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Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion

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Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion

With 15 Figures and 2 Tables

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Preface

Mr. Kenneth Giniger some time ago suggested to Dr. Holly Johnson, then President of Blanton-Peale Institute, New York, NY, that Blanton-Peale compile an encyclopedia of psychology and religion, a comprehensive reference work consisting of articles contributed by scholars of importance in the fields of religion, psychology, psychology and religion, and psychology of religion. Dr. Johnson also saw the need for such an information source and began planning work on the project with the assistance of Blanton-Peale colleagues, Dr. Walter Odajnyk and Dr. David A. Leeming. Long working together with Blanton-Peale on behalf of *Journal of Religion and Health*, Springer Science+Business Media became publisher, with Dr. Leeming, Dr. Kathryn Madden, and Dr. Stanton Marlan named as Editors-in-Chief. Dr. Leeming became Managing Editor of the project. He has taught courses in myth, religion, and literature for many years and has published several books on these subjects, including the *Oxford Companion to World Mythology*, and until recently was Editor-in-Chief of the award-winning *Journal of Religion and Health* and Dean of Blanton-Peale's Graduate Institute. He is currently President of Blanton-Peale Institute. Dr. Madden served as Dean and later President of Blanton-Peale, was Associate Editor and later Executive Editor of the *Journal of Religion and Health*, and has recently published *Dark Light of the Soul* (Lindisfarne Books). She teaches and lectures regularly and is in private practice. She received her M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. degrees in Psychology and Religion from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She has published many articles in her field and is Editor of *Quadrant*. Dr. Marlan is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He is a training and supervising analyst for the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and is President of the Pittsburgh Society of Jungian Analysts. He is also Adjunct Clinical Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University and holds diplomates in both Clinical Psychology and Psychoanalysis from the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has been Editor of the *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice* and is the author of numerous articles and books in the field of Jungian psychology. Parentage of the *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* comes naturally to the Blanton-Peale Institute. Founded in 1937 by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and psychologist Smiley Blanton, the Institute is a mental health clinic and psychological training institute dedicated to the constructive integration of religion and psychology. The *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* provides a crucial new resource for the collaboration and mutual illumination of these two fields.

Entries are drawn from a wide variety of religious traditions, not only modern world religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, but also, for example, African Animism, pre-Christian Celtic and Germanic traditions, Egyptian, Greek, Gnostic, and Native North American and Mesoamerican religious movements. Approaches to the subjects demonstrate a broad range of methodologies. Each entry is intended to create a tension of meaning between traditional religious terms and psychological interpretations. The goal is not to impose *the* correct or definitive meaning, but to explore new and latent deposits of meaning that bear implications for human self-understanding, cross-cultural interpretation, and therapeutic possibilities.

Occasionally, more than one article on a given subject is included to present different points of view. Extensive cross-referencing allows the reader to enhance understanding of particular subjects through direct access to related topics. The *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* will serve as a valuable and accessible reference work in both electronic and print versions for academic libraries and their patrons and will be of particular use to the growing community of researchers, academics, teachers, clergy, therapists, counselors, and other professionals who are involved in the developing reintegration of the fields of religion and psychology.

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David A. Leeming, Kathryn Madden, and Stanton Marlan

Introduction

The world's great religions have always served as the repository of the psychological truths and values of mankind. Religions address the fundamental questions of human existence: the purpose and meaning of life; our relationship with God; the nature of the soul; the existence of evil, suffering, and death; ethical behavior and conscience; our search for happiness, redemption, and salvation. In previous centuries theologians and religious philosophers were not inclined to differentiate between matters of "soul" or "psyche." Figures such as St. Paul, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Pascal, and Kierkegaard were people of faith who also grappled with the mysteries of human interiority, will, and motivation.

In the course of addressing these issues, every religion has developed a definition of human nature and examined our fundamental motivations, drives, and desires. Religions have been crucibles for the time-tested psychological principles that assure a sense of identity, community, and meaningful life. All religions, for example, have discovered that negative psychological states, such as pride, anger, hatred, lust, envy, ignorance, selfishness, and egotism, lead to personal and social conflict, injustice, and pain. On the other hand, positive mental and emotional attitudes, such as love, altruism, forgiveness, compassion, generosity, humility, equanimity, and wisdom, lead to a sense of personal well-being and social harmony. From a psychological perspective, religions are all-encompassing therapeutic systems that deal with major life events, transitions, and crises and respond in a healing, often life-saving way to the travails of the suffering soul and the impoverished spirit.

With the emergence and then dominance of scientific rationalism, however, the fields of religion and psychology diverged and entered into a relation of mutual suspicion. Beginning with the Enlightenment and its materialistic, secular, and rationalistic *weltanschauung*, the previously generally accepted religious and spiritual delineation of human nature was seriously challenged. In time, a split occurred between studies of human nature based on secular definitions and the age-old religious knowledge of the human soul and spirit. The two fields that should have been allied and in creative dialogue instead became estranged from each other, and often ignored or rejected the knowledge that each could have contributed to the enterprise of understanding human nature. Purely secular notions of human nature emerged: human beings were seen as rational animals; a person was born a *tabula rasa*, neither good nor evil, with parenting and education forming the personality; human beings were a composite of their economic and social relations; human beings were initially motivated by instinctive, irrational, and unrealistic drives and desires; all human behavior, emotions, and motivations and those most sublime cultural creations, religious beliefs and experiences, were the result of complex organic, neurological, and biochemical interactions. The tradition inspired by Sigmund Freud tended to view religion as an illusion, a cultural vestige of immaturity and projection. Consequently, those in the religious camp came to view psychology as a reductionist enterprise that denied the sacred and transcendent aspects of reality.

While some continue to subscribe to such stereotypes, a more sophisticated understanding of religion – particularly as advanced by the field of depth psychology – has done much to overcome them. The secular paradigm that has ruled the domain of psychology for the past centuries was challenged early on by pioneers such as William James, C. G. Jung, Roberto Assagioli, Viktor Frankl, Erik Erikson, and the humanistic psychologists Gordon Allport, Erich Fromm, and Abraham Maslow. During the 1970s, these thinkers were joined by the transpersonal psychologists, who have sought a synthesis between secular psychology and the great spiritual traditions. While they have accepted the stages of personal development described by various exponents of secular psychology, they have added the stages of transpersonal development evidenced in the world's contemplative and meditative traditions. Because of the cultural shift represented by the above and the persistence of religious beliefs in the vast majority of populations worldwide, contemporary psychologists are beginning to recognize that a purely secular approach to the study and treatment of human beings is inadequate. A science dedicated to the exploration of the basic characteristics and strivings of human beings and to the classification of the laws of human behavior needs to be inclusive and not exclusive of the religious dimension.

The need to address religious and spiritual problems is now deemed not only legitimate, but also clinically and ethically imperative. The 1994 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published by the American Psychiatric Association, for example, contains a new classification, "Religious or Spiritual Problems."

This *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* grows out of the developing awareness of the need to reintegrate the sciences of the mind with the science of the spirit. By bringing together the disciplines of psychology and religion, it

unites the two areas of study concerned with the behavior and motivations of human beings and provides a crucial new resource for the collaboration and mutual illumination of these two fields. For those in the study of religion, it offers new tools for understanding the images, structures, symbols, and rhythms that constitute the vocabulary of religious experience. For those in the field of psychology it reveals deep patterns of meaning and practice that inform human culture and the personal identity of millions.

This *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* illustrates, even to the skeptical, the vital importance of religion in our world and the serious depths of its symbolic universe. For those already immersed in religious studies, it demonstrates layers of meaning that are enriched – not reduced – by the tools of psychological investigation.

We trust this encyclopedia provides comprehensive timely accessible information from a multi-faceted perspective that reflects the intersection and the growing synthesis of psychology and religion.

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Homosexuality

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Iconography

Immanence

Initiation

Karma

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Locutions

Mormonism

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Deluge

Deus Otiosus

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Primordial Waters

Quest

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A

Abraham and Isaac

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The pivotal story of the *akedah* (the “binding” of Isaac) occurs in *Genesis 22* wherein God commands Abraham to sacrifice his long-awaited and only son with his wife, Sarah. This divine dictum is considered a test, since at the last minute when Abraham draws the knife to kill Isaac, God sends an angel to stay the sacrifice, and a ram is substituted in place of his son. God rewards Abraham for not withholding his only son from God and therefore passing the test, and promises Abraham numerous offspring, guaranteeing Abraham that he will be the “father of nations” blessed by God. It is Abraham’s absolute faith in God that makes him willing to sacrifice Isaac, and it is precisely this strict obedience that renews Abraham’s covenant with God and, in turn, God’s covenant with the patriarch, Abraham (which begins with God’s first call to Abraham in *Genesis 12:1–3*) and his subsequent generations. The *akedah* constitutes the foundation of the three monotheistic (also called Abrahamic) traditions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is Abraham’s near-sacrifice of his son that establishes his absolute faith in God, while simultaneously defining faith within the context of these monotheistic traditions.

Qur’anic Significance

In the Qur’an, Abraham is no less a man of faith than in the Hebrew Bible. He is considered to be the first monotheist because he is “sound in the faith,” and thereby a Muslim (one who submits to God) (3:60). The sacrifice story occurs in Sura 37:100–13. There are two notable differences. First, Abraham learns in a dream that he must sacrifice his son and he reveals this to his son: “My son, I have seen that I should sacrifice thee” (37:101), to which his son replies, “My father, do what thou art bidden” (37:102).

Lastly, the Qur’an does not specify *which* son is to be sacrificed: Isaac or Ishmael, Abraham’s first born through his slave, Hagar. Therefore, many Muslims assume that it was Ishmael who was offered for sacrifice, since he was the first born. However, according to some Qur’anic scholars, there are an almost equal number of authoritative statements within Qur’anic tradition that consider Isaac the intended victim as there are those that point to Ishmael (Delaney, 1998:170).

Søren Kierkegaard

In one of his most famous, pseudonymous works (penned under the name, Johannes de Silentio), *Fear and Trembling* (1843/1983), Kierkegaard uses the *Genesis 22* account of Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac in order to engage in a philosophical meditation on the question of faith. Although cast within the philosophical tradition, *Fear and Trembling* opens the question of Abraham to the individual and private sphere, thereby adding a psychological component. Kierkegaard was not the first to engage the story of Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac philosophically. His writings were a direct response to and critique of those of the pre-eminent German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).

Like Kierkegaard, Hegel considered himself a pious Christian. Hegel’s interpretation of Abraham appears in an early essay, “The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate” (written between 1798–99 and published posthumously), and forms the basis of what eventually matures into Hegel’s idea of the dialectic, which he elaborates in his famous *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807/1977). In his early writings, Hegel declares that “the first act which made Abraham the progenitor of a nation is a dismemberment which snaps the bonds of communal life and love” (Hegel, 1984: 185). For Hegel, Abraham the Jew characterizes “the Jewish multitude” that “wreck[s] [Jesus’] attempt to give them the consciousness of something divine” (Hegel, 1984: 265). Abraham represents “unhappy consciousness,” a term that Hegel later elaborates as

“inwardly disrupted consciousness” of a “contradictory nature” (Hegel, 1977: 126). In other words, Abraham as unhappy consciousness doesn’t realize the implicit unity that underlies all things. Unhappy consciousness is but the second, unfulfilled step in the dialectical process, which moves from identity to difference to finally, the identity of identity-and-difference. As such, unhappy consciousness is imperfect and incomplete, not yet having reconciled and harmonized identity and difference, and realized the inherent unity of thinking and being.

Kierkegaard recovers Abraham as the highest and truest man of faith. Kierkegaard considers Abraham to be a “knight of faith” who believes despite reason and demonstrates that faith is a matter of lived experience. Importantly, Abraham also demonstrates that there is in fact a “teleological suspension of the ethical”; in other words, Abraham, the single individual, is higher than the universal, ethical sphere. In this way, Abraham’s act cannot be comprehended by reason alone nor subsumed under the ethical order, which is dictated by reason. In an act of absolute faith, the “knight of faith relinquishes the universal in order to become the single individual” (Kierkegaard, 1843/1983: 75). The individual is higher than the universal. Furthermore, for Kierkegaard, interiority is higher than exteriority. Thus, “the paradox of faith is that there is an interiority that is incommensurable with exteriority” (Kierkegaard, 1843/1983: 69). Faith, therefore, in its paradoxical absurdity (it is absurd since it cannot be completely comprehended by reason alone) involves a leap into the unknown. And this must be carried out alone by the single individual in the fear and trembling of uncertainty. This act and experience of faith is intimately personal and private.

Freudian Perspective

Although Freud wrote extensively on fathers and sons, he repeatedly emphasized the significance of the son killing the father, and not the inverse. In *Totem and Taboo*, where Freud discusses the Oedipus complex, the focus is on the son killing the father, even though the Greek story of Oedipus begins with Laius’ attempt to murder his son. Freud, however, takes up the myth after these events have transpired in order to bring attention to the later part of Oedipus’ life and to his killing his father. Even in *Totem and Taboo*, where Freud attempts to trace the origins of monotheism through an exploration of the primitive, primal horde, it is the act of the sons usurping and sacrificing the father that founds the basis for religion. Freud emphasizes sacrifice, but not of the son.

Furthermore, Freud’s later work in which he deals with the question of Jewishness and religion, *Moses and Monotheism*, focuses on Moses – not Abraham. The anthropologist Carol Delaney devotes several chapters of her book, *Abraham on Trial: The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth*, to this thought-provoking absence, arguing that Freud’s exclusion of Abraham and his omission of the dynamic of fathers killing sons point to “a glaring *scotoma* or blind spot” in Freud’s work (189). Her study is an exploration of the significance of such a curious absence. Many Freudian scholars and psychoanalysts have attempted to use the Abraham and Isaac story as a corrective to what they consider to be the shortcomings of Freud’s Oedipus theory. What Delaney and others possibly overlook is the feminine element that figures predominantly in the Oedipal story and thus underlies Freud’s Oedipus complex. This component is not overtly present in the Abraham and Isaac story, and for this reason, perhaps, Freud chose Oedipus over Abraham.

Jungian Perspective

Jung’s most extensive engagement with the idea of sacrifice occurs in his work *The Sacrifice*, (Jung, 1956: 613–682) and in *Transformation Symbolism in the Mass* (Jung, CW 11: 296–448). From Jung’s perspective, sacrifice is an act of the unconscious and “the impulse to sacrifice comes from the unconscious” (Jung, 1956: 660). From the ego perspective, however, an act of sacrifice is impossible psychologically because the ego cannot decide to make a sacrifice. Rather, “an act of sacrifice takes place,” revealing that “a process of transformation is going on in the unconscious whose dynamism, whose contents and whose subject are themselves unknown” (Jung, 1956: 669). Sacrifice is a mystery and can never be fully understood by ego-consciousness since it is impossible to “derive the unconscious from the conscious sphere” (Jung, 1956: 670). Thus, the “I” can neither demand nor fully comprehend the sacrifice. Jung argues that, although the conscious may like to consider itself higher than the unconscious, it is the unconscious that is greater than the conscious. In “the act of sacrifice the consciousness gives up its power and possessions in the interest of the unconscious” (Jung, 1956: 671). The ego unwittingly sacrifices the “I.” Read in another way, just as the ego cannot choose to make a sacrifice, the “I” can’t do therapy, but therapy, nonetheless, happens. This uncontrolled and absolute giving (which is a relinquishing of the egoistic claim and therefore not overseen by ego-consciousness), which is a form of self-sacrifice, is a Self-possession (the

autonomous, transcendental Self which includes unconscious components as opposed to the self identified strictly with the ego and consciousness) since the Self causes the ego to renounce its claim on behalf of a supraordinate authority and in so doing, increases Self-knowledge. Every advance of the Self requires that the ego be sacrificed to something higher than itself, not unlike Abraham's absolute act of giving to God.

See also: [▶ Akedah](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [▶ Sacrifice](#)

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Abyss

Kathryn Madden

Origins and Images of the Abyss

Abyss from the Greek *abyssos* typically signifies a bottomless or boundless deep. The abyss appears in biblical tradition in several related senses. In the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 1:2, *abyssos* relates to the Hebrew *tēhōm*, which most likely stems from the Babylonian *Tiāmat*, a

personification of the primordial deep of waters existent before creation of world (NRSV). In Babylonian mythology, *Tiāmat* as the primal sea was personified as a goddess, (Jacobsen, 1968: 104–108) and also as a monstrous embodiment of elemental chaos (Dalley, 1987: 329).

The Egyptian worldview had a similar concept in *Nun*. *Nun* referred to the primeval water that encircles the entire world, and from which everything was created, personified as a god. In contrast to *Tiāmat's* goddess, feminine nature, *Nun* was considered to be an ancient god, the father of all the gods, which refers to his primacy rather than literal parentage (Lindemans, 2000).

Abyss became identified with *Sheol* and *Tartarus* (Job 41:24) based upon its association with notions of primordial depth and chaos. In Greek mythology, *Tartarus* was the gloomy prison of dishonorable opponents of Zeus. *The Book of Enoch* defines abyss as a place of punishment for fallen angels.

In post-biblical Jewish literature, because of its associations with chaos and death, the abyss became identified as the prison of rebellious spirits and the realm of the dead. By the time of the New Testament writing, the abyss was an abode of demons (Luke 8:31) and Hades (Romans 10:7), where the devil is imprisoned in a bottomless pit (Revelations 20:2). The Gnostics of the first century made abyss, under the name of *Bythus*, into a divine first principle, the source of all existence, thus representing a return to an original unity.

The images of the abyss throughout the Judeo-Christian era traditionally have been symbolic of hell, destruction, or death with the exception of the Gnostic myth which attributed to abyss both the source of life and life's return to this source. The Gnostics, along with their myths, were persecuted and eliminated as being heretical to the canonical truths of the mainline Church.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Contemporary psychoanalyst James Grotstein speaks of the abyssal experience as “the black hole” of nothingness, meaninglessness, and chaos – a “zero-ness” expressed, not just as a static emptiness but as an implosive, centripetal pull into the void (Grotstein, 1990: 257–258). Grotstein, from the neoclassical school of Freudian psychology, views the abyss of the black hole as “nameless dread,” an empty matrix and “container” of meaninglessness (drawing from Wilfred Bion, 1962, 1967). The abyss or void is associated with the death instinct which prepares us to anticipate and to adapt to the ultimate horror of death.

This black hole is the “pre-perception” of an experience-released anticipation which warns us of the extinction of the psyche.

Grotstein claims from clinical experience that “the minds of patients suffering from primitive mental disorders. . . are hypersensitively vulnerable to the detection of randomness and meaninglessness; they often substitute archaic, apocalyptic (meaningful) scenarios in order to prevent their minds from dissolving into the maelstrom of nothingness” (Grotstein, 1990: 265). Failure to tolerate the gap and its empty nothingness causes a default into “no-thingness. . .” (1990: 273).

Grotstein primarily focuses upon the borderline disorder and psychosis in which the person experiences “a spaceless, bottomless, timeless and yet, paradoxically, condensed, compact, and immediate yielding suffocation anxiety” (Grotstein, 1990: 281). Truly, psychopathology may prevent an individual from achieving sufficient meaning in the self and object world. A borderline or psychotic condition might make it impossible for the person to withstand the entropic pull toward nothingness and meaninglessness – ultimately toward chaos (randomness), the traumatic state, “the black hole” (1990: 286). Yet, there are non-psychotic states of being in which a person may experience the void, or “black-hole” of nothingness and return to a world of meaning.

Alternative Views of the Abyss in Analytic Psychology and Religious Experience

The more typical notion of abyss that has been passed down through history is like the sea; we fear being pulled down into the abyss to our annihilation. Yet, there is something about the abyss, as there is about the sea that exerts a strange pull on us.

There are alternative psychological understandings of the notion of abyss. Two examples of the abyssal experience were manifest in the imagery of Jacob Boehme, a seventeenth century German shoemaker and religious mystic, and Carl Jung, the twentieth century Swiss psychoanalyst. Both men gave witness to this layer of existence as not so much the “abyss of hell” but as a symbol of a unitary reality.

Boehme’s abyss, which he called the *Ungrund*, or unground, was pre-existent, underlying all of creation, even God. Jung’s notion of the Self exists before the beginning of the individual human being and is our ultimate goal in terms of psychological life.

The abyss, for Jung, analogous to the objective unconscious, and the Ungrund for Boehme, provided for both men, a “window to eternity.” Boehme was enabled to see through to the constellated reality of Christ, and for Jung, to the Self; for both, to something that points beyond itself to a transcendent ultimacy.

For Boehme, the abyss is a Self-revealing reality that gives life to the world but is itself a mystery. Spirit meets us as a dynamic reality at the abyss level and points beyond itself. Beyond what we know, we receive glimpses of “conscious communion or participation in a timeless reality” (Wood, 1982: 209).

Following a period of melancholia, Boehme allowed himself to be drawn inward to an abyssal state where he discovered a new image of God, fuller and more complete than before. Boehme’s experience inspired in him the production of a profound theme: that of the Ungrund, (unground), a groundless abyss, a state of pre-being underlying not only all of creation, but even God.

The Ungrund

The Ungrund is anterior to God and anterior to Being. The Ungrund lies in the eye, the core of God and creation (Boehme, 1969: 3:1, 16:16) and is eternally a mystery to God because it is what God was before God became conscious of God’s Self. The Ungrund is pre-distinction, pre-existent and is difficult to characterize except as *ewiges Kontrarium*: the nothing is the all; the emptiness is the fullness. The Ungrund, or abyss, contains all antinomies, but all the contradictions are still in harmony because these contraries are only potential and not yet differentiated.

As W. P. Swainson says, “[W]ithin this Abyss is an eternal, bottomless, uncreated Will, or Byss. This Will, or Byss, ever desires to become manifest – ‘It willeth to be somewhat.’ This is only possible in a state of duality or differentiation, for without contrast there could only be eternal stillness, nothing could ever be perceived” (Swainson, 93–94).

The Ungrund (abyss) is not the personal creator God but the absolute-in-itself, a moment at the commencement of the divine life and process of self creation and revelation of Being and the divine (Boehme, 1965, 1:1).

Boehme’s creation myth articulates a process in which God created God’s-self from the abyss through an eternal will. In A. E. Waite’s *Three Famous Mystics*, Swainson describes how God differentiates himself from this abyss: “This Will, or Byss, fashions what is called a Mirror, which reflects all things, everything existing already in a latent

or hidden state in the Abyss. . .[and] makes them visible or manifest. The Supreme [then] perceives all things in Himself. The dual principle is latent in Him. He is both Byss and Abyss. He could not otherwise know Himself . . . Boehme terms this Mirror the Eternal Wisdom, the Eternal Idea It is the Infinite Mother, the Will being the Infinite Father. . .” (Swainson, 93–95).

When the Will, or the Father, beholds Himself in this mirror, creation become active and manifest through the union of the Will and Wisdom: the archetypal Father and the Mother. The abyss for Boehme, then, is a “place” beyond time and space from which emanates all possibilities. All of creation arises from a “breathing out of God’s self” (Swainson, 209).

While Boehme’s visions may have followed a disintegrating period of melancholy or psychic disturbance, the visions led to healing rather than disintegration. These were humbling, not inflationary, experiences, which left Boehme with a feeling of awe and gratitude. Boehme’s (1978: 209) visions were noetic: his inner-self gives over to divine will and speaking. He exhibited a diminution rather than an inflation of ego.

Themes of opposition – of feminine and masculine, creation and destruction, good and evil, Christ and Lucifer, Ungrund and Sophia, life and death – abound in Boehme’s map. A comparison of his insight to that of modern depth psychology, places him squarely in the realm of analytical psychology and the notion of Carl Jung’s the Self-field where all naturally occurring oppositions of the psyche are encountered, held, and united in harmonic tension.

The Pleroma

Carl Jung likewise experienced an inbreaking image of abyss, what he called Pleroma, during his 6-year *Nekyia*, or descent into the deeper layers of the unconscious. His experience of the Pleroma was that of a paradoxical nothingness containing all opposites out of which God differentiates himself.

As a culmination of a long-term process of encounter with the deepest layer of the collective unconscious, specifically the psychoid, archetypal layer, Jung believed that we, potentially, experience something analogous to what, for Boehme, would be a pre-existent unitary reality.

Jung’s notion of the archetype as psychoid (Jung, 1963: 351) alerts us to a notion in which the unfolding of the Self, an archetype that unites opposites and orders our whole psyche, is an innate bridging reality that links the material and psychical, inner and outer in one reality.

Jungian analyst, Erich Neumann describes the Self-field as a pre-existing unitary reality that we developmentally emerge from. We find at a certain layer of reality a unitary reality existing beyond and before the primal split (consciousness from unconsciousness) that occurs when our conscious minds develop into a polarized reality. Except in cases of severe trauma or developmental injury, most of us have experienced this unitary reality in some form while we were in the mother’s womb or at a very early stage of development (Neumann, 1989: 9–10, 20).

- ▶ The prenatal egoless totality is associated with an unconscious experience – which can, however, be recalled in later life as a dim memory – of an acosmic state of the world. In this totality there exists a pre-psychic ‘nebular state’ in which there is no opposition between the ego and the world, I and Thou, or the ego and the self. This state of diffusion of the world-soul and the corresponding emptiness of the world is a borderline experience of the beginning of all things which corresponds to the mystic’s experience of the universal diffusion of the unitary reality (1989: 74).

Unitary Reality

The pleromatic/abyssal experience of unitary reality is something that is there from our inception. Developmental injuries and specific traumas may impair an individual’s knowledge of this unitary reality, but unitary reality (abyssal reality) underlies all experience. Drawing from Jung (1921: para. 424), the soul is thus like a two-way mirror, reflecting unconscious to ego and ego to unconscious.

The experience of unitary reality is relevant to clinical practice because abyssal experience is radically transforming. A new reality is born to us, offering us a new intrapsychic core, perhaps even restructuring the entire personality in a way the ego can better deal with its context and circumstances, one that enables us to see through to our former origins.

Spirit, from this view, is an *a priori* reality always in motion, moving toward us, shattering our consciousness, summoning us to receive that which is archetypally present and spiritually actual; as Boehme attests: (. . .) “to wrestle with the love and mercy of God, and not to give over, until he blessed me, . . . *And then the spirit did break through!*” (Boehme, 1915: 485–487, italics mine).

See also: ➤ Jung, Carl Gustav

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Active Imagination

Leon Schlamm

C. G. Jung’s development of the dissociative technique of active imagination, the visionary practice of “dreaming with open eyes,” arose out of his early experimentation with paranormal phenomena, especially mediumship, itself a dissociative technique of contacting the dead which traces its provenance to shamanism. His discovery of active imagination led him to associate psychological and spiritual transformation with the autonomous creation and manipulation of images.

Jung’s Descent into the Unconscious

In December 1913, believing himself to be threatened by a psychosis, Jung overcame his violent resistance to experiencing a series of waking fantasies, which would provide the raw material for the subsequent development of analytical psychology (Jung, 1963). In these waking visions, triggered by the suspension of his rational critical faculties enabling conscious receptivity to unconscious psychic contents (Jung, 1916/1958; Chodorow, 1997), Jung descended to the Land of the Dead (which he subsequently equated with the unconscious) where he encountered a number of significant *others* in the objective psyche, subjects independent of his consciousness (Jung, 1963). He learned to treat the numinous figures of his inner life, Elijah, Salome, the Serpent and Philemon, an Egypto-Hellenistic Gnostic who later functioned as his inner guru, as objective real *others* and to engage in dialog with them as equals (first verbally and later through writing, painting, and drawing) (Jung, 1916/1958, 1925, 1963; Chodorow, 1997), thereby discovering a meditative technique for psychological healing and spiritual transformation in marked contrast to the meditative practices of stilling the mind and transcending all images associated with yoga (Jung, 1963).

Active Imagination as Confrontation with the Unconscious

The function of this visionary practice, triggering a dynamic, confrontational exchange between consciousness and the unconscious in which each is totally engaged with the other and activating a stream of powerful, unconscious emotions and impulses, Jung discovered, was to access numinous unconscious images concealed by these emotions and impulses (Jung, 1916/1958, 1955–1956, 1963; Chodorow, 1997). By consciously dialoging with the flow of images produced by active imagination, Jung learned to transform and control these powerful emotions and impulses, thereby discovering the transcendent function (1916/1958, 1955–1956, 1963), the union of the opposites of consciousness and the unconscious which he identified with the individuation process, as well as healing himself. However, it is important to remember that, for Jung, it is through the *affect* that the subject of active imagination becomes involved and so comes to feel the whole weight of reality. Numinous images encountered during active imagination are based on an emotional foundation which is unassailable by reason. Indeed, the whole procedure is a kind of enrichment and clarification

of the affect, whereby the affect and its contents are brought nearer to consciousness, becoming at the same time more impressive and more understandable (Jung, 1916/1958, 1951, 1952/1954).

Jung was well aware that the practitioner of active imagination unable to maintain a differentiated, self-reflective conscious point of view in the face of unconscious visionary material would be vulnerable to mental illness: either in the form of psychosis where consciousness is overwhelmed by unconscious visionary materials; or in the form of conscious identification with numinous unconscious contents leading to possession by them (Jung, 1916/1958, Chodorow, 1997). However, he insisted that his visionary practice, if approached responsibly by an individual endowed with a well developed consciousness, could bring considerable rewards. In addition to the strengthening and widening of consciousness itself (Jung, 1916/1928, 1916/1958, 1931/1962, 1934/1950, 1955–1956), dreaming with open eyes could enable the practitioner to realize that unconscious contents that appear to be dead are really alive, and desire to be known by, and enter into dialog with, consciousness (Jung, 1963). If one rests one's conscious attention on unconscious contents without interfering with them, employing the Taoist practice of *wu wei*, just letting things happen, discussed by Jung in his Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, it is as if something were emanating from one's spiritual eye that activates the object of one's vision (Jung, 1916/1958, 1930–1934, 1931/1962, 1955–1956). Unconscious contents begin to spontaneously change or move, begin to become dynamic or energetic, to come alive. Jung characterizes this process by the German term *betrachten*: to make pregnant by giving an object your undivided attention (Jung, 1930–1934, 1935/1968, 1955–1956), a psychological process anticipated by his 1912 dream of a lane of sarcophagi which sprung to life as he examined them (Jung, 1963).

These experiences which Jung characterizes as numinous, however, require a vigorous, active, self-reflective conscious response endowing them with meaning, and thereby changing them (Jung, 1916/1958, 1955–1956, 1963). Here lies the significance of Jung's claim that the dead seek wisdom from the living in his pseudonymously produced Gnostic poem of 1916, *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*, itself the product of active imagination, rather than, as in mediumistic practices, the living seeking the wisdom of the dead. The dead, numinous, unconscious contents, need the living, consciousness, as much as the living need the dead (Jung, 1963; Segal, 1992; Welland, 1997; Bair, 2004). This process of continuous dynamic interaction and collaboration between consciousness

and the unconscious is expressed by the German term *auseinandersetzung* – coming to terms with, or having it out with or confronting unconscious psychic contents – and is mirrored in Jung's religious narrative calling for divine-human collaboration underlined by his heretical observation that whoever knows God has an effect on Him in *Answer to Job*, another product of active imagination (Jung, 1916/1958, 1952/1954; Chodorow, 1997; Welland, 1997).

Active Imagination in Western Religious Traditions

Jung himself alleged the use of active imagination in Gnosticism and alchemy on which he drew heavily in his later work (Jung, 1944, 1951, 1955–1956; Segal, 1992), and was clearly gratified by Corbin's research on active imagination in theosophical Sufism (Wasserstrom, 1999). However, as Merkur's recent scholarship tracing the history of active imagination in the West has confirmed, the incidence of this visualization technique in mystical traditions is more widespread, and can be found, for example, in Gnosticism, Kabbalah, Sufism, alchemy and more recent European esotericism, as well as shamanism (Merkur, 1993), thus providing considerable support for Jung's claim that his post-Christian, psychological practice of dreaming with open eyes is analogous to, and can be understood as a detraditionalised form of, spiritual practice fostered by many Western religious traditions during the last two millennia. Merkur also distinguishes between what he calls intense "reverie" states, including Jung's active imagination, and trance states. Whereas the latter involve the increasing repression or restriction of ego functions (or consciousness), the former would seem to involve their increasing relaxation and freedom.

See also: [Alchemical Mercurius and Carl Gustav Jung](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Coincidentia Oppositorum](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Descent to the Underworld](#) [Dissociation](#) [Dreams](#) [Ego](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Healing](#) [Individuation](#) [Inflation](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Numinosum](#) [Objective Psyche](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Psychospiritual](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shamans and Shamanism](#) [Transcendent Function](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Adam and Eve

Stuart Z. Charmé

One of the central features of creation stories in most cultures is a description not only of the genesis of the cosmos but also of the appearance of the first human

beings. Such stories often serve etiological purposes, explaining the origin of the different forms and characteristics of human beings. The Biblical story of Adam and Eve is the most well-known and influential story of human creation and is often used as a “proof text” justifying particular values and models related to family, marriage, sexuality, and gender roles. Yet it is important to remember that creation stories are a form of religious myth. Their importance and meaning do not lie in the literal, historical accuracy of their details, and to focus on such issues misses the level on which their power and truth exists. The Adam and Eve story offers profound theological and psychological insights about human beings’ place in the world, their relationship to each other and to a transcendent dimension of reality. Biblical editors linked the Adam and Eve story (Gen. 2) with the seven-day creation story that precedes it (Gen. 1) as a further elaboration of the nature of the sole creatures who were made “in the image of God.” The famous story of Adam and Eve’s loss of paradise as a result of ignoring God’s instructions has a far more complex message than that disobeying God is bad. Indeed, Jewish tradition takes little notice of Adam and Eve and certainly does not hold them up as the main reason for a flawed human nature. Only later are they elevated to their Christian status as the original sinners.

The multi-dimensional nature of religious myth makes it impossible to encompass the full meaning of a story in any single psychological interpretation. Nonetheless, psychological approaches to the Adam and Eve story help us to attribute meaning to the peculiar details in this story: a man created from earth, a woman born out of his rib, a tree with forbidden fruit, a seductive serpent, nakedness and shame, punishments and expulsion, etc.

Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Adam and Eve

From a psychoanalytic perspective, religious myths are expressions of both conscious and unconscious human struggles, projected onto archetypal figures. Accordingly, one way to look at a story like that of Adam and Eve is to see it as an expression of the struggle between fathers and sons and the ambivalence of their attachments to one another. On the one hand, it emphasizes the importance of the son’s subordination and submission to the authority of the father. For Freud, God is both a loving and protective father, but also one easily provoked to anger and punishment. He represents the power of the super-ego to keep instinctual desires under control. Yet the story also

contains a thinly disguised expression of Oedipal revolt, not simply in the son Adam's striving to become like God the father through the acquisition of knowledge, but also in giving expression, yet simultaneously condemning, the forbidden intimate relationship between mother and son. Such an interpretation is able to make sense of some of the peculiar details of the story and the obvious suppression of a mother figure. Taking the story at face value, Adam has a father but no real mother, and even Eve is born out of a male body. This creation of Eve out of Adam's rib makes more sense, however, as a disguised inversion of their true relationship, for it is out of the bodies of females that males are born and it is only a mother who can rightly call her child "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). If Eve, who is later called "the mother of all the living," is regarded as the missing mother figure in the story, thereby reconstituting the Oedipal triangle, then the nature of Adam and Eve's sin is thrown into a whole new light. God the father forbids his son Adam the one kind of instinctual knowledge that a father and son should not share. A phallic serpent who tempts Adam and Eve to taste the fruit, a sense of shameful nakedness after the act, and a punishment that highlights female desire, pregnancy and childbirth all offer a strong subtext of sexual taboos that have been violated in this story. Confirmation of this view may be seen in Adam and Eve's very first act after their expulsion from the garden, their immediate exercise of the new sexual knowledge and desire they have acquired (Gen. 4:1).

Although greater responsibility for the fall is projected onto Eve and indirectly on all women, it is primarily a cautionary tale addressed to sons regarding the danger of challenging the rights and prerogatives of the father. The central characters in subsequent Christian myth can be seen as a reenactment of this same Oedipal ambivalence. This time, however, it is through absolute obedience to the authority of God the father that Jesus, the second Adam, and the Virgin Mary, the new Eve, ultimately displace the father when they ascend to heaven and are seated side by side as celestial king and queen.

Jungian Interpretation of Adam and Eve

Other psychological interpretations of the Adam and Eve story do not see the fundamental tension in the story as related to sexual prohibitions and violations. For many of them, the fall of Adam and Eve describes the difficult process of human growth and development. For Jungians, for example, the garden of Eden is an archetypal expression of primordial wholeness that is both the origin and

ultimate goal of human life. At the beginning of human consciousness, there is an undifferentiated unity between the individual psyche and nature, God, and the unconscious. The story of Adam and Eve is an account of the growth of consciousness and the emergence of an ego with awareness of the tension of opposites in human life. Thus Adam is created not as a male, but as the original union of male and female in all human beings. The creation of Eve represents a break-up of the original wholeness of male and female that ideally is still reflected in individual human personality. The serpent is not a dangerous character tempting humans with sin, but rather a symbol of wisdom and the renewal of life. From this perspective, the eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil represents a growth of consciousness that brings an awareness of all polarities and opposites. The couple's self-consciousness about their nakedness describes the inevitable dawning of ethical consciousness and a more mature awareness of gender differences.

The Fall Story and Psychological Development

In this context, the story of Adam and Eve is not about a tragic mistake that condemns humanity, as traditional Christian theologians have contended, but rather about a difficult but necessary step in the psychic growth of all human beings. Adam and Eve achieve a new level of consciousness, but it comes at the cost of feeling alienated, separated and expelled from their childhood paradise. While the story is typically viewed as an endorsement of what Erich Fromm has called "authoritarian religion," in which obedience to divine authority is the cardinal human virtue, it also implies something quite different. Fromm points out that the authoritarian model of religion leaves humans alienated, infantilized, and impoverished by projecting all of their human powers for love, knowledge, and freedom onto an external deity. He insists that such a position contradicts the more humanistic perspectives within the Biblical tradition. At a deeper, more subversive level, the message of the story is to emphasize the painful necessity of breaking free from the security of a childhood that is governed by parental authorities and to assume the knowledge and responsibility necessary to create new relationships, build new families, and determine one's own path in life. And this, many argue, is not really disobedience to divine command as much as a fulfillment of human beings' mature spiritual capacity.

In some ways, the Adam and Eve story is therefore a developmental story, describing the struggle of

adolescence to separate and individuate from one's parents. Paradoxically, the process of becoming an adult, i.e., being like God, only can happen through an act of disobedience which challenges the absoluteness of parental authority. And it is a story that emphasizes the centrality of human relationship to realize this process, for it is not good for man to live alone, physically or psychologically.

The story offers no lament that Adam and Eve might have done otherwise and perpetually remained in paradise. Rather, the loss of paradise is inevitable and inescapable, and it enables man to become a partner with God in the redemption of the broken and alienated dimensions of the world.

Patriarchal or Feminist Approaches to Eve

It is hard to talk about the Adam and Eve story without considering its complicity in persistent misogynistic elements within Biblical tradition. Such interpretations have constructed women as spiritually inferior, psychologically weak beings who need to submit to their husbands in particular and male authority in general for the good of all. The story traditionally been used to reinforce images of women as temptresses and to justify the religious, social, and political subordination of women. In the original cultural context of this story we can also find evidence of patriarchal religious leaders' efforts to delegitimize religious symbols and ideas associated with sacred images of female power from surrounding cultures. Wisdom-bearing serpents and trees with life-giving knowledge about fertility were likely references to elements of older religious traditions emphasizing connection with the life-giving power of the earth, often symbolized by goddess figures. The Biblical version transforms these elements into manifestations of rebellion and disobedience, and implies greater culpability to the female character who first gives in to temptation.

Some recent feminist re-interpretations of this story offer more sympathetic readings of Eve. If the underlying psychological message of the story involves the difficult yet necessary process of growing up, the dawning of conscience, intellect, desire and sexuality, then it makes little sense to demonize the character who initiates this process. In this reading, Eve is not gullible and weak but rather a strong, decisive, and courageous woman who actively seeks new knowledge and experience. As with other important religious myths, the central characters of this story have

been rediscovered and reinvented by modern readers in response to the concerns and issues of our time.

See also: [Biblical Psychology](#) [Creation](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [Genesis](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Original Sin](#)

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Adler, Alfred

Melissa K. Smothers

Background

Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was an Austrian psychiatrist and recognized as one of the fathers of modern psychotherapy. He was born in Vienna in 1870 and decided at an early age that he wanted to be a doctor in order to “fight death.” He was the second child in a large family and suffered from numerous illnesses as a child. He studied medicine at the University of Vienna and preferred not to treat a client's symptoms in isolation, but rather considered the whole person, including their social setting.

In 1902, Adler was asked to join a weekly psychoanalytic discussion circle and became an active member in the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society; other notable members included Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. However, after nine years, he and about a dozen other members split from the society over theoretical differences. He went on to form the Society of Individual Psychology, which emphasized the role of goals and motivation in people's behaviors. Adler developed his theory of *Individual Psychology*, using the word individual to emphasize the uniqueness of the personality. In the year after leaving the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, he published *The Neurotic Constitution*, which outlined his theory.

During World War I, Adler served in the army as a physician and became increasingly aware of the necessity for humans to live peacefully and develop social interest, in which one feels as they belong with others. After the war, Adler's concept of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* or social interest/social feeling became a central aspect of his Individual Psychology theory. He went on to develop child-guidance clinics throughout Vienna and was the first psychiatrist to apply mental health concepts to the school environment.

By the mid 1920s, the *International Journal of Individual Psychology* had been founded and published until 1937; it resumed publication after World War II. Between 1914 and 1933, Adler published more than a dozen books, including, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, *What Life Should Mean To You*, *Religion and Individual Psychology*, *Social Interest: A Challenge to Mankind*, and *Cooperation Between the Sexes*. Due to the rise of Nazism in Austria and similar to other Jewish people of his generation, Adler left Europe, and settled in the United States in 1935. While on a European lecturing trip, Adler died suddenly of heart attack at the age of 67.

Individual Psychology

Individual Psychology suggests that people are responsible for their own choices and the way they deal with consequences. In this theory, humans are self-determining, creative, and goal-directed. When individuals are able to understand their goal in life, they can see the purpose of their own behavior. Adler sees each individual as a unity and viewed all problems as social problems. Adler viewed the answer to life's difficulties as social interest, or the feeling of connectedness with the whole of humanity and that each person must fully contribute to society. According to Adler, the true meaning of life is to make a contribution to the community.

In Adler's view, religion was an expression of social interest. His theory of Individual Psychology has religious undertones in that his definition of social interest is similar to those religions that stress people's responsibility for one another. While Adler did not believe in God or in the Bible, he did collaborate with clergyman. His book, *Religion and Individual Psychology*, was coauthored with Reverend Ernst Jahn. Adler believed that if clergy had training in Individual Psychology, he would be able to make greater accomplishments in the arena of mental health and hygiene. Adler believed that there are many religious initiatives that try to increase cooperation, and he stated that

there are many paths that lead toward the ultimate goal of cooperation.

As compared to other systems of psychology, Individual Psychology and Adlerian psychotherapy have been more open to spiritual and religious issues. The Adlerian position toward religion is most commonly positive, viewing God as the concept of complete perfection. Adler defined God as the human understanding of greatness and complete perfection. As opposed to Freud, Adler viewed God as the conceptual idea of perfection, not as an internalized parental image.

One of Adler's most prominent ideas is that humans try to compensate for inferiorities that we perceive in ourselves. He developed the idea of inferiority complex, as well as the goal of superiority. A lack of power is often at the source of the feelings of inferiority. One way in which religion enters into this is through beliefs in God, which are characteristic of one's attempts at perfection and superiority. In many religions, God is often considered to be perfect and omnipotent, and instructs people to also strive for perfection. The person, who is always striving, is aware that he or she cannot experience such perfection, but that having a goal defines life. By attempting to identify with God in this way, people compensate for their imperfections and feelings of inferiority. Adler believed that the idea of God inspires people to act, and that those actions have real consequences. One's perspective on God is important because it embodies one's goals and guides social interactions.

Numerous authors have compared Adler's Individual Psychology to Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Native American religions. In the literature, Christianity appears most frequently cited as having similar tenets with Individual Psychology. For example, there are considerable commonalities between the basic assumptions of Christianity and Individual Psychology regarding the view of humans. Both view individuals as creative, holistic, social oriented and goal-directed and emphasize equality, value and dignity of humans. A focus within the Christian Bible is on human relationships, with God, oneself and others and provides guidelines for relationships for living with others. Humans are responsible for caring for one another, emphasized both in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus. Both the Bible and Adlerian psychotherapy emphasize the relationship between spiritual-mental health and social interest. The Bible's decree of love one's neighbor is synonymous with the Adlerian concept of social interest.

Individual Psychology and Buddhism are both based on holism in their understanding of the human mind

because they believe there are no conflicts between elements of the mind. Yet, while Buddhism applies holism to understanding the structure of the universe, Individual Psychology recognizes conflicts between the individual and the world. Individual psychology denies the idea of the self as separate from the rest of the individual; no self exists apart from the whole. Similarly, Buddhism denies the existence of the self as such.

The view of human distress, can be viewed in corresponding terms from a Buddhist and Adlerian perspective. In Adler's Individual Psychology, an individual strives towards his or her life goal while inevitably facing specific difficulties in his or her life, referred to by Adler as life tasks. When facing difficulties, the person feels inferior; therefore striving towards one's goals leads to feelings of inferiority or suffering. Likewise, in Buddhism, three thirsts cause suffering: the thirst for pleasure, the thirst to live and the thirst to die. In addition, in Buddhism and Individual Psychology, all conflicts are interpersonal and occur between the individual and life events; they both deny intrapsychic conflicts. Life unavoidably produces interpersonal conflicts and these conflicts make an individual suffer. In contrast to Individual Psychology, Buddhism asserts that the awakened or enlightened do not deal with conflict in the world. Through three ways of studying, a person can understand that the conflicts he or she has in life are only illusions.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#)
[▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#)

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Adoption

Ronald Katz

The Bible doesn't "speak" to us in words about adoption but conveys great insight through its stories. It teaches us by example. Adoption consists of two parts: the relinquishment of the child by the parent(s) and the adoption of the child by a new parent(s). In the Bible, the relinquishment of the child is always associated with the threat of death to the child. In the first instance, Abraham relinquishes his son Israel to G-d while expecting that it will result in his son's death. In the next story of adoption, the mother of Moses is forced to relinquish him by placing him in the Nile River in order to save him from certain death. In the story of Esther, not part of the actual Bible itself, relinquishment comes about as a result of the death of Esther's parents. In a related example of relinquishment in the Bible, two women appear before King Solomon claiming to be a baby's mother and when the King threatens to kill the baby by cutting it in half, the real mother relinquishes the baby to the other woman in order to save the child's life. In ancient classical literature this association between relinquishment of the child and death manifests itself in Sophocles' trilogy about Oedipus. Here the relinquishment of the child Oedipus takes place with the expectation of death to the child as a consequence. The thread running through these stories is that the bond between parent and child is of such primal significance that it can be broken only as a matter of life or death. The Bible does speak to us in words about the attitude toward relinquished orphan children and so does the Qur'an. In the world of Islam, the orphaned child is treated with great love and care. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) once said that a person who cares for an orphaned child will be in Paradise with him. The Qur'an gives specific rules about the legal relationship between a child and his adoptive family. The child's biological family is never hidden; their ties to the child are never severed. The adopted parents are like

loving trustees and caretakers of someone else's child. In the Bible there are references to orphans: the repeated attitude is that they should be treated with special consideration and that it is a blessing to those who care for them. This attitude is manifested in the stories depicting relinquished children who are delivered into loving hands. When Abraham relinquishes his son Israel, G-d immediately sends an Angel to protect Abraham's relinquished son Israel from death and then promises such a wonderful future that all of his family (descendants) will inherit the surrounding lands which were (eventually) named Israel after him. After Moses was relinquished, he was rescued from the Nile River by Pharaoh's loving daughter who protected him from the Pharaoh's death decree, arranged for his biological mother to nurse him and raised him to be adopted into the Pharaoh's family. Esther who was relinquished as a result of her parent's death was adopted by her loving uncle Mordecai who protected her from the wrath of the Persian ruler by hiding her Jewish origins. And in the related story about the mother who relinquished her baby to King Solomon's judgment in order to save the child's life, King Solomon gives the baby back to his loving mother. In the Classical Greek story about Oedipus who is bound and abandoned in the wild by his parents, he is found and delivered into the loving hands of King Merope and his Queen and raised as a noble. And what is the outcome one can expect from this loving care of the adopted child – nothing less than a loving, faithful and loyal offspring.

These scriptural and classical literature stories teach us that our love and support of the adopted child will be rewarded with the love and loyalty of the child in return. In today's times there is controversy over whether the adopted child should be aware of his adopted status. What insight is shed on this subject by these religious and classical sources? The Qur'an quite clearly spells out in words the view that the child's awareness of his adoptive status is very necessary. The adopted child must retain his/her own biological family name (surname) and not change it to match that of his adoptive family. There can be no doubt or mystery about the adoptive status of the child. The Bible conveys the importance of this awareness again in its stories. Abraham is accepted and his son adopted into the religion of one G-D, Judaism, and this "adoption" is proclaimed to the world and fought for.

Esther is knowingly adopted by her Uncle and raised in accord with her racial and religious roots. She is loyal to her adoptive parent to the point of risking death to please him by confronting the Persian King. And later when the relinquishment of the Jews by genocide from their

adoptive home in Persia is sought by the Prime Minister Haman, Esther again risks her life in loyalty to her adoptive father by proclaiming to the King her secret, that she is a Jew.

These stories also illustrate the contrasting effect on the adopted child of adoption unawareness. Moses' adoption was trans-racial, a Hebrew child in an Egyptian family. His adopted family was the ruling class of the country while his biological roots were with the enslaved class. We are given the impression that he had no knowledge of his adoptive status growing up until he is regarded as "brethren" by the Hebrew slaves he was supervising. We can surmise that he may have had unspoken conflicts and identity confusion that couldn't be revealed and acknowledged. Moses is portrayed as a poor communicator who struggled with rage in the Bible. At one point he explodes and kills an Egyptian overseer who was brutalizing some Hebrew slaves. The mixture of anger, fear and guilt often underlies the many reports of the high incidence of anger in adoptees. The strength of Moses' loyalty to his adoptive family was made evident by his self-imposed exile from Egypt which lasted for as long as the Pharaoh lived.

Not knowing one's biological roots puts one in danger of violating a fundamental human taboo against incest which the adoptee who lacks specific knowledge of his biological roots is subject to. Islam specifically addresses the issue by insisting on clear demarcation between blood relationships and non blood relationships. The Bible's solution is exemplified in the story of Moses. In his years of self imposed exile Moses marries a non-Hebrew, thus avoiding the possibility of incest when he establishes a family of his own.

What do we learn about the road from identity confusion to identity resolution? Moses' identity crisis is resolved and solidified by a the recognition of and reunion with and the support of his birth family. This reunion helps him accept himself as a Hebrew and as G-ds' spokesman. In his mission to gain the relinquishment of the Hebrews from their adoptive home in Egypt, Moses repeatedly confronts the new Pharaoh of Egypt. Here too the relinquishment of the Hebrews from Egypt is only brought about after their children were threatened with death by the Pharaoh. In this story, the Pharaoh acts on his murderous feelings toward the Hebrews as he tries to prevent their separation from Egypt by ordering the death of the first born Hebrew children and later by trying to kill the Hebrews after allowing them to leave Egypt. The Pharaoh's murderous decree against the Hebrews results in the death of his own child and the destruction of his

army. We see that the suppression of the adoptees true identity results in conflict and ultimately destruction to the suppressor.

In the story of Oedipus we see the consequences of not knowing the true biological identity played out in dramatic fashion. In the story of Oedipus, his adoptive roots are not consciously known to him. He is an unknown puzzle to himself as exemplified by the problem posed to him by the sphinx: Who is man? We know that his biological parents had arranged for his relinquishment by death through abandonment. We know that out of loving loyalty to his adoptive parents he had fled them rather than risk their destruction after hearing the Oracle's prophesy that he would kill his father. The inevitable outcome is that he kills his biological father and had an incestuous relationship with children by his biological mother. The incestuous dangers of the adoptee's ignorance of his true biological roots is brought "to life" in this play. The play too adds to the insight that loving care of the orphan by the adoptive parents results in a loving and devoted child whereas murderous action towards the child brings about a murderous reaction. The lack of conscious knowledge of one's adoptive and biological origins is portrayed here as causing turmoil and conflict in the life of the adoptee.

These ancient insights have also been reflected in the writings of psychoanalyst and adoption specialist Florence Clothier (1943) in "The Psychology of the Adopted Child" who wrote "... the severing of the individual from his racial antecedents lie at the core of what is peculiar to the psychology of the adopted child." "... the ego of the adopted child ... is called upon to compensate for the wound left by the loss of the biological mother. Later on this appears as an unknown void, separating the adopted child from his fellows whose blood ties bind them to the past as well as to the future."

What are the common threads that run through these writings:

1. Adoptive parents who raise their children in a loving way will have loving children who will not destroy them with their aggression.
2. Acting out of primal hostile impulses by parents toward their children begets the acting out of primal hostile impulses towards themselves.
3. Acknowledgement of adoption can help prevent incest.
4. Knowledge of one's true "core" is essential for mental well being.

See also: [▶ God](#) [▶ Oedipus Myth](#) [▶ Qur'an](#)

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Affect

Jo Nash

Definition

Affect is a term used in psychology to denote the broad field of emotional and mood based experience of the human subject, and is a concept deployed in the post-structural theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and related fields of social and cultural theory, to describe the means of visceral communication which invests the experience of relationship between an organism and its environment with meaning, in the broadest possible sense. Protevi writes, "An affect is that which a body is capable of, and so the affectivity of conceptual personae becomes materially grounded in what Alliez will later not hesitate to call a 'biology of intellectual action'" (Protevi, 2005).

When we consider that affect involves embodied, visceral perception that is intuitively apprehended (Bion), is object relational, and may be both generative of cognition, or a product of cognition, or even pre-cognitive (instinctual), or trans-cognitive (integrative), we can understand that affect mediates all experience at both conscious and unconscious levels of awareness, and is an important mediator of all religious and spiritual experience. In *Affect, Religion and Unconscious Processes* Hill and Hood write,

"Insofar as religious experience involves representational worlds, or object relations, affect is hypothesised to play a central role as a mediator (that often is not associated with awareness) of such processes that underlie various behaviours" (Hill and Hood, 1999: 1018).

Affect Theory and Integration

For the psychoanalytic psychologist Silvan Tomkins (1962, 1963, 1991, 1992), who developed what has

become known as “affect theory,” affect can also be understood as an important factor in motivation, in that it is generative of stimuli and also mediates the complex human biofeedback system in an attempt to sustain homeostasis. The adoption of a religious or spiritual practice can be understood to be motivated by the human need to optimise positive affect and ameliorate negative affect to achieve harmonious bio-psycho-social functioning. The need to identify with a positive “Image” for Tomkins, is rooted in a need to identify with the beloved parent, who resonates with positive affects such as love, joy, patience, acceptance and so on. This process of identification enhances optimal development and facilitates highly complex forms of psychological integration dependent on the mediation of ever more subtle affective processes or states. As McGroarty writes: “This also allows for a finer imagination . . . In addition to expanding categories of imagination and perception, this process also may be somewhat therapeutic, in cases where the event under analysis has instigated trauma . . . The feedback system is ultimately geared toward reporting on the progress toward this state [homeostasis], humans are freer than other animals because of the complexity of the Images they hold, and variety of strategies with which they may pursue these images” (McGroarty, 2006: 60–61).

It follows that identification with the positive Images associated with spiritually developed or integrated others, whether they are ministers, teachers, gurus or saints, will be a source of motivation for adopting religious or spiritual practices or values, because the processes involved enhance the ability of the human affective system to sustain homeostasis when under stress from negative stimuli, and thereby regulate itself harmoniously.

In short, identification with highly integrated persons and aspiring to become like them, by adopting practices that enable affective self regulation, enhances happiness and well being. A sense of freedom is also enjoyed by those with a highly developed ability to regulate their own affective states. Spiritual and religious practices are one set of tools available to enhance the development of affective self regulation, and forms of psychotherapy that deploy elements of contemplative practices in particular, have been demonstrated to be very effective in achieving this objective.

Affect Regulation and Contemplative Practice

Mindfulness based stress reduction or MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) and mindfulness based cognitive therapy or MBCT,

(Segal et al., 2002) are two forms of therapeutic affective self-regulation which deploy Buddhist meditation techniques and yoga exercises to enhance affective self-management. They have been demonstrated to be particularly effective interventions in mood disorders such as recurring depression and substance abuse problems, which are often rooted in misguided attempts to use alcohol, drugs and/or food to regulate emotions and mood.

More recently, a new type of intervention designed to regulate affect called “analytic meditative therapy” has been described by Harrison (2006) as a non-dual psychotherapy rooted in the Tibetan Buddhist practices of Dzogchen and Mahamudra, which enables “relaxed contact with absolute reality and [...] mental healing to occur spontaneously” (Harrison, 2006: 73) through “contemplative resting in non-dual mental space” (Harrison, 2006: 73). Such an intervention embraces the tendency of human affect to achieve equilibrium when given the “mental space” to do so. Certain skills in contemplative discipline are required to create the mental space that enables this to occur.

The above descriptions of the role of affect in the generation and mediation of psychological states, including spiritual and religious experience, is made more interesting by research that demonstrates the converse relationship also exists. Ancient contemplative practices generate and mediate affect in predictable and repeatable ways, with meditation and breathing techniques now being used to enhance psychological well-being as highly effective therapeutic interventions in the field of emotional health.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Esoteric Buddhism](#) [Instinct](#) [Mindfulness](#) [Nonduality](#)

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African-American Spirituality

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Spirituality has played a paramount role in shaping the identity of African Americans, permeating many aspects of life. African American spirituality has its roots in African religious traditions and culture (Boyd-Franklin, 1989), according to which, people are born spiritual beings, and thus, religion and spirituality are an integrated part identity. African religion and spirituality have also influenced African culture, education, social life, politics, and economics (Idowu, 1992). Overall, African spirituality is very communal in nature as noted by John Mbiti, who said, “I am because we are; and because we are, therefore, I am” (1969: 108). Reflected in this quote is the idea that consciousness of oneself stems from duties, responsibilities, and privileges experienced with others.

Role of Faith

African spirituality helped those affected by slavery to nurture and promote a sense of community while under the influence of the white slave owners’ European religion (Battle, 2006). African spirituality also helped those forced into slavery redefine themselves, find unity, and express inner strength, despite their experiences of oppression. Further, African spirituality buffered white slave owners’ attempts to destroy African cultural identity. Strength would be drawn from one another in secret meetings as well as through music and dance; the presence of

the sacred would be celebrated through songs, beating drums, prayers, and stories (Cook and Wiley, 2000). Traditional African concepts of spirituality and religion are interwoven into African American spirituality and are reflected in contemporary African American culture (Wiggins and Williams, 1996). For example, a fundamental African spiritual concept that was retained by African Americans is the idea that people live in a religious universe and therefore the whole of a person’s life is deeply religious. This idea includes the belief that one is connected to past, present, future humankind, nature, and God. African spirituality is the legacy of African Americans and is present in African American spirituality and culture today. Likewise, as in African worship, African American worship involves verbal and physical expression that includes the whole body and is expressed in the form of song and dance. Music and spirituality are linked in the African American culture and elements of “spirituals,” reveal cultural patterns that have been sustained through the years (Wiggins and Williams, 1996). These elements include the use of metaphor, symbolism, and imagery which appear in the form of blues, rap, and jazz (Wiggins and Williams, 1996).

Role of the Church

Still, communalism continues to play a central role in African American spirituality that promotes a collective identity involving psychological and spiritual integration with others and the sacred. African American spirituality also continues to be an integral part of the struggle for liberation from injustices that followed slavery and has become part of the survival system of African Americans in contemporary times (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Wiggins and Williams, 1996). This can be seen in the emergence of the Black church in America for example, which has been integral to the development of African American religion, politics, and social justice issues. Being one of the first institutions that belonged solely to African Americans, it became multifunctional and was considered a place of refuge in a hostile world (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). With time, the Black church, empowered by the communal nature of African American spirituality, would be shepherded by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who together with the Black church, helped give rise to the Civil Rights movement which was focused on eliminating the racial discrimination of African Americans.

Currently, the African American churches continue to have a communal foundation that serves as an extended family where social attitudes, values, and codes of conduct of the church and the family are interwoven (Cook

and Wiley, 2000; Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Most African American churches continue to be representative the African American spiritual lifestyle by reinforcing the concept that the sacred exists in all things animate and inanimate (Cook and Wiley, 2000). This is exemplified in the way that African American churches provide resources such as food, shelter, financial aid, child care, recreation, health care, political action, cultural expression, and mental health services to meet the basic needs of the community (Cook and Wiley, 2000). On the whole, African American spirituality continues to be a significant source of strength, hope, meaning, identity, liberation, and forgiveness. It is also continues to play a central role in affirming ethnic, cultural, and historic pride (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990).

Role of Clergy

Within the African-American church, the pastor is viewed as the leader and spokesperson for the congregations. The modern-day pastor is representative of the tribal leaders and/or shamans of African tribes. The African chieftain was responsible for the welfare of his people acting as protector, provider, and counselor. The shaman offered spiritual guidance and was a liaison to the metaphysical realm. African American pastors have similar duties, serving as providers of spiritual knowledge and motivation, offering guidance to the troubled, and protecting the people. The role of pastor in the African American church is one of reverence whose influence encompasses the church and the family, and extends out to the larger community (Cook and Wiley, 2000). As in African cultures, religious leaders are perceived as being knowledgeable professionals who are intermediaries between church members and the sacred (Idowu, 1990). The pastor sets the moral foundation of the church, and members often look to pastors for help with their problems and needs (Cook and Wiley, 2000). It is viewed as a pastor's duty to go to God with prayers on behalf of the individual, family, or community (Idowu, 1992).

See also: [Community](#) [Religious Identity](#) [Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Ahimsa

Trish O'Sullivan

Ahimsa is a Sanskrit term meaning non-harming. It is the supreme virtue in the three great religions of India – Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. It is the first Yama or discipline in Yoga, the first precept in Buddhism and the first great vow in the Jain moral code. If this discipline or vow is kept than the others will automatically be attained. For example, the Buddhist precepts of truthfulness, non-stealing, control of sexual activity, and avoidance of intoxicating substances are forms of non-harm of both self and other. This non-harming ethic is said to benefit others not only through their ensured personal safety but also by the creation of a peaceful atmosphere wherein others are moved to give up their own hostility. Ashoka (268–233 BC) was an Indian emperor that used rapacious violence to conquer and enforce his rule killing thousands. He converted to Buddhism and adopted the practice of Ahimsa. The peaceful change that followed forever linked his name with Ahimsa.

The fulfillment of ethical demands removes existing karmic impurities that create suffering and prevents the accumulation of new impurities. Just as non-harming is the root virtue leading to freedom from suffering, violence is the root cause of all suffering. Practitioners are expected to consciously minimize violence as much as is practicable so as to get rid of the violent attitudes of mind which are not suitable for meditation and will make bad karma.

While all three traditions focus on non-harming in daily life, the Jains go to relatively extreme lengths to avoid harming any creature. Some sweep the ground as they walk so as to avoid stepping on any insects and/or

wear facemasks to prevent small insects from injury while breathing. The widespread custom of vegetarianism in India is related to the practice of Ahimsa.

The Indian Mahatma Gandhi utilized Ahimsa as a political tool, through which the Indian Colony achieved freedom from Britain. Other freedom fighters such as Martin Luther King, Jr. in the U.S. successfully applied these principles in the African American struggle for civil rights. While Gandhi was certainly a role model for MLK there is a pacifist tradition within Christianity also. Christian peace churches such as the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers closely adhere to Jesus's teaching of nonviolence.

The animal rights and environmental movements, are modern examples of a growing non-harming consciousness with a positive regard toward life including both individual life forms and the natural world as a whole.

Ahimsa and Psychology

All three traditions teach that nonharming must be practiced in thought, word and deed. Nonviolent communication involves speaking truthfully with regard for the other person and listening deeply with compassion.

Thich Nath Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist Master teaches that psychological violence against the self occurs when feelings are held back and pain ignored. Nonviolence involves being present and recognizing one's own pain or despair, otherwise pain builds and can push one to become caught in one's views or to lash out in anger.

Psychotherapy involves the examination and reduction of violent and other self-harming thoughts and deeds. It involves the generation of compassion towards others who suffer or who have harmed one through the realization that all harm comes from others pain.

The conscious therapist is the embodiment of nonviolence by maintaining a position of presence, listening and unconditional positive regard for the patient. It is this therapeutic stance that allows for healing to progress, eventually leading to a lessening of harming activities either internal or external in the patient's life.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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Akedah

Lynn Somerstein

The Bible Story called the “Akedah,” in Hebrew tells of the ending of ritual child sacrifice. It is frequently translated as the “Sacrifice of Isaac,” but the correct translation is the “Binding of Isaac.” Although the word “akedah,” in Hebrew, denotes the bound limbs of an animal prepared for ritual sacrifice, Isaac is not sacrificed.

The events of the Akedah are well known. God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Isaac and Abraham climbed Mount Moriah together and approached the killing place. Abraham carried the knife, really a cleaver used for butchering animals, and the sacrificial fire. Isaac carried the wood to be used later to burn his body in an offering to God. Although Isaac asked Abraham where the sacrificial animal was, he knew that he was doomed; he did not resist when his father bound his hands with ropes, placed him on the funeral pyre, and reached out to slit his throat. Isaac's feet were not bound- he could have run away.

Isaac submitted to his father's desire to kill him but he was saved when an angel appeared and stopped Abraham's hand. The Lord blessed Abraham and promised to multiply his seed “as the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the shore of the sea” (Genesis, 22:17–18).

A traditional understanding of the Akedah is that God did not want Abraham to kill Isaac because murder is wrong even if God commands it, and God will never again ask for anyone to submit to such a test of faith.

An alternative understanding of the Akedah is that it expresses perfect love. Abraham showed God that he loved Him perfectly when he agreed to sacrifice Isaac, and Isaac loved Abraham perfectly when he agreed to

allow himself to be sacrificed. The Akedah marks the time when literal child sacrifice was stopped; it reveals the beginnings of compassion while it exemplifies God's power and male hegemony.

Abraham thought of sacrificing Isaac, but he did not actually do so. The Akedah is an important story for theories of human psychology because it shows the growth of the human psyche as we begin to understand that words are not the same as deeds.

Often people act as though words and deeds are the same; their thoughts can be experienced as crimes, "thought crimes" deserving punishment, which can lead people to feel guilty, anxious and depressed, even though they have not done anything wrong. One of the many goals of psychotherapy is to help people realize the difference between thoughts and deeds so that their thoughts and feelings can be examined without blame.

Isaac did not attempt to run away, he acquiesced to his father's apparent desire to kill him. Did he believe he would be saved? Might there be other reasons? Did Isaac feel compelled to comply in order to win his father's love? Maybe he was too scared to run. We meet many fathers and sons in treatment who need to answer these questions for themselves.

See also: [Abraham and Isaac](#) [Authoritarian Personality](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Psychology and the Origins of Religion](#) [Sacrifice](#) [Sacrifice of Isaac](#)

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Alchemical Mercurius and Carl Gustav Jung

Mathew Mather

Alchemy and Mercurius

In alchemy the figure Mercurius has a close association to the substance quicksilver and to the planet Mercury, and therefore also to the Greek Hermes. Indeed the term *Hermetic Art* associates directly to this figure.

As a substance, the element mercury exhibits remarkable properties. In Alexandrian alchemy it was used to affect a spectacle of transformation. Specifically, by crushing and heating a piece of cinnabar ore, a metallic vapor was released. This vapor could then be distilled to yield quicksilver. Reheating the quicksilver transformed it into a red-like crystal, reminiscent of the original cinnabar ore. In effect, it portrayed a transformation mystery whereby a piece of earthly matter could undergo a "tortuous ordeal of purification and renewal." In the animistic worldview of archaic alchemy, it illustrated the idea of a spirit "captured in matter" that could be released and transformed through alchemical operations.

The alchemists also noted the highly reactive and transformative nature of quicksilver. It combined readily with substances such as sulfur, gold, silver, copper and tin. In particular, it reacted powerfully with sulfur, to the extent that some of the Arabian alchemical systems were even referred to as the Mercury–Sulfur systems (not unlike the Chinese concept of Yin–Yang).

The concept of mercury, in alchemy, was also not restricted to the literal substance of quicksilver. For example, the alchemist Newton writes of any metal in its fluid form as being the "mercury of the metals." In this view, the elements can be reduced through heating into a primal matter. Through appropriate operations this primal matter would then be reconstituted, in a quest to achieve a more "noble" state.

In the alchemical worldview, each metal also has a range of "magical associations." In this schema, quicksilver associates to the fast-moving and erratic planet mercury. Not surprisingly, it has been associated pre-eminently to a trickster-like psychopomp as intermediary

between the realms of day and night (symbolically, between consciousness and the unconscious).

Jung and the Alchemical Mercurius

For Jung the chthonic spirit, referred to in medieval alchemy as Mercurius, was a central concern. This figure had a profound influence on his personal and intellectual life. For example, in his personal life whilst preparing lectures on this figure in 1942, he emotively writes of being “dissolved almost.”

During his presentation on this figure, he expressed exasperation in attempting an articulation. He dramatically complained that “the concept swells dangerously” and “the end is nowhere in sight.” In this lecture he also described Mercurius as “ambiguous, dark, paradoxical, and thoroughly pagan,” and as a “symbol . . . compensatory to Christ.” Not surprisingly, he also associated the alchemical Mercurius to the figure of Merlin.

Jung also represented this figure in stone carvings at his Bollingen retreat. On one of the stone walls he created a trickster face, and accompanied this by the astrological glyph of the symbol for mercury. This particular image was done whilst he was working on the concept of *synchronicity*. This same glyph also appears centrally, carved in his enigmatic Bollingen stone.

See also: [▶ Hillman, James, and Alchemy](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [▶ Synchronicity](#)

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Allah

▶ God

Altered States of Consciousness

Brandon Randolph-Seng

Altered states of consciousness (ASC) can be very profound and life changing experiences to the religious believer. For example, conversion, testimony, and revelation can all be seen within the context of ASC. An altered state is a subjective reality in most religious experiences and can be identified across all religions and cultures (Bowen, 1998). However, the psychological study of these seemingly important human experiences can be difficult. Even finding an agreed upon definition of ASC is challenging. Despite this challenge, in the scientific study of religion, ASC can be defined as experiences interpreted by the experiencer as an encounter with a reality that is other than ordinary (Geels, 2003). Using this definition, mystical experiences may be considered a type of ASC. For a religious believer, having an ASC or mystical experiences may be the defining moment for their understanding of and motivation toward life. Many of the world's religions are sustained by and even created through reported instances of ASC. As a consequence of the centrality of ASC to a religious believer, understanding the circumstances in which these states arise is important for articulating the psychological influence of religion on a believer's perceived reality and behavior (see Randolph-Seng & Nielsen, 2009).

See also: [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Conversion](#) [▶ Revelation](#)

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American Buddhism

Robert Kaizen Gunn

Current Popularity of Buddhism in the United States

Contemporary Buddhism is one of the strongest and perhaps subtlest catalysts for change in United States history, soon to equal, if not surpass, the role of both Christianity and Judaism in the shaping of American religion, philosophy, values, culture and identity – even, perhaps, American politics and economics. It is a new *basso continuo* of change in America, finding expression not only in direct religious practices, but interpenetrating both intellectual and popular culture.

Like one of its central metaphors, the diamond net of Indra, which consists of a necklace of diamonds, each of which is connected with every other diamond, is separate and yet within each diamond is every other diamond, American Buddhism consists of many highly varied *sanghas* (local groups) whose common root is in the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha of third century BCE India, and has now interpenetrated every aspect of American culture. It is found in common images in marketing (the Dalai Lama on Apple computer), in music (e.g., Philip Glass, Buddha Bar), in movies such as *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997, Director Jean Jacques Annaud. The movie was based on the true story of Heinrich Harrer with the Dalai Lama from 1944 through the invasion of Tibet by China in 1951), *Kundun* (1997, Director Martin Scorsese. Based on the life of the Dalai Lama's life from childhood to adulthood) or *Matrix* (1999, Directors Andy Wachoski and Larry Wachoski), Richard Gere, in psychology (the plethora of books on Buddhism and psychotherapy), philosophy (*The Monk and the Philosopher: a Father and Son Discuss the Meaning of Life*, 2000 by Jean-Francois Revel, Matthieu Ricard with John Canti, translator. New York: Random House), science (www.neiltheise.com, accessed 6/19/09, the Dalai Lama's *The Universe in a Single Atom*, 2006), education

(Naropa Institute, the rise of departments on Buddhism in universities and seminaries), restaurants (Zen Palate), bars (Zen, West Hempstead, NY) and politics (former governor of California, Jerry Brown). Buddhist thought may be found indirectly in some of the most popular movies such as *Star Wars* (1977, a movie, Director George Lucas), *The Matrix* (1999, above), *The Lion King* (1994, a movie, Directors Roger Alers and Rob Minkoff) and *Pocahontas* (1995, a movie, Directors Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg).

After a growth of 170% between 1990–2001, according to the American Religious Identity Survey, Buddhism has become the fourth largest religion in America with at least 1.5 million members (after Christianity, Judaism and Islam), approximately 7% of the population.

Its beginnings, however, were subtle and small.

Early History of Buddhism in the United States

Buddhism first came to America, as many religions move, through commerce and trade. The first American merchant ship, *The Empress of China*, which reached Canton in 1784, was the first of many American merchant ships, often members of the East India Marine Society, which brought Buddhist statues and artifacts along with silk, lacquer ware, furniture and porcelains back to America.

In literary and intellectual circles, Asian religion appeared in Benjamin Franklin's *Oriental Tale* (originally titled "A Letter From China"; Franklin 1905-7: 200, 204, 205, 207-9), in the writings of Joseph Priestley, the letters of John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, and most notably in Hannah Adams' *Dictionary of All Religions* (1817/1992). Dissatisfied with the Christian bias in all the existing reports of other religions, Ms. Adams set about to present other religions in the world in a more objective light. Using a Romanization of the sound of the Chinese character for Buddha, Ms. Adams wrote, "The most predominant sect is that of *Foe* . . ." (Tweed, Prothero, 1999: 55).

The direct contact with actual Buddhists on American shores came with Chinese immigrants who began to arrive around 1820. Their number increased considerably beginning with the California Gold Rush of 1849, such that, by 1852, there were some 20,000 Chinese in California. Within a decade, nearly one-tenth of the California population was Chinese. The first Buddhist temple in the U.S. was built in 1853 in San Francisco. By 1875, there were eight such temples. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which forbade the importation of any more Chinese laborers, stalled further immigration from China. Chinese

Buddhism remained primarily a practice among the Chinese until the second half of the twentieth century.

Chinese Buddhism has grown enormously in the U.S. in the past 50 years. Largely a monastic group, the “City of Ten Thousand Buddhas” was established by Hsuan-Hua in Talmadge, California in 1959. It continues as the headquarters of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association. In 1978, the Hsi Lai Temple was established outside Los Angeles. Today there are over 125 Chinese Buddhist organizations in the U.S., and they comprise an eclectic combination of different Buddhist schools, including Ch’an, Vinaya, T’ien-t’ai, Tantra and Pure Land traditions. This eclectic approach may be found also in the Vietnamese Buddhism that came with the many immigrants from the war in Vietnam, and the Korean Buddhists who came in the last 50 years.

It was Japanese Buddhism that, from its first appearance, sought to engage non-Asian Americans. Its arrival may be dated from the *World Parliament of Religions*, which was held in conjunction with the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. Among the participants was Shaku Soen, a Roshi who would return to America 10 years later to promote Rinzai Zen Buddhism.

The Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism sent missionaries, Shuye Sonoda and Kakuryo Nishijima, to San Francisco in 1898, to establish the Buddhist Mission of North America. In spite of the Japanese Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924, by 1931, they had established 33 temples.

With the United States’ occupation of Japan after World War II, however, a qualitative leap was made by two gifted American soldiers who subsequently devoted their lives to the study and practice of Japanese culture and religion: Philip Kapleau, an American who learned about Zen as a court reporter for the War Crimes Trials, returned to the U.S. to found a Rinzai Zen training center in Rochester, New York; and Donald Keene, who established a department of Japanese Studies at Columbia University.

These efforts by Americans coming back to bring Zen to other Americans were matched by the advent of three Japanese Zen masters: Taizan Maezumi, Roshi, who established the Zen Center of Los Angeles in 1967; Shunryu Suzuki who founded the San Francisco Zen Center; and Soyu Matsuoka Roshi who established the Chicago Buddhist Temple in the Soto Zen tradition. At about the same time, though not an official Zen master, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, through his prolific writings and teaching at Columbia University, made Zen Buddhism well known throughout America, especially in academic circles. Suzuki’s work achieved its greatest recognition in his last years

in America, 1950–1958. Hakuun Yasutani Roshi, who first came in 1962, brought an integrated approach of both the Soto and Rinzai Zen traditions, as had Taizan Maezumi Roshi.

With the efforts of these teachers, Zen Buddhism sprouted exponentially during the 1960s, as American counter-culture went through a revolution that, through a combination of dissent against the growing war in Vietnam, rebellion against entrenched authorities in both politics and education, the death of God movement, the hippie movement and the experience for many of hallucinogenic drugs with its mind-expanding (and sometimes destructive) effects, opened a path for non-traditional, non-Western religion.

The most recent entry of Buddhism into the United States is the Tibetan. Although there had been Tibetan Buddhists in the U.S. before, the great influx of Tibetans was prompted by the Tibetan holocaust in which Chinese Communists invaded Tibet and tried to extinguish its religion. Many people, including the Dalai Lama, went into exile at that point, to India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and America.

The other Buddhist tradition that has grown considerably in recent years, due to the instability of Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma (Myanmar), is the Theravadan tradition. Because of the influx of immigrants from those countries, many temples have sprung up in major American cities. Like their predecessors from China and Japan in the earliest days, they tend to settle into their respective ethnic communities and focus on the needs of the newly migrated.

Ongoing Interactive Impact Between Buddhism and American Culture

Although one may easily discern clear differences in the history and development of the Buddhism that came with immigrants from Asian countries, both recent and distant past, and the history and development of the Buddhism that grew with primarily Euro-American converts, there are several other developments that resist such a dichotomizing perspective.

While the references to Buddhism’s presence in American pop culture above may be superficial (a designation which post-modernism would not deem negative), there are other developments that suggest Buddhism’s influence is a major factor in American cultural change.

1. One of the main conditions that prepared American soil to be receptive to Buddhism was the flourishing of

psychology and psychotherapy in the culture at large. Although the number of people who themselves entered into personal psychotherapy might be relatively small, from the 1960s on, the idea that the human mind was largely responsible for how people behave, that that mind was itself highly conditioned (from both depth psychological and behaviorist perspectives), and a source of unknown powers for creative and destruction (the unconscious); and that attention to the mind's assumptions and conditioning could bring healing and transformation, made Buddhism a natural fit, because of the central role of mind in every aspect of the Buddhist quest for alleviating suffering. Buddhism, with its central admonition to look within for the source not only of one's problems and existential questions, but for their resolution, entered American culture like a fish takes to water.

Psychology and Buddhism became twin partners engaged in the process of transformation. The number of books and conferences dealing with them as mutually enhancing as well as significantly different practices is incalculable. It set the stage for a global, not just American evaluation of the relation between psyche and spirit. Prompted, to take just one example, by American, Japanese and British psychologists, there have now been two International Conferences on Buddhism and Psychotherapy in Kyoto. There are now entire training programs in psychology at Buddhist institutes and universities, and Buddhism has come to be recognized as offering a model of mind that deserves to be included in the curricula of training programs for psychotherapy and chaplaincy.

2. Although Jesuits had been deeply engaged in the study and practice of Buddhism in Japan for hundreds of years, and a Jesuit wrote one of the most comprehensive histories of Buddhism in English (Dumoulin), it is reasonable to say that the birth of Buddhist/Christian dialog as a mutual exchange between equals, rather than an exercise in polemic or condescension, was prepared in both a broader (larger audience) and deeper (as a dialog between Buddhist and Christian monks) way by the Cistercian monk, Thomas Merton. Moments before he died in Bangkok, Thailand, ending his only trip to Asia with his talk on "Marxism and Monastic Perspective," Merton urged that the dialog between Buddhism and Christianity be continued across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries. It has been continued since his death through a variety of forms and forums, including at least two events at Merton's own monastery, the

Abbey of Gethsemani in Bardstown, Kentucky. The dialog was broadened to include other Christians and Buddhist groups, and lay people as well as monastics through the Society for Buddhist Christian Services, which holds biannual conferences ever since. The impact of these dialogs continue to shape not only emerging consciousness among Buddhists and Christians, but has created a much more comprehensive attention to all religions, leading many to prefer to speak of spiritualities rather than religions. Buddhist is thus a catalyst not only for Buddhist/Christian dialog, but also for religious/spiritual consciousness in American generally.

3. It is perhaps not possible to tell the story of Buddhism's explosive growth among converted Buddhists without a reference to the war in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s. Although America was deeply divided by the war and torn apart within over its worth, it unquestionably served to alienate many Americans from everything that was considered to be its cause – the Establishment in political, economic, educational and religious leadership. Among that alienated group, many found common cause and common mind with Buddhists in opposing the war, working for immigration and resettlement of displaced Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians, and conducting campaigns for peace. Led pre-eminently by a Zen Buddhist priest, Thich Nhat Hanh, Engaged Buddhism emerged not only in America but also around the world as an effort to raise consciousness and create change. It is distinctive within Buddhism in its emphasis on taking the personal transformation of consciousness that comes from meditation and reflection and shifting it to social consciousness and action for social change. It continues today as a powerful movement advocating for ecology, education, and political and economic reform, as well as opposing war. It is significant within America especially in offering a uniquely Buddhist approach to consciousness raising and public confrontation, and finds expression through the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in Berkeley, California and its journal, *Turning Wheel*.

4. The surge in Buddhism since the 1960s happened at the same time as the rise in women's consciousness, the concern for women's rights and the political, literary and economic critique of patriarchy. Unsurprisingly therefore, Buddhism has become not only a catalyst for American change, but has itself been changed by the feminist movement, challenged to look at and change its own long-entrenched patriarchy within Buddhist texts and hierarchies. Among others, Rita Gross and Stephanie Kaza have been on the forefront of integrating a feminist perspective into

Buddhist thought and practice from the academic side. Enkyo O'Hara, Joan Halifax, Eve Marko and Myotai Treace, among others, have themselves not only been ordained but received full transmission and authorization to teach, and have developed their own sanghas.

With a critical analysis of patriarchy now clearly on the table of American Buddhism, the questioning of other aspects of patriarchal assumptions continues apace, with respect to understandings of gender identity and sexual orientation. Buddhism shares with Christianity, Judaism and Islam a checkered history of views on homosexuality and transgender issues. As the gay and lesbian (and later, bisexual and transgender) liberation movement followed the civil rights movement for African Americans and the women's rights movement, so Buddhism in America finds itself changing its traditional assumptions about sexual differences (cf. work of Roger Corliss).

These four developments within American Buddhism are not experienced or shared with all Buddhists in America. Some immigrant Buddhists coalesce into islands of self-protected and self-sustaining communities, focused on the preservation of forms of language, culture and religious practice, as they knew it on their native soil. Their children and grandchildren deal constantly with the often excruciatingly complex issues of assimilation and acculturation within America, often setting generations in conflict with severe fragmentation over authority and the challenges of a pluralistic America. We have grown, however, beyond the simple dichotomy of immigrant versus converted Buddhists into much greater complexity.

There are two small examples of what may open in the future: the first is the small book written by Eric Liu, former Clinton speech writer, *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker*. Liu traces in great depth his own struggle as a second generation Chinese to come to terms with his father and the culture his father left behind, forcing the son to forge a new identity and bring his learning into the emerging American culture. This kind of personal reflection is a heart-warming and thought-provoking model of how one might struggle with all the issues of how to reclaim pieces of tradition and bring what remains valuable into the future. The second example is in a course taught by Dr. Paul Knitter, Paul Tillich Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology and World Religions at Union Theological Seminary in New York, called "Double Belonging." Knitter makes the case for people who practice in two traditions and maintain them simultaneously without reducing one to the other,

nor rejecting one in favor of the other. This is one model for how to live between now and some as-yet-undetermined future form.

Although it is not possible to predict how these many movements within and outside Buddhism will affect its future in America, one may safely say that, consonant with the pluralism that pervades every dimension of American life, it may be more appropriate to look for the continuing varieties of Buddhism than to assume any reduction in its complexity. If it so emerges, American Buddhism will thereby be both profoundly Buddhist and profoundly American.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Amita Buddha

Minqin Wang (王敏琴) · Lee W. Bailey

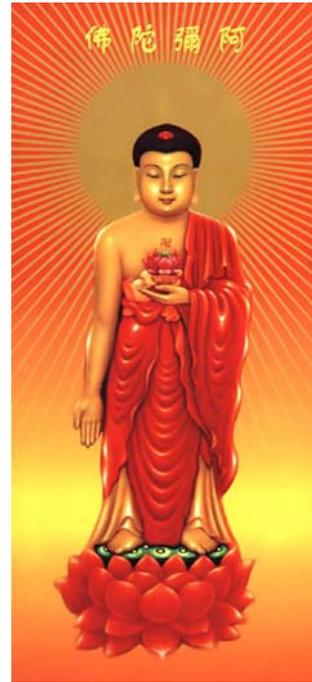
The name “Amita” comes from the Sanskrit *Amitabha* and *Amitayus*, translated “Boundless, or Infinite Light and Life.” The Chinese is (阿弥陀佛) *A Mi Tuo Fo*, the Tibetan is *O-pa-me*, the Korean is *Amit'a Bui*, the Vietnamese is *A-di-da Phat*, and the Japanese is *Amida Butso*. He became in China and Japan especially, the supreme personification of the *Dharmakaya*, the highest enlightenment, the supreme beauty of infinite love, not one of many Buddhas, but of Buddhahood itself (Malalasekera, 1961 I: 434). He was not conceived of as a god. He was a man who became an awakened Buddha in the traditional manner (Malalasekera, 1961: 438). Mahayana Buddhism believes that many awakened Buddhas can exist simultaneously, not just in past and future.

Pure Land

Amita is the leading Buddha of Pure Land (or Ultimate Bliss) Buddhism, practiced primarily in China and East Asia, and is spreading worldwide. The Pure Land is a marvelous transcendental western paradise of gold, gems, flowers, perfume, music, and numerous Buddhas. It is the goal of devotees of Amita to develop a Pure Land consciousness, to improve this life and prepare to go to the Pure Land at death. This can be achieved in various ways, by repeating a mantra of the Amita with faith many times, thereby strengthening one’s character and the tendency to do good deeds, and by meditating.

History

Historically, the earliest surviving evidence of Amitabha comes from the stone pedestal of an Amitabha statue discovered near Mathura, near Delhi (which was a major source of Buddhist sculpture) dated 104 CE, making it the oldest document of Mahayana Buddhism (Pure Land). Commentaries on Amita were written by masters of most every school of Chinese Buddhism. The earliest known sutra mentioning Amitabha, which is said to have begun the practice of Pure Land Buddhism in China, is the translation into Chinese of the *Pratyutpanna-samahi Sutra*, by the monk Lokaksema during the later Han dynasty (Lokaksema). A major shrine is on Lu Shan [Mt. Lu]. This was begun by Hui-yuan (334–416 CE), who founded an



Amita Buddha. Figure 1 A MI TUO FO (Amita Buddha); courtesy of Wan Fo Chan Si, in Liaoning Province, at <http://www.wanfochansi.com/>.

Amita Buddha group there in 402 CE, called Bai-lian-she. They practiced meditation based on the *Pratyutpanna Sutra*. It was on Lu Shan that the post-Liberation revival of Buddhism began in 1923 (Welch, 1968: 55).

Amita temples are commonly built in conjunction with the goddess Guan Yin, who is closely associated with Amita Buddha (Chen, 1964: 341–342). But in ancient Amitaba tradition, no women were allowed in his realm unless they were reborn as men (Malalasekera, 1961: 435). In Chinese Daoism Amita-fo is also considered by some to be the incarnation of *Laozi* (老子). Some see early versions of Amita-fo imported from lands far to the West, others argue that it was brought from India, others say that the concept of the Pure Land has been embedded in Chinese consciousness for thousands of years (Hsien, 2000). After centuries of development in China, Amita Buddhism spread to East Asia, notably in Japan in the eighth century, when many temples were built in Kyoto.

Art

In paintings, mandalas, and statues, the bodhisattvas *Guan Yin* (or *Avalokitesvara*), and *Da Shi Zhi* (大势至) “Great

Power Comes,” are Amida’s two important assistants. The three together are called “the three saints in the Western Paradise.” Mandalas such as the eighteenth century “Larger Sutra Mandala” portray Amita in the center in his characteristic seated meditative position, with the various elements of the Pure Land Western Paradise surrounding him. Large temples commonly housed numerous impressive statues (Taira, 1961). In some images of Amita, he is standing on a lotus, with a halo around his head, holding a lotus or jar of royal unction, with a small swastika on his chest. This image, reversed, was taken by some warlike twentieth-century Europeans who horribly distorted its original compassionate meaning. Amita art expanded to include images of the terrible punishments of Hell, as well as the blissful wonders of the Pure Land paradise. A colossal bronze outdoor statue of the meditating Amita, fifty feet high, was cast in 1252 in Kamakura, Japan, and called the Daibutsu, or “Great Buddha” (LaFarge, 1887).

Texts

A primary text in Sanskrit is *The Larger Sutra on Amitayus*, or *The Infinite Life Sutra*, in one of the Buddha’s past lives, when he was called the Buddha Lokeshvararaja. During the time named “The King of Freedom of the World” (世自在王), a king heard the Buddha’s teaching and then became a monk named Dharmakara, or in Chinese, *Fa Zang* (法藏) “The Container of Dharma.” The Buddha told him to create a realm, by his own efforts, where sentient beings could find utmost happiness. He took 48 vows, among which the eighteenth is the crucial one:

- ▶ If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten quarters who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name, even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma (*Larger Sutra*, Part 1, 268, 48 Vows, 18).

and he also swore:

- ▶ If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten quarters, who awaken aspiration for Enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely desire to be born in my land, should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (*Larger Sutra*, Part 1, 268, 48 Vows, 19).

This scene has been recorded by many Buddhists in different times and places. This monk Dharmakara/

Fa Zang became the major Buddha named Amita Buddha. Since then whoever wants to become a Buddha can get his help.

The *Amitabha Sutra* or *The Smaller Pure Land Sutra* is another primary text in Sanskrit. It is a description of the Buddha speaking to a huge crowd of distinguished Gods and spiritual leaders. He described in detail a Buddha realm of Ultimate Bliss, or Pure Land to the West, which in China is the direction of spiritual wonders, where resides the Amitabha Buddha, who teaches the Dharma with excellent blessings. He says that there are Buddhas as numberless as the Ganges sands, such as the “Measureless Life Buddha” and the “Pure Sound Buddha” (*The [Smaller] Amitabha Sutra*).

In the third primary sutra, *The Amitayurdhyana Sutra*, Amita prescribes a three-fold goodness: (1) Support your parents, serve and respect teachers and elders, be compassionate, and abstain from injury, (2) Take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, fulfill all the moral precepts, do not lower your dignity, and do not neglect the ceremonies, (3) Give your whole mind to enlightenment, deeply believe the karmic law of cause and effect, study Mahayana doctrines, and encourage others to do the same (Malalasekera, 1961: 436).

Practices

Reciting the name of Amita with a sincere heart is the primary practice, but doing it for others is more meritorious than doing it for oneself. Accumulating merits is a path to the Pure Land, and in an ancient tradition, merit can be transferred to the dead. The highest goal is to become one with Amita.

Amita Buddha has another 37 names, among which there are 12 names connected with light, such as immeasurable, incomparable, joyful, pure, inexpressible, and all-pervasive. But Amita is generally called “The Buddha of Boundless Light” and “The Buddha of Boundless Life.” Whereas Sakyamuni Buddha is seen as a teacher, Amita is seen as a savior who gives faith.

Amita is not just the name of a Buddha, but also a mantra, practiced not only by Buddhists, but also commonly used as greetings by Buddhists and non-Buddhists in China. It is a kind of blessing, wishing that others may have boundless light and boundless life. It has such an unfathomable power that people can escape from more than a thousand disasters when they hear the name just once. That is why people are encouraged to read his name.

Expansion from China

In Japan, widespread Amita Buddhism may be called *Jodo-Shinshu* or *Shinran*. Shinran (1173–1262) was a very important leader of what is now the largest Buddhist denomination in Japan (Malalasekera, 1961: 438). He forbade followers from praying for personal interests or temporal welfare. The faithful are to turn all difficulties over to the Buddha. *The Collected Works of Shinran* are primary Japanese sources. The mantra practice is called *Namu Amita Butsu* (“Adoration of the Amita Buddha”), or in brief, *nembutsu* (Ryukan, 1997 “Major Expositions”). The simple practice of chanting such mantras gives Pure Land a wide appeal and contrasts with the more abstract and challenging paradoxes of other branches of Buddhism, such as Zen’s “Nothingness.”

There is a debate about whether calling the name Amita just once, even at the moment of death, is sufficient to attain birth into the Pure Land, or whether one must call the name many times in life to achieve birth in the Pure Land. One answer is that many-calling is only the accumulation of single-calling, for death may strike at any surprising moment, even after one calling (Ryukan). The proper attitude is one of gratitude, service to Amita, free of selfishness and pride.

Psychology

There are numerous fruitful books on Buddhism and psychology. Psychotherapists who have also practiced Buddhism, such as Mark Epstein M.D., have expanded far beyond Freudian nineteenth century materialism. They explore the similarities of psychotherapy and Buddhist practices. Both seek to bring to consciousness feelings that block healing or enlightenment, not always from childhood, but often in relationships. Buddhist meditative practices – silent listening and mindfulness – are similar to therapeutic non-attachment from neurotic emotions, learning to stand back and observe them, rather than identifying with them. These and other themes are explored by many. Epstein’s focus is on humiliation, thirst, release, nowhere-standing, remembering, repeating, and working through (Epstein, 1995).

Therapy in a rationalist society involves opening to intuition, and a faith in finding an authenticity. This may overlap with the Buddhist opening to transcendence, discovered in visions, mandalas, mantras, and ethical guidelines. Amita chanting could be seen as a therapeutic practice of focusing the deeper mind on a refined higher self to detach the ego from neurotic habits of feeling.

Taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha could be likened to therapeutic commitment in psychotherapy, except with a transcendent purpose.

From a Jungian analytic or archetypal view, when caught in neurosis or suffering, one must first have or develop an ego strong enough to stand back and watch unconscious material coming up, rather than being overtaken by it and identifying with archetypal images, such as Jesus or the Buddha, and losing a sense of one’s human limitations. Then in analysis, one encounters in dreams, etc., unconscious feelings and brings their meaning to consciousness, leading toward the ego’s serving the Self, the experience of archetypal divinity. Here Jung wrestles with the paradoxes of the Eastern extreme of identifying with the “non-ego,” the divine, or “becoming Amita Buddha,” and the Western extreme of identifying with the overly-rational, conscious ego and denying the reality of the transcendent Self. The former may seem to allow “jumping over” feelings into the wonder-filled transcendent. The latter imagines the ego to be in control, free of unconscious or transcendent influences. Jung, and many Asian thinkers, reject either Western absolutizing the ego, or Eastern negating the ego. Rather, Jung seeks to direct the ego toward guidance from the Self, the archetypal experience of the transcendent divinity, as in Amita Buddha. “The ego needs the self and vice versa” (Jung, 1979 CW11: para. 961). One might say: “Keep your feet on the ground and your head in the clouds.”

The Buddhist priest, university professor, and Jungian analyst Mokusen Miyuki says that the Amita meditative and chanting practices focus the mind on the Buddha. Jung saw religion as rooted in an experience of the numinous, as in rituals. So rituals such as chanting of the name of Amita (“Namo Amitabha” – “Adoration to Amitabha”) can produce experiences of the numinous which can reorganize one’s psyche away from ego-centric focus toward sincere participation in the higher Buddha-mind, and thereby overcome suffering. “. . .the ego functions in conjunction with the self in creating a state of constant renewal and enrichment” (Miyuki, 1994: 142). Miyuki agrees with Jung that this is not to dissolve the ego, but to let the ego be guided sincerely by the numinous Self or Buddha-mind, via the ego-Self axis, or Dharma-gate, leading to birth of a stronger ego within in the uplifting, larger Pure Land consciousness.

According to Buddhism, everyone inherently has the Buddha nature – cosmic Light – in oneself. But during incarnation, the Light is typically clouded by all kinds of desires, such as crude greed, sex, and pursuit of wealth and fame. So if people read in Chinese “*Na Mo a Mi Tuo Fo*” (“Devotion to Amita Buddha”), or chant

Amita-Buddha's name sincerely in any language, their unconscious will be activated and vibrate together with Amita's power in the universe. Their soul will be full of the liberating Light that frees one from ego's base desires, attachments, and suffering. They will become more sincere, happy, and enlightened, and have a long life in this incarnation. They will be born into the transcendental, blissful, Pure Land consciousness.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Guan Yin](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#), and [Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [Mandala](#) [Mantra](#) [Psychotherapy](#)

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Amor and Psyche

[Cupid and Psyche](#)

Amplification

Joe Cambray

Amplification is Jung's signature method for identifying and accurately applying mythic, historical, cultural and universal analogies to unconscious material of a collective nature. This can foster engagement with deeper resources in the personality, facilitating individuation. The idea developed as a part of his general study of associations and their dynamics, as when applied to dreams, fantasies, delusions or hallucinations. In exploring such material as the fund of personal associations becomes depleted yet considerable psychological energy remains with an image, Jung recommended employing parallels from history and culture that drew upon the patterns in the collective unconscious such as myths, legends, folklore, fairy tales, alchemy and so forth. This became a part of his method for understanding dreams.

Brief History of the Idea

Although Jung had discussed the use of comparative material from cultural sources in his Fordham University lectures on "*The Theory of Psychoanalysis*" in 1912 (in *CW* 4) and published an extensive study using such material, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (first published in 1912, which he later revised to form the text of *CW* 5), it was not until 1914 in a lecture to the Psycho-Medical Society of London, published under the title "*On*

Psychological Understanding” that he introduced ideas which would more clearly develop into the theory of archetypes in conjunction with the method of amplification (Jung, 1915, in *CW* 3: pars. 388–424; see n. 12). It may be that a full separation from Freud’s influence, which occurred in 1913, was needed before Jung could allow his own unique approach to flourish. In the 1914 article Jung argues for a constructive as opposed to reductive method, leading to a non-causal, synthetic approach with prospective understanding that “build up towards an unknown goal.” From the start he linked amplification with complex processes that will culminate in his formulation of individuation.

By the time of his “*On the Psychology of the Unconscious*” in 1917 (in *CW* 7), Jung speaks explicitly of the method of amplification with a dream example comparing the causal-reductive and the synthetic-constructive approaches, including the use of imagery from the I-Ching. He demonstrates the psychological relevance and benefit of amplifying dreams with symbolic understanding. Through out the 1920s and 30s Jung frequently used this method in a practical manner in his various seminars.

In 1935 Jung gave five lectures at the Institute of Medical Psychology (London’s Tavistock Clinic) (in Jung, 1980 *CW* 18). After acknowledging the feeling of not knowing that is inherent in any real contact with unconscious material, Jung explains how he proceeds, drawing upon his earlier researches in the word association experiment. “I adopt the method of the philologist, which is far from being free association, and apply a logical principle which is called *amplification*. It is simply that of seeking the parallels” (Jung, 1980). He continues with the importance of understanding the context of each image in a dream for any overall interpretation, seeking “what tissue that word or image is embedded in. That is *amplification*.” For Jung, this differentiates his approach from Freud’s, which he feels “is seeking the complexes” whereas he is “looking for what the unconscious is doing with the complexes.” The shift towards identifying operational dynamics in psychic processes considerably broadens the scope and utility of this method. Parenthetically the 38 year old W. R. Bion, who at this time was unpublished, is known to have been in the audience along with his patient Samuel Beckett who was greatly impressed by Jung. Bion went on to become a renowned psychoanalytic theorist whose work included exploration of mystical states. His work contains many echoes of Jung’s comments and his followers often employ myths in their explorations of unconscious contents.

In his 1944 treatise *Psychology and Alchemy* (Jung, 1935/1968 in *CW* 12) Jung includes an extended discussion of a series of dreams of a young man whom we now know was the Nobel laureate in physics, Wolfgang Pauli. The longitudinal use of amplification with such a dream series provides a fuller appreciation of the value of the method in the context of an observed individuation process. “As manifestations of unconscious process the dreams rotate or circumambulate round the center, drawing closer to it as the amplifications increase in distinctness and in scope” (Jung, 1953/1968 *CW* par. 12: 34). The center for Jung is, of course, the transpersonal Self. In this text, he also firmly locates the method in the alchemical tradition of transformation of substances: “The method of alchemy psychologically speaking is one of boundless amplification. The amplification is always appropriate when dealing with some obscure experience which is so vaguely adumbrated that it must be enlarged and expanded by being set in a psychological context in order to be understood at all” (1953/1968 *CW* 12: par. 403). From Jung’s perspective the alchemist’s purpose in employing such a method was to bring out the hidden value in the rejected, unwanted, base aspects of life. Amplification thereby serves to orient consciousness to matters of deep importance that might be avoided if only viewed superficially.

From the late 1940s until the end of his life, Jung expanded his view of amplification to include both the method of active imagination and the feeling function. In his 1947/1954/1969 essay “*On the Nature of the Psyche*” (in *CW* 8) speaking about active imagination he notes that it does not involve “a *reductio in primam figuram*, but rather a synthesis . . . a kind of spontaneous amplification of the archetypes.” (*CW* 8: 403) Inclusion of a more profound valuing of subjective experience, a feeling response, rather than relying only on scholarly researches to reveal the connection to the deeper layers of the psyche is seen in his 1958 essay “*Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth*” (Jung, 1970 *CW* 10). There Jung remarks: “The symbological or ‘amplificatory’ approach produces a result that looks at first like a translation back into primitive language. And so it would be, if understanding with the help of the unconscious were a purely intellectual exercise and not one that brought our total capacities into play. In other words, besides its formal mode of manifestation the archetype possesses a numinous quality, a feeling-value that is highly effective in practice” (Jung, 1970 *CW* 10: par. 646) Thus in his fullest expressions of this method, Jung require the whole person to be partake of the action for it to be psychologically substantive.

There have been numerous developments in Jungian method over the years. In particular articulating the

cultural layer between the personal and the archetypal aspect of the unconscious has been an important refinement – see especially, Henderson (1993); Singer and Kimbles (2004).

Contemporary Utility of Amplification

Various clinical and cultural implications stemming from the analytic method amplification have been noted over the years by Jungians. Some of the more important are:

1. Recognition of patterns of psychological life which are forming, be it in an individual or in a society. In the language of the contemporary science of complexity, systems which can self-organize to produce forms and behaviors operating at a level above that of the component parts, and not found in their component, but only coming into being through the field of interactions between the components, are termed emergent. Amplification can facilitate psychological emergence drawing attention to and focusing psychic energy on just those nascent patterns most relevant to life.
 2. Providing a more richly textured narrative background for a life, helping a person discovers aspects of being which live in myth. For the disenfranchised elements of the personality this can offer a helpful link to the broader human community. The method thus allows a pathway for engagement with archetypal energies, at the core of complexes which comprise the personality. Making unconscious processes more ample through the adroit use of analogies renders these processes more available to examination; see for example Samuels in *Post-Jungians Today* (Case-ment, 1998). In applying this method care must be taken that narcissistic elements which can become dangerous, as through inflation, are not excessively activated but that there be a relativizing of the ego and a metabolizing of any identifications with the self.
 3. Deciphering the potential significance of unconscious productions such as symptoms and dreams through a comparative process. This can provide valuable orientation of diagnostic and prognostic value, which can help in determining a course of treatment or intervention. For an example see remarks by John Beebe on the “case of Joan” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* (Young-Eisendrath and Dawson, 1997) regarding a patient’s suicide wish to “. . . jump in a river” as a kind of urge towards baptism, or spiritual renewal through immersion in unconscious processes, which addressed this use of amplification. Beebe integrates
- the religious ritual dimension of the impulse with clinical thinking by suggesting it may point to a need for a period of regression, with less organization or verbalization available to patient and therefore the possible use of artistic forms of expression to sustain engagement; a period of quiet containment as dissolution forces breakdown the old structures. Note in the clinical setting actual amplifications are often not shared explicitly with the analysand. As with Jung’s later thoughts on active imagination and “spontaneous amplification,” reverie, as explored by psychoanalysts such as Thomas Ogden, may itself be seen as a form of amplification, especially when used to explore an interactive field, to make the exchanges occurring within it more available to consciousness. The psychoanalytic literature does not touch, however, on the notion of reveries linked with the collective unconscious, which is one way of looking at myth.
4. Shedding light on archetypal processes occurring intersubjectively as well as intrapsychically, within an interactive process as Jung indicated in his essay on *The Psychology of the Transference* (Jung, 1946 in *CW* 16). The analytic field may manifest in metaphoric or symbolic form in an emergent process, as when a psychological content becomes activated for both partners in an analysis. These often have a synchronistic feeling as in Jung’s famous story of the woman who dreamed of a piece of jewelry in the shape of a scarab beetle and in the analysand’s telling of the dream, Jung caught a similar beetle inexplicably trying to come into his office window. Once in a secured, symbolic field (Goodheart 1980), amplification can thus support a mutual playfulness at the root of creativity.
 5. Provides a more expansive model of the psyche, allowing inclusion of cultural processes. This can form a basis for understanding unconscious aspects of social, political, religious, aesthetic, historical, and even scientific discourse. While the use of symbolic forms always derived from a cultural and historical context, there is most likely a biological predisposition to generate these forms (see Pietikainen, 1998 and responses). There remains the need to more fully trace out the cultural evolution, including disjunctions, of these forms.
 6. Helps to identify the scale-free network qualities of the field of the archetypes of the collective unconscious thus allowing contemporary research on networks to be applied to Jung’s model of the psyche. For ease of comprehension, consider the World Wide Web which is just such a network, with sites connected by hyperlinks: the pattern of nodes (sites with few links) and

hubs (sites with large numbers of links) together with their lines of connectivity. These networks have self-organizing properties which foster resilience to removal of nodes. Psychologically this offers new insights into both the resilience of defenses in analytic work and the possibility of stabilizing new relations between the ego and the unconscious which developing during such work – for an initial discussion of this see Cambray and Carter (2004), chapter 5.

See also: [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Analogy (Islamic)

Amani Fairak

Analogy (Islamic) or *Qiyas* is the fourth source of *Sharia* (Islamic Law). In case of the lack of direct text, from the Quran or Hadith, on any contemporary issue, making judgment based on analogy is permissible by Sharia. Analogical reasoning can be deduced from a known Islamic judgment and then applied to the unknown problem within the Islamic model of the Quran, Hadith and the Islamic consensus. This means that the Quran and Hadith can be further analyzed and extended from a primary known issue (*asl*) to a new problem (*fara'*) if there is a common cause (*'illa*) for both problems.

Example: drug abuse and wine drinking are both not permitted by Sharia although they are two different problems. The first was not known in the early days of Islam and it was not mentioned in the Quran or Hadith. Analogically speaking, since drug abuse has the same effects of alcoholic abuse (loss of consciousness), which is forbidden in the Quran and Hadith, therefore, drug abuse must be banned by law as well.

See also: [▶ Sharia](#)

Analytical Psychology

Claudia Nagel

Introduction

Analytical psychology is based on the works of C. G. Jung (1875–1961). The term was first used by Jung when he left the psychoanalytic community around Freud in 1913, to describe a new psychological science with the aim of exploring the unconscious and its relationship with the conscious. The symbol-creating function of the psyche can not be understood and used for the process of personal development without the conscious. In the course of life the individual can go through a process of individuation enabling him to achieve his innate potential and thus give meaning to his life.

Jung studied medicine (M.D. in 1900) and underwent additional training in psychiatry (1905) at the Swiss Burghölzli Clinic. His close relationship with Freud lasted from 1907 to 1913. After the painful break from Freud he underwent several years of auto-analysis and in 1921 he published his work *Psychological Types*, which formed the basis for an independent psychological school of thought, Analytical Psychology. In the first 30 years of life he laid the foundation for his extensive psychological oeuvre, dedicating himself in the second half to the study of topics from history, religion and cultural history which strengthened and differentiated his theory (Stein, 1998). Throughout his life he devoted himself to the exploration of the question if and how religious and mythical experiences can be investigated by empirical scientific methods.

The Nature of the Self

Although, to cite Murray Stein, Jung has designed a map of the human soul, it is the development of the Self which is at the center of his explorations of the soul. His concept of the Self is fundamental for the differentiation from other schools of psychoanalytical thought, in that it forms the basis and the goal of human development. The core element in the process of individuation, which is central to his psychoanalytical approach, is the unfolding and development of the Self. Man is to become what he is meant to be.

Jung's concept of the Self is different from self-concepts of other psychoanalysts as, e.g., Kohut, primarily regarding the idea of transference. This means that the Self is situated outside the individual psychic field, which it defines but in which it is not contained. Not the "I-am-(my)self" is meant by this concept, but rather something incomprehensible, unperceivable, greater than oneself. The self forms the primeval basis for the communality of the subject with the world, with the basic elements of being. Subject-object, I-other are connected in the self in a common field of structure and energy (Stein, 1998).

- ▶ As an empirical term the Self defines the totality of all psychic phenomena in human beings. It expresses the oneness and wholeness of the total personality (...) it comprises that which can be experienced, and that which can not be experienced, or can not yet be experienced. (...) In as far as wholeness, which consists of both conscious and unconscious contents, it is a postulate, it is essentially transcendent, (...) As there are, in fact, phenomena of the conscious and the unconscious, the Self as a psychic totality contains a conscious as well as an unconscious aspect. Empirically the self becomes manifest

in dreams, myths and fairy tales in the figure of the 'superordinate personality' like a king, hero, prophet, redeemer, etc., or as a symbol of totality as, e.g., the circle, quadrangle, quadratura circuli, cross, etc. Inasmuch as it represents a *complexio oppositorum*, a union of opposites, it can also appear as a union of two as, e.g., the interaction of yang and yin in the Tao (...). It thus confirms itself as an archetypal concept which is different from other concepts in that it takes a central position through the significance of its content and its numinosity (Jung, 1921/1995, CW 6, § 891).

The Numinous

The numinous corresponds to the God-image in the individual. The archetypal character of the numinous manifests itself in different symbols which occur across all cultures and express the relationship between the numen and human beings in again and again similar ways (e.g., mandalas, crosses, etc.). Jung therefore postulates that man is in essence religious and that religion is a native form of expression or attitude of the psyche. In his work there are, however, no personal statements regarding his faith. "One might then say that the term 'religion' denotes a particular attitude of a consciousness which has been altered by the experience of the numinous" (Jung, 1939/1995, CW 11, § 9). This numinous, the inexpressible, mysterious and at the same time terrifying is that which is particularly moving or touching in the perception of the self. It is the perception of wholeness which transcends conscious reality. As the numinous reflects this divine character, the self corresponds to the God-image or "a God in us." However, Jung makes a clear distinction between the question of the existence of God and the God-image:

- ▶ It is, of course, due to the perpetual commingling of object and image that one can not understand the difference between 'God' and 'God-image,' and therefore believes to be speaking of God – to be explaining 'theologically' – when speaking of the God-image: Psychology as a science is not entitled to call for the hypostatization of the God-image. Nevertheless, consistent with known facts, it needs to anticipate the existence of a God-image. It is therefore (...) understood that (...) the God-image corresponds to a specific psychological complex of facts and thus represents an important element and a basis for work, yet the question as to the nature of God is not to be answered by psychological science (Jung, 1928/1995, CW 8, § 528).

Reflected in the self and in the symbols of the self are thus human experiences with the Devine, although neither of these permits any conclusions regarding the nature of the Devine.

The Self-Regulating Psyche and the Role of Symbols

Analytical psychology assumes that the function of the Self is to hold the dynamic totality of the psychic system together. If, for example, symbols of the Self occur in dreams, this may be seen as a compensatory act of the psyche aimed at healing a psychological crisis in the conscious. In the totality of the Self opposites like good and bad, light and shadow are united. The perception of this totality expresses the wish for psychic union of the opposites in a synthetic third, which constitutes a decisive factor in the process of personal development. The principle of opposites and enantiodromy is based on the concept of self-regulating psychic mechanisms. The psychic energy expressed in the striving for individuation is directed towards the achievement of wholeness and is controlled and driven by the Self as a transcendent center outside the psyche. It is therefore not the ego which is responsible for the process of individuation, but the compensatory function is the deciding factor. The self-regulating function of the psyche implies that the unconscious counterbalances the one-sided tendency of the conscious. “For all excessive processes compensations are made immediately and inevitably” (Jung, 1947/1995, CW 16, § 330). It is primarily the repressed or other unconscious contents which – in the presence of excessive one-sidedness – irrupt into consciousness in the form of dreams, images, or irrational actions (like the famous Freudian slip). As a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious serves the symbol which is created by the transcendent function.

In the symbol, which has a central role in analytical psychology, different aspects are “thrown together” (the Greek root *symballein* signifies to throw together): antithetical contents (conflict, polar aspects) conscious and unconscious (transcendent function), past and future (myths and dreams), form and content (image), inner and outer (projection). Areas or aspects which are (can) actually not (be) directly related are connected with each other in different constellations through the symbol so that something new, a third is created, i.e., the symbol. The development of the symbolic attitude is therefore of crucial importance in the process of individuation. The transcendent function enables the emergence of a symbol. It is the capability of the psyche to unite pairs of opposites in a

synthesis, where something new is created. The transcendent function connects the unconscious with the conscious: a creative relationship develops in which the transition from one attitude to another becomes possible. Symbols and archetypes are the vehicles of the transcendent function.

The Role of the Ego

The symbol-forming function of the soul – and thus the compensatory function – can become effective only if it is comprehended by the ego, i.e., the symbols have to be understood and integrated with the help of the conscious. The ego should be in a compensatory relationship with the self and a so-called “Ego-Self axis” (E. Neumann) should be formed. This Ego-Self axis illustrates the dynamic relationship between the ego and the Self. Neumann assumes that the ego dissociates itself from the Self at the beginning of and during the first half of life, increasing consciousness develops and a center of consciousness in the form of an ego-complex arises. According to Jung the essential part of the individuation process occurs in the second half of life, which is marked by a backward movement of the ego to the Self, characterized by the broadening of consciousness and integration of the personality. Although the concept of dissociation of the ego from the self advanced by Neumann has lost in importance in the light of more recent findings of developmental psychology, the Ego-Self-axis is nevertheless helpful in understanding the self-regulating function of the psyche. An identification of the ego with the self would, for example, be either an indication of inflation or of psychotic delusions of grandeur.

The ego in analytical psychology is the center of the field of consciousness and is also understood as the ego complex. It is characterized by a high degree of continuity and identity with itself. “The ego-complex is a content of the conscious as well as a prerequisite thereof, because I am conscious of a psychic element, in as far as it is related to the ego-complex” (Jung, 1921/1995, CW 6, § 810). The ego is a part of the total personality and the prerequisite of our ability to experience and reflect the world and ourselves. The ego is not a creation of our conscious wanting, but transcends it. Environmental factors have a role in ego formation and can be described with Winnicott as “facilitating environment.” From today’s perspective the ego or ego-complex, like all complexes, is formed in early infancy as the result of attachment relationships, in later life other relationship experiences also contribute to the formation and alteration of the ego-complex.

Complexes and Archetypes

Jung viewed complexes as more or less unconscious psychic contents held together by an identical emotion and a common core of meaning, the archetype. He understood a complex as an unconscious focal point of psychic processes, charged with a high degree of negative or positive emotional energy. A negative complex may be caused by a deeply felt emotional experience, a psychological trauma, or negative childhood experiences. Complexes may also be seen as “split off components of the psyche” (Jung, 1934/1995, CW 8, § 204), which if they have not yet become conscious, may cause psychic disturbances in the unconscious. Jung demonstrated the effectiveness of complexes with the help of the association experiment, which he had developed further. The presentation of complex charged words can produce changed reactions, as well as a galvanic skin response. Today, complexes are understood as the dynamic compression of internalized relationship experiences, capable of changing and developing throughout life. Complexes can be compared with other psychological models as, e.g., Stern’s representations of interactions generalized (RIGS), or the internal working models developed by Bowlby. Analysis focuses on the elucidation of these complexes: they are brought to consciousness, emotionally worked through and processed. The symptoms of a complex can be understood and interpreted symbolically. This enables the release of the psychic energy bound in the symptoms, the psychic equilibrium and inner balance can be re-established, and an instant of personality integration occurs.

Complexes always have an archetypal core. Comparable to complexes, archetypes are a central building block of analytical psychology. Based on Kant’s concept of the *a priori*, Jung postulates the existence of an *a priori* in all human action and thought, an “innate and therefore preconscious and unconscious individual structure of the psyche” (Jung, 1939/1995, CW 11, § 151). These preconscious structures can not be described, they are a type of unconscious predisposition to act in a certain human manner. They have no concrete contents and are therefore to be understood as shapes or “primordial images,” which are passed on from generation to generation of humans. “Visible” contents are added to the archetype through individual experience. Archetypes in addition to the self, which is frequently described as the primary archetype, include the animus and anima, the shadow and the persona. Neurobiologic findings have contributed to a somewhat changed understanding of the archetype. Today it is preferred to view archetypes as “image schemas, early developmental mental structures

which organize experience while themselves remaining without content and beyond the realm of conscious awareness. . . . The image schema would seem to correspond to the archetype-as-such, and the archetypal can be equated with the innumerable metaphorical extensions that derive from image schemas” (Knox, 2003: 96). They represent mechanisms which serve to organize experience in the human brain. In addition, they also appear to be unconscious “representations of dynamic patterns of relationship between self and other” (Knox, 2003).

The Collective Unconscious

At first glance the described new perspective appears to render access to Jung’s essential construct yet more difficult; in particular because it has an important role in considerations from a religious perspective, i.e., the collective unconscious, which Jung differentiates from the personal unconscious. However, recent research in developmental psychology has demonstrated the phylogenetic endowment of newborn infants with regard to communicative abilities. The collective unconscious represents the deepest layer of the human psyche, which is formed from universal archetypes and instinct-based forces and is identical for all humans.

- ▶ We can differentiate a personal unconscious that comprises all acquisitions of personal existence, i.e., what has been forgotten, repressed, subliminally perceived, thought, and felt. In addition to these personal unconscious contents there are other contents, which do not derive from personal acquisitions, but from the congenital possibility of psychic functioning per se, namely from the congenital brain structure. These are the mythological aspects, motifs and images, which can develop at any time and anywhere without historical tradition or migration. These contents I describe as the collective unconscious (Jung, 1921/1995 CW 6, § 919f).

The collective unconscious reveals itself primarily in myths and fairy tales, whose analysis enables access to archetypal contents and appears primarily in dreams, literature, art and culture. The language of the unconscious are symbols and images, because they exert a powerful influence on the conscious, in particular with a view to their numinosity. The psychological unconscious is further ascribed a tendency towards finality, which finds expression in the teleological principle. Within the framework of the individuation process the individual might succeed in grasping the finality of the unconscious from the individual perspective, enabling him to experience his

own actions and life as meaningful. To a degree determined by itself, the ego is thus forced to comply with and understand the demands of the self. This individual striving for meaning can therefore be understood as religious.

See also: [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ Complex](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Ananda

Paul Larson

Ananda was one of the main disciples of the Buddha. He served as his personal attendant and occupies a similar place in Buddhism that the Apostle John does in Christianity. Both were very close to their Lord in a personal as well as spiritual way. As such, Ananda wielded much influence in the First Buddhist Council, immediately after the death of the Buddha (544 BCE). Because of his close relationship to his teacher he is the source of many of the stories told in the canon of scripture known as the Sutras (Skt.) or Suttas (Pali). Of all the qualities attributed to him, good memory was one. Service to others was another. His name means “bliss.”

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#)

Androgyny

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Plato's *Symposium* addresses the subject of human nature (*anthrōpinen physin*) in its former state (*palai hemōn physis*) (189D). According to the speaker, Aristophanes, there were not two but three “kinds” (*ta genē*) of humans: male (*arren*), female (*thēlu*), and an equal combination of both male and female (*ampheterōn*) (189D). In this third type male and female are joined into the form (*eidos*) of one unity, *androgynon* (189E). This *androgynon* is quite

vital, which according to Aristophanes, threatens the gods who thus split the form in half, creating the separate forms, male and female. Each has only a portion of the original vigor, and are therefore no longer a concern to the divine patriarchy. Aristophanes says, this “man-woman” nature has ultimately been vanished (*aphanistai*), and Aristophanes himself appears to devalue it by referring to it as a “thing” (*auto*). Other notions of androgyny also occur. The ancient Gnostic text *Interrogationes maiores Mariae* quoted by Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403 CE) tells of Jesus producing a woman from his side. The image symbolizes Christ as the Anthropos, the Second Adam who is both male and female after the way of the first, hermaphroditic Adam (cf. Gal. 3.26–28; Matt. 22.30). In Hindu Vedic traditions the androgynous Original Man Purusha, who “as large as a man and woman embracing,” divides his self to create husband and wife (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.3; cf. *Aitareya Upanishad* 1.1–14; *Atma Upanishad* 1–3). In the Cabbalist tree King David is associated with the tenth sefirah *Malkhut* the feminine aspect of judgment. She is *Matronita*, the Grand Lady of the cosmos. She has a special affinity for the left side, being referred to as the gentle aspect of wisdom. Within the history of the Church, the eleventh to thirteenth centuries show particular interest in the androgyny of Christ. The Cistercians are especially noted for a reworking of the symbol of Jesus and the integration of the feminine aspect. Anselm the theologian and Archbishop of Canterbury (1033–1109 CE) writes: “But you, Jesus, good Lord, are you not also a mother? Are you not that mother who, like a hen, collects her chickens under wings?” (Prayer 10 to St. Paul, *Opera omnia* 3:33 and 39–41). The French abbot Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 CE–1153 CE) in his series of sermons on the Song of Songs refers to the refreshing sweetness and perfume of the breasts of Christ the Bridegroom. They are “better than wine, but smelling sweet of the best ointments” (Sermon 9.4). According to Jung, the separating into male and female sets up a pair of opposites and makes consciousness possible. It manifests latent symbolism and unconscious processes as compensation response to external, conscious condition of undifferentiated unity (Jung, 1969: 204 ff.). Jung also equates the duplex figure to the Anthropos as the idea of wholeness and unitary being which existed prior to human beings and represents the end-goal of human life. As Anthropos, the androgynous figure occurs as the essential, governing archetype and “organizing principle of the unconscious, the quaternary, or squared circle of the self” (Jung, 1969: 204).

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Plato and Religion](#)

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Angels

V. Walter Odajnyk

The word comes from the Greek *angelos*, a translation from the Hebrew *mal'akh*, meaning “messenger.” In the major Western religions angels are ministering spirits and guardians of the supreme deity and serve as messengers and intermediaries between the divine and human realms. They act as extensions of the divine will, reveal divine truth, watch over the world and guide souls to their postmortal destiny.

The motif of attendants upon the supreme deity who also serve as messengers and intermediaries between heaven and earth is widespread. In Chinese and Japanese religions there are ministering spirits and divine messengers whose role is similar to those in the West. The ancient Mesopotamians depicted giant winged genies as divine ministrant and guardian spirits. In Zoroastrianism there are six spiritual entities that attend the chief deity. In Hinduism the *angiris* are the messengers between gods and men. The function of a Boddhisattva in Buddhism is comparable to that of an angel. Hermes and Iris, both with winged sandals, are the divine heralds in Greek mythology. The messengers of the Celtic Otherworld often appear in the guise of swans. But not all winged entities are angels. Wings indicate swiftness (the winged sandals of Hermes and Iris) and the ability to function in the air, and by analogy in the realm of the spirit. The winged Nike represents the Spirit of Victory and is not an angel, i.e., a messenger.

In the Bible angels appear as wingless young men. Only the Seraphim and Cherubim are winged and not

human in form. Until the thirteenth century angels were depicted as adolescent males. The late Gothic romantic ideal of beauty led to the feminization and etherealization of the angelic form. In popular belief angels are divine or semi-divine creatures entitled to be worshipped in their own right. They are sometimes equated with daemons, fairies, elves, jinn, etc. that are amenable to human manipulation and used in magic. The notion of a personal guardian angel developed in the second century A.D. probably influenced by various religious and folk beliefs in protective ancestral guardians or spirits.

Judaic: Angels appear often in the Bible as messengers and protectors. The most striking representation of angels as intermediaries between the divine and human realms is Jacob's dream of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it and God standing at the top of the ladder. An angel stayed Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, wrestled with Jacob and named him Israel and appeared in the midst of the burning bush to Moses. The Seraphim, fiery, serpentine, six-winged angels surround the throne of Yahweh. The Cherubim, four-winged and four faced, bear his throne and were depicted on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. A Cherub was posted east of Eden to prevent human beings from returning and eating also of the Tree of Life. Satan, also called Lucifer, led a rebellion against Yahweh and was cast down from heaven to the earth with his host of rebellious angels. Two angels are named in the Bible: Michael ("like God"), warrior leader of the angelic hosts, and Gabriel ("man of God"), who interpreted Daniel's vision. When sent as messengers the Biblical angels appear as young men. Two other angels appear in the Apocrypha: Raphael ("God has healed"), guide of physicians and travelers and Uriel ("fire of God"). Seven archangels are mentioned in the apocryphal Book of Tobit and in post-biblical Judaism, especially in apocalyptic literature seven angels, sometimes called archangels lead the heavenly hosts (First Book of Enoch).

Christian: Angels play a significant role in the New Testament. Gabriel announced the conception of John the Baptist to his father, Zacharias and the conception of Jesus to Mary. Angels appeared to shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem to announce the birth of Jesus. Angels appear with Christ at the Second Coming and play a significant role in the Last Days described in The Revelation. Later Christian writers, particularly Pseudo-Dionysius and Justin, developed elaborate hierarchical schemas of angels, describing their roles and attributes. One such ranking consists of nine orders: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. The nine orders are divided into

three choirs, emphasizing the symbolism of the Trinity (3×3). The first choir contemplates God, the second governs the universe, the third executes the orders of the superiors. Clement of Alexandria, under Hellenistic influence, thought angels control the course of the stars and the four elements (earth, water, fire, air).

Islamic: When Allah created Adam he asked the angels to prostrate themselves before him, all did except Iblis (Satan). For this sin of pride Iblis was banished from heaven and became the enemy of mankind. Angels revealed the *Qur'an*, to Muhammad, who fearing he was possessed by jinn was about to throw himself off a cliff when Jibril (Gabriel) appeared and confirmed him as a prophet. Angels surround the throne of Allah, record the good and evil deeds of human beings, intercede with God on their behalf, escort the soul at death, reward the good and punish the wicked. In Islamic tradition there are four orders of angels: four throne bearers; the cherubim who praise Allah; four archangels; and a host of lesser angels. The archangels are: Jibril, the revealer; Mikal (Michael), the provider; Isra'il, the angel of death; and Israfil, who places souls in bodies and sounds the trumpet at the Last Judgment. Malik is the angel in charge of hell. In popular belief, there are also female angels, the *huris*, who provide male Muslims with erotic delight in paradise (they are similar to the Hindu *apsaras*).

Commentary

From the Freudian perspective angels are wish fulfilling fantasy creations of the protective, caring, and guiding aspects of the parental imago. As attendants and guardians of the male supreme deity they represent aspects of patriarchal power. As messengers and intermediaries they are internalized voices of parental authority and function as the superego, rewarding good and punishing evil behavior. The rebellion of Satan and his host of angels and their banishment from the deity's presence dramatizes the consequences of opposing the parental will. The Cherub with a fiery sword placed at the entry to the Garden of Eden protecting the Tree of Life refers to the patriarchal threat of castration and annihilation aimed at regressive incestuous impulses for a return to the womb. The "sons of God" who had intercourse with the "daughters of men" probably refers to the original band of brothers who killed the primal patriarch and usurped his sexual prerogatives. The angelic announcements of various Biblical conceptions is a "spiritualization" of parental sexual activity and perhaps an attempt on the part of both parents and children to see birth as a unique and special ("blessed") event.

From the point of view of Jungian psychology, angels are manifestations of the various characteristics and functions that belong to the transpersonal archetype of the Self or are attributes projected onto it by human beings, e.g., power, protection, intelligence, narcissism, pride, the source of life and death and of good and evil. As messengers, they represent attempts on the part of the Self to convey information to ego consciousness that otherwise would not be understood or apprehended. Their manifestation in human form allows for an empathic connection and makes the messages they convey comprehensible to human beings. As intermediaries between the divine and human realms, angels are attempts on the part of the transpersonal unconscious to maintain a relationship with human consciousness and to participate in the personal and temporal world. For example, it is noteworthy that angels prevented the sacrifice of Isaac, renamed Jacob Israel, appeared in the burning bush to Moses, announced the birth of Ishmael and of Jesus and revealed the *Qur'an* to Muhammad. In *Genesis* (6: 2ff) there is mention of “the sons of God” who took “daughters of men” for wives and fathered children who “became mighty men...of renown.” The divine or semi-divine birth of a hero is a universal motif. It depicts, so to speak, the desire of the transpersonal Self to have intercourse with the human realm and incarnate in the three-dimensional world. In strictly psychological terms, the motif portrays an impetus on the part of the transpersonal psyche to realize itself in ego consciousness. In this regard, the role of Satan (also called Lucifer, literally, “light bearer,” Isa. 14–21) in the three dominant Western religions is significant. The banishment of Satan and his rebellious angelic host from heaven to the earth is also an incarnation motif. (The banishment to hell is Milton’s poetic license and based on The Revelation where that occurs at the end of the world.) This “fall” of the angels precedes that of Adam and Eve and must be viewed as a preconscious foundation for the formation of a conscious human ego structure.

See also: [Abraham and Isaac](#) [Adam and Eve](#) [Bodhisattva](#) [Buddhism](#) [Celtic Religions](#) [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Dreams](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Gardens, Groves, and Hidden Places](#) [Heaven and Hell](#) [Islam](#) [Jesus](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Qur'an](#) [Super-Ego](#) [Virgin Mary](#) [Visions](#) [Zoroastrianism](#)

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Anima and Animus

John Ryan Haule

Terms introduced by C. G. Jung to describe certain functions of the human “soul” (*anima*, Latin). *Anima* names the feminine unconscious factor in a man, while *animus* applies to the corresponding masculine factor in a woman’s unconscious. Noting the frequency with which he encountered such contrasexual figures in the dreams of his patients, Jung theorized that every individual is born with the potential for both sets of gender characteristics but – under the influence of genes and socialization – only one set is developed consciously, leaving the other latent in the unconscious. Because dreams tend to “compensate” for an inevitable “one-sidedness” in conscious attitude, archetypal images of the opposite gender are common in dreams.

Gender Relations

Jung described the “masculine principle” as *logos* (the tendency to trust logic and verbal formulations) and the “feminine principle” as *eros* (the tendency to trust emotional connections and relatedness) (Jung, 1959: 14). A logos-oriented man will undervalue relational skills and feeling values, including his own. In the unconscious, however, they have numinous power, for they belong to the archetypal realm of goddesses and film stars. The situation with the eros-oriented woman is similar but opposite, with logos-characteristics numinous in the unconscious: male figures with fascinating verbal and intellectual qualities. When the two meet romantically, they tend to project their mythically idealized inner figures upon one another, making disillusionment inevitable when they discover that their partner is a poor match for the projection. When this happens, each partner will suffer from the limitations of the other’s undeveloped side: the man’s touchy, undifferentiated feelings and the woman’s stereotyped thinking.

Ultimately, however, anima and animus are essential for psychological transformation, where the disillusionment of projection failure may become the beginning of wisdom. Unconscious contents become known when one catches oneself in the act of projecting them; and few opportunities to do so are as unmistakable and personally painful as erotic conflicts. With enough presence of mind to recognize a projection for what it is and “withdraw” it – in

the sense of acknowledging it as one's own – one begins to become acquainted with anima or animus as unconscious potential. While an unrecognized contrasexual archetype will draw an individual into one unsatisfying encounter after another, an anima or animus that has become known will function intuitively to supply the formerly missing perspective and complete an understanding of the world and of oneself. This integration of the contrasexual archetype is known in myth as the hierosgamos (Greek for “wedding of the gods”). It leaves one more adequate for mature relationships and more capable of effective engagement with both the inner world and the outer.

Mediation: Ego and Self

Discussions of anima and animus that become fascinated with gender differences tend to overlook the fact that, at bottom, the anima/animus syzygy (or “pair of opposites”) plays the same role in every psyche. It mediates between ego and “self” (Jung’s name for the wholeness of our being, including both conscious and unconscious elements). The oppositeness of their gender reflects their personification of an inner world that is largely opposite to and compensatory for limitations in the conscious attitude. The allure of anima- and animus-figures, whether seen in visions or in a flesh-and-blood partner, inspires interest in unknown aspects of self and world and mobilizes psychic energy, drawing the individual into life and opening up a deeper and more compelling inner world.

Always lurking behind anima and animus is the self they mediate. As the most powerful and significant force in the psyche, self is the God of one’s inner world. From the psychological perspective, therefore, Tao, Brahman, Christ, Buddha, Atman, and the like, are projections of the self; while from the theological point of view, the self is that aspect of the human psyche that God uses as the “dark glass” through which divine revelations are possible.

Religious Dimensions

The numinosity of the godhead is an essential attribute of anima and animus, for the mediator reveals the presence of the greater being and glows with its splendor. This is the reason mystics – historically, those who have published accounts of their experiences have been overwhelmingly male – typically speak of their love of God in erotic language; why in the Kabbalah the nearest *sephira*, or “sphere of divine manifestation,” is the feminine Shekhinah (“Divine Presence”); why Rumi and many of the Sufis rhapsodize over a divine Beloved they experience as a

supernatural woman who entangles them in her black tresses; why Roman Catholic nuns describe themselves as “brides of Christ”; why devotion to Mary the Mother of God and to Muhammad’s daughter, Fatimah the Resplendent, are so important in their respective religions.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Feeling](#) [▶ Hierosgamos](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Logos](#) [▶ Numinosum](#) [▶ Projection](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Animectomy Complex

John Eric Killinger

Terminology

Term coined by American psychologist William Herbert Sheldon, Ph.D., M.D. (1898–1977). Though better known for his theory of and work with somatotypes, Sheldon wrote a book on a psychological approach to religion, education, and medicine entitled *Psychology and the Promethean Will* (1936). Despite demonstrating the influence of William James, the book appeared soon after Sheldon’s pilgrimage to Europe of 1934–1935 where he studied the psycho-physiological work of Ernst Kretschmer, conversed with Sigmund Freud, and spent considerable time with C. G. Jung discussing the theory of psychological types. The “animectomy complex” was coined not only “in good-natured appreciation” but also for “poking good-natured fun at” the Freudians for “their utterly delightful castration complex” (Sheldon, 1936: viii, 200).

Sheldon asserts that the word “animectomy” follows in the somewhat “vulgar” practice in medicine to mint neologisms from an admixture of Latin and Greek terms. In this case, the Latin *anima* (soul) is paired with the Greek *ectomy* (cut off). Sheldon’s definition of animectomy is “amputation of soul.” His primary concern seems to have been that psychology, if it already had not done so, was in danger of losing its soul, a fact echoed in the last several decades by John Sanford and James Hillman. That Sheldon should compare his neologism to the Freudian castration complex is interesting, for animectomy literally means “castrated soul.” The Greek *ectomy* derives from ἐκτομάζω (*ektomazō*), *I castrate, cut off, excise*, and it is occasionally used to refer to the circumcision of women. Unlike the castration complex, however, the animectomy complex is “merciful and fatal” (Sheldon, 1936: 200).

Diagnostically, the animectomy complex is dissociation from feeling-awareness, in other words, the soul. For Sheldon, *soul* means oneness, unity, union between inner wish and outer reality. In his psychological theory, Sheldon mapped out five levels, or panels, of consciousness, the lowest being that of material relations (economic consciousness) and the highest being feeling-awareness, or aesthetic consciousness. It is a dissociation from this highest panel consciousness that constitutes his animectomy complex, a dying back of the brain.

In other words, what Sheldon refers to is neither a physiological or anatomical construct, nor is it a metaphorical reference to regression to the reptilian brain. Rather it is a kind of complacency on the part of human beings who find it easier not to see and feel simultaneously a meaning and thus truly perceive and understand the world. This is not *Psychodaiktes*, the epithet of Dionysos as destroyer or killer of the soul. Neither is it *psycholethros*, the death of the soul. The animectomy complex is the end or loss of aisthesis in a person’s life, and it is with this loss that Sheldon is concerned and that he opposes with the need of Promethean will.

Influences

Sheldon’s (1936) work is influenced perhaps more by Jung’s *Psychological Types* (1921/1971) than he admits. Both draw from similar resources, including Carl Spitteler’s prose epic, *Prometheus and Epimetheus* (1881/1931). In the long run, Sheldon’s view is that if we continually practice routing out conflict and/or error, we will ourselves undergo an animectomy complex. We need conflict. In fact, it would even seem that we need error, too, in order to function and grow into the level of aesthetic feeling-awareness, to grow into soul to the extent that

in order to understand what suffering others are experiencing we need to experience or undergo something of an amputation/castration/circumcision of soul. In other words, it is suggested we pass through a symbolic dismemberment – if not death – that encourages, permits, and fosters psychic rebirth. This is related to the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul* of St. John of the Cross from a religious vertex. From a psychological one it is also related somewhat to what W. R. Bion has termed the experience of O (q.v.), the godhead or the unknowable ultimate reality that is an existential difficulty that must be passed through as a *rite de passage*, a *communitas* (q.v.) in its own right, in order to experience psychic rebirth.

There is something to be said for the experience of a psychic death in order to reap the benefits of a rebirth of wholeness within the self. In fact, Lawrence Staples (2008) in his book *Guilt with a Twist: The Promethean Way*, suggests that we must eat the forbidden fruit and bear guilt if we are to grow, steal the fire, and accept the punishment for bringing its knowledge to others. Again, this goes straight to Bion’s differentiation between “knowing about” and “becoming *being*” in his discussions concerning O. Bion argues that from the start, we’ve had this injunction from the deity in which thinking and knowledge (K) is forbidden. This is precisely what Jung was looking for in *Psychological Types* and Sheldon in *Psychology and the Promethean Will*. One could use the analogy of the computer reboot, even a complete shutdown and restart.

Polemic, Prosthesis, and Reconciliation

Sprinkled throughout *Psychology and the Promethean Will*, as well as given a fair-sized portion, is somewhat polemical writing on what Sheldon terms “waster culture.” Loud, monotonous music, art that fails to transform the beholder (one thinks of similar mild fulminations in Castoriadis (1999/2007) with regard to art and institutions in this vein), and philosophy that has lost its brotherly love for Wisdom. Today such waster culture is apparent in the proliferation of MP3 players, text messaging, multitasking cellular telephones, gothic and other subcultural pursuits, and reality television programming. If anything, Sheldon’s polemical style is meant simply to grab our attention and shake us out of uncritical apathy, much as Freud (1913/1950) attempted to do with his critiques of the caricature of religion, art, and philosophy.

If an animectomy complex is, as Sheldon defines it, a repressed fear of the amputation of soul, then reparations via psychology would be mere prostheses, attachments or

applications via proposition and projection. The cognate of prosthesis, *prothesis* (placing in public) is not quite helpful either, for this would perhaps lead to the individual's melting or dissolving back into the collective slipping into repression or unconscious, what Sheldon, following William James, called the dying back of the brain.

As to a sense of psyche as psyche becoming unconscious, Slater (2008) draws our attention to our predilection for keeping psyche at bay, which he notes is a "dislocation of psychic disturbance from psychic ground" (2008: 352). The animectomy complex is psychic numbing, absenting feeling-awareness, or aisthesis, in the face of suffering and trauma – in short, dissociation.

Even if one were to experience this "animectomy complex" as Sheldon suggests analysts do, this very well could be akin to Giegerich's (1988/2005) call to sublimate our psychologies at the risk of crossing the threshold into madness. The amputation of soul, let alone its loss, is a caricature of psychology inasmuch as Freud (1913/1950) suggests that obsessional neurosis is a caricature of religion, hysteria is a caricature of art, and paranoid delusion is a caricature of philosophy. The point being that amputation or castration of soul pushes us into critical thinking about the place of psyche in psychology. Psychology must show itself the barriers on which it can exercise its liberating power, thus doing more to help it to a better and more critical understanding of itself.

John Sanford (1929–2005) has articulated the disappearance, indeed the amputation of soul, from psychology. "Look in any dictionary or encyclopedia of psychology and see if there is a definition of *soul*. If there is one, it will only be a perfunctory one. The soul has gone out of modern psychology... almost" (Sanford, personal communication, October 11, 1992).

It is a valid point. Even Hillman and Ventura (1992) argue that in the 100 years since its inception psychotherapy is not helping to improve our world. Their critique occurs only because psychotherapy demands, even wants, at least a questioning, at most a hearing. The overstimulated post-modern information age in which we live seeks instant gratification, band-aids, less infrastructure, and pills and elixirs to cure one's ills and ailments. Depression, for example, is no longer the purview of the exponents of the talking cure; instead, we are continually bombarded with televised messages and magazine advertising sponsored by drug companies, insurance firms, and their lobbyists, who do not want time spent working through depression but rather desire the process sped up with medicines because depression is now considered a medical problem rather than a symptom of repressed psyche.

We face the problem of continuing horizontal splitting of psychology into cognitive, behavioral,

neurological, abnormal, and the like, let alone within traditionally recognized Freudian, post-Freudian, Jungian, and post-Jungian psychologies. We suffer an overwillingness to medicate, due in part to this horizontal splitting. Perhaps in certain instances whereby the working through complex psychological issues in such a climate of overstimulation and rapidly advancing technology, medicines are not only useful but necessary; however they are not the panacea the consuming public is proffered. The medicines do not help us arrive at the core or root of the problem. In all this over- and understimulation (or its deadening/numbing) there seems to be an eradication of time for reverie, reflection, meaning-making, and myth building required to make the journey toward wholeness. It would seem that the hearty endorsements of insurance companies to use more drugs than long-term "talking cure" therapy are only prostheses for amputated souls, and there is very little hope for castrated psyches, if this indeed is the impetus of meaning intended by Sheldon.

Perhaps what is called for is a reconciliation of the differential aspect of the promethean and the regenerative aspect of the epimethean. In this way, one progresses away from dying at the back of the brain (the comfort zone of merely knowing about) toward the aesthetic of becoming being. It is psychologically legitimate to accept a criticism of psychology as a negative of the negative in order to present a true positive, not unlike the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, but mere distinction between horizontal splitting of the field and its caricature in public and private practice leads to nothing more or less than further non-observance and repression of psychic phenomena. Even if it is perhaps good to put into practice the idea maintained in the apocryphal book of the Old Testament known as Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of ben Sirach) that leisure is necessary for the development and praxis of wisdom, we do well, as Jesus ben Sirach does, neither to discount nor dismiss and marginalize those for whom dying at the back of the brain is in fact their rightful function and place in life.

The animectomy complex presupposes that we no longer throw our hat in the ring with the notion that the gods have become our diseases. If these gods are in fact no longer *absconditus* but *absentia*, what happens to the voice of the symptom? Is it forever cast heroically into the darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, or have we simply lost the ability to deal with the amputation of soul from a vertical perspective? In other words, without Eros there is no Psyche. Without symptom there is no divisibility. Without divisibility we suffer from the dying back of the brain.

So we need the courage to realize the unavoidable necessity of the death to be died by our frame of mind

(Giegerich, 1988/2005: 230). It is this that mellows us so that rebirth of the aesthetic panel might occur.

See also: [▶ Dark Night of the Soul](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psychological Types](#)

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Animism

Lee W. Bailey

A Modern Tool: Tylor

“Animism” is not a religion, it is a theoretical construct that attempts to explain a wide range of religious beliefs and practices. It is a modern concept, a by-product of the theoretical dualistic division between subject and object, grouping together religious beliefs that breach or confuse

that division. Originally defined as the erroneous attribution of life or soul to inanimate objects by primitive people, “animism” was developed as a major category in “primitive” religions, a “minimum” definition of natural religion by E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) in his 1871 book *Primitive Culture*. Today a “new animism” is developing along quite different, more ecological lines.

Traditional beliefs grouped under this concept originally included the view that a person’s or animal’s shadow, breath, blood, liver, heart, or eye holds their soul. Animals have souls, and all of the earth and sky is full of souls. Some are re-incarnated ancestors, some are friendly spirits, some are hostile ghosts. One’s shadow-soul could be devoured by a crocodile. Eating an animal’s liver could transfer some of that animal’s qualities to you. Animals or things seen in dreams or visions are believed to have souls. At the moment of death, the eerie experience of seeing a life turn into a corpse suggests to many the departure to an afterlife of a soul (*anima*) that once animated, or gave life to the body. A tree may be seen as requiring placation before it can be cut, since it has a soul. Stones and gems may have souls. Ghosts and spirits of the dead are believed to populate the world and need magic, sacrifices or food to keep them alive or satisfy their potentially dangerous tendencies, such as revenge for a wrongful death. The ontological sources of the world, such as “Mother Earth” or the origin of a species of life may be perceived as souls in the world. Tylor contrasts animism, in which the soul is the origin of life, with materialism, in which matter is the origin of existence (Tylor, 1871, I: 453).

Evolution of Religion

Tylor argued that animism is the childish, primitive, lower, savage origin of all “higher” religions, in his scheme of the evolution of religion from an amorphous animism through more differentiated polytheism to anthropomorphic monotheism, all at war with science. R. R. Marrett, in his 1909 *The Threshold of Religion*, argued that an even earlier phase of undifferentiated “preanimism” or “animatism” (similar to electricity) that preceded animism. This reductive evolutionary scheme, promoted by others, such as Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, was often implicitly or explicitly seen as part of the August Comte’s 1822 positivist attack on religion as an early phase of illusory beliefs he called “fetishism,” that theoretically faded away in the triumph of rational modern science. Arnold van Gennep in 1909 called it “dynamism.”

Metaphysics

Tylor and others presented their schemes as “laws” of science, but they were heavily laden with metaphysical assumptions. When Tylor speaks of animism as “extranatural interference and causeless spontaneity” (Tylor, 1871, I: 3), he assumes that we know completely what nature is, and what it excludes. When he speaks of “inanimate objects,” he is picturing the world through the Cartesian lens of the subject/object metaphysic. Speaking of “cause,” he assumes that this is a universal principle that is omn-explanatory, and religion is a cognitive error. This is heavy-duty metaphysics, inflated by the narrow horizons of nineteenth-century positivist confidence in science. It is a nexus of a major ontological feud between archaic cultures and modern industrial society. Believing that souls inhabit the world outside human minds is essential to “animism,” and believing that NO souls inhabit the world outside the human mind is essential to the scientific worldview.

Attempting to make sense of the reports from cultures newly discovered by European global travelers, Tylor’s theory of animism did explain, for example, that funeral rites requiring the deaths of the wife, weapons, food, and servants of a powerful man, had some crude form of reason and practical value. Within their worldview, all these souls [*animae*] were going to heaven to serve their master’s soul. But to Tylor this kind of reason was finally subjective superstitious nonsense to be disposed of by the presumed progress of new scientific knowledge and more advanced races’ higher morality that respects human life.

Survivals

Tylor was Oxford’s first Professor of Anthropology when he retired in 1909, but his assumptions were soon eclipsed by more functional anthropology, which stressed social functions of religion rather than evolutionary progress, and psychoanalytic psychology, which saw the unconscious and symbolic side of archaic religions, rather than the early rational, practical side.

Tylor did see that animism survives in modern times, both in indigenous people’s tribal customs, such as sun-worship and divination, and in “higher” cultures’ superstitions, such as medieval witchcraft, spiritualism, and games of chance. He believed, as did many, that contemporary “savage” practices are survivals from archaic times, so they allow us to reconstruct past animism. But Tylor was

generally criticized for seeing archaic religions as too intellectual and rational, rather than emotional and intuitive.

After René Descartes proclaimed “I think therefore I am,” which helped shove previous intuitions of “animist” soul in the world aside as subjective irrationalities, these intuitions were sometimes happily dismissed as superstitions, and sometimes retained as mystical phenomena. The Romantics kept open a peek at soul in the world. Nineteenth-century Spiritualists maintained communion with what they saw as departed souls still in the world.

In the shadow of apparently triumphant industrialism, some contemporary indigenous people still hold to the archaic ontology when they say things such as “that mountain has spirit . . . ask Mother Nature to spare you some meat . . . worship the land, the ground and the stars and the skies, for they are the ones that have spirits. They are the mighty spirits which guide and direct us, which help us to survive” (Trimble, 1986: 24–47). Some cultures, as in Asia, still believe that eating a shark’s fin, rhino’s horn, or tiger’s penis, for example, can transfer some of that animal’s soul – aggression or sexuality – to you at dinner. “Bush meat” from African monkeys is still prized at some European restaurants. This demand is the source of ongoing bloody damage to wild animals. Children’s teddy bears, pets, and toys, people’s homes and home towns may be said to have souls. Such enduring childish or “primitive” practices indicate that the nineteenth century evolutionary scheme that attempted to leave “animism” in the dust of developing rationality in technological cultures was not as triumphal as some believed.

One might detect elements of animism in major religions. Anthropomorphism in general contains elements of animism, seeing generalized numinous powers as persons. In Christianity, the incarnation of Christ could be seen anthropomorphically as an embodiment of the religious instinct. Seeing certain literalist beliefs as the Devil may be seen as animist. Seeing gods as fathers, mothers, animals, or any earthy form may be seen as a form of animism. Statues, icons, and paintings, dancers, and all the many ways that spirituality is embodied may be seen as animism today. The Eastern Orthodox Christians have made a refined distinction in their debates about the presence of the divine in icons. The “essence” of God cannot be known in an icon, but the lesser “energy” of the divine may be felt. Giving spirits “spirit houses” as in Indonesia, or setting out rice balls as food for ancestors in a domestic shrine in Asia is animist. Animism survives, however refined, today, but not without continuing opposition.

Depth Psychology

Modern depth psychology has also edged toward the perception of souls in the world. On the one hand it helped rationalism strip the world of soul with its important theory of “projection.” This theory describes well how we all see out in the world what is actually rooted in unconscious dynamics. Sigmund Freud borrowed this concept from nineteenth-century culture, where theatrical *Camera Obscurae* at carnivals frightened people with tricks making pictures or actors seem to be spirits hovering in a dark room (Bailey, 1988). Similarly the “magic lantern” (now called the “slide projector”) was widely used by traveling performers to astonish and frighten people across Europe (Bailey, 1986). Ludwig Feuerbach used the concept in 1841, saying; “The personality of God is nothing else than the projected personality of man.” (*Die Persoenlichkeit Gottes ist die entäußerte Persoenlichkeit des Menschen.*) (Feuerbach, 1957: 226).

The key German word “*entäußerte*” translates “externalization,” not “projection,” but Feuerbach’s English translator George Eliot used the term “projection.” So when Freud adopted the concept in 1895 (the same year that the movie projector was invented by Edison and others), “projection” became a strong psychoanalytic image for withdrawing soul from the world, while it helped patients discover their inner lives rather than imagine their souls only in the world. While a healing concept, it also helped strip the world of animism and soul.

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud opened psychology up to the meaningfulness of the unconscious psyche as a healing factor, and the importance of symbolic language for psychology, but he retained key elements of nineteenth-century materialism, such as the subjective interiority of the psyche, dynamics such as projection, and the view of religion as an infantile illusion. In psychoanalysis, the transference/counter-transference relation in therapy has evoked much heated debate about the presence of crude, infantile, refined, or even transcendent presences in the analytic container. Some see it as a necessary element in therapy, others do not. Some allow for it to become actively erotic, others do not. But it is at least analogous to animism in its unconscious perception of psychological and spiritual dynamics in the analyst-client interaction field, sometimes infantile, sometimes shadowy, but rarely missing in such an intimate alliance, for it provides an

externalization of key unconscious dynamics to be worked out, as animism does in religion.

Carl Jung

Carl Jung adopted many of Freud’s psychoanalytic discoveries, such as the meaningfulness of the unconscious psyche, but rejected Freud’s focus on sexuality as central, and his denigration of religion. He also opened his “archetypal” depth psychology, however hesitantly, a step further toward “animism.” First, Jung developed his theory of the collective unconscious, which moved psychology out of a narrow subjectivism. This expanded the psyche into a deeper and wider sense of soul in the human community and history. He also elevated mythology to a symbolic language of the collective unconscious, giving traditions such as alchemy a positive meaning denied since the Enlightenment. He also showed how myths and dreams echo each other, both coming from the collective unconscious. A key therapeutic practice is to take the motifs of a dream (e.g., virgin girl) and search for parallels in archaic myths (e.g., Virgin Mary), thus amplifying and externalizing its meanings with historical and anthropomorphic depth.

After Jung’s transforming near-death experience in 1944 (Jung, 1961/1971), which opened him to a more cosmic sense of the soul’s journey, Jung became even more mystical and worked on uncovering the deeper meanings of traditions such as alchemy. The ancient and medieval alchemists wrote about transforming base materials such as lead into treasures such as gold, and Jung realized that they were talking in code language about their own soul transformations, for example, transforming depression and death into a treasure, the “philosopher’s stone.” These were in part “projections” from their inner lives onto outer matter, but Jung tread closer to “animism” and religion. In the alchemist Khunrath he reads: “It is the Aqua Permanens, eternally living.” The “radical moisture” is animated . . . by a fiery spark of the World-soul, for the spirit of the Lord filleth the whole world.” (Jung, 1963, CW XIV: para. 50).

Jung concluded his extensive alchemical explorations with the term “*mysterium coniunctionis*,” meaning: “Everything that happens, however, happens in the same ‘one world’ and is a part of it. For this reason events must possess an *a priori* aspect of unity, though it is difficult to establish this by the statistical method” (Jung, 1963, CW XIV: para. 662).

Although Jung sought to retain his Kantian subject/object epistemology and his role as scientific psychologist rather than theologian, toward the end of his life he

repeatedly tip-toed across the border between subjectivist psychology and a mystical sense of the oneness of the world (*unus mundus*) that allowed for a refined “animism” and religion.

Jung also saw many archetypal constellations, as between parents and children, as forms of *participation mystique*, Lucien Levy-Bruhl’s term for Jung’s sense of the wholeness of archetypal collective attractions, repulsions, and identifications as with tribe, society, religion, or nation. “The all-embracing womb of Mother Church is anything but a metaphor, and the same is true of Mother Earth, Mother Nature, and ‘matter’ in general” (Jung, 1963, *CW X*: 64–71).

One form this paradoxical struggle took was Jung’s concept of synchronicity, or “meaningful co-incidence.” outside the narrower laws of causality, such as extrasensory perception, clairvoyance, or precognition. Once a patient was discussing a dream of a golden scarab (a symbol of rebirth), and at that moment, a very similar scarabaeid beetle (rose-chafer) flew to the window (Jung, 1963, *CW VIII*, 843).

Jung’s critics call these explorations “mysticism,” and in them one might see elements of animism.” The later Jung did acknowledge that he stretched the boundaries of modern science. However, the many mysteries in areas such as physics’ subsequent explorations of dark matter have become the topics of postmodern questioning of the certainty of science, for which Jung was a precursor. Moreover, Jung never lost his strong ego and ability to step back and analyze the mysterious depths of soul-in-the-world that he uncovered.

James Hillman

Of Jung’s successors, James Hillman pressed forward the issue of soul-in-the-world farther. In *Revisioning Psychology*, Hillman devotes an entire chapter to “Personifying or Imagining Things,” where he criticizes the subjectivist view of defensive projections “out there” being withdrawn back “in here” and seen as merely fictional or imaginary, understandable only for the irrational: children, primitives, or the insane. This metaphysical assumption pervading psychology he challenges and instead seeks to “penetrate the interior realm of animism. For we are in search of *anima*, or soul” (Hillman, 1975: 3). This metaphysic is the real defense, he argues, against the psychic power, not as allegories under the rule of reason, but of vital, autonomous animated images. Against this religious and psychological literalism, he urges being in the world and experiencing it as a psychological field. The

ancient Greeks did this when they personified the psychic forces in culture such as Fame, Insolence, Timing, Hope Ugliness, Friendship, Modesty, Mercy, Peace, and in the world as Dawn and Night. This poetic language is necessarily mythological, but must be rescued from its rationalist prison and released to free the soul to experience the vitality of the inner and outer worlds. Hillman says: “Subject and object, man and Gods, I and Thou, are not apart and isolated each with a different sort of being, one living or real, the other dead or imaginary. The world and the Gods are dead or alive, according to the condition of our souls” (Hillman, 1975: 16).

While these worlds of Night and Hope are within us, we also live within them. The epidemic of depression in our society, Hillman says, may well be not simply personal problems, but feelings of collective grief and helplessness about the way industrial society has ravaged the world with pollution: “I know now that a great deal of the depression I suffered in Los Angeles was due to the effect of the smog. . . (1992: 82).” Avoiding literalism, we must also see through varieties of soul-in-the-world to the deep mysteries that they disclose, the one collective world below the ordinary particulars of life – the *anima mundi* – soul of the world. This is a de-literalized, radical, and highly refined form of the old “animism.”

Thomas Moore

Thomas Moore is another archetypal therapist in the Jungian tradition who presses forward the phenomenon of soul-in-the-world. In *Care of the Soul* he says: “Our felt relationship to things” in a soul-ecology “wouldn’t allow us to pollute or to perpetrate ugliness. We couldn’t let a beautiful ocean bay become a sewer system for shipping and manufacturing because our hearts would protest this violation of soul” (Moore, 270). *Anima mundi*, he says, is not a “mystical philosophy requiring high forms of meditation, nor does it ask for a return to primitive animism (Moore, 281). In involves simply a cultivating and feeling the arts of life with depth – art, music, food, and gardens. This shift is needed to care for our souls more fully, to balance the one-sided rationality that industrial society demands.

In *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, Moore goes further and explores “enchantment,” as when one walks in the woods and feels transported by the wonder and may even imaginably feel the inward voices of the trees and waterfalls speaking. From the farm spirit to garden paradises, Moore urges industrial societies to re-awaken ancient songs in the heart of nature spirituality to head off

our ecological suffering with a radically new openness to the mysterious and enchanting depths of nature.

Many other thinkers are exploring these same themes from various angles. Martin Heidegger offers a powerful and influential new ontology of Being-in-the-world (*dasein*). Jane Goodall has shifted animal studies toward accepting the souls of animals rather than behaviorally treating them as machines. Graham Harvey is writing about a new animism, as *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. Thomas Berry is exploring a *Universe Story* that integrates theology and nature. The old animism was a way of clearing the world for industrialism of the very soul that the new animism is re-awakening, but as it develops, the new animism will engage in a dialogue with science and religion that will change both.

See also: ▶ [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) ▶ [Freud, Sigmund](#) ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) ▶ [Projection](#) ▶ [Synchronicity](#)

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Anthropocentric View

Stacey Enslow

The anthropocentric view is a human-centered ideology. Christianity, Judaism and Islam are all religions that are considered to have a strong anthropocentric view. This owes to the origin mythologies shared among these religions that claim all of creation was created by God for the use of humans, as in the Biblical *Genesis*:

- ▶ Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'
- ▶ God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'
- ▶ God said, 'I have given you every plant bearing seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food' (Gen 1:26–29).

In the anthropocentric view, humans are the favored children of the creator. This is in contrast to other religions such as Buddhism, which doctrinally ascribe a favored status to all beings, as in *The Lotus Sutra*:

- ▶ I cause the Dharma rain to rain on all equally, never lax or neglectful.
When all the various living beings hear my Law,
they receive it according to their power,
dwelling in their different environments. . .
The equality of the Buddha's preaching is like a rain of a single flavor,
but depending on the nature of the living being,
the way in which it is received is not uniform,
just as the various plants and trees each receive the moisture in a different manner (Watson, 2000: 46–47).

Philosophical movements, such as the Deep Ecology movement, which are expressed through radical environmentalist and animal-rights movements, favor a “biocentric” or even “earth-centric” view; in which entire ecosystems are seen as the primary placeholder of importance. In such a view, humans are only important as one factor in an interconnected web of relationships.

See also: > Buddhism > Christianity > Creation > God > Islam > Judaism and Psychology > Myth

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Anthropomorphism

Lee W. Bailey

Anthropomorphism is the portrayal of the gods and spiritual powers beyond and in the world as having human appearance and qualities. It critically reverses the saying that “humans were made in the image of God” to “the gods were made in the images of humans.” Theriomorphism is the analogous portrayal of spirits in animal form. It is an ancient, widespread aspect of religion, evident in statues of gods and goddesses as if they were human, as in Egypt (Osiris), Greece (Aphrodite), or India (Krishna). They may blend human and animal images, as in animal-headed human figures. The Roman orator Cicero (106–43 BCE) complained of the “poisonous honey of the poets, who present us with gods afire with rage or mad with lust, and make us the spectators of their wars.” But he concluded that “we must admit there are gods,” due to innate ideas of the divine (Cicero, 87–88). Anthropomorphism may criticize the former and debate the latter.

Anthropomorphism is an issue that combines both ontological and psychological elements. It appears in both natural and cultural contexts. All have thick layers of mythic expressions. (1) Ontological anthropomorphism appears in both transcendent, heavenly theologies and immanent nature religions such as the Pueblo Kachinas. Many combine the two, as with Ishtar, Babylonian goddess of fertility who lives at least part of the year in the heavens



Anthropomorphism. Figure 1 Art from W. J. Wilkins (1975). *Hindu mythology: Vedic and puranic*. Calcutta: Rupa & Co.

with other anthropomorphic deities and descends to the underworld of death. (2) Human psychological drives or archetypal images also provide ripe opportunities for mythic anthropomorphism, from heroes (Superman) to lovers (Helen of Troy) and enemies (Satan). (3) The tendency to personify powers of the cosmos and nature continue in the names of planets (Jupiter), hurricanes (Katrina), and animals (Hanuman, the Indian monkey-headed god). (4) We find the urge plentifully in cultural artifacts – puppets (Pinocchio), dolls (Barbie), and machines (android robots – The Terminator). Theologically, the questions are whether the gods are “nothing but” finite human images, whether the ultimate cosmic reality is in any way analogous to images of our planet’s life forms, whether humans can participate in a portion of the energies of the divine, or whether we can know nothing of the divine through human images. Psychologically, are anthropomorphic images inevitable? Ontologically are they necessary?

Ontologically, the question is whether or not anthropomorphic images are accurate expressions of the ultimate reality that they seem to signify. Is God really fatherly? This cannot be proven, so in religion believers must acknowledge their faith, or, if more forceful, press their orthodoxy and literalism, either tolerantly or intolerantly. Psychologically, the question of the role of imagination in perception and cognition is central, whether in strict literalism or poetic metaphor. The psychology of the unconscious since Freud helps to see anthropomorphism theoretically as an unconscious tendency that is an inevitable psychic dynamic with its own patterns, as in dream

symbolism where a human represents a dynamic, such as sex or moral guidance. Freud, however, while showing the inevitable and meaningful nature of unconscious symbols, saw them as distortions of psychological reality, and tended to interpret images narrowly to fit his theory of the sexual predominance of unconscious drives – guns as male genitals, boats as female, etc. Oedipus and Narcissus are the classic Freudian mythic anthropomorphic images. His theory of projection, rooted in Feuerbach's critique of God, offers a strong theoretical basis for understanding anthropomorphisms as symbolic externalizations of inner dynamics, such as threatening Oedipal fathers seen in social (teachers), mythic (villains), or religious authority figures (God). Can anthropomorphism be fully rejected? Should it be? These questions have been answered in a cluster of five types of arguments: the arguments that interprets anthropomorphism as disposable, necessary, analogous, personifications, or presence.

The Disposable Argument

Anthropomorphism is inevitable but unnecessary, in this argument, because it is disposable entirely in the scientific method's rigorous epistemology of eliminating subjective additions to objective reality which excludes any religion. Scientific efforts to disenchant the world attacked the attribution of human qualities to nature in order to clear the way for a more rational analysis. Zeus no longer throws thunderbolts from the heavens when science can give a better and fear-reducing explanation. Galileo's rejection of the cosmology of an earth-centered universe was so controversial because it attacked the parochialism of the anthropological assumption that humans are the center of the cosmos. Nineteenth-century anthropologists such as Edward Tylor culminated the modern attack on animism, stripping the world further of whispers of the sacred. Anthropomorphism is seen by most scientists as an outdated, distorting primitive regression of children, poets and madmen, that has been replaced by scientific method that requires its distortions to be removed from the real world known only by scientific method. The epistemology here assumes that imaginative language and its symbols have no valid part to play in rational, scientific knowledge, and that religious language can be stripped of its primitive layer. Some call anthropomorphism a "pathetic" fallacy, referring to the "pathos" (Greek for suffering) or passion in the images supposedly clouding reality.

But anthropomorphism has not entirely left the scientific stage. Scientists debate this issue in animal ethology, for example, where some name the elephants,

chimps, or whales that they study. Jane Goodall names her chimps and Katy Payne names her elephants, describing mothers, aunts, and bulls, using family analogies, blended with detached scientific analysis. They develop empathy for them and even hint at a sense of the sacredness of their existence, threatened by poachers. Those who oppose such empathy may number the animals they study to prevent empathic anthropomorphizing. But can animal behavior be understood at any depth without making analogies to our own animal feelings? Astronomers still anthropomorphize planets with names of ancient gods – Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and physicists describe aspects of dark matter as "machos" and "wimps" (Greist). The best efforts at "objectivity" have not succeeded at eliminating all anthropomorphism from science. Unconscious remnants or conscious empathy have not been shed, and perhaps cannot or should not be shed. The unconscious is difficult to eliminate in thought, and ethical considerations such as empathy for animal suffering may make some anthropomorphism ethically valid.

The ancient worldwide anthropomorphic principle of sacrifice was the portrait of divinities that required to be fed by sacrifices of valuables in order to bestow on humans gifts such as children, food, or military victory. The gradual ethical humanization of Western religions stopped this practice. Human sacrifice was rejected in the story of Abraham almost sacrificing his son Isaac, for example. Then Jewish animal sacrifice finally stopped in 70 CE, when the bloody sacrificial practices of the second temple, destroyed by the Romans, gave way to local synagogue rabbinical teaching. Christians interpreted Jesus as the "last sacrifice" to God to atone for human sin.

The disposable argument still influences theologians in a different way. Rudolf Bultmann sought to demythologize the New Testament, not just to reveal the true historical events, but to strip away the anthropomorphic mythic accidents of its environment and translate it into abstract existentialist categories for a purer theology. The myth of the Messiah becomes faith in the freedom to live an authentic life. Today some biblical scholars, such as the "Jesus Seminar" group, continue the nineteenth-century effort to find the historical foundation of the Bible by eliminating as many mythic symbols as possible. They assume that the only valid language of faith is historical, not imaginative. The problem with this approach is that it is unable to rid itself of its own embedded imaginative language.

Gender is a sore point here, when feminists accuse scientists of reserving true scientific objectivity to the male psyche, and charge theologians with still referring to God as "He," thus retaining the father myth of God. Feminists

are experimenting with using images of God such as mother, friend, or lover. Others see in science an anthropomorphic assumption that human rationality is part of the intelligibility of the universe, and can know it all (scientism). But despite its successes and empirical testing, it may be that science is able to know only a narrow range of existence, and by ignoring the rest, distorts its picture of the whole as with our images of flawed android robots. The Disposable argument depends upon conscious knowledge and neglects unconscious anthropomorphizing.

Iconoclasm, or “image-smashing” is a cultural and religious attack on images, especially of the divine. Judaism built iconoclasm into the Ten Commandments, saying “no graven images” were allowed of anything in heaven or on earth, perhaps reacting to their experience in Egypt. Similarly Islam rejects human and animal images in its art and allows only calligraphy and plant forms. Theoretically iconoclastic Roman Catholic churches are full of frescoes, paintings, and statues of Jesus, Mary, and saints. Protestants discarded numerous visual images and decorations in churches, so much that Calvinist churches were described as having only “four walls and a sermon,” stressing the “Word” rather than the visual image. All, however, use literary images profusely in their faiths – God as warrior, liberator, king, harsh judge, merciful, and above all, male and fatherly. Buddhism stands out among highly anthropomorphic Eastern religions for its theoretical rejection of anthropomorphism, although its acceptance of the Asian belief in reincarnation retains a sense of transmigrating spirits pervading all sentient beings. The iconoclastic view that anthropomorphism is disposable neglects the unconscious or unacknowledged role of imagery in culture.

The Necessary Argument

Anthropomorphism is inevitable and necessary, some argue, because it is a functional part of perception, knowledge, and religion. It provides necessary organizational frameworks that reduce chaos and fear. Imagination is a part of the way we think, and how can we avoid thinking in metaphors from our environment? For most who think this way, there is no divinity behind the images. Here anthropomorphizing is a type of imaginative projection into the world that is a necessary way of stabilizing the world. The supposed objective world cannot be fully known, only the “marked” world of meanings. They are subject to critical analysis and change, but are not all disposable. Astrological anthropomorphisms, for example, can be withdrawn as erroneous projections, but

certain symbols, such as scientist-heroes, are needed to stave off chaos, fear, and despair.

In Holland, Fokke Sierksma thought that anthropomorphic gods, such as a lawmaking, loving fatherly God are needed to complete the *terra incognita* beyond the world ruled by ego. They are needed subjective gap-fillers in a world whose depth below the subject-object divide finally eludes us. But he believes that God is dead. These psychological and theological constructs can be modified by critical thought.

Stewart Guthrie argues that anthropomorphism pervades perception for good reasons. We are predisposed, shows cognitive science, to see the human form and qualities everywhere, and the more organized these “faces in the clouds” are, the stronger perception is. The more we see what we expect to see, in familiar images and categories, the clearer and more certain knowledge or religion seems. But comfort is not a function for anthropomorphism, because some images, such as Satan, are frightening. For Guthrie, anthropomorphism is the very core of religious experience, and any religion that seeks to eliminate the gods is not a religion. For Guthrie there is no real god – the clothes have no king. This position gives more importance to anthropomorphism, but psychologically, it seeks to keep the world ruled by cognitive ego-consciousness, theoretically in control of all its worldly imaginative projections.

The problem with this view is a lack of critical flexibility. The familiarity of the frameworks makes them seem unchangeable. In technological culture, the solution to problems is too often imagined to be just more technology in the same framework (re-enforced by science fiction anthropomorphisms), not a re-examination of the assumptions of technology itself, such as the domination of nature. Much anthropomorphism is taken literally, especially in religion. Fundamentalist religions claim patriarchal privileges, because God or an incarnation of God is male and literal views of creation and social roles because it says so in the holy text. This blocks the critical flexibility of reforming outdated anthropomorphisms. Also, mainstream religions that allow some critical adaptations need to ignore old parts of the sacred text, such as slavery and patriarchy. This selective neglect can become embarrassing, as when critics point out the pervasive violence in major religious texts, which become blessings on bloody nationalisms.

The Analogy Argument

Theism is the major religious expression of the divine with human qualities. While most believers talk as if

the anthropomorphic images of the gods were literally true (e.g., God the Father), philosophers and theologians have wrestled with how this could be. Maimonides argued that God is absolute and without anthropomorphic qualities, but organs such as the heart are metaphorically used to describe God in similes to awaken a sense of “His” higher spiritual reality. The Neo-Platonic principle, that by *participation* the divine intelligible world descends into the material world, influenced many, notably the Christian Eastern Orthodox, who struggled with whether the divine is present in their icons, and concluded that earthly forms can convey the “energy” of God, but not the “essence.” Very influential has been the ancient principle of *analogia*, expressed by Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite, who wrote that creatures have the capacity to receive divine ideas, but only by analogy, or in proportions, not giving complete knowledge of God. Hugo of St. Victor wrote that the world is a book written by God, and many saw in nature the signature of God. The Roman Catholic principle of *analogia entis*, or analogy of Being, is the acknowledgement that human images are analogies, proportional images of the vast mystery of Being itself. Thomas Aquinas wrote that human qualities such as goodness are figurative and limited in proportion to God’s goodness.

In India the *Rig-Veda* (x, 90) describes the creation of four social castes – brahmanic priests, warriors and government officials, shepherds and merchants, and servants – from the body of the anthropomorphic Purusha, a sacrificial personification of the world-soul. Thus the entire caste system is justified on an anthropomorphic analogy. Later Vedantic gurus mingle anthropomorphisms such as Ishvara (Brahman with qualities) and Brahman as the ground of all physical experience, but stress the underlying oneness of all existence in Brahman (Radhakrishnan and Moore, 1957: 507).

The subtle quality of the analogy principle makes it difficult for theistic traditions to avoid anthropomorphism. Even sophisticated theologians cling to literalisms such as the maleness of God and Jesus or the Brahmanic priestly tradition to justify a male-only priesthood. Again, unconscious anthropomorphism may overcome the best of intentions in this position.

The Personifications Argument

Anthropomorphism can also be seen as a robust type of imagination, which is acknowledged to be a full partner in knowledge and faith, a valid epistemology of the heart that is essential to a full life. In archetypal psychology there is an argument that when anthropomorphic

(or thieromorphic) images become fascinating in society, nature, culture, or dreams, they are inevitable and necessary, but not literal, archetypal personifications of the soul with important messages. They should not be seen as completely disposable or suitable for conversion into an abstraction such as “the father archetype.” One should, especially in psychoanalysis, explore the meaning of these images, for they bring important messages from the personal and collective unconscious. In imaginative conversation with these figures, one may, for example, realize that one has outgrown their childhood image of their father, may be able to forgive him his flaws, and thus release painful self-judgments, anxiety, or depression. This helps free religions of fatherly anthropomorphisms as well.

Such working with anthropomorphic images of psychic dynamics does not take the personifications literally, or translate them into conscious theories, but imaginatively engages them as meaningful expressions of real psychological forces. There is a paradoxical involved empathy, yet an ability to stand back and withdraw from the drama, think about it, and integrate it into daily life. This takes a strong yet imaginative ego able to relax and journey into the “underworld,” play with personifications without being overcome, and return to ordinary ego-consciousness.

This theory does not seek to follow overly conscious, literal scientific methods, but is used in psychotherapy, where symbolic unconscious dynamics behind conscious life are discovered and brought to the surface for conscious reflection. Archetypal theory, originating with Carl Jung, explores the depths of the collective unconscious and helps see the meanings of the unlimited range of anthropomorphic images that form an inevitable part of the soul, but do not cancel religion. Archetypes are unconscious, collective psychological patterns on a continuum with biological instincts. How, for example, does the psyche experience terror and evil? Jungians emphasize the strong role of shadow figures, often anthropomorphic, mythic images of evil: Satan, Hitler, villains, monsters, beasts, Frankenstein, the terrifying, repressed “other.” For Jung they show that in analysis one typically confronts the secret shadow (e.g., bad parent) and hopefully finds a treasure in it (e.g., good parent). Each archetypal pattern has its shadow. The lover Jung described as the *anima* (a man’s dream mother, lover, or shadow witch), and the *animus* (a woman’s dream father, lover, or shadow beast). Contemporary archetypal feminists let goddess images express the wide range of feminine roles.

Jung emphasized the central, regulating role of the Self archetype, which he saw as an image of psychological

divinity with innumerable symbols, such as the abstract mandala circles, animals (lion “kings”), nature (mountains, precious stones and metals), and humans (avatars, incarnations, prophets, priestesses, innocent children). This symbolic flexibility in expressing divinity opened many doors for theology, notably the feminist goddess explorations and ecological nature spirituality.

Archetypal theory offers a valuable way of seeing anthropomorphism, free of naïve or dogmatic literalism, reductive scientism, or excessively cognitive ego-centered consciousness. It allows for anthropomorphic symbolism, but at the same time it sees it as a kind of poetic, mythical play of the soul that can be made conscious only partly, but is subject to critical analysis and change. So God the “father,” for example, is a useful way to express that aspect of divinity, but it is incomplete. The great mystery of the infinite divine cannot be reduced to one half of this planet’s human reproductive system and its mental styles. The beauty of the goddess in all her spectrum of powers and the unspeakable wonder of the universe and earth’s rainbow of pre-verbal forces – stars, stones, mountains, lakes, animals, plants, etc. – can also be seen as expressions of the numinous immensity, not just those aspects that can be symbolized by an anthropomorphic father-like God.

The post-Jungian analyst James Hillman emphasizes the value of “personifying” or imagining. He rejects the “disposable” theory of anthropomorphism for being nominalist by denying the natural validity of imaginal experiences. Personifying respects images as they appear in gods or mythic figures. Much as an author’s fictional characters develop their own realities, personifying is an immediate receptive experience. It is a way of being in the world and feeling the world as a numinous, soul-filled psychological field. Ancient Greeks and Romans personified psychic powers such as Hope, Timing, Night, and Ugliness, not as unreal illusions, but as images of real phenomena. Athens had altars to Friendship, Modesty, Mercy, Peace, Victory, and Fortune. When such powers are not given their imaginative due, they may become illnesses, Jung stressed. Personified images have feeling tones and can be cherished or may reveal shadowy truths under the covers that need to emerge. Plotinus, Michelangelo, Vico, and Blake all saw the necessity to personify mythic perspectives to understand the soul’s intentions. Distinct from the dead world of industrial society, personification lets the world speak. Moonlight becomes love, dream villains demand attention and transformation, and gods offer salvation from suffering. Personifying is natural and only de-mythologizing is un-natural, Hillman argues. People may fear a personified world as a child

fears the dark, but befriending the stories as imaginative expressions of deep forces of the collective soul is transforming, like a child’s security doll or popular adult heroes who conquer evil. Anthropomorphism may be a necessary way of charming fearful strangeness out of the world.

Gods symbolically express deep and powerful collective forces that are inevitably experienced as human in appearance and qualities, but at the same time if not literalized, they can be taken into the imaginative psyche for what they can provide. The monotheistic God is not a literal father, but the father-ness of “his” image offers an image of life-giving, nurturing, loving moral guidance, just as the goddess offers “her” life-giving, nurturing, loving moral guidance with a different emotional tone, perhaps dancing rather than fighting many-armed gods express their many manifestations. These autonomous images are both in us and we are in them. They reduce the hard-nosed, literal influence of cognitive ego-consciousness and draw us into their enchanting world under the surface of control. We can interact with their different aspects and be transformed by them, taking up karate or dance, love or forgiveness, as they suggest. This process of soul-making requires faith in their powers, not as literal people out there or back then, but as personified soul-in-the-world. This is a difficult but stimulating challenge for industrial consciousness and theism.

The Presence Argument

The most abstract theoretical response to anthropomorphism goes beyond iconoclasm and personification to an affirmation of the mystical presence of an impersonal ultimate reality, not a thing because it is the source of all things, beyond yet within— *neti, neti*, not this, not that, say the *Upanishads*. This *theologia negativa*, points to the divine darkness, the cloud of unknowing, the deep mystery beyond all human images and knowledge. Some speak of a pure consciousness, difficult to perceive and articulate, subtle and quiet, but deep enough to transcend various religions and provide a foundation for the many images and theologies. Meditation is their common practice. Eastern traditions more readily differentiate between higher and lower forms of religious practices. In Hindu Vedanta, the Absolute is impersonal, and personalist theism and *bhakti* devotion is seen as a lesser practice. South Asian traditions commonly distinguish between conventional truth and absolute truth. Be still and know, say Buddhists such as Thich Nhat Hanh. The Zen monk meditates with an anthropomorphic statue of the

Buddha, yet seeks Nothingness. Find your own face before you were born, they say, and find ways of speaking of the great mystery that are original and authentic for you. This is a difficult challenge. This path is atheistic, in the sense of denying (but tolerating) the need for theistic personal images in the quest for ultimate spiritual reality.

This position acknowledges that for most people, images of divinity are inevitable and necessary, but for those who undertake deeper practices, the masks of the gods fall away and an ineffable, powerful experience of ultimate reality emerges that is beyond words and pictures. This “apophatic” position sees images as useful approximations, but disposable earthly images that must be set aside. Images of “light” are common here, or philosophically, abstractions such as Being, Presence, Emptiness, or Buddhmind.

Plato sought to purge philosophy of anthropomorphic Greek gods with his abstract ontology of Being, but he also told many myths, such as a creator god (*Plato, Timaeus* 69b). Michel Montaigne summed up a long debate, writing that

- ▶ The least-known things are the fittest to be deified; wherefore to make gods of ourselves, like antiquity, passes the utmost bounds of feeble-mindedness. . . . But to have made gods of our condition, the imperfection of which we should know, to have attributed to them desire, anger, vengeance, marriages, generation kinships, love and jealousy, our limbs and our bones, our fevers and our pleasures, our deaths, our burials – this must have come from a marvelous intoxication of the human intelligence (Montaigne, 383).

Nineteenth-century religion scholars envisioned an evolution of religions from naïve animism and anthropomorphism, as with the Egyptian gods with animal heads, upward to an iconoclasm that purified religion into a more abstract theistic god that retained personal qualities. But such a preliminary evolutionary schema is not valid, given the continuing multiplicity of religious forms today. Mystics commonly stand for the “presence” position, emphasizing cosmic mystery and the importance of the presence of ultimate reality found in experience over theorizing. Meditation, near-death experiences, and visions are common ways that this ineffable presence is experienced.

Buddhism is noted for its emphasis on simply sitting quietly in meditation, cultivating mindfulness and clearing the mind of worldly distractions, awaiting the appearance of the un-nameable. Images such as statues of the Buddha, incense, robes, and traditional monastic

practices, especially meditation, are central, but the awakening cannot be forced by form. Poetic, original, paradoxical names such as “the sound of one hand clapping” are honored as creative approximations, but not dogmatic concepts that harden cognitively and lose their energy. The bottom drops out of the ordinary ego and compassionate energy floods the humble practitioner who is grasped by a power beyond anthropomorphic representations.

One aspect of this approach is sometimes the attempt to leap over the passions, emotions, and grief of the normal ego and transcend them, rather than wrestle with them, as in psychoanalysis. Equanimity in the face of suffering, indulging in neither pleasure nor pain, are the goal, in contrast to the Western post-Freudian encounter with the unconscious soul on the way to transcendent peace. Some, such as Jung, say that, no matter how spiritual, any effort to leap over the passions is mistaken.

Anthropomorphism is a natural and strong human way of trying to make sense of the world. Some embrace it, consciously or unconsciously. But it can interfere with the search for truth, and needs critical detachment to prevent its limiting control of thought or belief. Critics who seek to eliminate anthropomorphism entirely should acknowledge the difficulty of knowing nature and ultimate reality behind the images of unconscious mythic dramas. Psychological personification and meditative wisdom point beyond literalism and abstract rationalism to poetic and pre-linguistic experiences that may ring with echoes of a far but near power.

See also: [▶ Animism](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Participation Mystique](#) [▶ Projection](#)

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Antichrist

Bobbi Dykema Katsanis

Introduction

Antichrist, at the most basic level of understanding, is simply any opponent of the Christ (q.v.), or, more commonly, *the* ultimate final opponent of Christ. This figure embodies all that is antithetical to Christ, Christ's teachings, and Christ's salvific action in the world as Christians understand these concepts. While based in a few rather obscure passages of Christian scripture, the concept of Antichrist and accompanying narratives and descriptions about Antichrist's identifying characteristics, deeds and context have developed in a long and rich tradition from the earliest days of Christianity.

Antichrist is mentioned as such only once each in two of the three epistles of John in the Christian New Testament. However, Christian theologians from very early on began associating Antichrist with the Beast described

in the scenes of final judgment in the Apocalypse (q.v.) of John (also known as the book of Revelation), as well as with apocalyptic imagery in the Hebrew Scriptures book of the prophet Daniel, and with brief apocalyptic moments in each of the four canonical Christian gospels. The main thrust of the Antichrist story is that in the final years of life as human beings know it on Earth, Antichrist through his charismatic powers of deception will come to hold sway over the affairs of humankind for a period of seven years. At the end of this period, Antichrist will ultimately be defeated by Christ and condemned to eternal torment in the lake of fire, after which all people, living or dead, will be subject to final judgment and either eternal reward or punishment for their earthly deeds and faith (or lack thereof). Adele Yarbro Collins relates Antichrist imagery to a primeval "combat myth" of cosmic struggle between good and evil at both the beginning and end of the world.

The earliest influential expansion of the Antichrist legend beyond scriptural accounts was originally entitled *A Little Book on Antichrist*. This tenth-century work by the French Cluniac abbot Adso describes the figure's identifying characteristics and context in detail. Many later writers continued to embroider upon the legend, bringing the Antichrist narrative to a level of detail on par with that of the vitae of many important Christian saints. Joachim Fiore (1135–1202) developed a three-phase system of the final days in which Antichrist would reign over the last few years of human life on earth, and Dante's *Inferno* associates Antichrist with those who have committed the sin of simony, i.e., selling ecclesial office for profit. The Antichrist narrative gained peak traction during the Protestant Reformation, when reformers such as Wyclif, Hus, and especially Luther hurled the polemical language of Antichrist at their religious opponents, primarily the papacy.

Further developments of the Antichrist legend in the modern period have been more subdued; yet the legend still carries weight, particularly with American Christian fundamentalists. The Zionist movement in the state of Israel has been associated with aspects of the apocalyptic narrative of Antichrist in the writings of Hal Lindsey (*The Late Great Planet Earth*), and of Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye (the *Left Behind* series of novels, films and television shows). Important modern literary and filmic treatments of the figure of Antichrist include Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Roman Polansk's adaptation of the Ira Levin novel *Rosemary's Baby*. The figures of Sauron and Saruman in Peter Jackson's adaptations of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy also function as important.

Antichrist figures in the popular imagination, as do horror-genre versions such as Stephen King's *The Stand*.

Description

Antichrist is characterized primarily as a deceptive figure whose main danger is his charismatic ability to lead some, but not all, faithful Christians astray. The reign of Antichrist over human affairs in the coming period of “end times” will be marked by persecution, oppression and tyranny, and by various “signs of the times,” including war, earthquake, famine, and disease. Antichrist has been specifically identified by contemporaries with various tyrannous figures in history, including Antiochus IV, Nero, Henry II of England, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, Pope John XXII, Napoleon Bonaparte, Benito Mussolini, and Saddam Hussein, and collective figures such as “the Jews.” Interestingly, Adolf Hitler appears less often in contemporaneous Antichrist rhetoric than does Mussolini; the careful interpreter of biblical and developing Christian Antichrist mythopoetics in any age would not have failed to note that Antichrist is traditionally associated with Rome, Babylon, and Jerusalem, and not with the barbarian lands to the north. In other strands of the tradition, Antichrist is geographically associated in more general terms with Empire, in which case the Third Reich is a classic example of intuitive free association with this aspect of the legend.

Other figures associated with the Antichrist legend and mythos include a messianic Last World Emperor whose rise to power is a harbinger of the arrival of Antichrist; the Beast or seven-headed dragon, who is often equated with Antichrist, in whole or in part; the figure of the False Prophet, who serves as Antichrist's public relations associate; and Gog and Magog, who are variously identified as specific figures or, alternately, as regions from which Antichrist may come; during the Cold War era American Antichrist discourse often identified Gog and Magog with the nation of Russia.

The figure of Antichrist exists in a matrix of tensions. Various readings and interpretations of the figure have emphasized either a more symbolic or a more literal understanding; an understanding of Antichrist as either an interior tendency within the human psyche or an external enemy; a collective or an individual understanding; and so forth. An important distinction must be made between Antichrist and Satan. Antichrist is a powerful and charismatic *human* opponent of God. Satan, while also powerful and charismatic, is characterized in Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures as a celestial opponent

of God, specifically a fallen angel. Conversely, Antichrist will ultimately be defeated by Christ, but the actual death blow might be dealt by Christ's agent the archangel Michael, allowing the figure of Christ himself to never be associated directly with the irredeemable downfall of any human person.

Psychological Significance

Religious historian Bernard McGinn has characterized Antichrist as a “projection of irrational fears about enemies.” The historical use of the Antichrist legend to demonize enemies, delineate boundaries of identity, and understand rapid and frightening cultural change is thoroughly documented in theological and, to a lesser extent, psychological and historical literature. The figure of Antichrist has often been used as a rhetorical device to mobilize the faithful in defense of orthodoxy or toward renewal of community life. Antichrist language often appears in the context of communal conflict or anxiety about powerful charismatic leaders both religious and political, such as the pope (Great Reform and Reformation periods); or the emperor in various moments of consolidation of civic power in the Western and Christian world.

The call to watchfulness and mobilization on the part of believing Christians occasioned by the proximity of Antichrist may provide meaning and stability in times of crisis, uncertainty and fear. Certain aspects of contemporary secular rhetoric also partake of some aspects of apocalyptic and/or Antichrist imagery, such as current fears regarding global warming and all-out nuclear warfare; while the groups and individuals engaged in public and private discourse on these concerns do not necessarily identify specific contemporary figures as Antichrist, the emotional appeal to a dualistic system, in which one group is destined for salvation and the other associated with the ultimate enemy, is at least occasionally a feature of such discourse. An internalized Antichrist, by contrast, does the psychological work of explicating the human impulse toward evil thoughts and actions and the existence of evil in the world. For at least some Christian believers, the figure of Antichrist is important in the context of divine intervention in human history, and only makes sense when coupled with a linear and progressive (or anti-progressive) understanding of history. The figure of Antichrist is used as a way of defining deviance and policing the boundaries of acceptable behavior, as well as imbuing quotidian human affairs with cosmic significance. Manifestations of Antichrist rhetoric may be identified by such common markers as: polemical

language; prophetic utterances describing the future; popular anxiety, stress, or strife, often denoted by persecution complexes or actual persecution; purposeful targeting of suspect groups by those who believe themselves persecuted, which can include parties from either or both sides of a specific conflict; and parodies of the main tenets of the vitae of the figure of Jesus Christ.

Jung (q.v.) characterized Antichrist as a personification or manifestation of the essential shadow side of, rather than simply a privation of, that which is good. Thus, ignoring or refusing to confront the existence of evil personified by Antichrist as a component of that which is good can be just as psychologically damaging as ignoring the good itself. For Jung, the figure of Christian is “parallel to the psychic manifestation of the self”; therefore Antichrist is the self’s shadow-side manifestation. This paradox is necessary because for Jung, light and shadow must be in balance in human self-understanding to ensure the psychological health of the whole person.

While Freudian psychology (q.v.) does not necessarily deal specifically with an Antichrist figure, elements of the conflict between Eros and Thanatos (q.v.) tend to be present wherever Antichrist themes are drawn into public and religious discourse. Robert Fuller has characterized Antichrist language as an outward manifestation of human fears of strong emotions, pleasures and lusts. Emotions are channeled through religious symbolism and in symbolic terms, helping the individual and community to deal with otherwise unacceptable feelings and behaviors. Antichrist embodies that which is taboo, becoming a demonization of hidden or unconscious desires and externalizing the struggle against seductive ideas and disloyal thoughts. Additionally, the scatological and erotic components of Antichrist rhetoric point toward a possible developmental-psychology understanding of the figure of Antichrist.

Bruno Bettelheim has suggested that the dark, erotic and/or violent aspects of children’s fairy tales serve a vital developmental purpose in slowly acclimating juvenile minds to the real terrors of the world outside the nursery. Given the titles and styles of certain important historical Antichrist, such as Adso’s “Little Book on Antichrist” or the 1521 Reformation pamphlet *Passional Christi und Antichristi*, it is possible that Antichrist legend has historically been a component of the religious and psychological developmental education of children.

The often conservative and even reactionary uses of Antichrist rhetoric seem to imply that Antichrist language might be useful to communities that find themselves in cultural opposition to intellectual trends, whose truth claims are subject to cognitive dissonance with modern scientific and technological understandings of

the physical world. That Antichrist will ultimately be defeated reassures the Christian believer that God is in control of human affairs and that in the end evil will not prevail.

Jewish

While a discrete figure identified as the ultimate human opponent of God has not been an important part of Jewish tradition, the Jewish figure of Armilus also draws upon the apocalyptic imagery in the book of the prophet Daniel. However, no such figure appears in Jewish writings before the Second Temple period, and Armilus is not attested to by name before the seventh century, appearing in the Targum to Isaiah. There he is described as the offspring of a coupling between Satan and a beautiful stone statue of a female human being. In the Midrash, the eschatological role of Armilus is to slay Messiah ben Joseph, after which he himself will be slain by Messiah ben David.

Islamic

Similarly, the Islamic figure of the Dajjāl, while functioning in similar ways to the figure of Antichrist in Christianity, perhaps carries rather less weight in Islamic traditions than the Antichrist figure does in the Christian imagination. The Dajjāl does not appear in the Qur’an, but develops in the *hadith* or sayings concerning the prophet Mohammed. The Dajjāl figure is a false last prophet, a bizarre human monster who attempts to lead the Jews in conquest of Islamic lands, but is ultimately defeated, usually by Jesus.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Angels](#) [Anti-Semitism](#) [Apocalypse](#) [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Demons](#) [Dragon Slaying](#) [Dreams](#) [Eschatology](#) [Evil](#) [Islam](#) [Jerusalem](#) [Myth](#) [Orthodoxy](#) [Prophets](#) [Revelation](#) [Rome](#) [Shadow](#) [Symbol](#) [Zionism](#)

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Anti-Semitism

Daniel Burston

Christian and Nazi Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism (or, as some say, Judaeophobia) is an amorphous but remarkably persistent form of religious and racial prejudice. While some scholars trace it to pagan sources (Manetho, Tacitus, Ovid, etc.), most stress its Christian origins. Generally speaking, Christian anti-Semites believe that Jews, unlike Christians, are a distinct “race,” with specific “racial characteristics,” such as darker skin and hair, a large, hooked nose and a grasping, materialistic, and decidedly tribal outlook on life that is the opposite of the noble Christian ideal, which aspires to spiritual universality. It is because Jews allegedly possess

these odious (physical and spiritual) characteristics that they reject Jesus as the Messiah and are responsible for his Crucifixion. Nevertheless, some anti-Semites say, Jews can redeem themselves and overcome their hereditary guilt by renouncing their ancestral faith and embracing Jesus as their savior. If they do, they are saved, and worthy of (grudging) inclusion in the Christian community. According to the Nazis however, faith (or the lack of it) is utterly irrelevant. The Jews' hereditary or "racial" characteristics loom so large in the Nazi imagination that someone's theological frame of reference simply does not matter. Thus in Nazi Germany, you could be an ardent Catholic or Protestant. But if you had one Jewish grandparent, you were labeled Jewish, and were to be transported to Auschwitz in due course.

Though the Nazis thought of Jews as "Semites," the truth is that Jews are not a "race" any longer. Indeed, when the term "anti-Semitism" was first coined in by Wilhelm Marr in 1879, it was already an anachronism. Long ago, Jews were in fact a Semitic people, as our common language, Hebrew, attests. But the phrase that occurs so frequently in our liturgy, *Am Israel* – "the people of Israel" – no longer refers to a discrete ethnic or racial group. It now refers to a community of believers that is as racially diverse as Christendom or the Muslim *umma*.

One reason that Christian anti-Semitism is so baffling is that Jews and Christians have so much in common. One conviction we share, rooted in Genesis, chapter 1 (verse 21), is that each and every human being is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). The practical upshot of this belief is our shared emphasis on the oneness or unity of the human species, on the one hand, and on the worth and singularity of each and every human being on the other. In addition, Judaism and Christianity converge impressively in their emphasis on the virtues of justice and mercy, and their desire to foster a truth-loving disposition among the faithful.

Another core conviction we share is the virtue of *courage*, which both Christians and Jews associate closely with another trait, namely *faith*. Jews and Christians claim that their faith gives them the courage needed to live a life based on justice, mercy and a truth-loving disposition, or to continually aspire to live in harmony with these values when we fail, as we all do, from time to time. In addition to courage, we place considerable emphasis on two other virtues, fidelity and humility. A synonym for fidelity is faithfulness, which carries the implication that those who are unwavering in their loyalty to their God are also full of faith. So, for Jews and Christians alike, courage, fidelity and humility are virtues which pivot around the central experience of faith.

Why do Judaism and Christianity share these core convictions? Because they were rooted in the religious environment that Jesus grew up in. Nevertheless, many Christians still subscribe to the mistaken idea that Jesus first taught or inspired this kind of faith, while the Jews were lacking in these attitudes and sensibilities, being robotically enslaved to "the law." This persistent fallacy is subtly anti-Semitic, and when coupled with the claim that the Jews are collectively responsible for the death of Jesus, constitutes the core of Christian anti-Semitism. That being so, it is important to stress that the habits of the heart that pious Jews and Christians share today were simply Jewish in the first instance. The gospels are strangely silent on Jesus' religious education, but he must have absorbed these ideas with the very air he breathed, and probably from some of the same Pharisaic rabbis the New Testament roundly condemns for their lack of realism, generosity, and spiritual authenticity. That is what most scholars believe, anyway (e.g., Crossan, 1996).

The belief that the Jews are collectively responsible for the death of Jesus may have been brewing for a century or so before it was finally published in 167 AD by Bishop Melito of Sardis. This claim was not formally repudiated by the Catholic Church until the Council of Trent (1545–1563). As subsequent history attests, however, this important declaration of principles had little impact. In response to Kristallnacht – in which the Nazis terrorized the entire Jewish population, killed almost 1,000 Jews, and transported another 30,000 to concentration camps, in Germany and Austria on Nov 10, 1938 – Pope Pius XI began composing an encyclical condemning anti-Semitism, but this was canceled by his successor, Pius XII, presumably to protect the Catholics living under Hitler's power from retaliatory measures he might have taken. As a result, it was not till after World War II, at the second Vatican Council (1962–1965) that the Catholic Church reiterated its stand on this matter, and started serious efforts to combat anti-Semitism in its own ranks.

Meanwhile, according to many historians, Kristallnacht, which foreshadowed the horrors of the Holocaust, was timed – at least in part – to coincide with Martin Luther's birthday on November 10. Despite the refreshing philo-Semitism he espoused in 1523, when he published "*That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*," Martin Luther (1483–1546) was bitterly disappointed by German Jews persistent refusal to join his Church, and became bitterly anti-Semitic. Indeed, he explicitly called for violence against Jews in tracts like "*On Jews and Their Lies*" (1543) and many public speeches toward the end of his life (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1941; Burston, 2007).

Anti-Semitism and Islam

A similar trajectory can be traced in the career of Muhammad (570–632). Though the founder of a new religion, rather than a Christian reformer, Muhammad initially bade his followers to pray in the direction of Jerusalem, in honor of Abraham, and started preaching in Arabia full of proselytizing zeal and good will toward Jews, which turned sour as he grew older, issuing in frequent bursts of anger and occasional campaigns of violence (Medina in 625, Khaybar in 628). Consequently, there are passages in the Koran which revile Jews, and some which can plausibly be interpreted as providing religious sanction for *jihad* against them, simply for being Jews. That said, in 638, after the death of Muhammad, Muslim rulers invited Jews back to Jerusalem – against the wishes of the Christian Patriarch. With a few notable exceptions, Muslim rulers were more tolerant of Jews than Christian rulers were until the 1880s, when pogroms in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe prompted the first wave of Zionist settlers to settle in Palestine. Ever since then, Muslim anti-Semitism has intensified, and become intricately intertwined with anti-Zionist sentiments and beliefs and a widespread tendency to Holocaust denial. Nowadays, when Christian anti-Semitism has abated somewhat in the West, radical Islamists continue to communicate and co-operate with left and right wing extremists to keep the whole sordid thing going.

Anti-Semitism and Psychoanalysis

Anti-Semitism had a profound impact on the history of psychoanalysis. The young Sigmund Freud had his heart set on becoming a research neurologist, but was deterred from that goal in 1885 by the quotas set on the number Jewish University Professors permitted to teach by ordinances passed by Vienna's notoriously anti-Semitic city council member, Karl Leuger, who became mayor of Vienna from 1897–1910. Leuger was an ardent Catholic whose ideas and activities contributed mightily to Freud's anti-Catholic animus. Had it not been for Leuger's civic ordinances, Freud might never have traveled to Paris to study with Charcot, and psychoanalysis might never have been created! (Frosh, 2005).

Somewhat later, in 1907, Freud "anointed" C. G. Jung, the son of a Swiss minister, as his heir apparent, provoking anger and consternation among his (mostly Jewish) followers, because he thought that Jung's growing stature in the world of medical psychiatry would deflect anti-Semitic criticism of psychoanalysis as a "Jewish science." These hopes were short lived. The relationship between

Freud and Jung dissolved in mutual anger and disappointment in 1913, and after World War I, Jung started to characterize Freudian psychoanalysis as a "Jewish psychology" in racist journals (Adams and Sherry, 1991; Samuels, 1991). After World War II, Jung angrily rejected the charge that he was anti-Semitic, though it was not merely Freudians who thought so. Erich Neumann, one of Jung's closest followers, and a Zionist as well, broke with Jung in the early 1930s because of his involvements with National Socialism. In *Eclipse of God*, Martin Buber accused Jung of neo-pagan tendencies that are predicated on a hostility to monotheism, and to Judaism in particular (Buber, 1952). In retrospect, like many highly educated Protestants of his era, Jung harbored both philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic tendencies. However, his struggle with Freud, and Freud's rigidity on matters of theory and practice, probably tipped the balance of his sympathies in a predominantly anti-Semitic direction for many years (Hogenson, 1983; Burston, 1999).

Quite apart from its impact on the lives of notable theorists in the field, anti-Semitism has been an object of study for several generations of psychoanalytic theorists. In 1938, Freud published *Moses and Monotheism*, which purported to explain anti-Semitism as a result of sibling rivalry and Freud's phylogenetic fantasy of the primal parricide. However, as ingenious as it was, Freud's book was highly speculative, and simply could not account for the devastating ferocity of the Nazi onslaught. Many questions remained, and in 1946, Ernest Simmel edited an anthology entitled *Anti-Semitism: A Social Disease*. More recently, in 1988, W. Bergmann published *Error Without Trial: Anti-Semitism in Psychoanalysis*. Meanwhile, just before World War II, the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research launched a psychoanalytically informed European anti-Semitism which was full of probing philosophical reflection, but utterly oblivious to the religious/theological underpinnings of anti-Semitism in the pre-modern world. This project culminated in the creation of the "A" (or anti-Semitism) scale in Adorno's monumental study, *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950). According to Adorno et al., anti-Semitism is highly correlated with religiosity and pro-fascist tendencies among American in the Cold War era. Left wing anti-Semitism, which dates back to Marx's infamous essay "*On the Jewish Question*" (1845) – and which has grown enormously since 1967, in conjunction with Islamic fundamentalism – was not even mentioned in this context.

Anti-Semitism is a baffling, protean and extremely resilient phenomenon - one that is not likely to disappear any time soon. While no single theory to date can account for all its diverse manifestations, everyone interested in

psychology and religion ought to ponder its meaning and origins for themselves.

See also: ▶ Buber, Martin ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav ▶ Nazism

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Anxiety

Allan Hugh Cole, Jr.

Anxiety is a common condition that presents in multiple forms and affects emotional, cognitive, physical, behavioral, and relational states. It includes feelings of uneasiness, worry, fear, apprehension, nervousness, and distress, and also longing, aching, and yearning. Anxiety may

also involve difficulty concentrating, ordering thoughts, speaking, and erratic conduct. A natural reaction that prepares one for responding to perceived dangers, anxiety can serve a protective function. Chronic or severe anxiety causes emotional distress, obsessive thinking, compulsive behaviors, relational struggles, and generalized restlessness. Anxiety often coexists with depression, and these exacerbate one another. Similar to depression, sources of anxiety, its effects, and its relief may be psychological, physiological, or religious in nature.

Studies indicate that approximately 13% of adults between the ages of 18 and 54 suffer from an anxiety disorder (NIMH, 2004). Other studies indicate that between 25% and 33% of the population will experience significant anxiety-related problems (Craske, 2002). A survey of primary care physicians conducted in the late 1990s found that 33% of office visits were prompted by some type of anxiety (Hallowell, 2001). Studies have shown further that anxiety disorders affect women (30%) at higher rates than men (19%) (Crowe, 2004), although this disparity likely reflects underreporting by men. Anxiety disorders, like depression, affect adults over the age of 65 at higher rates than younger populations (NIH, 2003; NIMH, 2004). Anxiety among older adults is often associated with decline in health, functioning, independence, and economic stability, role loss, and increasing numbers of interpersonal losses.

There are 12 types of anxiety disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The most common include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, specific phobia, and social phobia. Agoraphobia, which involves anxiety about places or situations from which fleeing is perceived as difficult or embarrassing, is not a anxiety disorder per se, but rather is associated with other stated anxiety disorders.

Anxiety differs from fear. Fear is tied to an identifiable source of perceived danger, such as a specific person, object, or situation. Anxiety lacks a specific source. It involves a pervasive, yet objectless or vague, threat to one's wellbeing (May, 1996). Most people find it easier to manage fear than anxiety. Because the source of fear can be identified, one may avoid, compensate for, or exert some control over it, whereas because the source of anxiety remains somewhat uncertain, one lacks a sense of control. Anxiety also differs from worry. Although anxious persons often worry, this is only one effect of anxiety.

Psychoanalytic Theory

This theory began with Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). He placed anxiety at the center of human motivation,

experience, and psychological difficulty. His most mature theory held that anxiety arises when one feels helpless in the face of a perceived threat (Freud, 1959/1989). This happens first in infancy, with the threat of losing the primary caregiver and what that person provides, including food, warmth, and comfort. As a child matures, anxiety involves threats of losing the caregiver's love and affection. Eventually, the basis of anxiety broadens to include threats of bodily injury and of losing the love or appreciation of other significant people. Childhood anxiety becomes a basis for anxiety throughout life. Present threats, as well as awareness of future ones, cause one to re-experience the helplessness known in past dangers. Anxiety signals the need to marshal adequate resources to fend off the new (or future) threat.

Freud distinguished between three kinds of anxiety (real, neurotic, and moral or social), but also points to the close relationship between anxiety and fear. *Real anxiety* is essentially fear. It is based on an identifiable threat posed by an external object or situation. *Neurotic anxiety* has to do with something unknown and that needs discovering. Freud thought that psychoanalysis demonstrates neurotic anxiety's basis in threats posed by internal drives, such as the desire for a sexual affair or seeking inappropriate control in a relationship. *Moral or social anxiety* relates to one's conscience and social expectations. This anxiety remains largely concealed from awareness by adhering to moral and social customs and expectations, and also by avoiding (repressing) unacceptable urges, thoughts, or behaviors. One may experience anxiety tied to all of these simultaneously.

Alleviating anxiety through psychoanalysis involves creating a safe environment that fosters identifying causes of anxiety without concern for disapproval or judgment. Deepening awareness of anxiety's sources and expressions, and reworking one's relationship to them, helps to control anxiety's effects.

Interpersonal Theory

This was developed by the psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan (1892–1949) in the mid-twentieth century. He expands Freud's principal focus on the individual's internal world (instinctual impulses, wishes, and fantasies) to include interpersonal engagement and its role in personality formation, and psychological health and problems.

Several assumptions guide Sullivan's theory. First, personality formation occurs *as* one engages interpersonally. Beginning in infancy, personality forms and emotional life operates according to interactions (communication)

with significant others. How primary caregivers respond to the infant's basic needs is paramount. Mental stress follows from inadequate communication, not only in early years but throughout life. Second, anxiety is what impedes communication. As anxiety increases, communication breaks down. Third, individuals in relationship contribute to a shared interpersonal field, so that interactions between two or more persons affect each individual.

Anxiety arises *not* from within us *per se*, but as a condition of our interpersonal field. It begins when a child senses an emotional disturbance in her caregiver and emotional disturbance that alters responsive interactions and prevents meeting the child's basic needs. The child "catches" the caregiver's emotional disturbance, which is interpreted as a form of anxiety, and internalizes it. The child becomes anxious. Trying to be responsive, the "disturbed" caregiver brings the anxiety "closer" to the child and increases anxiety for both of them. The child acts to alleviate this shared anxiety by seeking the caregiver's approval. Striving for approval leads to becoming what parents and others want as opposed to whom one wants to be. Although seeking approval leads temporarily to feeling more secure (non-anxious), this eventually exacerbates anxiety. Anxiety in childhood has lasting effects, for the same dynamic process reoccurs throughout life.

Like Freud, Sullivan placed importance on helping anxious persons explore sources of anxiety in therapy, and especially on increasing understanding of how anxiety relates to interpersonal relationships and conduct aimed at meeting others' needs and expectations. Relieving anxiety involves learning new ways of responding that focus on meeting more of one's own needs and expectations.

Sullivan also advocates for therapists nurturing anxious people interpersonally, with the goal of increasing their sense of security. Greater security fosters increased self-esteem, and helps rework anxiety-laden interpersonal patterns in a non-threatening environment.

Cognitive Theory

This theory locates the source of anxiety in one's thoughts and thinking processes. It was proposed by the psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck (b. 1921) in the late 1960s. He observed that depression and anxiety arise from certain patterns of thinking. These patterns consist of negative assumptions and beliefs. With depression, beliefs have to do with one's value, talents, and successes. With anxiety, beliefs involve the inability to remain secure amid

potential threats. Beliefs informed by operative cognitive patterns come automatically and only subsequently provoke emotions or affective states associated with them. How one thinks about experiences, including how information is processed, determines how one feels. Beck suggested that anxiety, like depression, can be alleviated by becoming aware of operative cognitive patterns and learning to replace them. “Cognitive therapy” involves identifying and internalizing less depressive and anxiety-laden cognitive patterns.

Beck recognizes the close relationship between anxiety and fear, but he understands the relationship differently than Freud and Sullivan. Beck calls anxiety a “fear episode” that involves an *appraisal* of a dangerous situation. Appraisal begins as a threat enters awareness and one immediately evaluates its potential for harm and resources to fend it off. This process suggests that fear involves a cognitive process. One must *think* about the danger. If assessment determines a lack of protective resources, fear gives rise to anxiety, which is the *emotional* process (feeling state) that follows from being afraid (the thought process). Thinking about a threat (fear) precedes feeling anxious about it. The cognitive component of fear gives rise to its affective one, namely, anxiety.

Since anxiety is a response to fear of perceived danger, as opposed to the cause of it, therapeutic efforts should not focus on anxiety itself. The focus should be identifying, understanding, and diminishing the fear that prompts the anxiety response by changing operative cognitive patterns. This involves working on how one appraises the fear that eventuates in anxiety.

Gary Emery (b. 1942) develops Beck’s principles of cognitive therapy and applies them to anxiety disorders. Emery’s view of “cognitive restructuring” involves education around five matters: (1) enhancing self-awareness; (2) modifying negative imagery; (3) modifying the affective component tied to anxiety (how it feels) to lessen its severity; (4) modifying the behavioral component tied to anxiety, especially avoidance; (5) and restructuring assumptions about three major life issues: acceptance, competence, and control (Beck and Emery, 1985).

Religious Perspectives

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). The Danish philosopher and theologian called anxiety “spirit sickness.” It follows from awareness of freedom, which is given by God, and the discovery that this may be used in limitless ways.

The biblical account of “the fall” (Genesis 2–3) demonstrates that Adam was the first to experience

freedom and its possibilities. Adam acted against what God had commanded, and in doing so, Adam discovered his freedom. This discovery prompted anxiety over the ability to choose. Adam could choose what he desired but was forbidden, or he could choose otherwise. Either way, he exercised freedom. Adam’s choice, moreover, actualized the opportunity for sin, which existed in the state of anxiety (Coe, 1985). Therefore, original sin followed from weakness as opposed to defiance (Marino, 1998). One cannot defy what one does not know, and Adam did not know between good and evil before he was presented with a free choice and made it. But Adam does not relinquish responsibility for the choice that led to sin. He could have made a different choice in his state of anxiety.

Adam discovered further that one’s own freedom and choice corresponds with those of others’, including God. Kierkegaard suggests that our greatest anxiety involves awareness that God is free *not* to choose us.

Anxiety has a paradoxical quality. It involves desiring what one fears (Kierkegaard, 1837), and thus it involves much ambivalence (Coe, 1985). This quality of anxiety recalls the Apostle Paul’s description of his own struggles, “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15).

Kierkegaard suggested that anxiety plays an invaluable role for human beings. Though painful, it quickens one to faith. Anxiety remains necessary for the Christian life. It reminds one of a need for Christ, and it helps one make choices appropriate for a life faithful to Christ (Gouwens, 1996). In this view, anxiety cannot be treated in the clinical sense, but it can be understood as a gift that promotes faith and reliance upon God. This understanding assuages the destructive effects of anxiety that follow from a fear of being rejected by God.

Paul Tillich (1886–1965). A philosopher of religion, Tillich called anxiety an ontological condition, specifically, “self-awareness of the finite self as finite” (Tillich, 1951: 192). Going beyond Kierkegaard’s view, Tillich differentiated between *existential anxiety*, a basic, universal type tied to being, and *neurotic or abnormal anxiety*, which issues from basic anxiety and has specific features. Existential anxiety, which all people experience, has its source in the awareness of the possibility of nonexistence, or “threat of non-being.”

Set in human beings’ limited and dependent natures, existential anxiety tends to transform itself into fear. It seeks an identifiable and concrete object of which to be fearful, as opposed to remaining in a state of uncertainty. Unlike anxiety, there is a resource for fear, namely, self-affirmation and corresponding courage. Courage defends

against despair by “taking anxiety into itself,” such that anxious persons must cultivate “the courage to be” (Tillich, 1952). This courage for self-affirmation in the midst of threats to the self comes principally from God, whom Tillich refers to as the Ground of Being. Abnormal anxiety follows from severe existential anxiety that has not been diminished by courage and, instead, has turned into despair.

Existential anxiety receives Tillich’s primary attention. Universal in scope, it has three principal expressions. These include anxiety of death and finitude, anxiety of meaninglessness, and anxiety of guilt and condemnation (anxiety of sin). These interact and sometimes merge. Existential anxiety is overcome in authentic relationships with God and other people, which foster the courage to be.

Physiological Considerations

Anxiety often has physiological sources and effects. Like depression, physiological factors can help produce anxiety or derive from it. Physiological factors in anxiety relate to neurobiology, including how genes, hormones, neurotransmitters, other brain chemicals, and brain structures and functions interact with various body systems. Persons with anxiety disorders tend to have highly sensitive anxiety triggers. Minimal potential threats to their wellbeing prompt significant changes in neurochemical and hormone levels, and they cannot prevent an acute anxiety response from fully activating. Along with different types of psychotherapy, especially cognitive and cognitive-behavioral approaches, treating anxiety often involves medications that help maintain appropriate levels of two principal neurotransmitters, norepinephrine and serotonin.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [Original Sin](#) [Sullivan, Harry Stack](#)

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Apocalypse

Charles B. Strozier

“Apocalypse” is a transliteration of the Greek work *apokalypsis* meaning “to uncover or disclose.” Within the Judeo-Christian tradition it means the specific ways in which God reveals himself or herself to humans. Prophecy, in turn, is the form of our access to that apocalypse, though some scholars have distinguished the prophetic from the apocalyptic traditions. In prophetism, it is argued, we are called to a change of heart, to repentance in the present, to a new way of living. It is a call to efficacy

and a challenge to change so that we can avoid catastrophe. In the apocalyptic, or the already-determined future, hope is deferred, which is why it is so often associated with the poor, the broken-hearted, the oppressed (Buber, 1954/1957: 192–207).

In that revelation that defines the apocalyptic, human history ends as God becomes fully immanent. In most (but not all) such myths, great violence is associated with this transition from the human to the divine. World-ending notions – the hallmark of apocalypse – are thus at the same time grim and profoundly hopeful. Endings are by definition beginnings. Out of violence comes redemption, renewal, hope.

In the Christian story, Jesus returns after apocalypse. This is a central message in His teachings, as for example in the Gospel of Matthew, when He describes (24:6–30) the “wars and rumors of war,” how “nation shall rise against nation” and “there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes,” how “they shall deliver you up to be afflicted” and “there shall be great tribulation,” even “the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken,” but for the faithful who survive, there “shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” in great power and glory. Fundamentalists rely on a specific version of this general story, one that is more closely based on a close interpretation of the book of Revelation, the last and dramatic book in the Bible. In it a sequence of events leads from the Rapture, through Tribulation, to the story of His millennial rule following the great battle of Armageddon, past a second great battle of good and evil and into the glorious making of the new heaven and the death of death itself when Satan and sinners are cast onto the lake of fire.

The apocalyptic energizes all forms of contemporary fundamentalism, including most noisily the Christian but also importantly the Jewish and Moslem traditions. These themes include the ambivalent struggle of all fundamentalisms with modernity (which is a very different thing from a rejection of the modern project), a tendency to create social and cultural enclaves that are in a sense open on one side, an exceedingly patriarchal attitude toward women, an attitude toward texts that always moves towards literalism, often but not always an evangelical outreach, and a sense of apocalyptic doom that involves a new relationship toward violence. The general principle is that fundamentalists radically alter the faith traditions out of which they emerge but in their extremities themselves share more in common than they would ever like to admit. There is even a fundamentalist mindset, which embraces rigid dualistic thinking, is totalistic or

absolutist, moves all too easily toward a paranoid style, lives within a frame that lends it a special relationship to the divine, embraces either an actual or a potential for violence and the dispensing of the evil other, and is always apocalyptic. The fundamentalist always and absolutely yearns for the radical end of this world that will be transformed in a firestorm into some image of final redemption, peace, and eternity.

Apocalyptic ideas, however, are rampant in American culture and by no means restricted to religious fundamentalism. Everywhere there are images of Armageddon and the end, from Homer Simpson who works fitfully for the local nuclear plant, to Schwarzenegger’s “Terminator,” to the banal *Left Behind* series (LayHaye and Jenkins, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d, 2001e, 2004a, 2004b). Sometimes, a genius like Don DeLillo explores apocalyptic themes in ways that bring new meaning to old forms. In *White Noise* (1985), for example, a professor of “Hitler Studies” moves through traumatic history to nuclear threat, and in *Mao II* (1991) the narrator joins the cultic frenzy of the Moonies with immersion and death in Beirut terrorism of the 1980s. Some of our most perceptive contemporary philosophers are equally drawn to the power of the apocalyptic. How can they not notice it, since it defines the most terrifying and yet sublime levels of contemporary existence? It is not surprising a new shelf of books on 9/11 has appeared filled by Jacques Derrida in 2003 (*The Work of Mourning*), Paul Virilio in 2005 (*Ground Zero*), and Giovanna Borradori in 2004 (*Philosophy in a Time of Terror*), among many others.

Hope lies in the idea of totalistic redemption. Our own successful nineteenth-century experience of abolitionism would have been inconceivable without its apocalyptic undertow, as I have argued in *Apocalypse* (Strozier, 1994). In Christian theology, as Catherine Keller has argued (1997: xi–xiv), people as diverse as Daniel Berrigan and Liberation Theologians from Allan Boesak, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, and Pablo Richard read the book of Revelation as a call for the oppressed to overthrow the world in their own image. Lois Ann Lorntzen (1997), in turn, describes the apocalyptic nature of the environmental activism of Earth First!, and one could add that of PETA and the very interesting and hopeful movement of anti-globalists among young people all over the globe. Even on the less psychologically stable fringes of this movement, among the millions of those who either feel they have been abducted by UFOs or have faith in the truth of the phenomenon, the feeling among many, as the late John Mack (1995) of Harvard described it, alien beings outside of our familiar Cartesian world are

attempting to save us from our path of destruction toward collective death. Finally, people such as the German theologian, Jurgen Moltmann (1993), in *The Theology of Hope* argues for a renewal of Christian eschatology in his read of Revelation, and Catherine Keller (1997) argues passionately in *Apocalypse Now and Then* and in many subsequent essays, that the book of Revelation is a text of hope, filled with dark and ominous images, especially against women, but that the wild and poetic flux of end time images must be yoked toward our salvation.

But nor can we ignore the malevolent power of the apocalyptic and its role in the creation of “atrocious-producing narratives,” as Robert Jay Lifton (1973: 65) has put it. The book of Revelation is in this sense a very dangerous text. It is filled with images of blood running up to the bridles of the horses, of seals opening to death, of trumpets blowing violence, and of vials pouring forth destruction in three great sequences of sevens, each linked forward and backward at the endpoints of destruction. Revelation is a story of biblical genocide, with God acting, in the words of James Jones (2006), as a “Divine terrorist.” There is a logic to our aspirations toward sacred, apocalyptic redemption. Dispensing of the other in collective ways, something we call genocide, grows out of an intensely felt idealistic and moral commitment to make the world better, as Lifton (1961: 433–437). People commit individual violence for all kinds of idiosyncratic reasons, but it is the deeply idealistic goal of changing history, of correcting it, of purifying it racially and ethnically that leads to genocide. And for the most part, those who carry out exterminatory projects feel they are acting on behalf of a messianic goal or on behalf of God’s end time purposes in the world, or some variation of these motivations.

The text of Revelation is presented as a dream, which is why John writes it in the past tense, and it moves quite logically from the release of great violence at the hands of an angry God to final redemption in chapters 19 through 22. Revelation is also a survivor narrative, for the text proves simultaneously the death and torment of the other and the salvation and redemption of the elect. There are, of course, many survivor narratives, and some can become paradigmatic of the hopeful for all time. But in the apocalyptic as we know it from the book of Revelation the survivor narrative gets corrupted and turned into violence as it gets totalized, or turned into an absolute story of redemption.

Apocalyptic or endist narratives, however, are not one thing and certainly are not restricted to the book of Revelation but have themselves evolved historically, from

the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* in the thirteenth century BCE, to the early Zoroastrians some six centuries later, to the author of the book of Revelation, John of Patmos in 95 CE, and to Joachim of Fiore (1135–1202) in the Middle Ages. But in no way have apocalyptic ideas emerged more importantly than in our recent historical discovery of the ultimate power of destruction with nuclear weapons and increasingly with other biological agents. Nuclear and other ultimate weapons have changed us psychologically and spiritually in ways we are just beginning to understand. We do not need God anymore, as we have since the beginning of culture, to carry out the end. The agency shifts. Ultimate power of destruction, which along with creation is the essence of God’s divine power, is now in human hands. It changes us in ways we are just beginning to understand.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Fundamentalism](#)

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Apollo

David A. Leeming

One of the most important of the Greek gods, Apollo was the son of the high god, Zeus, and the Titan, Leto. Apollo's twin sister was Artemis. Apollo was the god of light and reason. He was associated with music and the other arts. By defeating the Python, a mythical relative of the old Mother goddess at Delphi, Apollo became known as Pythian Apollo. His defeat of the old power, like his overruling of the same power represented by the Furies at the trial of Orestes for matricide, establishes him as the symbol of patriarchal order at the center of the classical Greek world view. That order was based on the mind rather than emotion, on reason, moderation, balance, and form as opposed to what was seen as the old chthonic chaos. If the old female power was of the earth and its mortality, Apollo's was of the sky, heaven and its eternity. In his attention to social order, Apollo's concerns are not with individual worth, but with "higher values." To quote mythologist Walter Otto, "The sense of his manifestation is that it directs man's attention not to the worth of his ego and the profound inwardness of his individual soul, but rather to what transcends the personal, to the unchangeable, to the eternal forms" (Otto, 1954: 78).

"Know thyself" was Apollo's motto. As Sophocles's great Oedipus plays remind us, that motto does not refer to deep individual searching but to a public grappling to a sense of one's place in a larger world of divine and social priorities and realities.

The killing of the Python is crucial to the psychological identity of Apollo. The Python, as the representative of the earth goddess Gaia, the first deity to emerge from Chaos "in the beginning," has contact with the depths of the underworld, representing for us the chaotic unconscious. She is the logical victim of the god who takes over the Pythian oracle at Delphi and represents intellect, analysis, and consciousness. In today's world Apollo stands out on one hand as the anti depth psychologist, concerned not with the inner self but with learning one's place in society. In another sense he is the model of the process by which the unconscious is "conquered," brought to the light of day, and of the ego in complete control over the demands of libido and superego.

See also: [▶ Apollonian and Dionysian](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#)

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Apollonian and Dionysian

David A. Leeming

Since Friedrich Nietzsche discussed the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy in his *The Birth of Tragedy*, the dichotomy has been extensively applied by philosophers, theologians, and especially by literary critics to discussions of an essential conflict between two human

impulses or ideals symbolized by Apollo and Dionysos in Greek mythology.

Terms generally applied to Apollo are reason, order, intellect, form, moderation, and consciousness. It was Apollo, the god of light, who defeated the primordial goddess-empowered Python and installed himself as the source of oracles at the sacred precinct of Delphi. The defeat of the Python represents the classical Greek patriarchal culture's defeat of the old chthonic and chaotic goddess power of Gaia, the first-born of Chaos in the Greek creation myth.

Dionysos was associated with the earth and the world rather than the sky and the heavens. He was, like Apollo, a son of Zeus, but only a marginal Olympian. He was the "Mad God," associated with ecstasy and chaotic emotions. Dionysos is the god of the grape, of drunkenness.

It has become usual to suggest in various contexts that both the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses need to be celebrated and kept in a state of balance. A work of art that is all form and no emotion is by definition inferior. The same could be said of a marriage or an athlete's approach to sport. Nietzsche, in his discussion of tragedy, recognized the necessary tension achieved by the presence of both the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Scholars remind us, in fact, that Dionysos and Apollo in ancient Greece were not necessarily seen so much as opposites as parts of a whole. In fact, as Apollo spent part of the year at Delphi – the navel of the Earth – Dionysos spent the other part there.

In terms of human psychology, the Apollonian aspect of our psyches is that which emphasizes order and self-control. That side is balanced by the Dionysian need to experience the emotional depths. Apollo, the god whose motto is "Know thyself," is the ego overcoming the chaotic elements of the unconscious so that an ordered, sane life can be lived. Dionysos is the need to delve into that unconscious and to experience its chaos before true individuation or wholeness can be achieved. As Dionysos descended to the Underworld and returned, the voyager into the unconscious can hope for a rebirth into an Apollonian self.

See also: [☛ Apollo](#) [☛ Dionysos](#)

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Apotheosis and Return

Alice Mills

Monomyth

According to Joseph Campbell's monomyth model of the hero-quest in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, there is a variety of ways in which a quest can end. The quest does not proceed at all for the person who steadfastly refuses the call to adventure. The hero may die at various points, especially during descent to the underworld. At the climax of the quest, apotheosis may occur as the hero transforms to a god. If the quest story completes the monomyth cycle of events, the hero experiences a return to society which may prove difficult. Reintegration to the familiar world of family, friends and ordinary everyday reality is hard on both sides, for the hero who has experienced the life-changing events of the quest and for those who have remained at home with little or no idea of what the hero has undergone.

Religion

In terms of religious experience, the equivalent to the hero's difficult return is to be found in life after conversion. Religious conversion involves the overthrow of previously held values, beliefs and attitudes. Having gone on this religious hero-quest and gained their spiritual treasure, converts are then likely to face the difficulty of rejoining a society that either does not comprehend or is actively hostile towards their transformation, unless they choose to renounce their earlier social and familial ties altogether. Full reintegration is not possible, as it would entail renouncing the spiritual insights gained in conversion. Remaining true to those new spiritual beliefs may well mean encountering persecution. The convert's sense of assured meaning and purpose in life can be found particularly vexatious when it clashes with a well established faith that the convert once subscribed to: of such clashes are martyrdoms made.

Boundary Issues

An equivalent to hero-quest apotheosis can be found in religions that seek for enlightenment. As Campbell

discusses, in Mahayana Buddhist belief the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara chooses to remain on the threshold of apotheosis until all sentient beings attain the state of enlightenment. Enlightenment is apotheosis not in terms of physical transformation but in attaining a godlike state of wisdom. According to the practitioners of Voodoo, the gods mount their human carriers without transforming them in rituals which might be understood as temporary apotheoses. Another form of apotheosis is the divine vision to which the lives and writings of mystics in many religious traditions bear witness. While apotheosis is usually a permanent transformation from mortal to divine in myth, in religious experience it is described as a temporary union of deity and human. The three religions of the book, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are wary of apotheosis, despite their wealth of mystical writings. Part of this wariness about claiming even temporary unity between god and human derives from the Old Testament deity's denunciation of other deities. In Islam, the mystical Sufis have long been persecuted as heretics. Among Christians, wariness of apotheosis stems in part from the bloodstained history of heresy, in which devout practitioners of theologically divergent faiths each calling itself true Christianity persecuted and attempted to annihilate one another. Theological battles raged, and lives were lost, over the question of whether Christ was true man who experienced apotheosis and became god at some time during his mortal life, or true god who only appeared to be a mortal man, or simultaneously true god and true man. It was this latter doctrine that became medieval Latin church orthodoxy in the Nicene Creed, ruling out apotheosis as an interpretation of Jesus' life and death.

Psychology

Psychologists are likewise wary of claims of apotheosis. Those human beings who assert their divinity in the secular Western world are likely to be diagnosed as mentally ill and to have their symptoms controlled with drugs. Jung warns of the dangers of inflation, which he defines as occurring when a human being identifies too closely with an archetype. The problems of return from the hero-quest and reintegration into society are well-recognized issues in psychotherapy. The person seeking therapy, understood as engaging in inner quest work to examine, recognize and alter destructive patterns of behavior, may well succeed in self-transformation, profoundly altering understandings of self and the world, changing beliefs, attitudes and values. On their return these heroic

venturers into the depths of the psyche are likely to behave very differently towards their families and friends. They may be welcomed with approval or rejected, even persecuted, and they may find that they can no longer live in the old way, stay in the same relationships, keep the old friendships alive or slot back into their jobs. Whether the difficulties come from within or without, once a person has deeply changed in psychotherapy, complete reintegration into the old ways of living is no longer possible. For the therapy client as for the mystic and the quest hero, the end of the process can bring active persecution or lonely suffering along with joys beyond the imagination of those who have not traveled that path.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Campbell, Joseph](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Monomyth](#)

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Archetype

Ann Casement

Archetype is one of Jung's two "signature concepts" according to the Jung scholar, Sonu Shamdasani, the other being the *collective unconscious* with which it is closely linked. Jung states that the collective unconscious is the part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that unlike the latter it does not owe its existence to personal experience. Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the content of the collective unconscious "is made up essentially of *archetypes*" (Jung, 1959: 42).

Jung first used the term "archetype" in 1919 in his paper *Instinct and the Unconscious*. He states there is good reason for supposing that the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves, in other words they are "*patterns of instinctual behaviour*" (Jung, 1959: 44). He goes on to say: "There are as many archetypes as

there are typical situations in life” (Jung, 1959: 48). In Jung’s model, the unconscious rests on a spectrum with the archetype at the ultraviolet end and the instinct at the infrared end. These struggle and intermingle with each other in the unconscious to form units of energy and motivation that manifest in ideas, images, urges and strivings. From this it may be deduced that the psyche is located in the space between instinct and archetype, matter and spirit, the body and the transcendent mind. “Psychologically, however, the archetype as an image of instinct is a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives” (Jung, 1960: 212).

Jung combined his reworking of the problem of instinct with “Plato’s high valuation of the archetypes in his theory of forms, which was maintained through to medieval philosophy, the archetypes had been reduced by Kant to a few categories” (Shamdasani, 2003: 242). Jung frequently relates his writing on archetypes to Plato’s “eternal, transcendent forms” (Jung, 1959: 33).

Jung went on to distinguish between “the archetypic representations, and the archetype itself, similar to Kant’s *das ding-an-sich* (the thing-in-itself) which is irrepresentable” (Shamdasani, 2003: 260). Kant’s theory of knowledge divided human cognition into what it could grasp viz. the phenomenal world and what it could not, which he termed the noumenal world – the *a priori*, timeless, spaceless, and causeless entities both within and outside the psyche. Jung linked Kant’s thinking on the *a priori* entities to his theory of archetypes.

The *archetypic*, or primordial image as it was first called by him, is frequently met with in mythology and the great religions. The irruption of these archetypic images from the unconscious into the conscious realm may be viewed as the basis of religious experience and of the need for the mysterious and symbolic that underlies the quest for what Jung calls *individuation*. As Jung states: “When. . . modern psychotherapy once more meets with the activated archetypes of the collective unconscious, it is merely the repetition of a phenomenon that has often been observed in moments of great religious crisis” (Jung, 1953:36).

The analytical psychologist, Anthony Stevens, says: “Jung took the term ‘archetype’ from the *Corpus hermeticum*. . . where God is referred to as the archetypal light” (Stevens, 2006: 79). “With his theory of archetypes operating as components of the collective unconscious, Jung sought to define the living bedrock of human psychology” (Stevens, 2006: 74). The analytical psychologist, Murray Stein’s, definition of the term archetype is that *typos* means stamp, and *arche* means the original or master copy.

Bi-Polarity of the Archetype

An important influence on the bi-polarity of Jung’s concept of the archetype was the pre-Socratic thinker, Heraclitus, with his concept of opposites and *enantiadromia*, a psychological law that denotes running contrarily so that eventually everything turns into its opposite which is an archetypal way of behaving. Jung’s theory of opposites states: “True opposites are never incommensurables; if they were they could never unite. . . God himself (is defined) as a *complexion oppositorum*” (Jung, 1960: 207).

Archetype and instinct are also opposites as follows: “Archetype and instinct are the most polar opposites imaginable, as can easily be seen when one compares a man who is ruled by his instinctual drives with a man who is seized by the spirit. . . They belong together as correspondences. . . they subsist side by side as reflections in our own minds of the opposition that underlies all psychic energy” (Jung, 1960: 206). The archetype is spirit and Jung goes on to state that: “The essential content of all mythologies and all religions and all isms is archetypal” (Jung, 1960: 206). As can be seen, both archetype and instinct are deeply implicated in religious and spiritual questions which Jung affirms as follows: “Confrontation with an archetype or instinct is an *ethical* problem of the first magnitude” (Jung, 1960: 208) (Original italics).

Another pair of archetypal opposites, *anima/animus* is relevant here as follows: “The archetypal images that link the self and ego-consciousness form a middle realm, which Jung calls *anima* and *animus*, the realm of soul. In Jung’s view, polytheistic religions stem from and represent the realms of the anima and animus, while monotheistic religions base themselves on and point to the self archetype” (Stein, 1998: 102–103) (Original italics).

Spirit and instinct were united in symbolic form in the archetypal form of the alchemical *hieros gamos* or higher marriage of opposites. “. . . the symbolic has the great advantage of being able to unite. . . incommensurable factors in a *single* image. With the decline of alchemy the symbolical unity of spirit and matter fell apart, with the result that modern man finds himself uprooted and alienated in a de-souled world” (Jung, 1959:109).

The Phenomenological Approach to Archetype and Religion

The group of scholars that gathered together under the leadership of Jung at Eranos included the Romanian-French historian of religion, Mercea Eliade. He was a

phenomenologist who was interested in uncovering the archetypal structures and pattern of religious life. In his writings on religion (*Patterns of Comparative Religion* 1958; *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 1954; *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* 1964) he recognized a basic division between traditional religions such as the archaic cults of Asia, Europe, and America, and the historical religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The chief element in the former is the depreciation of history and the rejection of the profane, mundane world, combined with an emphasis on actions and things that repeat and restore transcendental models. Only those things that participate in and reflect the eternal archetypes through which cosmos came out of chaos are real in this outlook. The mode of expression in this model is in consequence repetitive.

Post-archaic or historical religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam tend to see a discontinuity between God and the world and to locate the sacred not in the cosmos but beyond it. These hold to linear views of history in the belief that the meaning for humankind is worked out in historical process which is seen to have a purposeful plan. For this reason, the historical religions have been monotheistic and exclusivist in their theologies.

The following statements from Jung demonstrate his archetypal approach in relation to Eliade's writings on religion: "The life of Christ is understood by the Church on the one hand as an historical, and on the other hand as an eternally existing, mystery. . . . From the psychological standpoint this view can be translated as follows: Christ lived a concrete, personal, and unique life which, in all essential features, had at the same time an archetypal character" (Jung, 1958: 88). He says Catholicism "gives the archetypal symbolisms the necessary freedom and space in which to develop over the centuries while at the same time insisting on their original form" (Jung, 1958: 465). And: "...archetypal situations only return when specifically called for. The real reason for God's becoming man is to be sought in his encounter with Job" (Jung, 1958: 397).

Criticisms and Revisions of the Theory of Archetypes

Jung's theory of archetypes has been the object of criticism from many sources including the French structural anthropologist, Lévi-Strauss, as summed up in his statement that it is possible to "dispose of theories making use of

the concept of 'archetypes' or a 'collective unconscious'" (Lévi-Strauss, 1996: 65). He accuses Jung of attempting to find universal contents in his concept of archetypes but as the analytical psychologist, Wolfgang Giegerich, says of Jung's later thinking: "He (Jung) is no longer concerned with any substance, any entity. . . .he simply expresses the abstract notion of the oppositional structure or form of the psychic. . . .What the opposites are is here not said, and it cannot, should not be said in the context of this late work (*Myterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry Into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*), because this would be a relapse into the substantiating style of thought that this title has long left behind" (Giegerich, 2006).

Brief summaries of the views of two writers, the analytical psychologists, George Hogenson and Jean Knox, whose work represents major revisions of archetypal theory will be reproduced here. Lack of space inhibits elaboration of the important work of other writers in this area such as the analytical psychologists, Joe Cambray, who views archetypes, as well as various other key aspects of Jung's approach, as emergent properties from the complex interaction of the psychic system with the world; and Patricia Skar, who takes a similar line and goes on to suggest archetypes are the early products of developmental self-organization and should be considered to be a special category of complex.

George Hogenson asks the key question: What architecture of mind is best suited to underwrite the theory of archetypes? His conclusions are that cultural patterns encoded in the genome "what most Jungians would recognize as archetypes" (Hogenson, 2003: 108) are not and points instead to a less *a priori* structure of the mind. This is based on his study of robotics and dynamic systems theory whose "research paradigms conflict with the notion that strongly innate or *a priori* internal representations of the world are necessary to explain complex behaviour" (Hogenson, 2003: 109). Hogenson's interest in Baldwinian evolution (named after the psychologist, James Baldwin) is succinctly expressed by Terence Deacon, Professor of Biological Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, who is quoted by Hogenson as follows: "Baldwin proposed that by temporarily adjusting behaviors or physiological responses during its lifespan in response to novel conditions, an animal could produce irreversible changes in the adaptive context of future generations. Though no new genetic change is immediately produced in the process, the change in conditions will alter which of the existing or subsequently modified genetic predispositions will be favored in the future" (Hogenson, 2003: 110).

Jean Knox points to the convergence in recent times of cognitive science, neuroscience and psychodynamic theory in recognizing the self-organization of the human brain whereby genes do not encode complex mental imagery and processes but “. . .instead act as initial catalysts for developmental processes out of which early psychic structures reliably emerge” (Knox, 2004: 4). Furthermore: “Archetypes are not ‘hard-wired’ collections of universal imagery waiting to be released by the right environmental trigger” (Knox, 2004: 4). Instead, archetypes as emergent structures play a key role in psychic functioning and symbolic imagery. The way archetypes have often been portrayed is that there is information stored in a genetic code waiting “like a biological Sleeping Beauty, to be awakened by the kiss of an environmental Prince. This. . .is frequently implicit in discussion about archetypes, in Jung’s own writings and in that of many former and contemporary analytical psychologists” (Knox, 2004: 5). The gradual emergence of archetypes in analysis may enable the coming into being of the capacity for symbolization.

All the writers included in this last section are critical of any notion of archetypes as innate or “hard-wired” into the genes in their revision of Jung’s theory of archetypes.

See also: [Collective Unconscious](#) [Eliade, Mircea](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Arhat

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In Buddhism, the term (Skt.) “arhat” (Pali “arahant”) refers to a person who has achieved realization or enlightenment; having attained a state of nirvana. It is the model for spiritual development in Theravada Buddhism, one of three branches of contemporary Buddhism (cf.), also known as the southern transmission, because the tradition went southward from India to Sri Lanka, then to Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia. In the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, the model of the arhat is replaced by the model of the Bodhisattva (cf.).

The arhat is a fully realized being and upon death they do not return to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, the samsaric wheel of life. One attains this state through much dedication and effort, probably across many lifetimes. The earliest Buddhist scriptures, the *Tipitaka*, recount stories of how many of the monks who studied with the Buddha attained arhatship during their lifetimes.

There are four stages over which the already advanced practitioner reaches the final stage of release from the wheel of life. The “stream-enterer” is the first stage, the “once-returner” is the second, the “never returner” the third, and the arhat the fourth stage. In the experience of stream entering, the person is sufficiently well along in the path to actually taste the direct experience of (Skt.) nirvana or (Pali) nibbana. But the experience is fleeting because the mind-stream is not completely purified of the obscurations of attachment. As the mind is purified, the person achieves the degree of stability in the enlightened state of mind that they are only needing one more life-time to complete the process, and in the non-returning stage, if one is reborn at all, it is into one of the higher realms, and for the arhat, the achievement occurs in this lifetime.

For many lay Buddhists in the Theravada tradition, it is recognized that to achieve enlightenment one needs to be able to devote much time to meditation. As a lay person, a “householder,” one cannot realistically hope to achieve that goal. What one can strive for is to gain sufficient merit over the course of this life time to have a better reincarnation next time, and perhaps then to be able to release attachment to worldly things and focus on spiritual progression. By treating other sentient beings with “loving-kindness” (Pali “metta”) and above all, by supporting the ordained sangha (cf.) of monks and nuns through offering, one can gain much merit.

The basic means of achieving enlightenment is through the practice of meditation. In contemporary Theravada Buddhism, this involves the practice of vipassana (Pali) or insight meditation. This style of meditation is particular to Buddhism, and is found in all three branches, Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. In the latter two traditions it is known as shamata, or calm abiding meditation. Vipassana is described in the Mahasattipattana Sutta, part of the Tipitaka, or “three baskets” of Buddhist scriptures in the Pali language (Thera, 1962).

See also: [▶ Bodhisattva](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Enlightenment](#) [▶ Meditation](#)

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Ascension

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The ancient world understood the earth to be suspended within the larger *kosmos* consisting of various concentric realms. The whole order was perceived to be spiritually alive, its vastness creating anxiety among the ancients. Plato says that human beings existed as mere puppets having only a small portion of reality (Plato, *Laws* 804B, 644 D–E). Marcus Aurelius wrote that the activities of humans are “smoke and nothingness,” and the rewards of life vanish “like a passing bird” (M. Ant. 10.31; 6.15; 5.33; 10.10). This sense of alienation and the notion of the inferior nature of immediate existence created a desire to separate from the material world and ascend into the purer, celestial realm. Plato’s *Phaedrus* tells of the soul’s longing to spread its wings for upward flight to attain to god. In its fallen state it beholds beauty on earth making it desire the “true” beauty of the divine. It cannot attain this however, resulting in unending anguish (*parakinōn*, 249D). In his *Contra Celsum*, Origen of Alexandria (185 CE–ca. 254 CE) refers to Celsus’ discussion of the seven stages or “gates” of the soul’s ascent associated with the ancient Mithras cult of Persia. The stages are like a ladder at the top of which is the golden gate of the

sun and divine union. Each gate corresponds to one of the solar planets. The soul travels through each of the gates from the realm of the lower world to the higher realm of the gods (VI.22). The initiate looks directly into the rays of the sun to see a youthful deity, “beautiful in appearance, with fiery hair, in a white tunic and a scarlet cloak, wearing a fiery crown” (634–35). The ascension symbolizes the movement from the darkness of the unconscious realm into the light of consciousness. According to Jung, passage through the planetary spheres releases one to become free from characterological traits and compulsion specified in the horoscope and of which one is born: “he has won the crown of victory and become a god” (Jung, 1963: 230). Compare “The Angelic Liturgy” and the seven stages of angelic ascent to view the throne of God in the Dead Sea Scriptures (11 QShirshab). In a letter to the church in Corinth Paul speaks of being “snatched away” (Greek, *harpagenta*) into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12.1–5; cf. the *Apocalypse of Paul* 3). The Old Testament pseudepigraphic writing 1 Enoch tells of the ascension of Enoch: “the winds were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven. . . and I came into the tongues of fire” (14.8–9). Compare *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Testament of Abraham*, *3 Baruch*, *Ascension of Isaiah*. A consideration of ascension should also note its opposite, which is descending. Homer’s *Odyssey* speaks of the cave sacred to the nymphs that are called Naiads, and the two doors, one toward the North Wind by which persons go down, and the other toward the South going upward and is the “way of the immortals” (*athanaton hodos*) (XIII.104–114). Porphyry (232–305 CE) the disciple and editor of the Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus, likens this cave to the grotto of Zoroaster in the mountains near Persia. Souls journeyed down into the generative potencies of the cave to be ascended into the way of immortality (Porphyry, 1917: 2).

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Plato on the Soul](#)

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Asceticism

Fredrica R. Halligan

All the major world religions have recommended, at some point in their history, various practices of self-sacrifice in order to deepen and advance spiritual development. Asceticism is particularly pronounced in monastic orders. Ascetic practices vary from the passive (e.g., fasting, renouncement of desires) to the active (e.g., self-flagellation or, at the extreme, martyrdom). Most asceticism calls for moral choices and an austerity of lifestyle (the latter being quite counter-culture in the U.S. today). In general, asceticism is intended to fulfill one or more of the following functions: control of appetites and sense pleasures, detachment from materialism and even from relationships, awareness of mortality and impermanence, gratitude for divine blessings, expiation for sins, and identification with the suffering of others (e.g., with the Passion and crucifixion of Christ).

In psychotherapy and spiritual direction today, the question to be addressed is the healthfulness of ascetic practices, or lack thereof. This discernment must explore the consequences on the reality plane as weighed against the spiritual benefit expected in the spiritual realm. Questions must include: Is the individual likely to be hurt now or in the future? Will others potentially be hurt? In the current days of awareness of terrorist mentality, the meaning and consequences of all acts of self-sacrifice must carefully be discerned. Also of concern is the matter of motivation, along with the question of whether a specific act of self-surrender is life-giving or essentially destructive. Ascetic practice can be very beneficial to the spiritual aspirant as long as the motivation and consequences are appropriate, not ego-driven and not destructive to self or others.

See also: [▶ Crucifixion](#)

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Astrology

Rod Blackhirst

Along with alchemy, astrology is one of the cornerstones of the traditional cosmological sciences. In a popular sense the word astrology refers to the study of the influence of stars, planets and other heavenly bodies upon terrestrial events. The belief that celestial bodies influence or control events upon earth, including the inner life of human beings, is exceedingly ancient and is found in virtually all civilizations and cultures. It is more accurate, though, to understand astrology as an extensive symbolic language that permeates traditional cosmological thought far beyond the question of stellar “influences” upon earthly life. Traditional cosmology tends to understand the earth and sky as a single integrated system or even as a single living organism, in which case the planets are the “organs” of the cosmos. There are Western (Hermetic), Indian (Vedic) and Chinese systems of astrology, amongst others.

While astrology was often regarded as a priestly and divine science in ancient times, it has tended to be marginalized in the perspectives of the monotheist faiths because it is perceived to compromise the absolute nature of the Divine Will. These faiths have been keen to insist that the planets are not gods and that the predetermination of events is subject to Divine Will and not the outcome of mechanical cosmological forces. In the Middle Ages many Churchmen, including Popes, were practising astrologers but in more recent centuries (especially since the Reformation) astrology has tended to be cast as an “occult” science – or even one of the “black arts” – and so antithetical to orthodox religious faith.

In ancient texts astrology is inseparable from meteorology and weather prediction but it is also linked with character analysis and the determination of human temperaments. The notion that mental disease is caused by or is associated with the configurations of stars and planets is also age-old and has left its mark in modern languages in terms such as “lunatic” (one driven mad by the moon).

Belief in astrology persists in modern times in spite of the scientific revolution and the fact that the entire premise of astrology as it is usually formulated – non-physical and subtle or spiritual causal forces – violates the most basic tenets of the scientific paradigm. In fact, it is arguable that belief in astrology has never been so widespread and popular as it is today. Countless people “follow their stars” in astrological columns in magazines

and newspapers and there is a vast industry of astrologers offering consultations and “readings” to paying clients.

Much of this takes the age-old form of soothsaying and prognostication – the prediction of coming events – but in the modern context much of it may take a more diagnostic form with the astrologer offering psychological and character analysis from the study of a horoscope (natal chart) drawn up for the client’s time and place of birth. Since the nineteenth century there has been a strong movement to resituate astrological theory and practice away from the traditional methods of deterministic prognostication (called horary astrology) toward an understanding of astrology as a type of ancient and occult psychology with a corresponding emphasis upon natal astrology (the astrology of individual’s births.)

The most important proponent of this shift was Carl Jung who argued that astrology (along with alchemy) were premodern forms of the psychological sciences and who was even known to consult horoscopes (nativities or natal charts) of his patients in the belief that this could reveal aspects of their personality and especially their unconscious motivations. Jung said that “astrology represents the summation of the psychological knowledge of antiquity” (1962) and regarding its use in clinical practice added “I must say that I very often found that the astrological data elucidated certain points which I otherwise would have been unable to understand” (1948).

Jung attempted to provide a scientific basis for the use of astrology in psychology by advancing the theory of synchronicity which he styled as an “acausal connection principle” and more generally in his theory of the collective unconscious. According to Jung and the many astrologers who have followed him the planets and stars (zodiac) represent universal principles reflected in aspects of human psychological make-up. There is thus a *correspondence* between the heavens and the structure and contents of the human psyche. For example, it is supposed that planets that are situated below the horizon at the time of birth (and so are in the lower half of a horoscope) represent forces and motivations of which the native (patient) is not usually conscious. If, for instance, the planet Mars (traditionally the planet of the war god) is below the horizon and in a position considered to be “afflicted” or detrimental, then the native may be subject to violent and unpredictable rages over which he/she has little control. It is then supposed that a knowledge of one’s horoscope can provide self-insight and offer solutions to psychological problems.

Jung regarded the horoscope as an adjunct to more conventional modes of psychological analysis and a useful tool for therapists. The development and systemization

of this basic proposal has been pursued by many astrologer/psychologists since Jung, most notably by Dane Rudhyar who adapted aspects of the so-called humanistic school psychology (Carl Rogers, Rollo May et al.) to astrology. For him, the horoscope (natal chart) is a map to be used for the exploration of the complex inner world of drives and functions that together constitute the complete psychological organism. The publication of Rudhyar’s *The Astrology of Personality*, in 1936 was a milestone in psychological astrology. Carl Rogers published his *Client-Centred Therapy* in 1951. In the 1970s Rudhyar extrapolated Rogers’ ideas to what he style as a “transpersonal astrology.” His *Person-Centred Astrology* was published in 1972. In this work he redefines astrology as a language of symbols to be deployed as a diagnostic tool in the quest for psychological wholeness, integration, actualization and personal fulfilment.

These ideas were further developed by such astrologers as Marc Edmund Jones, Robert Hand, Michael-Meyer and Richard Idemon and have done much to change the face of contemporary astrology. In the United States today there is an Association for Psychological Astrology directed by Glenn Perry and staffed by men and women who are both practicing astrologers and qualified psychologists. The organization offers masters and doctoral degree programs.

The enthusiasm of psychological professionals and therapists for astrological tools, however, has waned since the 1970s – astrology has been psychologized far more than psychology has been astrologized – and one cannot really speak of a legitimate conjunction of the two disciplines. Despite its popularity astrology is still regarded as a fringe or pseudo-science while psychology, especially in the last 30 years, has sought fuller legitimation as an empirical, mainstream science and has been eager to shed its associations with quackery. Astrologers have tried to legitimize astrology (as “astrotherapy”) by presenting it as akin to or as an adjunct to the psychological sciences, but it cannot be said the association has been endorsed in kind by most psychological professionals.

See also: [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Synchronicity](#)

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Astrology and Alchemy

Claudia Bader

Alchemy and astrology are complementary disciplines. Sister sciences seen as the precursors to chemistry and astronomy respectively, their practitioners also consider them arts. They posit a universe where consciousness and matter are one. Alchemy relied upon astrology; astrology does not need to incorporate alchemy.

Astrology is the older discipline; some of the oldest written astrological references are Mesopotamian, and go back to approximately 1800 BC. (Britton & Walker; p. 42). It is an interpretive art as well as a science. The science of astrology is the observation and charting of the sky. The configuration of the planets is an objective fact based on geometric calculations, set up for the day, minute, and location of a person's birth. The universal element, the sky on a given day, is made personal through connecting it to earth through the time and location. This creates the wheel of the 12 houses of astrology, which determines exactly how the sky on a given day will manifest for whatever question is asked. This can be related to many different things: a person, business, country, or question.

Astrological work is most importantly the interpretation of the meaning of the configurations charted. The study of astrology involves memorizing the different archetypal meanings of the different elements of astrology: planets, signs, houses, and aspects (the geometric relationships between the planets). The art of astrology is in the synthesis and interpretation of these in relation to the subject at hand. The stars and planets have set orders and sequences. The meanings of the signs and planets have been consistent for thousands of years in western and eastern (Jyotish/Vedic) astrology. One

conceptualization of astrology is that it shows how we internalize and individualize the greater whole of life symbolized by the planets and signs. However it is conceptualized, it is about an external, orderly, a priori process made internal.

Alchemy is the inverse. In alchemy, the order has to be pulled from within the process. Alchemy is mysterious in that there is no order that is observable from the outside; even deciding what substance is chosen to begin the transformation is cloaked. Practitioners had to experiment to find this out; work with dream and revelation was just as important as scientific experiments in guiding the alchemist.

Alchemy is about process and transformation. The physical work in alchemy literally involves transforming substances from one thing to another. The goal is to obtain a substance that has the ability to transform: the philosopher's stone. However, the journey to obtain this is a transformative journey in itself, effecting psychological and spiritual change. The central metaphor of alchemy, the transmutation of lead into gold, is a metaphor for the refinement of one's being.

The planets and signs hold great archetypal significance for alchemists. In terms of correspondences, each planet has a metal associated with it; in alchemical formulation, the metals from the planets are spun from the cosmos into the earth. Alchemists used astrology to time their alchemical work, determining when to initiate a process. This allowed the alchemist the maximum alignment with the energies he/she sought to transform. These are the correspondences of the planets and the metals:

Sun: Gold
 Moon: Silver
 Mercury: Mercury
 Venus: Copper
 Mars: Iron
 Jupiter: Tin
 Saturn: Lead

In addition to the above, the seven basic alchemical stages defined by Edward Edinger in *Anatomy of the Psyche* have correlations to astrological archetypes (reprinted by permission of Open Court Publishing Company, a division of Carus Publishing Company, Peru, IL, from *The Anatomy of the Psyche* by Edward Edinger, ©1985 by Open Court Publishing Company).

The stages Edinger chose are: Calcinato, Coagulatio, Solutio, Sublimatio, Mortificatio, Separatio, Coniunctio.

Although alchemy is no longer in the forefront of modern consciousness, the archetypal power of the imagery and themes resonates psychologically as Jung, and

many Jungians, have explicated. However, the connection between astrology and alchemy is still alive, and the maxim of “As Above, So Below” can be observed in contemporary times by studying astrology, as well as in dream imagery, and themes and experiences of individuals.

People who have certain astrological themes highlighted in their charts natively or in a particular stage of their life will have characteristics and/or experiences correlating with the qualities of alchemical stages.

The astrological correlates along with the physical definition of the alchemical stages, examples of imagery and psychological themes are as follows:

Calcinatio – Mars, Pluto, Fire

- *Chemical Process:* The intense heating of a solid to remove water and all other constituents that will volatilize. What remains is a fine, dry powder.
- *Images:* Fire, Burning, Hell, Purgatory, Wolf, Lion
- *Psychological Themes:* Desire, Passion, Power, Attachment, Envy, Anger, Integrity.

Coagulatio – Earth, Saturn, Moon

- *Chemical Process:* The turning of vapor or liquid into a solid state. Cooling, or evaporating, or a chemical reaction which can create a new compound.
- *Images:* Body, Eating, Crucifixion, the Fall, Incarnation, The World of the Senses, Sex, Clothes (The body is the clothing for the soul).
- *Psychological Themes:* Embodiment, Object Constancy, Dealing with Reality, Containment, Limitation, Time and Space.

Solutio – Water, Neptune, Moon

- *Chemical Process:* A solid is turned into a liquid.
- *Images:* Water, Ouroboros, Swimming, Baptism, Bath, Flood, Dew.
- *Psychological Themes:* Compassion, Fusion, Idealization, Dependency, Addiction, Selflessness.

Sublimatio – Mercury, Jupiter, Uranus, Air

- *Chemical Process:* The material is turned into air by volatilizing and elevating it. The solid, when heated,

passes directly into a gaseous state and ascends to the top of the vessel, where it resolidifies on the upper, cooler, region.

- *Images:* Flight, Heights, Towers, Radio Stations, Jacob’s Ladder, Cosmic Ladder, Angels, Birds
- *Psychological Themes:* Detachment, Objectivity, Dissociation, Grandiosity, Observing Ego.

Mortificatio – Pluto, Saturn, Mars

- *Chemical Process:* none.
- *Images:* Blackness, Feces, Rotting, Smells, Mutilation, Overflowing Toilets, Worms, Pollution, Resurrection, Rebirth, Growth, The Nigredo. The blackness is brought about by the slaying of something, usually the dragon, but often the king, the Sun, or a lion.
- *Psychological Themes:* Mourning, Loss, Ego Death, Depression, Hatred. The death and transformation of the ruling principle within.

Separatio – Saturn, Uranus, Mars, Libra

- *Chemical Process:* The Prima materia is thought of as a confused composite of contrary substances that require separating out. The substance when heated will separate out into a volatile part which vaporizes and one which coagulates. A composite is separated out into orderly parts.
- *Images:* Swords, Knives, Logos, Compasses, Measurement, Numbering, Weights, Divisions
- *Psychological Themes:* Separation/Individuation, Discrimination, Discernment, Schizoid States, Splitting.

Coniunctio – Sun, Venus, Whole Chart, Saturn in Libra

- *Chemical Process:* Two substances come together to create a third with different properties. In particular, molten metals and the formation of amalgams by the union of mercury with other metals.
- *Images:* Marriage, Sexual Intercourse between Sun and Moon, Love
- *Psychological Themes:* Integration of the self into a whole; Individuation, Maturation.

See also: [Astrology](#) [Astrology and Mandalas](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Hillman, James, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#)

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Astrology and Mandalas

Claudia Bader

“Mandala” is the Sanskrit word for circle. The basic structure of a mandala is extremely simple. It is a circle. The circle encloses a sacred space, thought to include both the circumference and the center. When you see it on a page, it creates an inner and an outer space. It starts to become elaborate when it is concentric, or when a quadrated form is placed in or through it, as seen in [Fig. 1](#). This sacred circle is found everywhere, in the sun, the moon, a flower, a face, an eye and so on. The mandala with a cross shape in it is a classic form. The combination of quadration with the circle establishes a relationship of opposites. The four directions of the cross fix the endless movement of the circle, which has no beginning or end. It is a symbol for the eternal whole, which transcends time and space. From this foundation, it is elaborated upon in multitudes of ways, creating meditative devices the world over.

The cycles of life – day and night, and the regular returns of the seasons – define the circular motif in our

viscera. Juxtapose this with the linear experience of time and aging, or the quadrated experience of the equinoxes and the solstices – and the circle with a cross becomes imbedded in our very bones.

An astrological chart is a mandala.

Its foundation structure is a circle with a cross. Two axes, horizontal and vertical, anchor the chart; then two more axes are drawn, creating the full astrological wheel of 12-pie shaped houses ([Figs. 2 and 3](#)).

To understand the significance of the cross within the wheel, note the horizontal line in the chart. It is symbolic of the horizon line. This is where the rising sign, or the ascendant, determined from the day, minute, and location of someone’s birth, is placed. The sign on the ascendant is the section of the sky containing the constellation coming up over the horizon at the day, minute, and place of someone’s birth.

It organizes the signs on the wheel, which are placed on each axis called a house cusp, in a counterclockwise direction. The astrological houses rule different areas of experience, and also represent different dimensions of the psyche. The basic meanings and archetypes of the houses are given below.

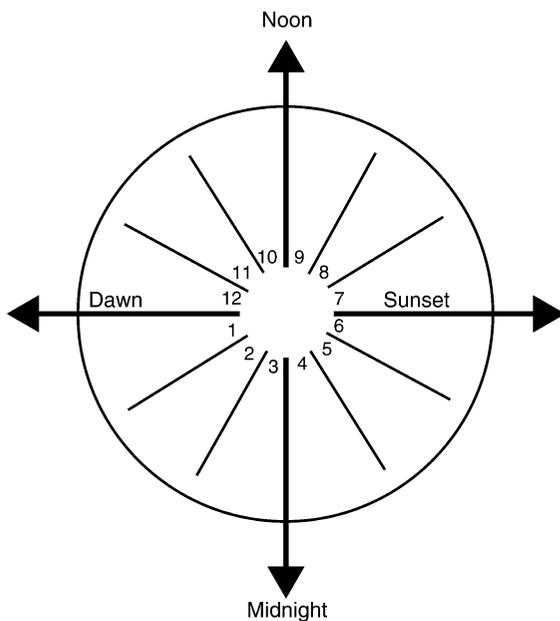
The Houses:

1. Self-Projection, Body, Beginnings: The Divine Spark/ Divine Child
2. Self-Worth, Personal Resources, The Body as First Possession, Finances: Conservationist
3. Near Environment, Information, Conceptualizing a Self: Siblings
4. Roots, Home Life, Parenting: The Tribe, The Source
5. Romantic Love, Self-Expression, Pleasure: The Lover/Artist
6. Daily Life, Physical Health, Work: The Servant
7. Marriage, Other People, Partnerships, Open Enemies: Marriage
8. Sex, Death, Transformation, Shared Resources: Initiation
9. Larger Horizons, Life Philosophy, Knowledge: The Priest and Priestess
10. Life Task, Profession, Parents: The Culmination
11. Life Wishes, Group Affiliations, Friendships: The Community/Idealist
12. Life Transcendence, Psychological Health, Sense of the Eternal, Self-Undoing: The Monk, Mystic, Prisoner

The planets are then placed in the wheel of the houses, and where they are placed is determined by the sign on the axes, which are called house cusps.



Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 1 A mandala with quadrations. Artist: Patricia M. Bowers.



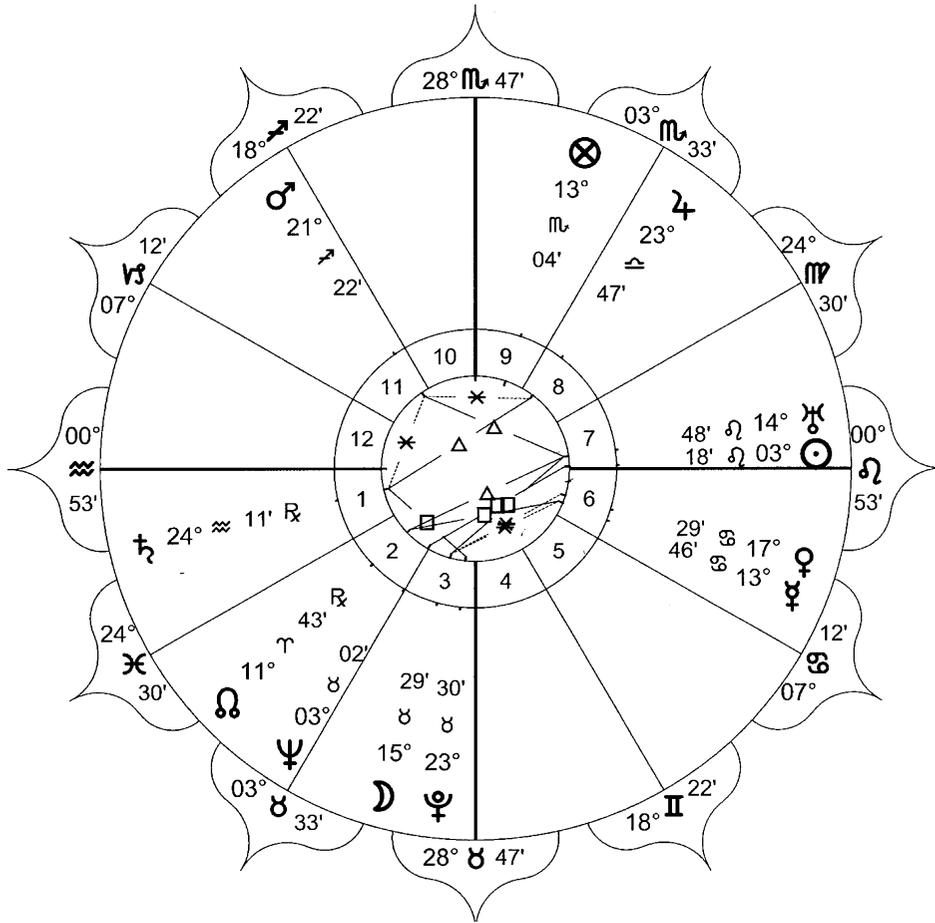
Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 2 The basic structure of an astrology chart, the wheel of the houses.

This determines how the sky of the day will affect someone personally.

This is important because the sky is universal, not individual; everyone born on a particular day will have the same placements of the planets in the sky (i.e., Sun in the sign of Pisces, Moon in Cancer, Venus in Aries, etc.). This is organized through the circle of the zodiac in the sky that hugs the ecliptic. This is the circle of the astrological mandala. The ascendant fixes the universal energy in time and space, literally bringing it down to earth. This is the cross of the astrological mandala.

This has a counterclockwise order.

In addition, there is a clockwise order as well in the chart, also beginning at the ascendant. Moving in a clockwise direction, it is the beginning of the cycle of a life, dawn. The next turning point represents the noon of life, and is at the top of the chart. The third angle, exactly opposite the ascendant, represents sunset. The final angle, at the bottom of the chart, represents the midnight of life, the end of the matter as well as the root issues in life (Fig. 4).



Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 3 Complete astrology chart with the planets placed into the wheel of the 12 houses.

Thus, the astrological chart is a graphic image of how we come from one source, as symbolized by the circle, becoming individualized through time and space.

In this way we inhabit a mandala of existence on earth, and to study an astrology chart is to contemplate a mandala.

Psychological Aspects

Mandalas and the astrology chart share archetypes of self, center, and reconciliation of the opposites. Jung stated that the mandala is the archetype of wholeness, relating it to the Self. Mandala images arise spontaneously in dreams and art as symbols of the center of the self.

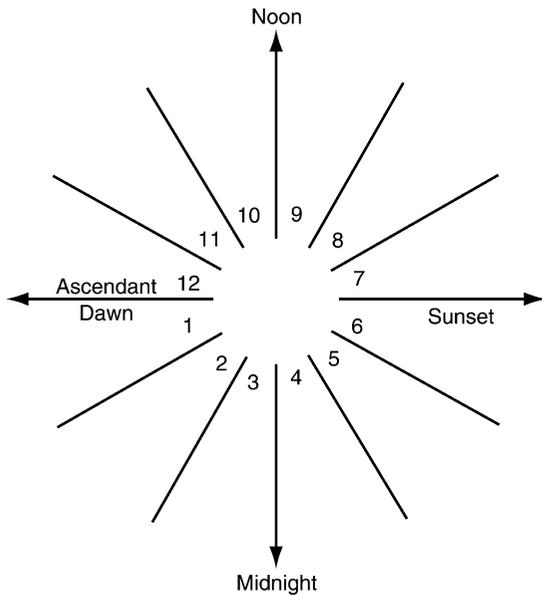
In addition, the wheel of the zodiac and the circle of the mandala create symbolic holding environments, which hearken back to the experience of lying in the circle of one's mother's arms.

Another powerful underlying psychological resonance is the experience of the underlying geometry of the face and the eye.

The face has a mandalic structure (Fig. 5). In learning to draw, artists are trained to see the underlying geometry in physical form. To draw a face with accurate proportions, you learn that the space from the top of the head to the eyes is approximately the same distance as that from the eyes to the chin. As far as a mandalic structure is concerned, the horizontal axis is the eye line, and the vertical axis is the line created by the nose.

The eye is another mandala contained within the face. The underlying mandalic geometry is powerful because of the experience of being held in one's mother's arms and looking into her face.

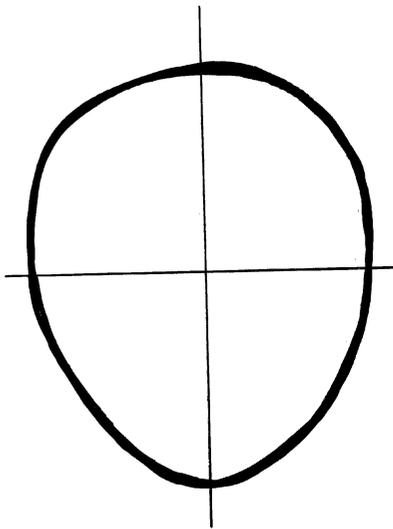
In children's drawings, mandala forms emerge very early on, in the scribbling stage which occurs from 18 months to 4 years old on average (Figs. 6 and 7).



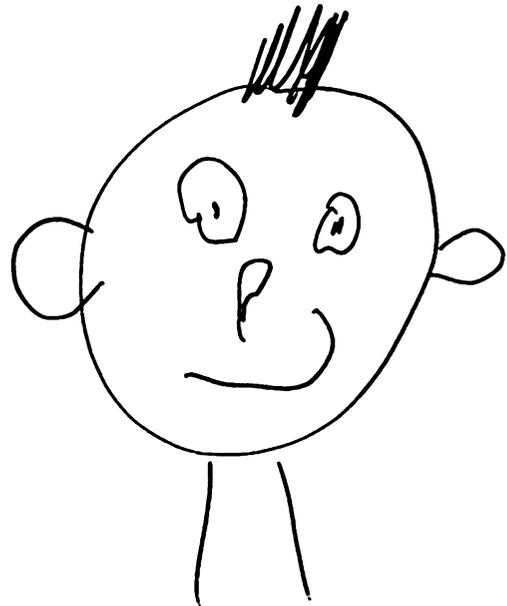
Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 4 The progression of the angles.



Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 6 Copy of typical mandaloid scribble (2 year old).



Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 5 Face Mandala.



Astrology and Mandalas. Figure 7 Copy of a typical 3-year-old drawing of a human.

The earliest images of humans usually have a mandala formation, with a huge head with markings at the approximate place of the cross in a mandala.

Thus, the core architecture of the mandala, and the astrological chart, evokes this early preverbal experience.

See also: [▶ Astrology and Alchemy](#) [▶ Astrology and the Transitional Object](#) [▶ Axis Mundi](#) [▶ Hillman, James, and Alchemy](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Mandala](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Self Object](#)

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Astrology and the Transitional Object

Claudia Bader

In discussing transitional phenomena, Winnicott states,

- ▶ this is the place I have set out to examine, the separation that is not a separation... but a form of union (1974: 97–98).

An astrological chart is created from the date, minute, and place someone takes their first breath. It creates a map which describes how an individual expresses a piece of the cosmos, a similar to the idea of a fractal. Astrology is a symbolic language, and someone's chart is a symbolic bridge. In addition to being a symbolic language about the self that becomes internalized, it is also a concrete image drawn on a piece of paper.

A person's chart shows how he or she is both separate and individual, yet one with the universe. In this way, an astrological chart is literally a transitional space, and the chart itself a transitional object.

To look at these ideas, I'm going to list the qualities of the transitional object and explore how these dynamics are reflected in people who are cathected to astrology. The bolded sentences are direct quotes from Winnicott in his book *Playing and Reality*.

These are the qualities that define the transitional object, as quoted from Winnicott in *Playing and Reality*.

Qualities of the Transitional Object

1. **The infant assumes rights over the object, and it is agreed upon by all.**

The charts are their charts, real and meaningful. It is an objective fact anyone can agree upon, based on personal birth data.

2. **It stands for the breast, or the object of first relationship.**

The chart works as a surrogate mother in that it holds an image of the person for them; it is drawn in a circle, which is a containing space, and conceptually provides a container which facilitates the ability to hold one's self. The astrology chart represents the first relationship, which is to the ultimate container, the cosmos, the ultimate "Great Mother." The round chart itself is a circle with a center, a breast/mandala/eye image.

The eye image adds a layer of symbolism related to lying in mother's arms looking into her eyes. Seeing and being seen, this crucial early experience begins the emotional life. Looking into her eyes we see ourselves reflected there through her responses to us and her love. We are mirrored by her.

It has a breast energy in that the chart feeds with information and provides mirroring. It is demand feeding, totally under the control of the subject, since it can be pulled out and looked at it whenever it is desired. However, it is not always a "good" breast – sometimes it is positive feeding when it presents "good aspects," and sometimes it is negative feeding or a "bad" breast when seen in terms of "bad aspects."

3. **It antedates established reality testing.**

The chart is set with the first breath, before there is any ability to test reality.

4. **It is a possession.**

The astrology chart is our unique and special object. It is both an internal mental construct and an external object that can be possessed, the chart drawn on a piece of paper.

5. **It is not internal nor external. It comes from without from our point of view, but not so from the baby's point of view. Neither does it come from within; it is not a hallucination.**

The chart is based on something wholly without – the planets at the time and place of birth. It is where a person connects to the objective universe. Yet it is also within us as a completely subjective reality – an expression of someone's life and life's meaning, as well as a developmental timing device. The predictable cycles of the planets reflect universal life

developments as well as reflecting individual differences within the universe. Therefore a chart is within and without.

It is not a hallucination because it is based on the hard facts of the planets' places and movements.

6. **The object is affectionately cuddled and excitedly loved as well as mutilated. It must never change, unless changed by the infant. It must survive instinctual loving, hating, and pure aggression if need be.**

A person's chart is a drawn image on a piece of paper. This piece of paper is often carried around, looked at, poured over. It is played with in the sense of doing calculations on it. It often falls apart, but can be redrawn. On a more superficial level of astrological information, people read their horoscopes in newspapers; but the columns and their information are excitedly read. Either the actual chart or the newspaper columns can be rejected, hated, and put away if the individual chooses. They never change, in that the natal chart is fixed, and ones' sign never changes. They survive.

7. **It must seem to have a warmth, or to move, or to have texture, or to do something that seems to show it has a vitality or reality of its own.**

The chart is filled with life. It comes from and represents the living universe. It moves on its own in that it reflects time and changes the timing techniques in astrology, called transits and progressions.

8. **The infant passes from omnipotent control to manipulation. It may develop into a fetish object persist into the adult sexual life. It may stand for feces. It is created by the child.**

A popular astrological theory is that the chart is "chosen" before someone was born or reincarnated. In this sense, they have created it. It is their life path, an indicator of who they are, and what energies we are using. The chart may be seen as having an omnipotent power to help control life by showing what will happen. This gives the user an illusion of control. Of course, as one continues studying and/or experiencing astrology, it becomes clear that it is not omnipotent, that perfect knowledge of the future is not obtainable although one can be forewarned of some aspects of it. By studying ones self through astrology, learning to work with (manipulate) the chart and its symbols, there is a sense of gaining mastery over ourselves and our lives.

9. **Its' fate is to be gradually decathected. It is not forgotten, but it loses meaning.**

Chart interpretation is a synthesizing of the meanings of all the symbols in their positive and negative modes. The ability to see good and bad at the same time is a developmental achievement. However, the root of symbolic meaning in astrology is beyond both good and bad. The ultimate object of the study is to know life and reality so well that the chart is not needed to mediate one's life and thus can eventually be discarded. In therapy, I notice that often the chart is initially a very important topic of discussion and interest, but as the therapy progresses it is talked about less and less until eventually it is referred to only during times of stress.

See also: [▶ Astrology](#) [▶ Astrology and Mandalas](#) [▶ Mandala](#) [▶ Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Atheism

- [▶ Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism](#)

Atman

Fredrica R. Halligan

In Hindu thought, *Atman* is the true Self of each individual, which is at one with the Divine, Brahman, the Absolute. C. G. Jung acknowledges indebtedness to this concept in *Aion* where he refers to the "atmic self." The

Hindu concept differs from Jung, however, in that the Atman is one and the same in every person. Atman is Brahman since, as it is said in India, “That thou art.” Thus God is the Indweller of every soul. The life task of each person is to discover Atman within.

In the *Upanishads*, ancient scriptures of India, Atman is described as the innermost nature of every living being, pure and unchanged. Neither birth nor death, nor re-birth can alter Atman. It is the Real, the unchangeable. In contrast, body, mind, and personality are changeable and are therefore defined as unreal, or illusory. This usage of the words Real (unchangeable) and unreal (changeable) often create confusion in the minds of westerners who use the same words differently. Whether Hindus chant, “Lead me from the unreal to the Real,” or talk of *Moksha* (liberation), God-realization or Self-realization, the meaning is the same, i.e., discovery of the eternal Atman within. This is the essential spiritual yearning, dating back to ancient Vedic times and continuing today.

The concept of Atman or Higher Self is not without controversy, however. In India the topic has long been debated, with Buddhists taking the contrasting view, which they call Emptiness, no-self or *Sunyata*. Some spiritual pundits (e.g., Jungian analyst, Hawyo Kawai) believe that, at the ultimate experience, both paths end up at the same place, i.e., that paradoxically Emptiness and Fullness of Self are essentially the same experience. What is clear is that both Hindu and Buddhist meditative traditions teach that mind and ego must be transcended in order to achieve the ultimate state of Realization (*Moksha* or *Nirvana* respectively.)

Wilber’s Synthesis

In western psychology, Ken Wilber conceptualized a spiritual-developmental path that he dubbed, “The Atman Project.” In Wilber’s perspective, the pathway to realization of Atman initially follows an outward arc towards development of ego, followed at midlife and beyond by an inward arc where ego is renounced and desires are transcended in order to approach the ultimate unity, with consciousness resting only in God, i.e., the Atman. Wilber synthesizes psychological, Hindu and Buddhist practice when he states that the ultimate goal, whether called God, Atman, Buddha or Ultimate Reality, is accompanied by recognition that “all things and events in the Universe are aspects of one fundamental Whole, the very source and suchness which is the Real itself” (Wilber, 1980: 101).

Traditional Hindu Pathways

In ancient India, Patanjali was the renowned pundit who charted the journey in search of *Atman*. Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* call for devotion to God as the means toward liberation or Self-realization. Spiritual practice and deep psychological purification is needed. Mind must be stilled and freed from all desires. What bubbles up, advanced meditators proclaim, is a state of absorption in Atman, nothing else. The experience has been described metaphorically as a light that does not flicker in a windless place. Thus one-pointed meditation is recommended as an important *sadhana* (spiritual practice). This transcendent state of liberation is considered to be beyond the western mapping of psychological states.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, central scripture of Hinduism, the realization of Atman is described as union or merging with God, a state that is free from all worldly attachments, free also from ignorance, greed and pride. To discover the infinite Self, the Atman, the Divine within, there is a gradual shift from the small self (or ego) to the higher state of consciousness. This shift is toward ever-more subtle states of awareness. In the process a detached observer arises, sometimes called the Watcher. Some say that this observer is the Atman. Others say that eventually even the Watcher disappears.

Hindus believe that the Self underlying the personality is perfect, but is covered by layers of illusion. Atman lies beyond the senses, beyond the emotions, beyond the intellect. Realization of one’s true identity (Atman) requires letting go of ego and all that has previously been thought of as “I-me-mine.”

See also: [▶ Bhagavad Gita](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Wilber, Ken](#)

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Atonement

Ruth Williams

The concept of atonement is closely associated to forgiveness, reconciliation, sorrow, remorse, repentance, reparation and guilt. It is a spiritual concept which has been studied since time immemorial in Biblical and Kabbalistic texts.

It is in a linked pair (or *syzygy*) with forgiveness.

It is also associated with the Christian idea of confession and repentance which requires atonement.

Atonement is an archetypal idea and, as such originates in an archetype (which Jung describes as “an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time” (Jung 1958/1964: par. 847).

To atone is an act of conscience. True atonement must come from the ego since it must needs be a conscious humbling rather than moral superego flagellation from “on high.” (“Ego” is used here in the Freudian sense, whereas from a Jungian perspective, true atonement would be an expression of Self.)

Some regard the process of psychotherapy itself to be a transformative process of repentance in as much as the very act of entering into psychotherapy has a dynamic effect on all those closely connected with the patient him or herself. There is usually a process of reflection, on past acts as part of the path of individuation (a Jungian term for the unfolding process of becoming more fully oneself which is broadly the goal of a Jungian analysis). Achieving this requires a person to follow what is known in Kaballah as the path of the Zaddik (the path of honesty/integrity) which ultimately leads to “at-one-ment” in the sense of a one-ness with God which may be seen as the potential inherent in the genuine process of atoning. This accounts for the immanence, the numinous quality associated with the sense of completion achieved in fully embracing atonement.

The ability to atone is connected to one’s ego strength. If the site of the betrayal or “sin,” is one which is suffused with narcissistic wounding, shame or hubris can inhibit the ability to atone. It therefore takes great sensitivity – in both collective and in personal situations – to enter into such a process.

In Judaism the “book of life” is considered to be open until the end of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The book of life is seen as containing one’s fate (contingent on

the process of atonement undergone during this period) for the next year and the book is sealed at the end of the Yom Kippur festival. In organizations such as Tikkun (a modern/progressive Jewish community whose name means to heal, repair and transform the world) the imagery of Yom Kippur has been turned into a spiritual path: they take a ten day period over the festival to examine what changes are needed in life, and how seriously one will take the year-long process of making those changes. By condensing the period of heightened attention to ten days, they are making sure that there is a time when these matters are brought to the forefront of one’s conscious awareness. If one has not been able to make any progress in self-awareness and steps toward change in those ten days, then in a certain sense one’s fate is considered to be sealed, the idea being that we will continue to receive the karmic consequences of being the way that we are at the current moment, and to the extent that we want that to change, this ten day period becomes a spiritual retreat and intensive short-term “psychotherapy.”

Yom Kippur is the most sacred day of the year in the Jewish calendar which is marked by fasting, abstaining from work, sex, washing, wearing of perfume and leather shoes (much like the Christian period of Lent). To truly engage with such a process has a transformative effect, although, as with all religious dogma, it can simply be treated as a ritualistic act.

The idea of the scapegoat originates with the rituals performed during the Yom Kippur festival. In ancient times the high priest of the Temple in Jerusalem would conduct a sacrificial ceremony on Yom Kippur. He would be clothed in white linen and would confess his own sins and then the sins of the people of Israel before making a blood of sacrifice. The priest then ejected a goat from the temple with a scarlet piece of woolen cloth on its head. It was goaded and driven, either to death or into the wilderness, which was seen metaphorically as carrying away the sins of Israel. It was believed that if these sins were forgiven the scarlet cloth would turn white.

Some regard the Old Testament scapegoat as being a prefigurement of the New Testament Christ whose suffering and death similarly expunged man’s sins. William Holman Hunt inscribed the following two Biblical quotes on the frame of his painting “The Scapegoat”: “Surely he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows/Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted.” (Isaiah LIII, 4), and “And the Goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a Land not inhabited.” (Leviticus XVI, 22).

In the absence of atonement, *someone* becomes scapegoated and left carrying the Shadow.

Sylvia Brinton Perera explores the etymology in *The Scapegoat Complex*: “The Hebrew word for atonement, *kipper*, is related to *kippurim*, eliminatory procedures. A Babylonian rite on the fifth day of the ten-day New Year festival was called *kippuru* and involved purgation, purification, confession of sins and a human sacrifice” (1986: 11).

Some of the elements in the complex – e.g., guilt and reparation – have been explored by Melanie Klein (1937) in a model which looks back to infant anxiety and the early development of conscience.

Cook draws our attention to the African philosophy of *ubuntu* which emphasizes the connection between the individual and the collective which perhaps facilitated the balancing of understanding and reparation rather than going down the path of vengeance and retaliation.

Desmond Tutu (1999) (Commission Chair) writes about the principles of restorative justice which underlay the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, being rooted in the African concept of *ubuntu* which is akin to atonement. *Ubuntu* emphasizes the relatedness between humans whereby everyone is diminished when someone is dehumanized. Criminality is seen as a breach in relationship which is restored by healing the breach as opposed to punishment *per se* (see Tutu 2004 lecture pp.4–5; concept also described in detail in Tutu 1999: 34–36).

The acts of atonement and forgiveness are seen as linked, the process involved being partially located in the realm of what Jung described as the psychoid unconscious, so that failure to atone produces a scapegoat. This perspective highlights how energetically we are tied to each other: one person’s failure to act, can have a significant impact on the ability of the other party in such a dyad to forgive. It is in this impasse that situations can seem quite intransigent and incapable of change. (Might it be in this impasse that blame is more likely to arise?)

This failure to take responsibility by the wounding party thus creating a scapegoat would be seen in terms of the Shadow being projected on to the “other.”

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Conscience](#) [▶ Forgiveness](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Repentance](#) [▶ Sacrifice](#) [▶ Scapegoat](#) [▶ Shadow](#) [▶ Shame and Guilt](#) [▶ Transcendent Function](#)

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Augustine

Nathan Carlin

Life and Legacy

St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was born to a pagan father and a Christian mother. After a rather wild adolescence, he began to work out his own intellectual and religious beliefs by means of trying on a number of ideas: to name a few, he was highly influenced by various strands of Platonism; he struggled with Manichaeism and skepticism; and, finally, he embraced Christianity. As Augustine noted in his *Confessions* – the first western religious autobiography – his heart was restless until it found rest in God. St. Ambrose baptized Augustine in the year 387, and Augustine later organized a monastery that eventually became established in Hippo, where he was made bishop in 396.

While he impacted the western church much more than the eastern church, Augustine, for better or for worse, is undisputedly one of the most influential theologians of all time. With regard to the history of doctrine, he is perhaps most well known for his ideas of original sin and just war theory, as well as for his views on the Donatist and Pelagian controversies. He also greatly influenced John Calvin, the greatest mind of the Protestant Reformation.

On Psychology

While Augustine was doing theology, he also addressed psychology. In *On the Trinity*, for example, he made a case for the rationality of the idea of the Trinity – how, in

other words, one could rationally conceive of God as “three-in-one” – on the grounds that human personality (one) consists of being, knowing, and willing (three), though, admittedly, he noted that this analogy does not perfectly convey the nature of the Trinity. As Diogenes Allen (1985) points out, “Augustine used the human mind as his analogue because human beings are created in God’s image” (p. 103). In human beings, then, Augustine looked for “trinitities” to learn something about the Trinity (1985: 103).

On Sexuality and the Body

Augustine wrote about human sexuality as well (cf. Brown, 1988). In *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Augustine notes that some interpreters of Genesis 3 regarded the first sin to be intercourse. One might say that these interpreters made proto-psychoanalytic interpretations centuries before Freud when they argued that the tree in the garden represented a penis and that the true or deeper meaning of the story concerns pre-mature, premarital, and irrational sex. Augustine, however, takes the text at face value and sees the sin simply as disobedience to the LORD’s commands (cf. Kvam, Scheering, and Ziegler, 1999). In any case, Augustine still does not have a positive view of sexual intercourse – far from it – even if he does not see the first sin to be of a sexual nature. Sexual intercourse as human beings experience it now, Augustine argues, gives evidence for the “fall.” Augustine holds that, before the “fall,” human beings could have pro-created without passion and as a deliberate act of the will, but now, Augustine laments, sexual arousal is not governed by the will. So the first sin, if not sexual, nevertheless had serious consequences for human sexuality. Another point to add here is that, for Augustine, the original sin of Adam and Eve is passed down by means of procreation – that is, by means of sexual intercourse. And because all human beings after Adam and Eve (except the Virgin Mary and Jesus) have come into the world by means of sexual intercourse, all human beings, following Augustine’s logic, bear the consequences of the sins of Adam and Eve.

Since Augustine was so influential in the history of doctrine, his views on human sexuality have naturally affected many strands of Christianity and western culture in general. In cotemporary scholarship, Daniel Boyarin has written extensively and eloquently on the cultural effects of Augustine’s views. In his *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture*, Boyarin (1993) notes Augustine’s infamous charge against “the Jews” – namely, that they are people of the flesh. Ironically, Boyarin, himself a Jew, says

that “Augustine knew what he was talking about” (p. 1). But conceding to Augustine this point enables Boyarin to turn what was once a criticism of Jews into a criticism of Christianity and other dualistic metaphysics. How? Boyarin argues that, “for rabbinic Jews, the human being was defined as a body – animated, to be sure, by a soul – while for Hellenistic Jews (such as Philo) and. . . Christians (such as Paul), the essence of a human being is a soul housed in a body” (1993: 5). The importance of this perhaps subtle difference in theological anthropology is that

- ▶ The notion that the physical is just a sign or a shadow of that which is really real allows for a disavowal of sexuality and procreation, of the importance of filiation and genealogy, and of the concrete, historical sense of scripture, of, indeed, historical memory itself. The emphasis, on the other hand, on the body as the very site of human significance allows for no such devaluations (1993: 6).

In *The Body and Society*, Peter Brown (1988), generally regarded as the leading scholar on Augustine, has written about such issues as well.

The Psychological Study of Augustine

In the field of psychology of religion, there has been considerable interest in Augustine. Parsons (2003) marks the beginning of the modern psychoanalytic study of Augustine with an article by Charles Kligerman (1957) and a symposium in *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* during the years 1965–1966. Two decades later, Parsons notes, followed another symposium in the journal that led to an edited volume by James Dittes and Donald Capps (1990). Capps and Dittes (1990) mark the beginning of the modern psychological study of Augustine with William James, who characterized Augustine as a “divided self” (p. vii). They note that, while the psychological publications on Augustine “are scattered among journals and books of several academic disciplines and the writers reflect diverse professional and scholarly orientations, the psychological study of Augustine is a matured field” (1990: vii). And so the purpose of the Capps and Dittes volume is “to recognize that field of study, to give it a sense of identity and to demonstrate its accumulated wisdom, to introduce fresh interest and to open new vistas” (1990: vii). Since then, the most recent full-length psychoanalytic study of Augustine is by Sandra Dixon (1999); James O’Donnell’s (2005) work is noteworthy as well. By reviewing the works cited here and the works cited in these bibliographies, the reader will have a good sense the psychological studies of Augustine to date.

In *Psychoanalysis and Mysticism: The Case of St. Augustine*, Parsons (2003) sketches a portrait of what he thinks a contemporary (and future) adequate psychoanalytic interpretation of Augustine would entail. Parsons notes that, in the psychoanalytic theorizing of Augustine, one can observe three types or schools of interpretation – namely, classic, adaptive, and transformational. Parsons (1999) previously suggested these categories for understanding the psychoanalytic study of mysticism, and in this article he peruses the psychoanalytic literature around Augustine with his own categories in mind. How does Parsons define the three categories? By “classic” he means traditional or orthodox (and therefore usually oedipal and reductive) psychoanalytic interpretations of mystical experiences. Here a mystical experience is usually explained in terms of developmental conflicts, and sometimes such experiences are rendered pathological and, therefore, pejoratively (cf. Kligerman, 1957). “Adaptive” interpretations do not interpret mystical experiences to be pathological. Quite the contrary, here mystical experiences are understood often to lead to growth. With regard to Augustine’s mysticism, Parsons notes that Dixon (1999) argues “for a preoedipal basis for Augustine’s mysticism when she states that the ascent with Monica to the ‘region of inexhaustible richness,’” which is, for Dixon, “the inexhaustible breast” (Parsons, 2003: 159). Parsons thinks that this argument is representative of an “adaptive” reading, as is Philip Woollcott’s (1966) argument that “the mystical visions were complicit in enabling Augustine to cure himself” (Parsons, 2003: 158). “Transformational” interpretations go even further and break with classic and adaptive interpretations in that transformational interpretations give epistemological legitimacy to the mystic, even while acknowledging the validity of classic and adaptive interpretations. As Parsons puts this with regards to the psychoanalytic study of Augustine, “a transformational approach must also create metapsychological space for a mystical desire which ‘ascends’ beyond the purely developmental” (2003: 169). The transformational approach, then, seeks a dialogical approach to religion and psychology.

Donald Capps (2007a and b) has continued to write on Augustine, and two of his recent articles have appeared in *Pastoral Psychology*. In *Augustine’s Confessions: The Story of a Divided Self and the Process of Its Unification*, Capps (2007a) notes that, when he began his professional career over thirty years ago, he wrote an article “on the psychologies of religion identified with Sigmund Freud and William James” (p. 551). Capps says that he didn’t realize then that he “would be engaged in a sort of dialectical embrace of these two innovative thinkers throughout

[his] career” (2007a: 551). So, in the first article, Capps (2007a) uses, as his subtitle intimates, James’s notion of the divided self to interpret Augustine’s *Confessions*, and, in the second article, Capps (2007b) focuses on Freudian interpretations of the *Confessions*, specifically on the often-noted issue of self-reproach in the *Confessions*. All of this is to point out, in other words, that the psychological study of Augustine is alive and well, and one wonders if a third symposium on the psychological study of Augustine will take place in the near future.

See also: [➤ Freud, Sigmund](#) [➤ Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#)

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Authoritarian Personality

Daniel Burston

Authority and the Father

The “authoritarian personality” is a social psychological construct derived from early psychoanalytic theories of attachment to (and conflict with) the father. To begin with, note that Freud’s own attitude toward paternal authority was profoundly ambiguous. In 1910, Freud attributed Leonardo Da Vinci’s astonishing precocity to the fact that he had “escaped being intimidated by his father in earliest childhood”, implying that the routine exercise of paternal authority leads to the suppression of free and unfettered intellectual development in children, and later on, in adults. Without saying so in so many words, Freud’s tribute to Leonardo suggested that childhood and adolescent rebellion against paternal authority is essentially an *emancipatory* process.

However, three years later, in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud linked rebellion against paternal authority to an intractable ambivalence rooted in our phylogenetic inheritance, which presumably underlies the “collective obsessional neurosis” that underscores all religious ideation. On this second reading, rebellion against paternal authority is an unconscious re-enactment of a collective rebellion against a prehistoric tyrant - in short, a repetition compulsion. Freud never reconciled these contradictory views of rebellion against paternal authority, or even acknowledged their existence in his work (Burston, 1994: 214).

Freud attracted many followers who resonated with the anti-authoritarian elements in his thought. However, all those who were radical or uncompromising in their opposition to patriarchal authority were eventually thrown out of the International Psychoanalytic Association, e.g., Otto Gross (in 1909) Wilhelm Reich (in 1933) and Erich Fromm (in 1954).

Though greeted as a theorist of great promise in 1907, Otto Gross was a “wild analyst” disowned by Freud and Jung by 1909 (Burston). Before his dismissal from “respectable” psychoanalytic circles, Gross was immersed in the matriarchal theory of J. J. Bachofen (Michaels, 1983; Green, 1999). In 1916, Gross inveighed, both publicly and in print, against “the patriarchal-authoritarian character” – an idea taken up by Wilhelm Reich a decade later (Cattier,

1970, Chap. 9 and 10) in his efforts to explain the growing appeal of Nazism.

Unlike most of his colleagues on the Left, Reich was alert to the quasi-religious character of the Nazi movement, and explained the religious and mystical dimensions of Nazi thought and propaganda as sublimated expressions of sado-masochistic tendencies in the collective psyche.

Fascism and Sado-Masochism

When it is used to describe a sexual perversion, the word “sado-masochism” denotes a kind of emotional numbness, or an inability to experience full sexual arousal and release without inflicting pain on others, or having pain inflicted on oneself. But this narrow definition of sado-masochism was abandoned, or more accurately, expanded by Freud and his followers in the 1920’s. Freud noted, for example, that sadism and masochism seldom appear in pure form, and that sadistic and masochistic tendencies are always found together in the same person. As a result, a person who prefers the sadistic role harbors masochistic tendencies, because a great deal of the pleasure derived from sadism derives from a process of unconscious identification with their victim. Conversely the masochist identifies with the sadist, and derives pleasure from this in the midst of his pain (This explains why sado-masochists often exchange roles.).

Taking his cue from Freud, Reich said that our definition of sado-masochism should be expanded beyond overt sexual behavior to include sadistic and masochistic *character traits*, which may or may not take on sexual form. People with a predominantly sadistic character may not gravitate to S & M per se, but take great pleasure in dominating, defiling and humiliating other people, robbing of their dignity and their powers of autonomous decision and action. They love power and control. Hitler was clearly such a person. He wasn’t interested in sex, really, but loved power, control and killing people, as did most members of his inner circle. Masochistic characters, by contrast, take pleasure in submission. They feel anxious unless they are neurotically attached to a more powerful person who tells them what to do. They love power and control too, but typically seek it out in others, rather than trying to seize it for themselves. Many of Hitler’s followers fit the masochistic profile. They silenced their consciences and their critical faculties and obeyed their Fuehrer, regardless of how heinous and bizarre his ideas and behavior were.

According to another analyst, Erich Fromm, neither the sadist nor the masochist – in this diffuse, characterological sense – is capable of genuine love or compassion for other human beings. Instead, they cultivate a kind of sordid intimacy with others – what he called “symbiotic attachment.” According to Fromm, people with a pronounced and open preference for sado-masochistic sex are relatively rare, and often conflicted about their inclinations, because they are frowned upon by the general population. But sadistic and masochistic *character traits* are quite prevalent in the general population, and when they proliferate beyond a certain point, authoritarian and anti-democratic regimes tend to flourish. In such circumstances, people who are relatively normal in terms of their sexual behavior and daily habits, but whose conscience has atrophied, support leaders whose sanity is quite precarious. The more grandiose and inflated a sadistic leader’s ego becomes, the more his followers revel vicariously in their leader’s (real and imagined) power. This attitude toward power legitimates the use of force and deception to solve problems, and abets an ideological emphasis on the natural inequality of man, which justifies the oppression of one race (or sex) by another. In chapter 6 of *Escape From Freedom*, published in 1941, Fromm said:

- ▶ Usually Hitler tries to rationalize and justify his wish for power. The main justifications are the following: his domination of other peoples is for their own good and for the good of the culture of the world; the wish for power is rooted in the eternal laws of nature and he recognizes and follows only these laws. . . (p. 251).

Moreover, Fromm continued

- ▶ The second rationalization, that his wish for power is rooted in the laws of nature is more than a mere rationalization; it also springs from the wish for submission to a power outside of oneself, as expressed particularly in Hitler’s crude popularization of Darwinism. In “the instinct of preserving the species”, Hitler sees “the first cause of the formation of human communities”.

The instinct of self-preservation leads to the fight of the stronger for the domination of the weaker and economically, eventually, to the survival of the fittest. The identification of the instinct of self-preservation with power over others finds a particularly striking expression in Hitler’s assumption that “the first culture of mankind certainly depended less on the tamed animal, but rather on the use of inferior people.” He projects his own sadism upon Nature who is “the cruel Queen of all Wisdom,” and her law of preservation is bound to the brazen law of necessity and of the right of the victory of best and the strongest in this world.”

Fascism, Conservatism and Anti-Semitism

While *Escape From Freedom* remains Fromm’s best known study of authoritarianism and Nazism, his empirical research on pro-fascist sympathies among blue collar workers in the Weimar Republic actually in 1929, while he was Director for Social Psychological Research at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, under the Directorship of Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer was accustomed to thinking of pro-fascist sympathies as an artifact or expression of Right wing sympathies, and was disagreeably surprised by Fromm’s discovery that they are actually quite prevalent among Left wingers as well. For this – and other – reasons, Horkheimer refused to publish Fromm’s study, which only appeared posthumously (Burston, 1991).

Fromm left the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research – which had relocated to Columbia University in 1937 – in 1938, and was replaced by Theodor Adorno, who used Fromm’s unpublished work as a pilot study, which informed his (much larger) study of pro-fascist and anti-Semitic attitudes among Americans, called *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950). Significantly, Adorno found no evidence of Left-wing authoritarianism in America, but did find striking correlations between “pseudo-conservative” trends and pro-fascist thinking, and between (Right wing) anti-Semitism and intense religiosity, which appear to imply that there is some necessary or inherent linkage between intense religiosity and authoritarian (and/or anti-Semitic) trends. These findings may have been valid in their time and place, but must be taken with a grain of salt nowadays. Why? Since the 1950s, Left-wing anti-Semitism has grown apace, while conservatives like William F. Buckley and Barry Goldwater have made anti-Semitism anathema in American conservative circles. While it certainly has not disappeared from the scene, anti-Semitism is entirely overshadowed by philo-Semitic attitudes (on the Right). Therefore, efforts to replicate Adorno’s study today would yield very different results.

Moreover, and more importantly, Adorno et al. shared Freud and Reich’s assumption that religiosity is the expression of repressed inner conflicts, sublimated sado-masochism, or other “pre-genital” libidinal fixations. The idea that religiosity per se is a symptom of immaturity, or a derivative expression of psychopathological trends is an example of Enlightenment bias that Fromm, for one, never shared. Fromm had trained for the rabbinate before becoming a psychoanalyst, and though an atheist himself, held the spiritual traditions of the East and the West in high esteem. Indeed Fromm devoted a chapter of *Sigmund Freud’s Mission* (1959) to demonstrating the

presence of authoritarian tendencies in a notoriously *irreligious* thinker – namely, Freud himself. Fromm’s reflections on Freud’s authoritarianism hark back to essays he wrote in the early 1930’s on matriarchy and patriarchy, and what he called “patricentric” and “matricentric” trends in individual and social psychology (Fromm, 1959).

See also: [Anti-Semitism](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Nazism](#)

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Avatar

Fredrica R. Halligan

Avatar (or *Avatara*) is an Indian concept meaning the descent to earth of a deity. In particular, Vishnu, the aspect of the Hindu Trinity who is devoted to preservation of the creation, is believed to have incarnated on earth many times. Whenever negative energies are rampant and the world is in great peril, in danger of imminent

destruction or chaos, Vishnu is said to return. He comes to guide humanity back to righteous living (*dharma*) in order to preserve the harmonious order of the universe.

Interfaith Perspectives

Psychologically we must compare this idea of Divine Incarnation with other traditions. It is well known that Christian belief in Jesus as Incarnate God impacts the whole belief system and worldview of the individual. In contrast, there is a somewhat more muted impact in Jewish and Moslem reverence for the prophets and in Buddhist reverence for the Buddha. For Hindus, like for Christians, the belief that God has incarnated on earth has profound psychological implications. Prayers to that incarnated Divine One are believed to be efficacious. This belief provides a strong resource for coping with the vicissitudes of life, an inspiration and model of behavior, and a supportive, calming religious-introject in the psyche of the believer. Unlike Christianity, however, the Hindu belief in divine incarnation is multiple.

Incarnation in the Hindu Tradition

Some of the earliest legendary *Avatars* were thought to take animal form (e.g., a fish, a turtle, a boar and a hybrid man-lion), but for thousands of years only human incarnations have been reported. These human incarnations have been mostly male, but recently a few female claimants have been reported (e.g., Mother Mira). The best known and most frequently worshipped *Avatars* are Rama, hero of the *Ramayana* epic, and Krishna, whose legends appear throughout the *Mahabharatha* epic, ending with the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Blessed One). In recent times, Sai Baba is also believed to be an *Avatar*, one who first incarnated in Shirdi and secondly re-incarnated in Puttaparthi, India.

For the Hindus, as for many Western religions, God is Love. Thus the *Avatar* is an embodiment of pure Love. Of the four major spiritual paths in Hinduism (*Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Karma* and *Raja*), *Bhakti* – the path of devotion – is most readily practiced in relation to an incarnate person. All humans are socialized to love other humans, so devotion to the *Avatar* is a natural extension beyond devotion to the family, to one’s own *Guru* (teacher) and other humans. Like Jesus in Christianity, the *Avatars* are reported to be miracle workers, healers, teachers, and expansive lovers of all creation. They are believed to be fully divine as well as human. Their wisdom is meant for all humanity.

Purpose of the Avatars

In Indian thought, the Will of God (*sankalpam*) is to protect the structure of the universe, so *Avatars* arrive when evil threatens to vanquish good. These incarnations are said to occur in response to earnest prayers by devotees, each manifestation suitable to the particular time and circumstance. The *Avatar* provides a role model of righteousness, truth and compassion.

Avatars incarnate to renew the spiritual endeavors of humanity. By example they illustrate the tender, human side of the divine; and by their miracles they demonstrate God's power. They teach how to achieve God-realization. Humans cannot fully understand the nature of God until they merge with the Divine. The *Avatar* teaches essential processes towards that end, including adherence to truth, non-violence, peaceful equanimity, loving service of others. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna teaches the way to merge with God: to be a willing instrument of God, acting in accord with Divine Will and leaving the outcome in God's hands. This equanimity is characteristic of *Avatars* and of advanced spiritual followers who merge with God, thus discovering their own true spiritual Self.

See also: [▶ Atman](#) [▶ Bhagavad Gita](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Sai Baba](#)

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Axis Mundi

David A. Leeming

The Axis Mundi or World Center is embodied for many cultures in such objects as world trees or centering towers (Ziggurats, temple mounts, etc.) or mandala centers. In Native American pueblo cultures the Axis Mundi is

the place of the people's emergence into this world, symbolized by the small hole or sipapu in the center of the religious space, usually underground, known as the kiva. For Norse culture the axis mundi is Yggdrasil, the great tree that in the creation myths links the various segments of creation – the lower world, the middle world, and the upper world. Axle trees such as this exist in many cultures. In Korea it was believed that a sacred tree connected the three worlds of existence. For ancient Tartars in Central Asia a giant pine tree grew out of the earth's navel and reached to the home of the supreme god in the heavens. For Christians, the cross is a kind of world tree on the world center hill of Golgotha. A city or town can be the world center, as in the case of the Greek oracular center, Delphi, often called the world navel.

Symbolically speaking, then, the axis mundi is the object that embodies the essential identity of a culture – its center or soul. In terms of individual psychology, the axis mundi is an expression of the interaction between various segments of the psychic world. If we think of the axis mundi as a tree, this understanding becomes clear. The tree's roots are in the mysterious depths; its leaves reach to the sky and its trunk is the vehicle for the energy that derives from the roots and reaches up to the energizing power that comes from the sun. In terms of the individual's quest for wholeness or individuation, the tree's roots explore and take nourishment from the subconscious – the unconscious world of dreams, where monsters are fought and lost treasures are to be found. The energy from this process makes possible the growth of the trunk – the lived life – and opens the individual to the budding and leaf-making which can be thought of as individual enlightenment or self-knowledge. The total tree is the unified Self.

See also: [▶ Self](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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B

Baal Shem Tov

Mark Popovsky

General

Israel ben Eliezer (ca. 1700–1760), the founder of the Hasidic Movement, was born in the Ukraine at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Among devotees, he is most commonly referred to as “The Besht” – an acronym of his Hebrew title, Baal Shem Tov, literally “Master of the Good Name.” His purported ability to perform miracles accounts for the moniker as he was able to harness the power of the “good name” – that is, God’s name – for healing. In his 30s he emerged as a charismatic leader, story-teller and traveling healer who quickly amassed a wide following among the impoverished Jews of Galicia. The Baal Shem Tov functioned mostly outside of the established communal structure. The stories told by his followers usually depict him as speaking in small groups or with individuals instead of preaching in the synagogue.

Core Teachings

The Baal Shem Tov preached an anti-establishment message, downplaying the importance of traditional text study as an act of piety in favor of narrative, song and dance. Such spiritual practices are accessible to everyone, not only the educated religious elite. He taught that individuals attain spiritual redemption by striving for a state of constant joy, especially when worshiping. Rather than something to be restricted, physical pleasure is valued because it leads to spiritual pleasure which in turn brings one closer to God. Some of the Baal Shem Tov’s sharpest criticism was reserved for Jewish leaders who encouraged asceticism through fasting or other rigorous practices which limited physical pleasure.

Though there is no evidence that the Baal Shem Tov was a scholar of Talmud or Jewish law, he did study Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism). Until his time, Kabbalistic

traditions generally resided in the hands of a small elite and were not taught or practiced widely. Through his travels, the Baal Shem Tov attempted to popularize some Kabbalistic notions, especially those related to the idea that an individual can become one with the divine through spiritual practice and good deeds. However, he also rejected some Kabbalistic principles, especially those that encouraged individual isolation. The Baal Shem Tov and his followers were roundly criticized by many contemporaneous rabbis for oversimplifying complicated mystical teachings and for creating a cult that was preoccupied with miracles, talismans, and the supernatural.

Influence in Hasidic Movement

The Baal Shem Tov became the first of many Hasidic Tzadikim (“righteous ones”; sing: “Tzadik”). The Tzadik or “Rebbe” was recognized by his followers to have attained a higher spiritual level and was believed to have the power to elevate the souls of those in his community through his righteous acts and ritual practice. Consequently, the Tzadikim of the Hasidic movement garnered loyal and devout *ad hominum* followings, much more so than that of a standard rabbi in the non-Hasidic world. After his death in 1760, a number of the Baal Shem Tov’s grandchildren and disciples became Tzadikim with their own followings. Within two generations, the Hasidic movement had spread throughout Eastern European Jewry attracting many adherents and simultaneously eliciting vigorous rabbinic opposition. It remained the primary spiritual orientation for many religious Jews in the region until the destruction of Eastern European Jewry during the Holocaust.

The Baal Shem Tov never wrote any works of his own; the stories he told were passed on orally among his followers. However, after his death his scribe, Dov Baer of Linitz, compiled a collection of teachings, correspondences and narratives in a volume entitled *Shivhei Ha-Besht*, translated into English as *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*. Some modern scholars have argued that the Baal Shem Tov’s emphasis on the spiritual value of story-telling, extensive use of symbolic language, fascination

with dream material and veneration of physical pleasure indirectly influenced the thought of Sigmund Freud whose father was raised in the Hasidic tradition.

See also: ➤ Buber, Martin ➤ Freud, Sigmund ➤ Kabbalah

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Bahais

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The history of the Bahais presents us with a fascinating case study in religious, cultural, and psychological transformation. It starts with the appearance of the Bab, a millenarian group of Islamic origins, which developed out of the messianic Shiite tradition, founded by Ali Muhammad (1819–1850) of Shiraz, Iran, known as the Bab. Ali Muhammad proclaimed himself to be the Bab (Gate) in 1844, a thousand years after the disappearance of the twelfth imam, according to Islamic Shiite tradition. (In the Shiite Muslim tradition, Muhammad ibn al-Hannifiya, who disappeared (or died) in 880 CE is the Hidden Imam, who is in hiding and would come back one day to restore peace and justice.) The Bab, in Shiite lore, was supposed to announce the coming of one greater than himself, who would open a new era of peace and justice. At first, Mirza's claim was welcomed, but when he started deviating from the Islamic tradition, the reaction was violent. In 1848, the Bab declared publicly their secession from Islam, and 2 years later Muhammad was executed by a firing squad.

The group leadership was then assumed by 2 half-brothers, Yahia Nuri (1830–1912), later known as Sabh-i Azal, and Husayn Ali Nuri (1817–1892), later known as Baha'u'llah. The next stage was a split in the movement which occurred when the former claimed to be the appointed successor, while the latter said that he was the

prophet foretold by the Bab. Followers of Baha Allah started a new movement, BAHAIIS.

The followers of Yhaia Nuri, known as Azalis, continued the tradition of BABISM. Their sacred book is *al-Bayan*, written by Ali Muhammad of Shiraz. According to this book, some elements of traditional Islamic law are abolished, and a promise is made of a prophet to come. The number 19 had central significance, and a calendar of 19 months, having 19 days each, was created. Another splinter group, the Bayanis, rejects Sabh-i Azal, and claims to follow the Bab alone.

The founder of Bahaism, Husayn Ali Nuri, known as Baha Allah or Baha'u'llah ("Glory of God"), was a Babist who, while in exile and in prison, became convinced that he himself was the prophet or the Messenger of God, whose coming was announced by the Bab. He wrote the Bahai scripture *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, detailing the laws of the faith. In 1863 he announced that he was the promised "Manifestation of God." After his death, his son Abbas Effendi (1844–1921), known as Abd-ul-Baha ("Servant of Baha"), was recognized as the leader, and starting in 1908, when he was released from prison after the "Young Turks" political reforms in the Ottoman Empire, undertook successful missionary work, especially in English-speaking countries. In 1921 the leadership passed to the founder's great-grandson, Shogi Effendi (1897–1957). After his death in 1957, the movement was reorganized, and it is now being run by a nine-member body, known as the Universal House of Justice, elected in 1963. The world center of Bahaism, and its holy places, are located in Israel. Bahaism's holiest shrines are concentrated in the Haifa area, where the founder worked and died, and the Shrine of the Bab, with its golden dome, is one of Haifa's best known landmarks. The BAHAI organization in the United States, among the largest in the world, is known as the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) of Bahais in the United States. A National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) exists in more than 100 countries.

Bahaism, having distanced itself from Islam, claims to be a universalist religion, preaching the religious unity of humankind and human equality. The religious prophecies of all past religions are supposedly being fulfilled now through the movement.

Baha'u'llah is described as the messianic figure expected by Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Earlier prophets are recognized, but with the coming of Baha'u'llah, the "Manifestation of God", a new era has begun, lasting 5000 years. It will lead to the Bahai Cycle, lasting 500,000 years. This will happen only after a global catastrophe and the disintegration of the present world order.

There are rules covering prayers, fasting, marriage, divorce, and burial, and prohibitions against political activities, homosexuality, and the use of drugs. Alcohol and pork are avoided. Prayers are said five times a day, and in addition there are blessings for many everyday occasions. Bahais of West Asian origin are expected to follow special rules, in keeping with Islamic customs. The numbers 19 and 9 are considered sacred. All Bahais are expected to pay 19% of their earnings to the group. The BAHAI calendar, which started in 1844, has 19 months, each having 19 days, and the year starts on March 21, following the Zoroastrian calendar. The 19 days preceding it are fast days till sundown. Bahais meet on the first day of the month, and regular meetings are devoted to scripture readings. Local congregations are tightly knit, and the private lives of members are closely supervised by the congregation and its leaders. While there is no involvement in politics, Bahais support the ideal of a world government and the activities of the United Nations. They have suffered prosecution in Islamic countries, especially Iran, where the persecution has become especially severe after the founding of the Islamic republic in 1979. According to Amnesty International, about 200 BAHAIS were executed between 1979 and 1992 in Iran.

Some descendants of Bahaism's founder, Baha'u'llah, have refused to accept leadership succession and organizational authority, as they were being marginalized by the leadership. The Bahai World Federation was founded in 1950 in Acre, Israel, by Amin Effendi, the founder's last surviving grandson, but it has become more marginal after losing all legal struggles against the majority leaders over Bahai real estate holdings and over official recognition by the State of Israel.

Since the 1950s, there have been several Bahai splinter groups in the United States which have predicted catastrophic floods and nuclear wars for 1963, 1980, and 1995. One such group is Bahais Under The Hereditary Guardianship, known also as Orthodox Bahais or Remyites, founded in 1960 by Charles Mason Remy (1873–1974), who in 1957 became a member of the Bahai collective leadership of 27, known as Hands of the Cause and also of the 9 Chief Stewards following the death of Shoghi Effendi. In 1960 he proclaimed himself to be the Second Guardian of the Faith, and was declared a Covenant-Breaker by the other members of the leadership, thus being excommunicated.

According to the group's doctrine of the great global catastrophe, major changes in the earth's crust would lead the rise of the seas and the death of two thirds of humanity. Remy predicted in 1960 that a catastrophic

flood would inundate most of the United States and urged his followers to move to the Rocky Mountains. This catastrophe was initially prophesied for 1963 and then postponed to 1995.

Bahais Under The Provisions Of The Covenant (BUPC) is a U.S. schismatic BAHAI group, founded in 1971 by Leland ("Doc") Jensen (1914–1996). Jensen left the official United States Bahai organization in 1960 and joined the Bahais Under The Hereditary Guardianship. Noting the predictions of Charles Mason Remy about the impending flood that would cover the low lying areas of the United States in 1963, Jensen moved to Missoula, Montana, where he opened a chiropractic office in 1964. In 1969 he was convicted of sex offenses and sentenced to 20 years in prison. After arriving in prison, Jensen reported having a series of revelations, and claimed the identity of several personalities mentioned in the Bible. Jensen combined Bahai teachings, occult ideas, and Christian eschatology to create the BUPC credo. He predicted a nuclear holocaust in 1980, followed by a thousand years of peace for those who would join BUPC and save themselves from destruction. He was paroled in 1973 and started recruiting followers immediately. April 29, 1980 at 5:55 p.m. was the time specified by Jensen for a nuclear war to destroy one third of humanity. That would be followed by 20 years of added upheavals, starvation, revolutions and natural disasters, and in the year 2000 God's Kingdom would be established, followed by 1000 years of peace. About 150 followers made preparations for the nuclear holocaust. When this did not take place, revised predictions were issued. The group entered a period of crisis and decline, but managed to survive.

The Bahai movement, which started as a heterodox Moslem sect growing out of Babism has proselytized successfully in the West, and now has followers on all continents. Its history reflects continuing psychological tensions between visions of apocalyptic destruction and of universal unity and peace. The appearance of dissident groups, competing with the main leadership, reflects these tensions.

We should keep in mind that this is a modern movement, started fairly recently, which has undergone quite a few transformations. At the leadership level, we can observe the expected conflicts stemming from personal ambitions and opposing visions. The movement has undergone a series of identity upheavals, involving social, psychological, and geographical changes, as its leadership has shown creativity and the ability to adapt and go beyond its historical origins to. What started in Shia millenarianism is today often perceived as a Western belief system, attracting followers all over the world. Its public

image is clearly at variance with its complex history and the psychological processes which created it.

See also: [▶ Islam](#)

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Baptism

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Baptism, (Greek: *baptein* = immersion) is a term usually applied to the Christian ritual of initiation by water, and it is the psychology of this ritual that will be addressed here. It must be noted, however, that such acts are by no means peculiar to Christianity. In many other traditions of the ancient and modern world water is used for ritual cleansing and/or initiation. Ritual washings at death can symbolize a cleansing in preparation for the journey to another world, as in the case of the ancient Egyptians. The Greeks had many bathing rites, as, for example in the washing of initiates entering into the Eleusinian mysteries. Jews have ablution ceremonies associated with washing away various forms of uncleanness. Muslims perform ritual ablutions before praying.

Baptism for Christians can be compared to Jewish circumcision in the sense that through baptism the individual is “marked as Christ’s own forever” as in circumcision the Jew is marked as a part of his “nation” for ever.

Christian baptism has immediate antecedents in the Jewish tradition of baptizing converts seven days after circumcision and in the then radical practice of John the Baptist (the Baptizer) who performed the ritual in the Jordan River. Jesus came to John to be baptized into his life’s mission. It was the apostle Paul (formerly Saul), in the early development of the Christian church as it broke away from its Jewish roots, who established the full symbolism of the baptismal ritual, one administered at various stages in Christian history at death, in early adulthood, or in infancy and in various ways according to the sect involved. The descent into or ritual administering of water in the ceremony was, for Paul, a symbolic

death based on the death of Jesus. Arising from the water the initiate follows Christ’s resurrection and is reborn. The initiate dies to the old life and is reborn, this time into life as part of the Church, the “Body of Christ.”

There was always a psychological element to the sacrament of baptism for Christians, a sense of a new knowledge or understanding that comes through the new life. The early church father and theologian, Clement of Alexandria, believed that “baptized, we are enlightened.” In terms of modern psychology baptism can become a symbol of the birth or recovery of Self. Water has always been the symbol of pre-creation, the symbol of the universal mother, the primal birth waters. In baptism it can be said that the initiate returns to the creative waters to be reborn as potential Self, ready in this new state of being to confront the various traumas and passages of life and ultimately death itself. The descent into the waters can also be seen as a model for the necessary descent into the mysteries and traumas of the unconscious and the old life in order to be reborn, this time with the understanding making it possible to face the realities and challenges of the life ahead.

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)
[▶ Primordial Waters](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Water](#)

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Bhagavad Gita

Fredrica R. Halligan

The *Gita*, as it is affectionately called, has been described as the bible of the Hindus. It is a verse Upanishad, and has become widely known even in the West because it has been the daily reading of Mahatma Gandhi as well as millions of other Indians. The story of the *Bhagavad Gita* is the tale of the Mahabharata war, the great conflict of good and evil. In this epic tale of war between cousins, the Pandavas won out because they relied entirely on God. Arjuna, the Pandava prince and accomplished archer,

turns to Krishna, his friend and charioteer who is God in disguise, for answers to the great questions of life.

- ▶ Imagine! A man we can all identify with is in dire straits, at a crossroads, brought to his knees by the great pressures and complexities of life, shakily reaching out. And his best friend, an incarnation of God, takes his hand and walks him through the answer – explaining step-by-step the most profound secrets of all ages (Hawley, 2001: xxiv).

The Gita is thus the story of a psychological war we all wage within, and the answers given teach us how to live so as to win God's grace. Chapters two and twelve are the most significant in their messages to humanity.

The Gita's Essential Wisdom

In Chapter 2, Arjuna is bent down with worry and remorse, not wanting to begin the battle that will cause the bloodshed of so many of his family and mentors. In response, Krishna teaches him that (1) we must each do our duty, (2) the death of the body is not the death of the person because the soul (*Atman*) lives on (with a description of the doctrine of re-incarnation) and (3) to be an instrument of the Divine is to be in union with God. This third point is the essence of the wisdom of the Gita. When we surrender to God, and dedicate all our actions to the Divine One, then we can get beyond our own egos and allow God to take over. We must: "Let go and let God" (as this same thought is reworded in the 12-step programs for recovery from addictions today).

To accomplish this vital surrender to God, we must let go of our personal desires, and we must leave the outcome in God's hand. This leads to equanimity, when we neither relish the praise, nor cringe under accusations and blame, that may accompany the outcome of our actions.

- ▶ The central points of issue, Arjuna, are desire and lack of inner peace. Desire for the fruits of one's actions brings worry about possible failure – the quivering mind I mentioned. When you are preoccupied with end results you pull yourself from the present into an imagined, usually fearful future. Then your anxiety robs your energy and, making matters worse, you lapse into inaction and laziness. . . . Work performed with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done in a state of calmness. Equanimity – the serene mental state free from likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions – is truly *the ideal* attitude in which to live your life (Hawley, 2001: 20f).

This spiritual wisdom has profoundly beneficial results in psychotherapy today. It is, of course, counter-culture in the USA to talk of desirelessness and relinquishing the fruits of our labors, but anxiety disorders can be ameliorated by psychoeducation with this "wisdom of the East" in mind.

God's Most Beloved Devotees

In chapter twelve of the Bhagavad Gita Krishna teaches Arjuna that God especially loves those who are genuinely devoted and surrendered to Him, those who love and serve others, and those who are possessed of equanimity. In the expression of particular love, Krishna in the Gita teaches humankind how to live in harmony with God's Will. He states that he loves most:

- ▶ He who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from the feeling of 'I and mine,' even-minded in pain and pleasure and forbearing. Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me, he My devotee is dear to Me (Chidbhavanda, 2000: 658).

This is a profound statement of how to live a spiritually-oriented, values-based lifestyle, as valid today as it was thousands of years ago when the Bhagavad Gita was written. In a recent, more Western translation, Krishna is also saying:

- ▶ I love those who do their worldly duties unconcerned by life. I love those who expect absolutely nothing. Those who are pure both internally and externally are also very dear to Me. I love devotees who are ready to be My instrument, meet any demands I make on them, and yet ask nothing of Me. I love those who do not rejoice or feel revulsion, who do not yearn for possessions, are not affected by the bad or good things that happen to and around them and yet are full of devotion to Me (Hawley, 2001: 112).

Sai Baba (q.v.), a contemporary *Avatar* in India teaches that the wisdom of the Gita provides guidance for all humans who live today. He summarizes:

- ▶ The great teaching of the *Geetha* is: 'Put your trust in God, carry on your duties, be helpful to everyone and sanctify your lives.' Dedicate all actions to God. That is the way to experience oneness with God. God is in you. You are in God. This oneness is the basic truth. Chant the name of the Lord and render social service in a spirit of selflessness and devotion to God (Sai Baba, 1995: 235).

Oneness with God has long been the aim of the mystical traditions of all religions. These small clues on how to attain that sense of union are vital for all spiritually-oriented clients in psychotherapy or spiritual direction. To dedicate one's daily actions to God is a profound spiritual practice with beneficial results in both the psychological and spiritual dimensions of life.

See also: [▶ Atman](#) [▶ Avatar](#) [▶ Hinduism](#)

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Bible

Jeffrey B. Pettis

The Bible (Greek, “the little books”) constitutes a collection of writings understood to be sacred and essential for the life and worship of Judaism and Christianity. Most of these works are compilations of various oral and literary traditions ranging from the second millennium BCE through the second century CE. They reflect the life and narrative of various groups and socio-political contexts of a monotheistic religion taking on distinct qualities and notions of ritual and worship. The Book of Genesis evidences many of the themes which permeate the Bible as a whole. The account of the creation story (Gen.1–3) sets forth the creative powers of the Divine to bring about life *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”). This is a YHWH who is mighty and receives sacrifices from patrons to appease his temperament and persuade his actions in the mortal, material world: “And Noah built an altar (Hebrew, *mzbch*) unto the Lord. . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground any more for man's sake” (Gen. 8.20–21). Compare Isaac's altar at Bersheba (Gen. 26.25), Jacob's altar at Shechem (Gen. 33.20), Moses' altar at Rephidim (Ex. 17.15), Solomon's

altar at Giben (1K. 6.20; 8.64). The notion of “revelation” also occurs as a central theme in Genesis and other texts, the purpose and needs of the Divine being made known to the heroes of the Jewish people. Abraham has a revelation that his people will become a great nation (Gen. 12.1–4) and that God is with him as a “shield” (Gen. 15.1). At Bethel Jacob has a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder and awakens afraid, knowing that he has been encountered (Gen. 28.10–22). His son Joseph dreams and interprets dreams through which the divine purpose becomes realized (Gen. 37–50; cf. 1 Sam. 3; 1 Sam. 28; 1 Kings 9; Isa. 6.1). Compared to the Canaanite religion of that time, the notion of afterlife in the Jewish Scriptures is minimal. Covenantal existence with God in the present world through faithfulness to Torah receives the primary focus. To be in right relation with YHWH is to experience the goodness and blessing of a full life: “Blessed is the one who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. . . but delights in the law of the Lord. . . He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bring forth fruit” (Ps. 1.1–3). It is not until the Book of Daniel (168–165 BCE)—the latest writing of the Jewish scriptures—that any clear notion of resurrection and life after death occurs (Dan. 12; cf. Ezek 37; Isa. 24–27). Embraced by Jewish groups such as the Pharisees and the Essenes, it is this belief which becomes central for early Christian communities and its writings. Paul writes how Jesus died, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. Jesus then “became manifest” (*ōphthē*) to Cephas, then the twelve disciples. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time” (1 Cor.15.3–6). Paul himself had a theophanous experience while traveling to Damascus. The event leads to his conversion to Christianity as one of its strongest advocates (Acts 9.1–22; 2 Cor. 12.1–5; 1 Cor. 9.1; cf. 1 Cor. 15.5–7). His understanding that a person is justified through faith and not through the works of the Law (Gal. 3.10–14) points to the cultural and political conflict over religious identity and the issue of Gentile (non-Jewish) membership in Jewish Christianity. Jesus as the “Son of Man” (Matt. 16.27–28, 10.23; Mark 10.45; cf. 1Tim. 2.5–6; Eph. 5.2; Titus 22.13–14), may be understood to continue the Son of Man in Judaism and occurs in the Book of Daniel (Dan. 7.13–14), a writing itself part of apocalyptic tradition especially rooted in the Maccabean Wars (168–65 BCE) and the Jewish resistance to the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes the Seleucid King of Syria (Dan. 7.8; 8.9; cf. 11.31; 12.11). He is the central figure who points to the anticipated “new age” of divine justice and redemption, where those who have suffered and died for the sake of their faith will be restored to new

life (cf. 1 En. 46–48; 4 Ezra 13.3, 51f.; 1 Cor. 15.37–50). According to Jung, in Christian Gnosticism the Son of Man is the Original Man, a visualization of God as Arch-anthropos, and the real organizing principle of the unconscious (Jung, 1969, 203). As an apocalyptic and visionary, Jesus as the final sacrifice (John 6.53–54) is presented in the Gospels expecting a dramatic change of world-order. In Matt.1.15 he declares: “The time is fulfilled (*peplērōtai ho kairos*) and the kingdom of God is near” (cf. Matt. 4.17, 16.28; Luke 4.19). Christ is both Messiah and “Lord” – an apocalyptic identification which is unique to early Christianity and its reading of sacred text (see Ps. 110.1; cf. 11QMelech). Paul too anticipates the return of Jesus and new world-order: “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God” (1 Thes. 4.16; cf. 1 Cor. 13.12, 15.1–6; 2 Cor. 3.18). For Paul, the new age begins with Christ’s resurrection and will conclude with its return. The Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible and dated around the end of the first century CE presents this age as the “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21.1). However, by the third generation of Christianity the immediate return of Christ and notions of millennialism lessen as the church focuses (necessarily) more on the manifest practice of its beliefs in the present world. Implicit within this shifting is an interest in evangelism and personal witness which roots Jesus’ life and resurrection in real time. Unlike Paul’s inward mysticism and his notion of the “spiritual body,” the Gospels present the fleshly resurrected Jesus (John 21.24–31) who appears for the salvation of the outward world: “Go tell the disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you” (Mark 16.7). The Jesus of the Gospels have a missionary emphasis and a focus upon faith in the apostolic tradition. This more material-world orientation becomes a foundation for the formation of the “church” in concrete terms. The Book of Acts is a good of example of the story of the church establishing itself in the Greco-Roma second century world. Other writings such as the Epistle of James, 1 Peter, and 1 Timothy show this religio-social shift from Pauline interiority and the numinous to the outward and literal orientation. In this way the unconscious processes and content of religious experience in Christian and Jewish scriptures is becoming conscious and formulated. This includes the instituting of rituals such as the Eucharist and baptism, and codes of behavior, dress and diet.

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Genesis](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Resurrection](#)

Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths

B

Kalman J. Kaplan · Matthew B. Schwartz

Fifty years ago, Dr. Eric Wellisch, medical director of Grayford Child Guidance Clinic in England, called for a Biblical psychology, arguing that:

- ▶ The very word “psyche” is Greek. The central psychoanalytic concept of the formation of character and neurosis is shaped after the Greek Oedipus myth. . . . In ancient Greek philosophy, only a heroic fight for the solution but no real solution is possible. Ancient Greek philosophy has not the vision of salvation . . . There is need for a Biblical psychology (Wellisch, 1954: 115).

Religious leaders in traditional societies often performed the function of applying the psychological wisdom implicit in the Biblical religious traditions to the particular life problems of members of their flock. Rabbis, priests and pastors used Biblical wisdom to help people with concrete real-life problems. The contemporary situation is very different. The therapist is largely ignorant of if not antagonistic to religion, often in a manner incongruent with the patient’s own orientation.

Several studies for example, have found that over 90% of patients believe in a transcendent God, compared to only about 40% of clinical psychologists. This is a huge disconnect! Most mental health professionals avoid reference to, or recognition of their patients’ religious beliefs and the deep influence of these beliefs on patients’ lives. Few mental health professionals fully incorporate a patient’s religious beliefs into a treatment plan.

There are a number of possible reasons for the resistance toward religion on the part of mental health professionals, and for the resistance of religious leaders to the insights and findings of the mental health field. For one, the fields of religion and mental health have historically been in conflict with each other with psychology/psychiatry allying itself to science and medicine. Second, psychology/psychiatry often has approached issues of spirituality in a superficial manner, treating spiritual development as something foreign to the development of the individual personality. Third, issues regarding life meaning are too often relegated to the theological realm alone. Fourth, much of the biological cause of mental illness has been relegated to psychology and psychiatry. Finally, much of traditional psychotherapy has been based on classical

Greek rather than Biblical foundation models. For example, traditional psychoanalysis has focused on Greek foundation stories such as Oedipus, Electra and Narcissus rather than on respective Biblical alternatives such as Isaac, Ruth and Jonah.

In a series of books on religion and mental health, we (Kaplan, Schwartz and Markus-Kaplan, 1984; Kaplan and Schwartz, 1993; Schwartz and Kaplan, 2004; Kaplan and Schwartz, 2006; Schwartz and Kaplan, 2007; Kaplan and Schwartz, 2008) have delineated ten important contrasts with regard to mental health between classical Greek and Biblical thinking: (1) the primacy of God versus nature; (2) the harmonious relationship of body and soul, (3) cyclical versus linear conceptions of time, (4) the relationship between self and other, (5) the relationship between man and woman, (6) the relationship between parent and child, and (7) sibling rivalry and its resolution, (8) the relationship between freedom and suicide, (9) the question of rebelliousness versus obedience, and finally (10) a tragic versus therapeutic outlook on life. Let us briefly describe each of these Hellenistic biases in mental health and suggest a biblical alternative.

God and Nature

Hesiod's *Theogony* portrays Earth and Sky mating and giving birth to the titans, in particular Cronus, who later begat the Gods. In other words nature exists before the gods and creates them. The family pathology commences immediately, as the Sky father shoves the children back into the Earth mother. Such action of course breeds reaction and Earth repays Sky, by plotting with their son Cronus to castrate his father. The father-son conflict becomes ingrained as a law of nature foretold by Earth and Sky.

The Biblical story of creation sees God as creating heaven and earth. In other words, God exists before nature and creates it. (Gen. 1:1). God then proceeds to create order out of chaos. First, light is divided from darkness (Gen. 1:24). God then divides water from the land (Gen. 1:9). Then, God begins to prepare this world for the entrance of man. First, He has the earth bring forth vegetation (Gen. 1:11). He places living creatures in the sea and fowls in the air (Gen. 1:20). Now God places living creatures on the earth – cattle, creeping things, and other beasts (Gen. 1:24). The world is now ready for people, and God creates them, His ultimate handiwork, in His own image and gives them dominion over all that He has created. (Gen. 1:27–29). There is no irreconcilable conflict

between people and God, between man and woman, or between parent and child.

Body and Soul

Plato sees the relationship between body (soma) and soul (psyche) as conflictual and unfortunate. The soul is a helpless prisoner in the body, compelled to view reality only indirectly and unclearly (Phaedo, 82d). Plato, perhaps following Orphic teachings, called the body a prison of the soul, and others with comparable ideas called it a tomb (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 1970: 895).

In Biblical thought, the human body and soul are both sacred, both created by God. They can and must function in harmony to fulfill God's purpose in the world. Emotion, intellect and body are all integral components of a human being, and there is no opposition between body and soul or flesh and spirit (Urbach, 1979).

Conceptions of Time

The pervasive Greek view of time is cyclical, mirroring the seasons of nature. A man rises up only to be overcome by hubris (pride) and cast down into nemesis (retribution), the nadir of the circle.

The Biblical view of time is linear, freeing itself from the cyclical seasons of nature. History begins in God's creation, continues with His ongoing revelation to man, and ends in God's messianic age. The book of Ecclesiastes distinguishes the cyclical view of time regarding natural events: "The sun riseth, and the sun goeth down." (1:3–7) from the developmental view embedded in human events "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die" (3: 1–8).

Self and Other

Greek thought sees self and other as fundamentally opposed. One wins at the expense of another losing. The legend of Narcissus is prototypical in this regard. The earliest sources of the myth of Narcissus have long since been lost. Our most complete account from antiquity is from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (ca. 43–17 CE). Although physically beautiful, Narcissus leads a life full of precarious oscillation between self-absorption and infatuation with another, which turns out to be his own reflection. He ends up in his psychotic attempt to integrate self and

other, and he suicides (Ovid, 1955: 3; Conon, 1798: 24) “Alas! I am myself the boy I see. . . I am on fire for love of my own self.” The Apollonian side of Greek culture relies totally on a walled-off and disengaged intellect. The Dionysiac side of Greek culture portrays an enmeshment which destroys individual boundaries.

Biblical thought sees self and other in harmony. Jonah avoids the polarities of disengagement and enmeshment. When he runs away to Tarshish, (Jonah 1: 1–3). God acts as a protective therapist, saving Jonah from suicide on several occasions: first with a fish (2: 2–11), and then with a gourd (4: 6). Jonah finally learns the message of divine mercy (4: 9–11) and that he can reach out to another without losing himself. In the words of the Jewish sage, Hillel, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself only, what am I?”

Man and Woman

Greek narratives portray men and women in basic conflict. Pandora, the first woman, is sent by Zeus as a punishment to man because Prometheus has attempted to steal fire for man to make him autonomous. Pandora is given many gifts to entice man, but, ultimately, is seen as responsible for man’s destruction and as a block to his autonomy. She opens the box she has brought to Epimetheus containing all the evils of the world, leaving only hope left locked inside and unavailable to humanity (Hesiod, 1973: 60–96).

Biblical narratives portray men and women as different, but in basic harmony.

Eve is sent as a blessing and partner, a “helpmeet opposite,” not as an instrument of punishment. Together she and the man are seduced by the serpent to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and while this leads to their expulsion from Eden, they do not die but build a life together with divine help and hard work (Genesis 2 and 3).

Parents and Children

Fathers and Sons: Laius/Oedipus vs. Abraham/Isaac. The Greek story of Oedipus portrays the father (Laius) and the son (Oedipus) in basic conflict. The father is told by an oracle that his son will kill him and marry his (the son’s) mother. Such a conflict is originally portrayed in the Greek theogony discussed above, and describes a pattern where the father feels the son is trying to displace him and the son feels the father is trying to block

him. The story begins with Laius trying to kill Oedipus and proceeds with Oedipus killing Laius and marrying his mother, Jocasta (Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*). This conflict is resolved in Freudian thinking through a fear of castration. This is the basis of the introjection of the superego for the son, and thus it is fear-based (Freud, 1923a, 1923b, 1924).

The Biblical story of Isaac portrays the father Abraham receiving the gift of a son, Isaac, late in his and his wife Sarah’s lives. Abraham then receives the command from God to sacrifice this son that he loves to God. However, this is only a test, and Abraham demonstrates his loyalty to God, Who sends an angel to stay Abraham’s hand, preventing child-sacrifice which had been so prevalent in surrounding cultures. The blessing of Abraham will continue through Isaac. (Genesis, 22) Covenantal circumcision can be seen as a non-injurious alternative to castration, transforming the father into a teacher and the son into a disciple. The father wants the son to both succeed and surpass him. The mother is not a seductress but a harmonizer. The basis of morality is thus not fear but a covenantal relationship between God, father and son. The son does not need to rebel against the father because he already has his father’s blessing.

Mothers and Daughters: Clytemnestra/Electra vs. Naomi/Ruth: The Greek story of Electra portrays a basic antagonism between mother (Clytemnestra) and daughter (Electra). Clytemnestra accuses Electra of preferring her father, Agamemnon. Electra accuses Clytemnestra of being unfaithful to her father. She and her brother Orestes murder their mother (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, Euripides, *Electra*). This story of Electra has been used by Jung as a term for a “feminine Oedipus Complex” (Jung, 1961: 347–348).

The Biblical Book of Ruth tells of the relationship between the Moabitess Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Even when Ruth’s husband dies, she refuses to abandon Naomi. Naomi does not try to block Ruth and, indeed, facilitates her marriage to Naomi’s kinsman Boaz, who is impressed by Ruth’s kindness to Naomi. Naomi is brought into the household as a nurse to their son Obed who is described as the father of Jesse, who is father of David. There is no hint of the antagonism between mother and daughter implicit in the Electra complex.

Siblings and Family

The Hebrew Scripture contains many stories of sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, (Genesis 4), Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 17–25), Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25–27) and

Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37–50). The greater incidence of sibling rivalry in narratives in Genesis than in Greek mythology is misleading. It is a function of the underlying purpose of the biblical family – the sons compete to inherit the covenant of the father. The father’s blessing can help resolve this rivalry, as with Jacob’s blessings to his sons, each given uniquely given the blessing he needed to suit his own personality and his situation (Genesis 49).

The Greek family is purposeless. The father is not a source of inheritance but an impediment. Sibling rivalry is initially masked by the threat of the father to the sons, who must band together to protect themselves: Uranus versus his sons (Hesiod, 1973: ll. 155–210), Cronus versus his sons (ll. 453–725), Zeus versus Heracles and Iphicles (Hesiod, 1914: ll. 35, 56 and 80), and Oedipus versus Polynices and Eteocles (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*; Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*). However, this bonding is shallow and will disappear as the paternal threat recedes. This pattern is expressed tragically in the curse of the weakened and blinded Oedipus to his two sons to slay each other at the gate of Thebes. (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, ll. 1386–1394; Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*, ll. 879–924).

Freedom and Suicide

Like many Greeks both historical and mythological, the Stoics clearly approved of suicide. The Roman Stoic Seneca, for example, saw suicide as freedom. “You see that yawning precipice? It leads to liberty. You see that flood, that river, that well? Liberty is housed within them. You see that stunted, parched and sorry tree? From each branch, liberty hangs. Your neck, your throat, your heart are so many ways of escape from slavery. . . . Do you inquire the road to freedom? You shall find it in every vein of your body (Seneca, *De Ira*, 3.15.3–4). Indeed, for Plato, philosophy is “preparation for death.”

Biblical thought is clearly opposed to suicide as no better and perhaps worse than homicide. “For your life-blood too, I will require a reckoning” (Genesis 9. 5). The human being is commanded to choose life: “See, I have put before you today life and death, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life so that you and your seed shall live.” (Deuteronomy 30.19) Freedom is seen not in suicide, but in life following God’s commandments. “Read not *harut* (carved) but *herut* (freedom). One is not free unless he devotes himself to the study of Torah” (Avot, 6.2). Indeed, Hebrew thought sees the Bible as a “guide for living.”

Rebelliousness Versus Obedience

A great deal has been made of the clash of Islamic and Western (European, American and Judeo-Christian) civilizations. Yet there is a more profound line of demarcation between those cultures that view rebellion and rebelliousness as the highest form of development (e.g., Albert Camus) and those that view obedience to the divine will as the highest goal. The underlying message of the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals after the Second World War was to mock the defense “we were just following orders.” Thus the mantra of the west came to be a distrust of *authority per se* (i.e., parents, community and religious leaders, and law and system of morality) rather than of a particular authority. Yet the Bible criticizes the Israelites, newly freed from Egypt, for building a golden calf. (Exodus 32). The question of rebelliousness versus obedience is complicated. In Greek mythology, Zeus cannot be trusted. Prometheus must rebel against him to help human beings. Prometheus steals fire for men, who are then punished by Zeus by means of the woman Pandora. In Biblical thinking, in contrast, God can be trusted and indeed must be trusted. According to Talmudic interpretation of the Biblical story of creation, God has provided the means for Adam to invent fire (Midrash Genesis Rabbah, 11:2). Thus the serpent is tempting Eve with the siren call of disobedience, but in Biblical teaching, this act is sinful. In short, one must know who one’s god is. If it is Zeus, one should rebel: if it is the Biblical God, one should obey. This does not mean we should not question a particular authority. However, this is different than questioning the very idea of authority.

Tragedy Versus Therapy

Bruno Snell (1935) has argued that the differences in the respective orderings of God and nature are not just chronological, but logical and psychological as well. The Classical Greek view is deterministic and the essence of the tragic vision of man; the Biblical view is intrinsically open to the possibility of change and transformation and lies beneath the idea of genuine psychotherapy. Before the Biblical God, nothing is impossible: He can cancel the natural order of things, alter it in any number of ways, or, indeed, create something out of nothing, just the way He created nature. A Greek god is confined to acts that may show his power but that cannot truly transcend natural law or defy fate. Lev Shestov (1966) argues very much the same thing, insisting that the Biblical God is not subordinate to Necessity. The

Greek view of tragedy and the Biblical view of therapy can be contrasted in two main points. First, bad family background is impossible to overcome in the Greek tragic vision: “But now, I am forsaken of the gods, son of a defiled mother, successor to his bed who gave me my own wretched being.” (Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, ll. 1359–1361). However, a bad family background can be overcome in the Biblical therapeutic vision: “Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. For though my father and mother have forsaken me, the Lord will take me up” (Psalms 27:9–10).

There is a profound difference between the Greek and Biblical vision with regard to the efficacy of prayer and a general sense of hopefulness. For the Greeks, prayer is useless in this determined world: “Pray thou no more; for mortals have no escape from destined woe” (Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 1336). The Bible believes in the efficacy of prayer, even in the most hopeless of situations.

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See also: [Bible](#) [Biblical Psychology](#) [Christianity](#) [God](#) [Myth](#)

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Biblical Psychology

Jeffrey H. Boyd

Mindfulness, a Buddhist view of human experience, is widely employed in psychology today. Every major religion offers a view of human experience, i.e., a spiritual psychology. The most popular is the biblical view.

There are two billion people in the world who say they are Christian, one billion Muslims, 0.8 billion Hindus, 0.4 billion Buddhists, 0.02 billion Jews, and 1.6 billion people who are none of the above. The biblical view is shared by those who call themselves Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

There is more than one biblical view. For example, in the book of Joshua there is a ferocious attitude toward people of other religions (“kill the Jebusites”); whereas Jesus taught us to live peaceably in a pluralistic society (“love your neighbors”).

The Bible’s God-Centered Approach

The Bible from a Christian perspective offers a God-centered view of people. God is the creator, rescuer, and goal of humans. Comparing today’s popular psychology with the biblical approach is like comparing a pre-Copernican to a Copernican model of the solar system. Popular psychology teaches clients to love themselves and trust their own understanding. The Bible teaches that we should “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Claudius Ptolemy said that the sun and planets revolve around the earth. Nicolaus Copernicus said that the earth and planets revolve around the sun. We are facing a similar debate in psychology today. Popular magazines, TV and public opinion teach that YOU are the center of the psychological universe: “believe in yourself.” The Bible proposes that you revolve around God, meeting or frustrating God’s wishes: “believe in God.”

Self-esteem is considered essential in popular psychology today, because you are the center of value in a pre-Copernican solar system. Self esteem is almost completely absent from the Bible. Often self esteem is viewed as a problem, as in the quote above from Proverbs 3:5. All value comes from God. Humility is valued: we should worship and obey God, not worship ourselves. When a non-Christian psychotherapist urges a Christian client to acquire self-esteem, the therapist is barking up the wrong tree. She would be more successful speaking to the client about how God values the client.

While popular psychology speaks of self-esteem, Christians speak of Christ crucified. They are parallel statements. Why? Because “Christ crucified” implies he died for me. Therefore I am valuable. The implication is that if Jesus had not been crucified for my sake, then I would have no value, because I would be a sinner with no foundation for being forgiven by God. But since Christ was crucified in place of me, my worthlessness doesn’t

count, and God loves me without reservation, as if I were Jesus Christ himself. Not only is self esteem otherwise absent from the Bible, the Bible is the most realistic description of humans acting horribly that has ever been written.

Another difference between the Bible and popular psychology is that individualism is almost entirely absent from the Bible. The Bible thinks of people socially, as members of a church, family or nation. The community is the central focus; individuals are important as they serve the needs of a community.

When we compare an individualistic (i.e. popular psychology today) with a God-and-community (i.e. biblical) view of humans, different things are emphasized. The individualistic approach values breaking rules, refusing to submit to authority, being unique. The God-and-community approach emphasizes obedience to rules, submitting to authority, and loving God and neighbor as much as you love yourself. The individualistic view emphasizes authenticity and honesty; but the Bible encourages you to control your tongue (James 1:26; 3:3–12). The Bible values humility and seeing yourself as small in the larger scheme of things. Popular psychology cannot comprehend that idea. When others are obnoxious, popular psychology tends to hold grudges and resentments. The Bible demands that we forgive our enemies, just as God previously forgave us even though we didn’t deserve it. This implies that, when you are married to someone obnoxious you should forgive and reconcile with your spouse.

The Bible’s Story

Every day the news media report disasters. What sort of a world do we live in? Is this an evil place? The Bible’s view is that the world is primarily good, for God created it (Genesis 1). But then humans rebelled (Genesis 3). Things have been a mess since people arrived.

The story of the Bible, starting in Genesis 12, is how the hero of the Bible (God) sets about to rescue people, and also the environment, from disaster. People are at war with God. The central problem is how God can love people who are vicious both to God and to God’s representatives (those who are those people who are powerless). God offers a series of peace treaties (called “covenants”), which say, in effect, “If you follow these simple rules then I will bless you; but if you violate them, I will curse you.” The Ten Commandments is such a covenant (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5). People violated the Commandments, so God destroying the nation Israel in the year 587 BC.

The last peace treaty in the Christian view is based on Jesus’ blood. God offers to be at peace with people providing they made a decision to believe that Jesus had died for their sake. The Bible promises an experience of “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). The blessings and the curses attached to this treaty are more severe than to the Ten Commandments. The blessing is that, if you accept the terms (i.e. belief in Jesus), then you would have eternal life, which is a quality of everyday experience, and also a promise after death. But the curse is that, if you reject Jesus, then you are choosing to remain at war with God, so you will suffer an embattled life now and misery after death.

A person without faith usually lacks motivation or interest in the God of the Bible. Some people, upon hearing about this God, find the biblical story repulsive. Others make a decision to become part of the biblical story. At that moment God comes into the person’s heart and fills it with an awesome experience of new energy. Suddenly there is peace with God; the antagonism of life vanishes. This does not mean that the believer is a perfect person. It means that God treats the person generously and is now responsive and available. From then on the believer has a psychological problem: whether to indulge in the old worldly lifestyle, or stick to the new lifestyle described in Matthew 5–7. Experience shows that the new lifestyle is more rewarding. Over decades there is slow progress of the good gaining more influence. But by the time of death the believer is still a thousand miles from perfection. The believer approaches death with confident anticipation.

See also: [Bible](#) [Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#)

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Bion, Wilfred Ruprecht, and “O”

B

John Eric Killinger

Speaking of “O”

In seeking to formulate a general theory of the internal object, the British psycho-analyst Wilfred Ruprecht Bion (1897–1979) developed an epistemological understanding of the absolute truth *in* and *of* any object. This absolute truth he called O. While O cannot be known, it can be known about – even its presence can be recognized and felt as, for example, in the Zen or Archimedean experience of eureka. But O itself is unknowable.

Knowledge respectfully leads to the indescribable ultimate reality, godhead, or “O,” but the two concepts are not synonymous. Mathematically, Bion might have written this as $K \rightarrow O$, not $K = O$, for $K \neq O$. Transformations occur *in* or *under* “O,” the godhead rather than *imago dei* or God, for both *imago dei* and God are imbued with activity, while the godhead is irreducible to operations. K, which stands for knowledge, is usually referred to by Bion as “curiosity.” Bion often quoted a statement of French author and critic Maurice Blanchot (given him by André Green) – *La réponse est la malheur de la question* (Blanchot, 1969: 13) – translating it as “the answer is the dis-ease of curiosity.” This is a key feature in understanding that we must allow for possibilities and not close off the realm of the imaginal, especially the Void and formless infinite that is another way of referring to O. To kill curiosity is simplicity itself: just stuff an answer down a person’s throat. If curiosity is flattened, then mystery dies with it.

In another paper, Bion (1957/1984) points out the movement that ensues from attempting to extinguish curiosity from life. When this occurs, the death of curiosity leads to arrogance, and arrogance is on the road to stupidity. The bumper stickers that proclaim Jesus as *La réponse* express an attitude of “I know,” which indicates the inhibition and prohibition of the occurrence of possibilities. If this attitude prevails, curiosity becomes not unlike the image of the crucifixion of Jesus as, for example, Matthias Grünewald imagined and painted him, who stretched out in his agony, assumes the leprosy of the marginalized. When curiosity begins breeding *scintillae*, or soul-sparks, we ought to be fanning them into flame

rather than trying to stamp them out because of their seeming irrationality.

Mental pain is thus necessary to sustain the dynamism within the analytic encounter so as to make possible and foster development. By mental pain, which the patient (and analyst!) must come to tolerate, is meant a link to transformation in K – knowledge/curiosity – that leads to transformation in O and the passing through of resistance (psychological turbulence), which can be written TK → TO. Psychological turbulence is resistance to an interpretation that moves one from the comfort zone of “knowledge about” to a less comfortable one of “becoming being” because O is equated with the Void and formless infinite. As with Jung’s notion of individuation, this passage is not a once-for-all event but a process. The mental pain comes about because most people prefer the “knowing about” to “being” or “becoming *being*.” This is comparable to William Sheldon’s understanding that most people are comfortable/content with repression (the “dying back of the brain”) rather than soul-making.

Speaking of O is not unlike attempting to define the Tetragrammaton, יהוה (YHWH), in which the vowels are left out of the name of the godhead because it is a way of talking about a force or power that cannot be described in articulate speech appropriate when discussing omnipotence, omniscience, or other formulations of religion.

Bion’s Lateral Move

Essentially what Bion does is begin with Plato’s theory of Forms to anchor the significance of O. Transformations of phenomena into representations of what once was but is/are no longer known are representations of a person’s experience of O. This gives the transformations themselves an anamnestic quality, that is, they serve to re-mind or help us unforget what has been repressed.

The lateral move that Bion makes is from Platonic Forms to the doctrine of Incarnation as expressed by the so-called Rhineland mystics Meister Eckhart and Doctor Admirabilis, John (Jan) van Ruusbroec. O is not 0 (zero). O is unknown ultimate reality. O is whole. The desire to be either completely good (the absence of evil) or completely evil (the absence of good) does a disservice to O, for O is *being*, the thing-in-itself. To be either good or evil is to be forever split, which is not in accord to being O or even attaining at-one-ment with it.

O is analogous to Meister Eckhart’s prayer, “I pray God to rid me of god,” (Eckhart, 1941: 231) an invocation of emptiness that allows one to be filled with the godheadness of the godhead. The capitalization and lower case

usage of “God” and “god” respectively in this translation is explained by Eckhart’s reading of the *Timaeus* of Plato. Ruusbroec describes a movement from union through an intermediary (God’s grace + one’s holy way of life) through union without intermediary (bare and imageless understanding, i.e., the abyss) to union without difference (the dark stillness which always stands empty out of which all things come [*tohuwabohu*, *abaissement de niveau mental* (!)], superessential to us and essential to God). It is a good demonstration of Bion’s epistemological movement of transformations of curiosity to transformations of unknowable ultimate reality, or TK → TO. Distilled from the thinking of these medieval mystics, O as a function of knowledge that emanates from being without implying action in the world does so without preconceptions, foreknowledge, even identification, for doing so would put distance between O and the person. We can be O but we cannot identify with O. Qualities attributed to O are links to O (such as Love, Hate, and Knowledge [curiosity]), and these qualities or links are but substitutes for and approximations of O. These links are inappropriate to O; however, they are appropriate to transformations in (or under) O, written as TO. After enumerating several types of transformation, Bion raises the question:

- ▶ It is possible through phenomena to be reminded of the ‘form.’ It is possible through ‘incarnation’ to be united with a part, the incarnate part, of the Godhead. It is possible through hyperbole for the individual to deal with the real individual. Is it possible through psycho-analytic interpretation to effect a transition from knowing the phenomena if the real self to being the real self? (1965: 148).

What is at Stake

For Bion, what is at stake is this bit between, the gap betwixt what he terms “knowing about phenomena” and “being reality.” For example, one could compare this to knowing about psychology and being psychologized – experiencing the stirring of soul, its provocation, the waking of the sleeping bear, which despite being quite wrong by standards of common sense is quite right in order to free the *dynamis* of *psyche* by means of provoking or sustaining mental pain. This is what leads to realizing transformations *in* or *under* O.

At-one-ment with O is possible, though it is not attainable through curiosity/knowledge (K). Curiosity depends upon the evolution of O → K, which means ridding curiosity of memory and desire. So it would seem that to become one with O requires a transcendent position, and it is analogous to the Lacanian Real.

Grotstein (1996/2000) notes that the letter *aleph* in Borges' story, "The Aleph," captures the essence of O. In the Hebrew alphabet, *aleph* as first letter represents a person reaching simultaneously toward the sky and toward the earth. As such, the *aleph* is the point at which all points converge. Regarding the story of Borges (1949/1998), a view of its shadow and a penumbra of associations is offered by Blanchot (1959/2003). In the Kabbalah, *aleph* is the *Ein Sof* or Godhead. According to a story regarding the creation in *Sefer Zohar*, the blessed Holy One explains that despite creating the world through the second letter of the alphabet, a (*aleph*) is to be the first of all the letters, and only through *aleph* does the blessed Holy One become One. "No union," remarks the blessed Holy One, "is actualized except by a [*aleph*]" (Matt, 2004: 16).

The change from curiosity to the unknowable ultimate reality ($K \rightarrow O$) is for Bion a special case of transformation, and he regards it as of particular concern to the analyst in "[their] function of aiding maturation of the personalities of [their] patients" (Bion, 1965: 158). In such a transformation from description of action in the world to representation emanating from being, psychological turbulence, or resistance to interpretation, is bound to occur. Bion cites the third dark night of the soul from *The Ascent of Mt. Carmel* of St. John of the Cross. This transformation in O ($K \rightarrow O$) that involves becoming is felt as being inseparable from becoming ultimate reality. The dark night pain is, according to Bion, the fear of megalomania, and this fear inhibits acceptance of being responsible and/or mature because it has the appearance of involving *being* God with the pain that can be expressed inadequately as megalomania (Bion, 1965: 159).

Grotstein notes "The generally feared connotation of 'mysticism' has occurred through the projective identification of 'mystique' onto it by those who, according to Bion, are afraid of truth and so mystify its clarity" (1996/2000: 301). What is needed is to learn to see things as they really are, to see through the camouflage and deception of words and symbols.

See also: [John of the Cross](#) [Kabbalah](#) [Meister Eckhart](#) [Zen](#)

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Black Elk

Richard W. Voss · George A. Looks Twice · Georgine Leona Looks Twice · Alex Lunderman, Jr. · Vern Ziebart

Black Elk, also known as *Hehaka Sapa* (Brown, 1953), Nicholas, baptismal name (Steltenkamp, 1993), and Choice, Black Elk's boyhood name, *Kahnigapi* (Neihardt, 1984), was born in December 1863 in a family of healers; his father and grandfather were prominent Oglala medicine men. (DeMallie, 1984: 3). He, too, was a powerful thunder medicine man, leading in traditional (Yuwipi) ceremonies. As a *Heyoka* he worked with the thunder and dog medicines; and, as such, often worked in paradoxical (contrary) ways. The *Heyoka* or thunder dreamers often do or say the opposite of the intended meaning. Black Elk actually practiced traditional healing and medicine throughout his life, converting to Catholicism only in 1929 when he married his first wife, Katie War Bonnet who was a Catholic. Black Elk's family believes that his "conversion" to Catholicism and his work as a catechist were not absolute. Family members recall that he continued to pray with the pipe, especially when the

thunder beings came (during thunder and lightning storms), along with maintaining his Catholic practices (G. A. Looks Twice, 8 August 2007, personal communication). However, some family members report that Black Elk did not practice the traditional ceremonies after his conversion to Catholicism.

Black Elk as an Historical Figure

As an historical figure he was remarkable in many ways. As a young man he fought in the Battle of Greasy Grass (Little Horn) and traveled with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show across the United States, performing at Madison Square Garden and in Europe, including England, France, and Germany. He was actually left behind when the Wild West Show returned to America, and lived in Europe for a year, traveling across Europe. In a letter written in 1889, Black Elk commented that he wished he could have seen the land "where they killed Jesus..." but noted that it required "four days on the ocean and there was no railroad. [and] If horses go there they die of thirst..." nothing that "[It would require] much money..." (DeMallie, 1984: 10). He was a survivor of the massacre that occurred at Wounded Knee in 1890. Black Elk survived three wives and fathered numerous progeny. He married Katie War Bonnet in 1892. He had three sons from this union, William (1893), John (1895), and Benjamin (1899); all baptized as Catholics. Katie died in 1903 and Black Elk was baptized as a Catholic in 1904 and named "Nicholas Black Elk". In 1906, he married Anna Brings White, a widow who had two daughters. He fathered three children from this union, Lucy (Looks Twice), Henry, and Nick, Jr. (Goins, n.d.). Two of his grandchildren, George A. Looks Twice, 74, co-author of this article and Esther Black Elk DeSersa, 80, still live in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (Fig. 1).

There are also five other living grandchildren of Nicholas Black Elk Sr., whose father was Nicholas Jr. Nick Jr. was married to a Rosebud (Sicangu) woman by the name of Bertha Brings Three White Horses. Black Elk died in August, 1950, at the ripe old age of 87.

Black Elk as an Anthropological Informant

Most of what the non-Indian world has come to know of Black Elk has been through recorded or transcribed interviews about his vision talk and explanation of the rites of



Black Elk. Figure 1 This photo shows Black Elk and his grandson, George Looks Twice (co-author) at the summer Indian Pageant held in the Black Hills, Rapid City, South Dakota, during the 1930s. (Photo from Vern Ziebart's collection, Rapid City, S.D.)

the Oglala that he gave to non-Indian partners whom he made his kinship relatives through formal (Hunka) adoption ceremonies. From 1931 to 1947, he shared different things about himself with each partner and relative. These interviews were given to John G. Neihardt (summer of 1931) and later published in *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) and *When the Tree Flowered* (1951). They focus on Black Elk's pre-reservation experiences as a boy and young man and his life-long struggle with the major vision which he carried with him with much sadness and regret. Neihardt based these books on material gathered from three visits to Black Elk. Later, Black Elk shared extensive information about the rites of the Oglala with Joseph Epes Brown who published *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (1953). Brown actually lived with Black Elk and his family for almost a year, during which time he became a part of Black Elk's family.

Black Elk as a Transformational Leader

It is difficult, if not impossible, for the non-Indian unfamiliar with reservation life to comprehend Black Elk. Recall the two extensive works (Brown, 1953; Neihardt, 1932) written about him, which chronicle about 20 years of his life – mostly his pre-reservation experiences, “the way things used to be for the Lakota...” This leaves approximately 67 years unaccounted for, which leads us to consider the third source of information about this important figure in the history of religion and cultural studies. This source is Lucy Looks Twice, Black Elk’s daughter, who shared her perspective on her father with Michael F. Steltenkamp, who at the time was a teacher at the Red Cloud Indian High School (1993) on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This perspective on Black Elk paints a different image of him from the earlier sources (Neihardt, 1932, 1951 and Epes Brown, 1953) in that it looks at the previously unrecorded years of Black Elk’s life, when he was known for his tireless catechetical work with the Jesuit missionaries. As Steltenkamp talked to people in Black Elk’s home community, he realized that while few people even knew about the books written about the man, everyone knew Nick Black Elk for his sense of humor and his dedication and skill in teaching Catholic doctrine to children, as well as his kindness and tireless service to his community (Steltenkamp, 8 February 2007, personal communication; see also Steltenkamp, 1993).

Steltenkamp felt that Neihardt had misunderstood Black Elk to some extent, and missed some of the humor in Black Elk’s interviews. One example was where in *Black Elk Speaks*, Nick Black Elk talked about escaping Wounded Knee, commenting that, “We were very hungry because we had not eaten anything since early morning, so we peeped into the tepees until we saw where there was a pot with papa (dried meat)...” While eating the papa, they came under fire by the soldiers; he noted that they “kept right on eating until we had our fill. Then we took the babies and got on our horses and rode away. If that bullet had only killed me, then I could have died with papa in my mouth...” (Neihardt, 1961: 270). While Neihardt viewed this comment with a deep sense of sadness and loss, Steltenkamp noted that this was a good example of Nick Black Elk’s wry humor... comparable to the warning many mothers give to their children to always wear clean socks... “you never know when you might be in an auto accident [and you don’t want to be found wearing dirty socks when you go to the hospital].” There was also a striking sense of defiance – in that even while under fire, the young Black Elk and his friend eat their fill of the

papa. Steltenkamp felt that Neihardt missed the essence of Black Elk’s humorous style.

Decolonizing Black Elk’s Legacy

Of course, there has been considerable debate as to “Who is the real Black Elk?” We see the traditional Oglala holy man, the brave, self-sacrificing warrior who resisted, fought, and survived the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, the witness of the traumatic events during the transition of the plains Oglala Lakota to reservation life, a devout Roman Catholic catechist and the archetypal image of the plains Indian portrayed to tourists visiting the old Indian village during the 1930s (Fig. 2).

Clearly, Black Elk is a complex figure who defies simple categorization. The second author, Georgine Looks Twice, believes that Black Elk’s “conversion” to Catholicism was due in part to his sadness toward his vision but also a way to protect the rituals and traditions that at that time and space were banned by the



Black Elk. Figure 2 This photo shows Black Elk poring in full regalia at the summer Indian Pageant held in the Black Hills, Rapid City, South Dakota, during the 1930s. (Photo from Vern Ziebart’s collection, Rapid City, S.D.)

U.S. Government (Indian Offenses Act, in *Lame Deer*, 1992: 230).

To Black Elk's descendents, Black Elk's conversion to Roman Catholicism was also a survival strategy (Georgine Looks Twice, 17 February 2008, personal communication; see also Lone Hill, 2008). Converting to Catholicism during the early reservation era enabled Black Elk to assert leadership in his community during a very tumultuous period of history for the Lakota people. Black Elk's great granddaughter (and co-author) believes that Black Elk's compliance with the Catholic missionaries was his response to the oppression that was part and parcel of reservation life. Black Elk discovered a way to transform the broader and pervasive oppression into personal and spiritual transformation, enabling his people to better understand their new situation while holding on to traditional values.

The process of understanding Black Elk is like setting up a traditional 3-pole Lakota tipi – each pole a different informant – Neihardt, Brown, and Steltenkamp. While setting up the tipi may seem simple at first glance, it is much more complex and elegant than someone inexperienced with the process might realize. The foundation of the traditional Lakota tipi are three poles laced in such a way that two of the poles can be pulled apart to form the inverted V shape, with the third forward pole serving as the lifting pole, which actually raises the tipi – this can all be done by one person which is quite remarkable considering that each pole is approximately 20–26 feet high and may weigh as much as 50–60 pounds each. After the foundation tripod has been set, the remaining poles are lashed under each of the three foundation poles, which, when finished, forms an elegant spiral when looking up at the poles from inside the center of the tipi. Of course, invariably there are inexperienced people trying to set up a tipi. They generally yell instructions to one another, maybe become so frustrated they may even give up. Most of the times the end result of their effort is usually a disaster – or at least a very wobbly tipi that will blow away in the strong prairie winds. For many non-Lakotas, attempting to understand Black Elk is like this.

Acknowledgment

Dedicated to the memory of my Hunka relative (adoptive mother, one of the ceremonies which Black Elk discusses), whose name is Margaret Richard Lunderman, a Member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and descendant of Chief Red Cloud. She crossed into the spirit world on 03-03-08. With esteem, Rick Voss.

See also: [Native American Messianism](#) [Shamans and Shamanism](#) [Vision Quest](#) [Visions](#)

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Bodhi Tree

Paul Larson

The Bodhi Tree is a symbol in Buddhism. It is so called because it was under such a tree that Siddhartha Guatama became the Buddha of this age. By legend it was a fig tree

(*ficus religiosa*), known for its heart shaped leaves. In modern Bodh Gaya, India, a tree at the Mahabodhi Temple is revered as the Bodhi Tree, though the exact spot where a tree stood in Buddha's day is not known with precision. The original tree was destroyed in the seventh century, but the current tree is a scion of a scion of the original tree which was sent by Asoka to Sri Lanka. For the pilgrims, it doesn't matter, because the act of reverence is sanctifying beyond the literal aspects of history.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#)

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Bodhisattva

Paul Larson

In Buddhism, the “Bodhisattva” (Snskt) is one who has realized enlightenment, or “nirvana,” but out of compassion for the suffering of sentient beings has deliberately resolved to delay reaching final nirvana, complete release from samsaric rebirth, in order to aid others in achieving enlightenment. This is a principal doctrine of the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism, also known as the northern transmission, since it passed into the rest of Asia from India northwest via the Silk Road. It is the motivation that drives spiritual development in the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions in contrast with the model of the arhat (cf.), which is the motivating ideal in Theravada Buddhism, the southern transmission, going from Sri Lanka to the rest of southeast Asia.

The Bodhisattva vow is taken by lay and monastics alike in the Mahayana tradition, and involves the commitment to work for the release not only of oneself (the goal of the arhat) but for all sentient beings. The eighth century Indian Buddhist scholar, Shantideva, authored the *Bodhicaryavatara*, roughly translated as the path of the bodhisattva, which is one of the major statements of Mahayana doctrine, and a source of numerous commentaries. The ethical heart of the image of the

Bodhisattva is compassion and any merit one's actions gain is dedicated, therefore, to the enlightenment of all sentient beings. In Buddhist iconography, images of transcendental Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are numerous. Among the most important of the Bodhisattvas is Avalokiteshvara in the Indian and Tibetan traditions, and Kuan Yin in the Chinese, Korean and Japanese traditions. The former is represented as a male, the latter as a female. These images are used in meditation to generate the underlying attitude of compassion, and also serve as foci of devotion, prayers, incense and other offerings. Other Bodhisattvas include Manjushri and the Bodhisattva who will become the next Buddha, Maitreya.

See also: [▶ Arhat](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Compassion](#) [▶ Guan Yin](#)

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Body and Spirituality

Roberto Refinetti

In secular philosophy, the distinction between body and spirituality is more commonly known as the distinction between body and mind. In either case, it is assumed that humans have at least two dimensions: a material one (body) and a spiritual one (mind). How these two dimensions relate to each other is a contentious matter.

Body and Mind

For over a century, it has been common understanding that the part of the body related to mental activity is not the foot, the heart, or the liver, but the brain. Thus, the so-called mind-body problem is actually the mind-brain problem – that is, how psychological phenomena relate to

the activity of the nervous system. Many potential types of relationship between mind and brain have been proposed. Classifications of systems of ideas are always arbitrary to a certain extent, but a convenient classification recognizes four major groups: idealism, mentalism, psychophysical parallelism, and materialism (or materialist monism).

Idealism refers to a conception that only the mental realm truly exists and that the brain (and the rest of the material world) is merely an illusion. This position has very few sponsors nowadays. Mentalism refers to the conception that mental events can be fully explained by psychological concepts without any reference to the nervous system. This is a dualistic viewpoint, as it implies that mind and brain are distinct and largely independent from each other. Psychophysical parallelism refers to the conception that mind and brain are distinct but closely related to each other. This form of dualism may imply that mind and brain are only different sides of the same coin or even that neural activity can affect the operation of the mind without actually creating the mind. Finally, materialist monism refers to the conception that mental events are nothing more than neural events. This is a monist viewpoint because it implies the existence of only one dimension – the neural dimension.

As one reads the scientific literature, one gains the impression that psychophysical parallelism is the dominant conception among behavioral neuroscientists. To start with, the idea that mental events are correlated with neural events has a long tradition in psychology. Four of the major psychologists in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century made explicit statements about the parallelism between mind and brain: the highly influential William James, the father of psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud), the discoverer of classical conditioning (Ivan Pavlov), and the creator of the intelligence test (Alfred Binet). Particularly after the development of positron-emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic-resonance imaging (fMRI), it has become evident that activity in particular circuits of the brain is correlated with particular mental events.

Going beyond mere correlation, however, lesion and stimulation studies in animals and in brain-surgery patients have provided evidence that mental events do not have a life of their own – that is, that mental events can be reduced to neural events. As philosopher Mario Bunge put it, behavioral neuroscience performs a limited type of reduction: an ontological reduction without full epistemological reduction, but nonetheless a reduction. Thus, although most neuroscientists are not themselves aware of it, their work actually provides support for materialist monism. The reduction of mind to matter is

also a basic assumption in cybernetics, as Norbert Wiener (the creator of cybernetics) asserted that if we could build a machine whose mechanical structure is entirely consistent with human anatomy and physiology, then we would have a machine whose intellectual capabilities are identical to those of human beings.

It is not difficult to see why behavioral neuroscience needs the reduction of mental events to neural events. After all, if one can see, touch, and disturb nerve cells, one would like to do the same with mental events. Because one cannot do the same with mental events, one assumes that they do not really exist. If mental events are neural events, then there is no immaterial world to be dealt with. Thus, we feel terrified or ecstatic, drowsy or excited, because of specific electrochemical processes taking place in our brain. Likewise, so-called psychological causes of mental illness are merely those causes whose neural bases are not yet known. In general, to understand behavior is to understand the action of the nervous system. The mind is simply a name associated with brain functioning, just like breathing is a name associated with lung functioning and movement is a name associated with particular forms of muscle functioning. Francis Crick (Nobel laureate for the discovery of DNA) called this The Astonishing Hypothesis because most people who are not neuroscientists (and even many neuroscientists) are astonished to learn that the mind is nothing more than a label attached to the operation of the brain.

Body and Soul

Although various religions have pronouncements about the relationship of mind and body, the lack of technical detail in these pronouncements prevents close comparisons with the secular perspective. A major roadblock is the nebulous distinction between mind and soul. In Christianity, both Augustine and Aquinas held that the soul lives in the body but is non-material and immortal. Because most psychologists believe that the mind ceases to exist when the body dies, the soul must be distinct from the mind. Thus, there may be a need to recognize three human dimensions: body, mind, and soul, which are only loosely related to the Ancient Greek concepts of soma, psyche, and pneuma. On the other hand, mind (or spirit) and soul are used interchangeably in many biblical passages, which favors a simple dichotomy of body and soul (the latter somehow incorporating the mind).

The major difficulty in equating mind and soul is that the qualities of the mind cannot be properly characterized without the restrictions of time and space, whereas the

soul is eternal and not bound by geography. For instance, in Piaget's model of cognitive development, the mind of a 4-year-old child operates according to a pre-operational scheme, whereas that of an adult operates according to a formal operational scheme. Under what principle does the soul operate? Similarly, the mind of an American speaks English, whereas the mind of an Angolan speaks Portuguese. What language do their souls speak? It would seem that the soul must be distinct from the mind. In this case, the concept of spirituality would be related partly to the mind and partly to the soul.

Whether or not the mind is considered to be the same as the soul, the concept of the soul is incompatible with a materialist view that reduces spirituality to the operation of nerve cells. Therefore, the religious perspective (at least in the tradition of Christianity) favors either idealism or mentalism (as defined above) and is, therefore, in disagreement with the secular perspective that favors psychophysical parallelism and materialist monism as explanations for the relationship between body and spirituality. In analytic psychology, Carl Jung was a major proponent of mentalism and had great interest in religion.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [▶ Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#)

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Boisen, Anton

Curtis W. Hart

Boisen's Life

Anton T. Boisen was born in Bloomington, Indiana in 1876. His early life was marked by the death of his father at the age of seven. An able scholar and student, he graduated from the University of Indiana at Bloomington and taught romance languages there for a time before entering the Yale School of Forestry. Later he attended

Union Theological Seminary in New York where he studied under George Albert Coe, a professor steeped in the approach of William James to the psychology of religion. After ordination in the Presbyterian Church and a lackluster career of some ten years in the parish ministry, he experienced in 1920 the first of three psychiatric hospitalizations where his diagnosis was that of schizophrenia of the catatonic type. The second occurred in 1930 after the death of his mother and the third on the occasion of the death of the love of his life, Alice Batchelder, a woman he courted for years even as she consistently rebuffed his advances and proposals of marriage. He became convinced that his first hand encounter with mental illness was for him, as he often said, a "problem solving experience" that permitted him a new lease on life and vocation when he was well into middle age. He set about the task of educating seminarians and clergy about mental illness and ministry in mental health in the hospital setting and doing research in the sociology of religion and the psychology of religious experience. This investigation into mental illness and religious experience utilized what he had personally gone through and followed William James' descriptive and biographical approach to these phenomena in his magisterial work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). Boisen held two major chaplaincy positions, first at Worcester (Massachusetts) State Hospital and later at Elgin (Illinois) State Hospital where he died in 1965.

Boisen's Contribution to Psychiatry

Boisen made invaluable contributions to the dialogue between religion and psychiatry. His pioneering work includes, first, his efforts at establishing pastoral care as part of treatment in psychiatric institutions and, second, his passionate interest in the education of seminarians and clergy through encounters with what he called "the living human documents," individuals making their way through psychiatric illness, an experience he poetically describes as "the wilderness of the lost." He inspired individuals to follow him into this field of endeavor that evolved overtime into clinical pastoral education that is regularly offered to or required of those involved in graduate theological education. At the same time he tirelessly promoted his ideas and articles of an interdisciplinary character that reached a wide professional audience in both the religious and psychiatric communities. Besides his autobiography, *Out of the Depths* (1965), he also wrote *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Illness and Religious Experience* in 1936, a work that is still regarded as a classic in the field. His articles appeared

regularly in the journal *Psychiatry*, a publication edited by his friend and colleague, the well known and highly regarded psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan. Sullivan thought very highly of Boisen whose books he reviewed and ideas and writings he utilized and quoted. He also visited Boisen's pastoral education training programs at Elgin State Hospital where he interviewed patients for student groups and shared in their case reviews. Boisen's work has been highly regarded enough to have one of his pieces entitled "*Personality Changes and Upheavals Arising Out of A Sense of Personal Failure*" written in 1926 and published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* included in that august publication's *Sesquicentennial Anniversary Supplement* in 1994. There it appeared alongside seminal pieces by such luminaries as Sullivan, Erich Lindemann, and Leo Kanner. Boisen's article focuses upon the existential dimension of the experience of mental illness as it relates to broader philosophical concerns. The article demonstrates both his analytical gifts and rhetorical powers.

Boisen's Legacy

The latter half of Boisen's life was filled with professional success along with a great deal of personal loneliness. His efforts in promoting the dialogue between psychiatry and religion were formidable. Among his shortcomings was what critics have identified as his all too clear and certain separation between organic and functional causal factors in psychiatric illness. He also developed as years went on something of a brusque, authoritarian manner in dealing with both colleagues and students. He also lacked the organizational skills to help guide the twentieth century's clinical pastoral movement past its early stages in the 1920s and 1930s. He remains, however, an important figure and formative influence whose person and ideas deserve ongoing attention.

See also: [Religious Experience](#) [Sullivan, Harry Stack](#)

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Bonnell, John Sutherland

James G. Emerson

Introduction

In 1962, John Sutherland Bonnell (January 10, 1893–February 26, 1992) known as "Sid" to his closest friends, retired as Pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City.

Contribution from the Personality Sciences

Although known best through his radio ministry when he succeeded Harry Emerson Fosdick as the preacher on ABC's National Vespers, his basic contribution lay elsewhere. As a pastor, Dr. Bonnell brought the insights of psychoanalysis into the world of pastoral care in a way that gave those of conservative faith access to that field. In effect, his witness gave the conservative pastor "permission" to see the positive contributions of Freud, Jung and Adler to the practice of ministry – even though the pastor might not agree with the philosophical or psychological views of any of those three when it came to the Christian faith.

In many ways, through his books *Pastoral Psychiatry* and *Psychology for Pastor and People*, Dr. Bonnell opened doors not only for what clergy might do but what people in the pew might consider both for themselves and for their "lay ministries."

Brief Biography

"Sid" Bonnell was born in a barn on a farm of Dover, Prince Edward Island, Canada. He became a truant in the eighth grade and worked in Falconwood Hospital – a hospital for the "insane" – of Charlottetown, PEI, where his father had become superintendent. (His father was not a doctor but a farmer with administrative skills who was brought to the management of the hospital.)

In that hospital a patient by the name of Brown took interest in the tall, lanky young Bonnell and tutored him. Out of that training he passed the examinations for entrance to Prince of Wales College, and he was on

his way. The hands – on experience of working in the Falconwood Hospital, however, remained the background and basis for Bonnell's further studies as the works of Sigmund Freud and William James became part of the educational scene in Canada and the United States.

“Sid” Bonnell also enlisted in the Canadian army in World War I, was twice wounded in Europe, and then was sent home after suffering the effects of mustard gas. A shell fragment would have taken his life were it not for a large watch that he carried in his chest pocket. The watch deflected the fragment.

Princeton Lectures

In 1923 “Sid” married Bessie Louise Caruthers, of Charlottetown, PEI. She was the daughter of a prominent physician on “the Island.” The Bonnells had four children, George, Catherine, Elizabeth, and Margaret.

After a four point pastorate in the area of Cavendish, PEI (a community made famous by the story of *Anne of Green Gables*), the Bonnells moved to the St. Andrews parish in St. John New Brunswick; the Westminster Church of Winnipeg; Canada, and then in 1936, the pastorate of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Although the Bonnells became American citizens, they never lost their Canadian roots. Three months of every summer found them on Prince Edward Island where Dr. Bonnell did most of his writing.

Basic Viewpoint

After writing the book *Pastoral Psychiatry*, Dr. Bonnell also became a visiting lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. His course basically dealt with case studies that grew out of his own experience. His early work showed the influence of Sigmund Freud's writings, but Dr. Bonnell never moved the work of pastoral care into a pastoral model of Freudian analysis. Rather, he used the nomenclature of Freud's work, such as “the Oedipus Complex” as a tool for helping a parishioner identify the nature of a problem. He wrote, “. . .the minister who values his time and desires to conserve his mental and spiritual resources will inform himself of the teaching of these sciences that deal with the human mind” (Bonnell, 1938: 53).

Dr. Bonnell therefore saw the science of psychotherapy as something that spoke not just to therapy and counseling but to the whole range of ones ministry.

The Context of Care

Dr. Bonnell took seriously the context in which the “cure of souls” (read, “care of souls”) took place. He made use of a small but comfortable room with cathedral style window frames that gave both a church frame of reference and a source of comfortable outside light. On the wall he had a picture of Christ at prayer in Gethsemane. The parishioner sat in an upright but comfortable chair and Dr. Bonnell sat behind a small desk that served simply as a prop for use when necessary but did not give the impression of an imposing study.

The room for this counseling was set across a hall from the entrance to the floor and avoided both the pastoral offices and the secretarial offices. The context for the pastoral counseling was therefore both private and faith centered but not doctrinally overwhelming.

Evaluation of His Work

Dr. Bonnell never developed a particular system for pastoral care nor did he formulate a theological construct for his work. Basically, Dr. Bonnell was a practitioner and his lectures were more case studies than theoretical discussions. Whereas the work of Norman Vincent Peale, a contemporary and friend in New York, became popular best sellers, much of the two key books in the field by Dr. Bonnell centered on the work of the pastor. His lectures at Princeton were heavily attended.

The Evaluation by Others

Others in the academic field of that day, such as Seward Hiltner of Chicago and Princeton and Hans Hoffmann of Harvard, saw three strengths in Dr. Bonnell's work: an uncanny ability to sense an individuals “real” problem when that person went to the counseling room; a clear, structured means of communicating an answer to that problem; and a clear context of faith that was not imposed on the one with a problem but created an atmosphere of safety and of concern.

The weaknesses observed by these and others were: a person with a weak ego could be overwhelmed and lost in the “larger than life” presence and approach of Dr. Bonnell; for the same reason, pastors often tried to imitate him rather than understand the dynamics behind a counseling session. That failure resulted in a

pastor or student failing to develop his or her own approach to a parishioner. The lack of a theoretical framework within which to understand the counseling process left a major need in the area of pastoral care and counseling.

Books Written

Although Dr. Bonnell wrote some 13 books in his lifetime, the key ones that relate to the field of psychology and religion are listed below.

In the first two of these, Dr. Bonnell spoke of pastoral psychology as the “healing of the soul” E. B. Holifield sees him as understanding the goal of pastoral psychology as that of “keeping one in touch with God and the spiritual resources that flowed from God” (Hunter, 1990: 105). His practice also showed three dimensions: a dimension of personal strength and competence that he brought into the counseling room, a dimension of concern for the well being of the parishioner who came for help, and a dimension of diagnostic accuracy the later professionals such as Seward Hiltner regarded as remarkable (In personal conversation with the writer).

His solutions were practical and immediate. It was not uncommon for a counselee to leave the office with a sense of direction and an immediate task to do. One such counselee needed space and time to work out his concerns and Dr. Bonnell facilitated his having work on a farm for a summer. Another counselee needed a meaningful role that would give a sense of purpose in life and found herself given an opportunity to visit shut ins. That opportunity had the double value of meeting the need of others and, in so doing, meeting her need for a meaningful role in life.

Some sessions ended with prayer; but that was not the rule. Dr. Bonnell was not “client centered” in the way of Carl Rogers, but he was aware of where the person was, of what the person brought to the counseling moment, and of the fact that the person, not he, set the agenda for the hour in the counseling room.

In the third of these books, Dr. Bonnell sought to reach lay people. In a day called “the age of anxiety,” he focused on anxiety and both inadequate remedies and sound remedies. He had a particular concern for the issue of the ultimate escape – namely suicide. In the book, he sought to help the reader learn how to confront the problems of the day from a spiritual as well as a psychological frame of reference.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Pastoral Counseling](#) [Rogers, Carl](#)

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Breathing

Paul Larson

The use of the breath in spiritual practice has a long history and the metaphor of the breath as a symbol for life is equally long-standing. First let us note its strong association with life itself. We now know that there are heart beats and brain function in the womb, but before that knowledge we knew that taking in a breath was one of the first things we did as we are born. Our airway was cleared, the cord cut, and then we cried out. It is also the last thing we do as we die, we expire, literally. So the glyph in Egyptian for life was an airway and lung, the word in Hebrew for the life spirit is “nefesh,” the ancient Greeks termed the life force, “pneuma,” and in Sanskrit “prana” is also a term linking breath and life.

A basic limb of yoga as laid out by Patanjali was pranayama, the discipline of using the breath as a spiritual practice. Anyone who has practiced hatha yoga knows how intimately the breath is connected with the ability to stretch the body into the postures, or asanas. Different styles of breath are used for different purposes. Alternate nostril breathing has a purifying effect, the breath of fire, short rapid breaths is an energizer, and so on. Likewise most of the Asian forms of martial arts make great use of breath control to enhance the power of blocks, punches or kicks. A standard technique in Western stress management techniques is diaphragmatic relaxing breath. It is among the most useful techniques since it can be done relatively unobtrusively.

As any singer or orator knows, breath support and breath control is essential in performing long phrases whether chanted, sung or spoken. So indirectly, breath control is implicitly involved in a wide range of other spiritual practices. In short, the breath is a foundational skill in a wide range of human activities, many of which are directly or indirectly spiritual in nature and the breath has an obvious association with life itself. In Western

psychology, diaphragmatic breathing is taught as a relaxation and stress management technique (Everly and Lating, 2002). Similar approaches are used in a variety of voice training (speaking or singing) and in many of the martial arts. Thus, the ability to effectively use the mechanisms of breath has importance as a clinical tool and for effectiveness in a variety of recreational activities. The breath as both involuntary capacity to sustain life and as a voluntary tool is a vital part of psychology and spirituality.

See also: [Yoga](#)

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Buber, Martin

Maurice Friedman

Martin Buber (1878–1965) had a highly significant impact both on the religious thought of his time and on the theory and practice of psychotherapy.

The foundation for both of these contributions was Buber's early and later lifelong concern with Hasidism – The popular communal mysticism of the Jewry of Eastern Europe that arose with Israel ben Eliezer (the Baal Shem Tov) (1700–1760). In his lifelong work on Hasidism Buber moved from the fuller stories of his youth, such as *The Legend of the Baal Shem*, to the much shorter tales of the Hasidim – “legendary anecdotes.” When in 1948 the great German-Swiss novelist Hermann Hesse nominated Buber for a Nobel Prize in Literature, he claimed that by his tales of the Hasidim Buber had enriched world literature as had no other living person. Buber also wrote *For the Sake of Heaven*, his Hasidic chronicle-novel and the little classic *The Way of Man According to the Teachings of the Hasidim* plus essays on Hasidic life and community that were collected and published in English translation in *Hasidism and the Modern Man* and *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. In Hasidism Buber found a great emphasis upon *kavana*-dedication, devotion, and inner intention. Accompanied by a life of action for man and

God best expressed in the phrase “hallowing the everyday,” Buber was not himself Orthodox and observant. This led many to criticize Buber for his failure to emphasize in the tales *halakah*-the Jewish law, including his friend Abraham Joshua Heschel, a scion of Hasidism who was directly descended from some of the great Hasidic *zaddikim*. Once, however, when someone suggested to Buber that he free Hasidism from its confessional fetters as part of Judaism, Buber replied, I do not need to leave my ancestral house to speak a word that can be heard in the street. “I brought Hasidism to the Western World against the will of the Hasidim themselves.”

Although there were many things in Judaism that Buber could not accept, he felt that in the Hebrew Bible, more than anywhere else there appeared the dialog between God and man, it was to biblical Judaism and not to the rabbinical Judaism that succeeded it that Buber gave his full attention. He translated the Hebrew Bible into German with his friend Franz Rosenzweig, until Rosenzweig's death in 1929, emphasizing the “cola” or breathing units of the text. “Do we mean a book? We mean a voice,” he said.

God does not ask for “religion” but for community. Buber unfolded his view in a series of important biblical interpretations: *The Kingship of God* (from the beginning of the covenant with Israel, God makes the absolute demand of bringing all of life in relation to him), *Moses* (here Buber replaced source criticism by “traditional criticism”), *The Prophetic Faith*, and *Two Types of Faith*, in which Buber contrasted the *emunah*, or trust in relationship, of the Hebrew bible, Jesus and the Hasidism with the *pistis*, or faith based on a knowledge proposition that characterized Paul and many Christians who followed him.

Buber's philosophy of dialog, with the eternal Thou that is met in each finite Thou did, however, speak in universal and not just Jewish terms. Buber saw God as the “absolute Person” who is not a person but becomes one to know and be known, to love and be loved by us. We can dedicate to the absolute Person not only our personal lives but also our relationships to others. Buber moved from the actual event-the “lived concrete”-to symbol and myth. Countless concrete meetings of I and Thou have attained expressions in the relatively abstract form of myth. It is just this that gives these myths their universality and profundity and enables them to tell us something of the structure of human reality that nothing else can tell us. The that can only be met as a Thou. “Love is the responsibility if an I for a Thou.”

Buber was a philosophical anthropologist as well as a religious and community socialist. His teaching of the “life of dialogue,” influenced many fields of thought that

are not in themselves religious, such as sociology, education, psychology and psychotherapy. Basic to these fields of thought was the dialog between person and person and not between God and man. A German book has appeared entitled (in English translation) *Buber for Atheists!*

In psychotherapy, as in teaching and in the relationship of pastor and congregant Buber spoke of “a normative limitation of mutuality.” This limitation did not mean the I-It relation but a one-sided I-Thou in which the therapist or teacher “imagines the real” makes the other person present in his or her uniqueness. No such seeing the other side of the relationship is possible for the patient or pupil. Yet the patient is not, to Buber, the subject of a psychoanalysis but of a “psychosynthesis,” to use the term that Buber shared with the Italian therapist Roberto Assagioli. Buber’s concern was the whole person who made decisions out of the depths of his or her being rather than with the conscious rational mind alone. “Inclusion,” or imagining the real, in the essential first step to making the other present, and making the other present in his or her uniqueness is the essential step to “confirmation.” Confirmation, to Buber, did not mean merely accepting or affirming the person. It could indeed include confrontation and wrestling with the other. “The inmost growth of a person does not occur, as people like to suppose today, through one’s relation to oneself but through being made present by another and knowing that one is made present.”

Buber’s influence was not confined to individual one-on-one psychotherapy. It also affected group therapy and that “contextual” or intergenerational family therapy that was founded by Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, M.D. In such therapy the adult children come to understand the childhood of their parents while avoiding “parentifying” their own children. So here the central statement of *I and Thou* – “All real living is meeting” – is applied to the relationship between person and person within the family or outside of it without any explicit reference to an I-Thou with the eternal Thou.

In 1957 the Washington (DC) School of Psychiatry brought Buber to America to give the Fourth William Alanson White Memorial Lectures on “What Can Philosophical Anthropology Contribute to Psychiatry.” The lectures that Buber gave then brought together into one whole (now published in Buber’s book *The Knowledge of Man*) the various strands that have before and since, served as the groundwork for all Hialogical Psychotherapy.

The *between* is the ontological dimension in the meeting between persons, or the “interhuman” (not to be confused with the “interpersonal which includes I-It as well as I-Thou!”) that is usually overlooked because of our tendency to divide our existences into inner and outer,

subjective and objective *Dialogue* is the way through which we relate to others in their uniqueness and otherness and not just as a context of our experience. The intrapsychic is only the accompaniment of the dialogue and not as so many psychologists tend to see it, the touchstone of reality in itself. Underlying the I-Thou as also the I-It is the twofold movement of “setting at a distance” and “entering into relation” (*distance and relation*).

Essential in psychotherapy when it is a question not of some repair work but of restoring the atrophied personal center, is “healing through meeting.” Corollary to this is the fact that Buber saw the *unconscious* as the wholeness of the person before the differentiation and elaboration into psychic and physical, inner and outer. Buber felt that Freud and Jung and all other psychologists missed because of the logical error that if the unconscious is not physical, as many claimed, then it must be psychic. The unconscious can only be grasped dynamically and in process and not as some sort of fixed object. Buber particularly wanted to guard against that “psychologism” that removes reality and the meeting with others into the intrapsychic so that life in the soul replaces life with the world. Jung saw religion as psychic events that take place in relation to the unconscious and God as an autonomous psychic content, a function of the unconscious. “Otherwise,” wrote Jung, “God is not real for he nowhere impinges upon our lives.” Psychology becomes in Jung the only admissible metaphysics. The fiction of the world in the soul conceals the possibility of a life with the world.

Existential guilt, is an event of the between, something that arises from the sickness between person and person and that can be healed only through illuminating the guilt, persevering in that illumination, and repairing the injured order of existence through an active devotion to it. Existential guilt is an ontic dimension that cannot be reduced to inner feelings or the introjection of the “superego.” This put Buber at variance with Freud who saw guilt as only neurotic and Jung who saw guilt as one’s failure to achieve individuation. Neither saw guilt as a reality of the human person in relation to the reality entrusted to him or her.

Therapy too rests on the I-Thou relationship of openness, mutuality, presence and directness. Yet it can never be fully mutual. There is instead what Buber called “a normative limitation if mutuality” that applies to the therapist, the teacher the pastor, and, of course, the parent. There is mutual contact, mutual trust, and mutual concern with a common problem but not mutual inclusion. The therapist can and must be on the client’s side and, in a bipolar relationship, must imagine quite concretely what the client is thinking, feeling and willing. The therapist cannot expect or demand that the client practice

such inclusion with him or her. Yet there *is* mutuality, including the therapist's sharing personally with the client when that seems helpful.

Inclusion or "imagining the real," must be distinguished from the empathy that goes over to the other side of the relationship and that identification that remains on one's own side and cannot go over to the other.

Confirmation comes through the client being understood from within (by parents, family, friends, and lastly through the therapist) and through the therapist going beyond this to that second stage in which the demand of the community is placed on the client. This demand enables the client to go back into dialogue with those from whom he or she has been cut off. Buber saw inclusion, or making the other present, as anything but passive or merely receptive. It is rather a "bild swinging" into the life of the other where one brings all one's resources into play.

See also: [▶ Baal Shem Tov](#) [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Hasidism](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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Buddha-Nature

Trish O'Sullivan

Buddha-nature is a teaching of the Buddha regarding the true nature of Self. After attaining enlightenment the Buddha stated that all beings have Buddha-nature. Propagated in the Mahayana School especially, the teachings espouse that all sentient beings possess a True Self that is unconditioned, undefiled, indivisible, and timeless. This True Self or Buddha-nature is beyond the realm of ordinary consciousness and practitioners must transcend ordinary conceptual thought (usually through meditation) in order to perceive it. While it is said that Buddha-nature is to be attained through meditation, it is also emphasized

that everyone already has it and the process is one of piercing conceptual ignorance and uncovering something that is already there. The experience of attaining Buddha-nature is realization or enlightenment.

The realization of Buddha-nature brings with it a cessation of over-identification with the body, emotions and mental processes. This results in release from Samsara or suffering related to attachment to the idea of a separate self and the related grasping and aversion that results from that idea.

Buddha-nature contrasts with the idea of the self as the essence of over individuality in that with the realization of Buddha-nature all notions of individuality and separateness become less fixed. Psychologically this concept of interconnectivity and non-distinction from all sentient beings, since all beings have the same Buddha Nature is a perspective that decreases isolation and brings compassion, understanding and peaceful practices such as ahimsa or nonharming. It can also diminish the fear of death and other forms of insecurity.

From the psycho therapeutic perspective, the experience of being viewed by the Buddhist therapist as someone who is ultimately undamaged and has the capacity for attaining enlightenment and full Buddhahood is a positive one. Many Buddhist authors and therapists encourage psychotherapy clients to meditate in order to diminish attachment to negative emotions and situations. This can reduce suffering while the client works through their issues and is a valuable skill useful throughout life.

Buddha-nature is not something that can be adequately explained with words but must be experienced for complete comprehension. Within Buddhism there are many teaching tools that point to Buddha-nature rather than attempt to explain what it is. The following is a traditional Chinese Zen poem of unknown authorship pointing to Buddha-nature:

- ▶ The Human Route
Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed—
That is human
When you are born, where do you come from?
When you die, where do you go?
Life is like a floating cloud which appears.
Death is like a floating cloud which disappears.
The floating cloud itself does not exist.
Life and death, coming and going are also like that.
But there is one thing which always remains clear.
It is pure and clear, not depending on life or death.
Then, what is the one pure and clear thing?

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#)

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Buddhism

Paul Larson

Buddhism is one of the world's major religions. It arose in northern India in the 6th century before the current era in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 BCE.). It grew out of Hindu thought and shares a common world view based on the concepts of dharma, karma, reincarnation, and the manifest world as illusion or “maya.” Dharma, translated often as “law,” “way,” or “path” refers to the immutable structure of the world and its constituent elements. But it differs from the Western concept of law, as it is not promulgated by a personal creator god, but rather is simply the structure of reality. “Karma” (cf.) is likewise an impersonal force through which the fruits of one's actions come back to enhance or diminish from one's growth on the spiritual path. This contrasts with the Western view of being subject to judgment by a personal god. Reincarnation refers to the cycle of individual birth, life, death and rebirth. This is termed the “wheel of life,” or “samsara.” The goal of spiritual development is to end this cycle.

Siddhartha Gautama was reputedly a son of a king of the Śākya tribe (hence the epithet, “Shakyamuni,” or sage of the Śākyas) and was sheltered from viewing human suffering by his father. At age 29 he encountered a old person, a sick person, a corpse, and a mendicant, or wandering holy beggar common in the Hindu tradition. He found this new awareness deeply troubling and decided to leave his wife and child, his palace and life of comfort to pursue the religious life. He wandered with the sadhus, received much training in meditation and the practice of self denial and discipline. However he felt

he had not received full attainment. After he broke a fast by taking a bowl of milk from a woman cow herder, his followers left him, thinking he had strayed from the path. Then he sat down in meditation firmly intending to make the final breakthrough. He continued into the night and received many temptations for power, comfort and so on, but persisted. He did achieve a final enlightened state where the whole of existence was made known to him including knowledge of all his previous life times. As the dawn broke he realized he had achieved his goal. His title, the Buddha, means “the enlightened one.” He claimed to have awakened fully and completely to the ultimate nature of reality with the capacity to retain this awareness while still embodied in the flesh. This day is celebrated in Buddhist tradition as Visaka. It is a combined birthday and day of enlightenment.

He initially doubted humans could either believe him or achieve this same result, but became convinced he nonetheless needed to tell humanity about his achievement. So he sought out his former students who had gone to a deer park in Sarnath near what is now Varanasi (Benares) and preached his first sermon. This is known as the “first turning of the wheel of dharma.” In this sermon he identified the Four Noble Truths which include the Noble Eight-fold Path.

The first of the four Noble Truths is the reality and pervasiveness of human suffering. The second noble truth is the awareness that suffering comes mostly from our very human attitude of grasping, desiring, reaching out for something. That can be a feeling, a mental state, a relationship with a person, or an object such as wealth, power, or fame. The third noble truth states that there is a way out of this endless cycle of suffering. The fourth noble truth is that the way out can be summarized in the noble eight-fold path, eight specific ways in which one can work toward achieving that same enlightenment that the Buddha experienced.

The Noble Eight-fold Path is the most succinct statement of Buddhist spiritual methods and means by which spiritual growth is to be accomplished and how one is to live. It is often broken down in to three groups, two comprised of three truths, and a third comprised of two. The first triad, “sila,” (Skt. morality), is comprised of right speech, right action, right livelihood. The second triad, “samadhi” (Skt. meditational absorption) consists of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The third, “prajna” (Skt. wisdom) involves right understanding and right thought. The former means seeing the world as it truly is and not as it appears, the second refers to the transformation of our thought processes which comes

from the practice of the others, particularly those involved in samadhi.

Of all of the major world religions, Buddhism is often described as the most psychological. This is true, since the whole foundation of the religion is the practice of meditation, a certain type of mind state that is cultivated through practice. In a comparative sense, the “gnosis” that leads to salvation (nirvana) is completely experiential and direct. It is not mediated through concepts and talking or thinking about the divine; it is the experience of the divine. In both Hindu and Buddhist views, that experience is beyond personhood and the boundaries of conceptual logic. The path of spiritual development of all beings is the attainment of that state of non-duality which is known as nirvana. The very etymology of “Buddha” refers to the view that enlightenment is state of being fully awake and aware in a cosmically uncompassing mind. Despite the ineffable nature of the mystic union which Buddhists call enlightenment, it is the attainment of that state through the discipline of the mind that makes it such a powerful psychological tool. The goal of spiritual development is ultimately the dissolution of the self, which really is a fiction anyway. This contrasts with the Western goal of salvation of the individual soul.

After the death of the Buddha, there were several Buddhist councils which sought to redact his teachings (Skt. sutras) and codify rules for monastic life (Skt. vinaya). Soon explanatory and philosophical discourses (Skt. abhidharma) were added to make the third division of material within the Buddhist scriptural canon. The canon is known as the “Tripitaka,” (Skt) meaning three baskets in reference to these major divisions of the material (Goddard, 1938/1966).

The Buddhist sangha, or community, comprised of both monastic and lay followers soon diversified into several schools of thought. The initial distinction occurred geographically, one branch went south, to Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The other branch went first to the northwest, to Pakistan and Afghanistan, then over the high mountains of central Asia into the Tarim basin of modern China. Here several Buddhist kingdoms flourished before the arrival of Islam. From there it went on to China, Korea, Japan, and meeting the southern transmission in Vietnam. The Sanskrit term “yana” is generally translated as “vehicle,” and the southern stream called the Hinayana, or lesser vehicle and the northern transmission called the Mahayana, or greater vehicle. The original Hinayana teachings became transformed into the modern Theravada school, which is the only remnant of that transmission (Theravada is the preferred name for this

score, avoiding any pejorative connotations of Hinayana). Later, in the first millennium Buddhism was influenced by a pan-Indian movement known as Tantrism. Out of this influence came esoteric Buddhism, or the Vajrayana, or diamond vehicle, as it is now known.

It is not a great surprise that the generation of Western students of Buddhism which began in the 1960s was drawn to the religion through the practice of meditation rather than the cultural aspects of daily religious practice that is at the heart of Buddhism in the ethnic Asian communities where Buddhism was the dominant religion (Fields, 1986). Westerners went right for the psychological consciousness-based experiences and only later became aware of and began to find meaning in the cultural cycles of feasts, fasts, and the close interrelationship between a lay and a monastic community. The job of religious education of children and communal bonding was for many Westerners, a secondary acquisition. Buddhist meditation practices are quite wide-ranging. It shares with Hindu tradition the use of mantra meditation, based on developing the psychological of concentration, it has especially developed an open-focused meditation style now known as “mindfulness” in the psychological literature (Germer, Siegel, and Fulton, 2005). Tibetan meditational practices are the most complex, involving visualizations, chanting, use of gestures (Skt. mudras) and ceremony.

The spectrum of Buddhism offers just as much variety of religious experience as in the Western monotheisms. As with many religions, there are traditions and sects where profound devotion to a particular saint, guru, or person is worked out through more emotional sorts of practices and devotional liturgies, and others which are more austere and involve solitude and or denial. The artistic iconography of Buddhism likewise reflects the full range of human experience, from the bare and clean lines of a Japanese rock and sand garden, through the ornate and vivid tankas of multi-armed divine beings in coital embrace all portrayed with a busy border of paisley brocade.

See also: [▶ Buddha-Nature](#) [▶ Esoteric Buddhism](#) [▶ Karma](#) [▶ Samsara and Nirvana](#) [▶ Sangha](#)

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C

Cain and Abel

Mark William Ennis

Cain, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, is the first human being born on the earth; the first child of Adam and Eve who were created out of the dust of the earth by God. Qur'an tells a similar, although not identical, story of Cain and Abel. The name Cain in Hebrew means "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Cain was a tiller of the land as was his father, Adam, following Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In the course of time a younger brother, Abel was born. The once only child now became an oldest child. Unlike his father and his older brother, Abel became a shepherd of sheep.

The day comes when Cain and Abel each bring offerings to God. God finds Abel's offering acceptable but God finds Cain's gift un-acceptable. Many have speculated as to why one offering was acceptable and the other not. Perhaps this reflects a culture that valued pasturing animals over that of land-based farming. Perhaps it is because Abel brings the first of his animals while it is not specified if Cain's offering was the first fruits. Maybe it shows God valuing younger, less powerful people at the expense of the older or more influential. This theme is not uncommon in Hebrew scripture. Jacob is the younger of two sons but becomes the inheritor of their father's estate as well as the father of Israel. Likewise, King David was chosen to be king of Israel over and against his older brothers.

The fact is that we can not know for certain the reason for the rejection of Cain's offering. But, from my point of view, the more interesting question is how Cain reacted to this rejection.

One can glimpse the family system approach of Bowen in Cain's reaction. Reminiscent of his father, Cain seeks to externalize his difficulties. Adam, when confronted by God for his eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden seeks to blame Eve, and by extension, God himself, for his failing. Likewise Cain sees the

fault in Abel and somehow seems to believe that the death of his brother will make his offering acceptable. Instead, he gains further isolation, and his brother's blood even poisons the earth. True to Bowen, the toxins of a sick family trickle down and contaminate the family in subsequent generations as well as effect the super-family system.

One may also gain a foreshadowing of Alfred Adler's examination of birth order in this story. In Adlerian thought, the oldest child is an achiever who considers subsequent children as a threat to his place in the world. In this particular account, the older brother is indeed supplanted in worth by the little brother. This ancient story is a tale of sibling rivalry within the context of a fallen family contaminated by parental sins. Cain is ultimately trying unsuccessfully to please a creator father while staving off the rivalry of a brother and suffering from the contamination of his human father.

Cain's reaction to this rejection is murder and the subsequent estrangement from the only community that he loved. Here we see a personality disorder as described by Rotter. Had Cain developed a mature personality with a strong internal control mechanism, he might have avoided becoming a murderer.

Cain, with a stronger personality, with the strength to reject his family pattern might have received the answer that we find unanswerable, "God what can I do to make my sacrifice acceptable?" He might have altered his history and not become the world's first murderer.

See also: [Adler, Alfred](#) [Creation](#) [Genesis](#)

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Call, The

Alice Mills

The call to adventure is the first stage in the monomyth, when the hero is summoned to undertake a quest. The monomyth is a pattern of hero quest narrative developed by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* from a host of fairy tales, myths and other sacred tales that span millennia and cultures. Campbell points out that not all hero quest narratives contain all the features of the monomyth, but the call to adventure is omnipresent in these narratives. Sometimes the hero only recognizes the summons in hindsight and if the tale has a trickster element, it may be well hidden. A helpful and wise guide sometimes explains the call to the prospective quester but it may also appear, as in some Biblical examples, to be an incomprehensible demand outraging common sense. The call may summon the hero towards a specific task, such as killing a dragon; it may take the form of an epiphany, profoundly transforming the individual's perceptions and understanding of self and the world; some calls to adventure are aversive, when the hero's dissatisfaction with the status quo propels him or her into a quest for change. The call always announces the prospect of change, whether for a kingdom or an individual soul.

The monomyth hero quest can also be understood as guidelines for the psychological hero quest that, in Jungian thinking, every psyche should undertake. The call to adventure would then be a summons alerting the psyche to unconscious contents that are ready for the work of integration that Jung terms individuation. In this sense, the call to adventure may come in such forms as a generalized dissatisfaction with ordinary everyday life or disturbing dreams, an illness or retrenchment from a job. While the mythic monomyth very often involves a youthful hero, the Jungian hero quest can be undertaken

at any age. The hero in the mythic monomyth is an extraordinary individual, but for Jung the hero quest is a path available for all human beings, since all have a shadow in need of integration. As Campbell's pattern shows, while individual hero quest stories may deal with only one quest and have a "happy ever after" ending, the hero quest as a pattern should be regarded as cyclic. When one quest is ended, the next call to adventure may well occur. For the individual psyche, the call to adventure, to recognize and integrate shadow contents, is not a call to achieve complete integration then and there; for Jung, there is always more shadow to emerge and be integrated.

See also: [▶ Campbell, Joseph](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Myth](#)

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Calvinism

Jaco J. Hamman

Calvinism refers to a particular understanding of the Christian faith and an approach to the Christian life first articulated by the French Protestant theologian, John Calvin (1509–1564). Subsequently, it has been upheld in Protestant Christianity's Reformed tradition by persons such as John Knox (Scotland), John Bunyan (Britain), and Jonathan Edwards (America) (McGrath, 2007).

Calvinism has five basic beliefs: (1) Humanity is totally deprived due to original sin; (2) God unconditionally elected those who will be saved to receive eternal life; (3) Jesus Christ has died for those who were elected by God; (4) The Holy Spirit pours irresistible grace over those saved; and (5) Believers will persevere and are eternally saved in Jesus Christ. For Calvinists, the sovereignty of God reigns over all aspects of a person's life: personal, spiritual, intellectual, political, and economical. Education informed by Calvinist dogma is important as is distinguishing the sacred from the secular (Spencer, 2002).

Calvin believed that knowledge of self – realizing one's depravity and need for salvation – and knowledge of God

leads to wisdom (McMinn & Campbell, 2007). Following their founder, Calvinists generally judge psychologies harshly in light of God's sovereignty and humanity's deprivation. They often question the philosophical foundations and models of personhood, health, and abnormality of most psychologies (Browning & Loder, 1987).

See also: [Christianity](#) [Evangelical](#) [Fundamentalism](#) [God](#) [Holy Grail](#) [Jesus](#) [Protestantism](#)

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Campbell, Joseph

Anais N. Spitzer

Joseph Campbell (1904–1987) is one of the most widely recognized scholars of mythology. The public television series *The Power of Myth* (1985–1986), consisting of interviews with Bill Moyers, propelled him into the public spotlight. A follow-up book, published posthumously, (Campbell, 1988) increased his popularity and catapulted his earlier work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), onto the *New York Times* best-seller list in 1988. George Lucas' public acknowledgment of Campbell's work as inspiration for the *Star Wars Trilogy* cemented Campbell's place in the popular canon. Although many of Campbell's ideas have been embraced by the public at large and his importance has been recognized beyond the walls of academia, Campbell is no less a scholar. That he spent most of his life as a teacher and academic, along with the rigor of his work and its subsequent use among scholars, affirms the pertinence of his ideas to the study of myth within the academy.

Life and Scholarship

The oldest of three children, Campbell was born in New York City in 1904 to Irish Catholic parents. In 1910 Campbell's father brought him to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, igniting a life-long interest in Native America religions. He quickly exhausted the share of children's books on the subject and by age 11 was already reading Bureau of American Ethnology reports.

Early on, Campbell was an avid reader, excellent student and gifted athlete. In 1921 he enrolled in Dartmouth College to study biology and mathematics but, after discovering the humanities, he transferred to Columbia University as an English major in 1922, earning a Bachelor of Arts in 1925. A member of the Columbia track team, he set the school's half-mile record.

In the summer of 1924, while enroute to Europe, Campbell met Jiddu Krishnamurti (with whom he sustained a lifelong friendship) who introduced him to Buddhism and Hinduism. This early encounter with Eastern religions had a lasting impact on Campbell's life and scholarship.

In 1926 Campbell returned to Columbia University to pursue a Master of Arts in Medieval Literature. His thesis, "A Study of the Dolorous Stroke," was supervised by the Arthurian scholar Roger Loomis. Hungry to continue his studies but already aware that his interests crossed disciplinary boundaries and were incompatible with the specialization a Ph.D. would require, he traveled on a Proudfit Fellowship to the University of Paris to study Romance philology and later to Munich where he learned Sanskrit. Campbell became enthralled with the European intellectual milieu that led him to the works of James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Leo Frobenius, Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung. All of these figures would later come to influence his theory of mythology and his writing and teaching.

Campbell began his teaching career at Sarah Lawrence College in 1934, beginning his career-long acclaim as an exceptionally skilled and popular teacher. His first major publication was *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944), co-authored with Henry Morton Robinson. Another highly influential figure in Campbell's life was the German Indologist, Heinrich Zimmer, whom Campbell met in 1941. A speaker (along with a plethora of other famous intellectuals from across the globe) at the prestigious Ascona, Switzerland based Eranos Conferences, Zimmer introduced Campbell to Paul and Mary Mellon, founders of the Bollingen Foundation, which later published many of Campbell's works. The Mellons solicited Campbell to write the commentary to the first book of the Bollingen series, *Where the Two Came to Their Father: A Navaho War*

Ceremonial (1943). After Zimmer's unexpected death in 1943, Campbell was put in charge of editing Zimmer's posthumous writings, a project that took twelve years and yielded four volumes. During this time, Campbell presented two important papers of his own at Eranos: *The Symbol Without Meaning* (1957) and *Renewal Myths and Rites of the Primitive Hunters and Planters* (1959). He also edited a series of volumes consisting of papers presented at the Eranos conferences. In the summer of 1953, while in Switzerland, he met Jung for the first time.

Campbell retired from Sarah Lawrence in 1972 and moved to Honolulu where he continued his research and writing. A few of his works from this period include *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion* (1986) and *The Mythic Image* (1974). During this time he also completed *The Power of Myth* interviews. He died of cancer in 1987.

Notable Works

Campbell's studies in literature, the psychology of Freud and Jung, anthropology and Eastern religion informed his famous study of hero myths, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, which employed Joyce's idea of the monomyth in its examination of hero myths across the globe.

One of Campbell's most significant works of comparative mythology is the four-volume *The Masks of God* (1959–1968), a study of “primitive,” “oriental,” “occidental,” and modern literary, “creative” mythology. On the one hand, the volumes set out to “view the cultural history of mankind [sic] as a unit” and to “compose into a single picture the new perspectives that have been opened in the fields of comparative symbolism, religion, mythology, and philosophy” (1959: 3, 4) by tracing worldwide re-occurring mythological themes. On the other hand, the volumes carefully assert that “the myths of differing civilizations have sensibly varied throughout the centuries” (1959: 18) in such a way that the virtue of one culture's mythology is the vice of another, and one's heaven, another's hell. In other words, Campbell warns in his prologue, “mythology is no toy for children. . . . there is a real danger, therefore, in . . . joining the world in a single community, while leaving the anthropological and psychological discoveries from which a commensurable moral system might have been developed in the learned publications where they first appeared” (1959: 12), making note of the fact that his comparative study was cognizant of the importance of historical differentiation and the dangers of morphological parallelism and historical diffusion.

At the end of his life, Campbell undertook another comparative study, producing the richly illustrated two-volume *Atlas of World Mythology* (1983, 1989), which further extended his studies of the historical origin and diffusion of myths.

Theory of Myth

For Campbell, myth functions symbolically, as “energy-releasing, life-motivating and – directing agents” (1959: 4; 1969: 178). Mythology reveals a psychological truth that shows itself in stories and images. Underlying the historical and cultural particularities of mythology is also the potentiality for shared meaning across time and culture that exists because of the psychological and metaphysical underpinnings at work in the stories and alive in the human spirit. Campbell believed that myths are of nature – that is, they are part of the very structure of human biology and the psyche – and although they manifest within and are influenced by culture, they are not exclusively of culture (as Claude Lévi-Strauss proposed). For Campbell, the gap between nature and culture is bridged by myth. Nature is not only out there in the world beyond the human, but it is also within. Myth unites the inner world with the outer. Toward the end of his life, Campbell summed up myth as the “experience of life” (1988: 5). This later statement echoes Campbell's insistence that the interpretation of mythology is anything but systematic. In fact, in *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, he uses the shape-shifting god Proteus as a metaphor of mythology in order to suggest that mythology is psychological, historical, anthropological and metaphysical and cannot be reduced to a single function.

Myths – including mythic discourse and thinking – can function in one of two ways: as a symbol “functioning for engagement” or as a symbol “functioning for disengagement, transport, and metamorphosis” (Campbell, 1969: 169). Campbell carefully elaborates these two functions in his 1957 Eranos lecture “The Symbol Without Meaning” by drawing on the metaphor of a bow that serves either to engage or disengage meaning. When the symbol is given a meaning, “either corporeal or spiritual, it serves for the engagement of the energy itself” (Campbell, 1969:178). As an agent of engagement, myth works to confer meaning. In this way, it can be read as a “literature of the spirit” that provides one with “clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life” (Campbell, 1988: 3, 5) that aligns the individual with society (in particular, the collective unit of family, religion, tribe, state and nation)

and the cosmos. Myth unites the inner with the outer and shows how each is mirrored in the other.

However, when the symbol functions to disengage, myth does not provide any assurance of meaning. When “all meaning is withdrawn, the symbol serves for disengagement, and the energy is dismissed – to its own end” (Campbell, 1969: 178). Rather, myth evokes an experience of existence instead of positing a specific meaning that always runs the risk of being taken dogmatically. In fact, Campbell frequently warns against interpreting the symbolic literally and even argues that such literalizing is absurd (and potentially even dangerous) in a “de-mythologized” world (1969: 124–126). Inasmuch as myth can reveal the previously unknown, making it known and bringing it to consciousness, it can also point to the unknown as unknowable.

Criticism

The bulk of negative criticism of Campbell’s work comes from academics in the fields of religion and folklore, and stems from one basic complaint about his hermeneutic of comparativism. Many detractors have simplistically likened him to Mircea Eliade and Jung on the issue of archetypes and universals, equating the psychological with the universal and ahistorical in order to argue that Campbell’s comparativism is unscholarly (dismissed by Wendy Doniger as “Muzak mythology” (Doniger, 1992: 78)) since it overlooks historical and cultural particulars in favor of generalizations.

In his 2004 Presidential Plenary Address to the American Folklore Society, Alan Dundes takes aim at Campbell’s “universalizing,” arguing that some mythological motifs do not exist in all cultures. To support his assertion, Dundes cites the lack of a deluge myth in sub-Saharan Africa as one example. Earlier in his speech, however, Dundes does emphasize the point that interpretation “would not have been possible without recourse to grand theory” (2005: 4), of which “universalizing” is a key part. In the same speech, Dundes also credits Campbell “for getting people interested in our discipline” (2005: 10).

David L. Miller forcefully argues that these claims against Campbell do not bear closer analysis because Campbell was neither a Jungian, nor unaware of the importance of historical differentiation. Invoking Plotinus’ *Enneads*, Miller avers that Campbell’s method is that of comparing the likeness of unlike things (that is, of finding similarity within inherent difference), as opposed to the likeness of like things (1995: 168–177). Miller points out several pivotal and often neglected parts of

Campbell’s scholarship that affirm this, adding that Campbell’s choice of language in the titles of his books (a thousand faces as opposed to one face, masks of God) subtly points to the complexity of Campbell’s approach.

Robert Segal has also made the case that Campbell is not a Jungian and that, in fact, his theory of myth differs significantly from Jung’s (1990: ix–xi; 1987: 244–262; 1999: 463–465). Furthermore, Segal calls into question the flippant dismissal of comparativism, asserting that “any theorist – of myth, religion, or anything else – is a universalist” in some way (1999: 463) and lists James Frazer, Northrop Frye, Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Lévi-Strauss as some offenders who are not always subjected to the same scrutiny as Campbell.

See also: [Hero](#) [Monomyth](#) [Myth](#)

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Castration

Stefanie Teitelbaum

A modern definition of castration is any action, surgical, chemical, or otherwise, by which a male loses the functions of the testes or a female loses the functions of the ovaries. Castration is also referred to as gelding, neutering, orchietomy, orchidectomy, and oophorectomy. Traditional definitions of castration refers only to the physical removal of the testes. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all share strict prohibitions about mutilating God's creations.

Freudian castration refers to the biological penis of the Oedipal boy fears castration by the father as punishment for incestuous wishes towards the mother. Internalization of this fearful father is a formative factor in the creation of the superego, the psychical agent of morality and civilization in the structural topology of the psyche. Psychoanalysis in Freud's lifetime, post-Freudians, and psychoanalytic feminists have elaborated, revised and/or reviled his phallo-centric position. Current views of castration anxiety include all psycho-sexual erotogenic zones and functions in men and women.

Psychology and religion share thoughts about castration and/or fear of castration serving to free the spirit from the forces of instinctual gratification. Both psychoanalysis and religion have had controversy over the blurred boundary between biological and psychical castration imagery.

Religion

Olympian Creation Myth

At his mother's Gaia's urging, the titan Cronus castrated his father Uranus. The Goddess of Love and Beauty, Aphrodite, was formed from the foam of the severed

testicles in the sea. Uranus sought sexual gratification every night, but hated the children conceived by his lust.

Paganism

The priests of Cybele castrated themselves as early as 415 BCE as a sacrifice to purify the soul, transcend the demands of passion, society and family in order to reach the divine.

Judaism

In Deuteronomy 23:1, castrated men are expelled from the assembly of Israel.

Christianity

The Gospel According to St. Matthew, (19:12) includes a quote of Jesus', in which he says that there a men who make themselves enuchus for the kingdom of heaven's sake. St. Augustine of Hippo argues against a literal reading of Matthew 19:12 indicting physical castration as a return to Cybellene cults, an assault on manhood, and a mutilation of God's creations. In Europe, women were not permitted to sing in church choirs. Boys were sometimes castrated to preserve their pure soprano voices which broke at puberty. Such boys were called castrati. In the late nineteenth century the Roman Catholic Church, took a formal position that castrating singers is a mutilation of the body and therefore a sin.

Islam

A hadith, the oral tradition relating to the words and deeds of Muhammad, orders the physical alteration of the female genitalia in language unclear to both Arabic and English speaking people. Two of the ritual procedure rising from that hadith, clitoridectomy and excision, have been termed female castration in modern times (Badawi, 1989). The Qu'ran forbids alteration of Allah's creations, naming such practice the work of Satan.

Psychology

Psychiatry and Psychosis

Biological castrations have been performed on men and women to control deviant sexual behavior and masturbation

primarily in the nineteenth century, although such practice was never widespread. Chemical castration to control deviant sexual behavior is a current treatment. Auto-castration has been observed an onset indicator of schizophrenia, and one self-castrator incorporated Matthew 19:12 in his delusional system (Waugh, 1986, Meyers and Nguyen, 2001). The question of madness was raised in the Cult of the Gates of Heaven, wherein members castrated themselves prior to a mass suicide in preparation of a return to God. Freud's account of Daniel Paul Schreber's paranoid delusions included castration so as to be able to mate with God and produce God's children (1911/1955).

Psychoanalysis

Castration anxiety and symbolic castration are primary forces to repress instinctual and/or and id impulses towards forbidden and gratifications, particularly the taboo of incest. A son gives up his sexual desire for his mother for fear of castration by the Father God. The superego, the internalized Father conscience and guardian of civilization, evolves in response to castration anxiety and eliminates the need for the totem Father. Freud thought of women as castrated beings, therefore with weaker a superego structure. The threat of castration has no authority to the already castrated. A child's experiences shock and horror of seeing the castrated mother and fearing that such castration will happen to him as well. Freud's view of fetishism, based on questionable scholarship about tribal ritual, is that the fetish covers up the knowledge of the castrated mother. The mother, who in the infant's fantasy has a penis, is the pre-Oedipal phallic mother. The experience of castration anxiety is necessary to resolve the Oedipal phase. Freud postulated that penis envy is the girl's counterpart of the boy's castration anxiety (Freud, 1913/1955, 1923/1955, 1924/1955, 1927/1955).

Melanie Klein introduced the concept of pre-oedipal castration anxiety and part objects, elaborating on Freud's (1905/1955) ideas of psycho-sexual zones and the child's lack of differentiation of penis, feces and baby (1926/1955), and the experience of the loss of the breast (1917/1955). Any psycho-sexually significant body part or function which a child holds dear, that is filled or cathected with libido, is subject to loss by a castrating god-like mother. The breast, experienced by the child as a part of his/her own mouth, the anal sphincter and its feces, the urethral sphincter and its urine, and an imaginary internal penis for boys and girls, are Kleinian part objects (Eigen, 1974). Jacques Lacan added voice and gaze to the Kleinian part object inventory.

Lacan's re-reading of Freud set out to correct Freud's blurred inner and outer reality boundaries and defined castration in purely psychical terms. Lacanian, castration is to be cut off from the *jouissance*, defined as both orgasm and excess, of identifying with and having the imaginary phallus of the pre-Oedipal phallic mother. Within this model, both boys and girls need to undergo this castration and accept that the mother desires the father's real phallus, the anatomical penis, rather than the child's imaginary phallus like that of the phallic mother. This castration is necessary to accept the reality of the external world and to form language. The Lacanian view places the Oedipus story as a reconstructed explanation of a castration already experienced. Freud's Oedipus story forces a behavior to avoid castration by a Father god. Psychoanalytic feminists have found the revised unisex Lacanian phallus as a gateway to incorporating Freud in post-modern feminist psychoanalysis (Bevis & Feher-Gurewich, 2003).

Commentary

The earliest castration story, the son Cronos, urged by his mother to castrate his lustful, unloving Father to create a pure allegorical woman representing Truth and Beauty foretells millennia of struggle within psychology and religion to modulate the sometimes mutually exclusive demands of satisfying the flesh and satisfying the soul. Freud sought to solve this problem of dualism in his concept of sublimation and the fear of castration contributes to the sublimation process. Biological castration as a religious purification is the extreme enactment of soul-body dualism, devoid of symbolic resolution.

Freud posited circumcision as a symbolic substitute for castration (1909/1955), and castration anxiety holds a central position in Freud's religious and cultural texts as well as those texts about the unconscious. Freud's uncanny (1919/1955), the psychical experience of something missing, relates to both the circumcized/castrated Jewish male and the castrated pre-Oedipal phallic mother. These castrated being induce castration anxiety in Gentile men encountering the castrated Jew, and in any man encountering the castrated woman. Castration anxiety is thus a causal factor in both anti-semitism and misogyny. While Freud himself explored the relationship between castration anxiety and death anxiety, Freud may have eroticized the fear of death at the hands of the woman as mother, wife and death figure, with his phallic, father-centric theory (Jonte-Pace, 2001). The triple White Goddess of mother, wife and death (Graves, 1948/1966), may be hidden in Freud's death/castration anxiety displacement.

The castrating mother, a popular image in contemporary society, is seen as causal in Jung's Puer Aeternis. The eternal boy-man is symbolically castrated by a symbiotic, infantilizing mother and sacrifices his manhood to remain his mother's beloved boy. In both the modernist Freudian as well as Jungian reading, the puer aeternis, a castrated boy in fantasy, may be male or female in external reality (von Franz, 2000). While Melanie Klein's work on the castrating mother sought to express the power of a Mother God to the infant, the castrating, phallic woman is often a representation of misogyny.

St. Augustine, in his rejection of a literal reading of Mathew 10:19, said "What then doth all that which remained of him after his gelding signify?" Augustine's use of signification anticipates Lacan, post-modern feminism and psycho-linguistic signification's role in gender identification challenging Freud's omnipresent "anatomy is destiny". Muslim women are regularly gelded, and are still signified as women. Men and women are gelded in life-saving surgeries and still retain their gender signification. Melanie Klein's all-powerful castrating mother god is an iteration of Freud's all-powerful castrating father god, opening gender ambiguity of god figures, a parent god that is both male and female. "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

Symbolic castration, the freedom of the demands of instinctual passions, opens the gates of heaven, beauty, art civilization to men and women.

See also: [Circumcision](#) [Clitoridectomy](#) [Dualism](#) [Father](#) [Female God Images](#) [Femininity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Id](#) [Instinct](#) [Lacan, Jacques](#) [Mother](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Puer Aeternus](#) [Repression](#) [Super-Ego](#) [Symbol](#) [Taboo](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Celtic Religions

David Waldron

Pre-Christian Celtic religion, mythology and symbolism have left an incredibly rich and varied legacy in European culture. That being said it is a field of folkloric mythological studies that is extremely diverse, varied and, to some

extent, historically quite problematic. The extent to which perceptions of Celtic culture and religious practices have been shaped by contemporaneous socio-political factors and the ubiquitous problems raised by Christian and Roman transmission has made attempts to develop a holistic understanding of the religious beliefs of the pre-Christian Celts an inordinately difficult and complex affair. However, despite the very murky waters surrounding the historical record of Celtic polytheistic religion there are very powerful archetypal themes and cultural forms that resonate through to the present.

Unlike the Paleolithic peoples before them the iron-age Celts were semi historic in that they left traces of their culture in written records and in the enormous wealth of archeological finds (Hutton, 1993). In particular there are minted coins from Gaul, Raetia, Noricum and the British Isles, sculptures and other cultural artifacts, Roman eyewitness accounts and an array of literature and bardic lore transcribed in the middle ages. However, these sources leave a great deal to interpretation. The material left in artwork and archaeological finds suggest a great deal and leave many tantalizing themes for speculation on the nature of Celtic culture and religion. The classical eyewitness reports, especially that of Caesar and Poseidonius, attempt to directly translate Celtic Gods and rituals into Roman equivalents and the medieval accounts of Celtic folklore, such as that of the *Mabinogion*, strongly reflect medieval Christian and Saxon/Norman preoccupations, power structures and social mores (Darvill, 1987).

The Roman Conquest and the Celts

When examining the religious practices of Celtic polytheism there are three distinct phases in the transmission of Celtic religion, folklore and mythology. Firstly, there are the religious practices, artwork and festivals of pre-Roman conquest Celtic civilization. Secondly, there is the synthesis and syncretism of the Roman colonization of Britain and Gaul. Finally there is the further synthesis and development during the Christian period. In this context however, and given the diversity and localization of many of the religious practices and rituals recorded, it is a problematic exercise to attempt to find a pure or unadulterated form of Celtic religious belief. Rather it is a living cultural tradition engaged in constant evolution and development in relation to socio-political issues, cultural transmission and eclectic engagement with other societies and religious beliefs, forming a synthesis of mythological, religious and cultural forms held together by

common archetypal themes and symbols of powerful aesthetic and psychological resonance (Matthews, 1991).

Celtic Culture, Religion and Folklore in the Roman Era

While there is an enormous amount of diversity between Celtic regional and tribal affiliations there are several key hierarchical, ritual and festival themes that remain central to the religious practices of the Celts of antiquity. Caesar and Poseidonius both refer to Celtic religious practices being dominated by a triumvirate of religious castes, the Druids who acted as priests and judges, the Ovates who acted as seers and prophets and the Bards who specialized in versecraft, lineage and lore keeping (described as Filid in Ireland). This pattern of three religious castes was also chronicled by the later Christian scholars of the middle ages. Indeed the number three seems to have been of enormous significance to the Celts appearing in numerous pieces of artwork, in the triple aspect manifestations of many of the deities and in much of bardic lore transcribed by medieval Christian scholars (Darvill, 1987).

Similarly with regards to festivals, while there were immense variations between districts and language groups with regards to seasonal festivals and their ritual/festive activities it is fairly certain that the four quaterly seasonal festivals associated with the solstice and equinox were practiced through Celtic society. Of these Samhain, commemorating the end of the year and communing with the spirit world, and Beltane, celebrating the beginning of summer and the harvest were the most significant. However, recent research by Ronald Hutton suggests that the centrality of Samhain and Beltane to Celtic religious practice may be far less than is generally accepted (Hutton, 1993).

Attempting to understand the nature of Celtic deity is similarly difficult in that there was a complicated system of localized tutelary gods and, more commonly mother goddesses, deities mixed with folkloric hero archetypes such as Lugh and a collection of zoomorphic deity like beings such as Epona the horse Goddess and Cernunos the hunter God which was appropriated as the divine male deity figure by contemporary Wiccans. This network of polytheism varied immensely between districts and language groups and is extremely difficult for the contemporary historian to study in earnest due to the aforementioned problems raised by Roman and Christo-centric transmission. The result is that we are left with a bewildering and fragmentary array of evocative and powerful images, rituals, symbols and archetypes open to much speculation and interpretation (Hutton, 1993).

The Problems of Roman Transmission

During the post-Roman conquest period this problem was further exacerbated by the well documented tendency of Caesar, Poseidonius and other Roman chroniclers to assume the Celtic deities were direct equivalents of Roman and Greek deities without attempting to contextualize them within the established Celtic cosmology and social system. Furthermore, during the period of Roman colonization many of the deities and ritual practices did merge together with Roman equivalents and cults to Mercury (associated with Lugh in Celtic folklore), Mars (associated with Toutatis) and Jupiter (Taranic) among others were very common and widespread through Gaul and the British Isles. This merging of Celtic and Roman mythology, religious beliefs and deities problematizes anthropological and historical interpretation through the loss of the original cultural meanings ascribed to the historical archetypal images of Celtic deity. At the same time, however this synthesis enriches the analytical psychological perspective through the analysis of what the underlying mythic figures and deities in Celtic religious beliefs archetypically represent in the collective unconscious. A similar pattern occurs when studying the influence of Christian chroniclers who were similarly preoccupied with an alternate cosmology and religious world view. They also found the symbolism, mythology and archetypal resonance of the Celtic polytheistic mythos deeply inspiring, albeit in a medieval Christian context. Indeed, artwork and mythology inspired by Celtic mythology and deities deeply permeates the nominally Christian artwork and literature of medieval Western Europe. Perhaps the most notable example being the merging of Celtic mythic figures and deities with Catholic Saints, in particular St Patrick and St Brigid (Hutton, 1993).

The Celtic Revival

Another important legacy of Celtic religious practices has emerged in the late nineteenth and twentieth century pagan revival movements. Of particular relevance are the Druidical Pagan revivals spawned by folklorist and poet Iolo Morgannwg and related organizations such as the “Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids” and the “British Druid Order” (Hutton, 1993). Drawing on the Romantic literary tradition’s fixation on nationally oriented cultural authenticity and sacrality of the landscape, the impact on Welsh and English national identity and culture inspired by these movements is immense and speaks to the archetypal power and psychic resonance of the mythology and

religious beliefs of Celtic civilization. Similarly, Celtic inspired mythology also deeply permeates other Pagan revivalist movements, most notably Wicca and Goddess or Dianic Paganism with a strong fixation on the role of feminine associated Celtic deities such as the Morrigan and Brigid (Bonewits, 2006). Thus while developing an empirical historical understanding of Celtic religious practices can be a fragmentary and problematic exercise, in analytical psychological terms it is a powerful and pervasive model of archetypal symbolism in European culture and a rich source of symbolism in the collective unconscious.

See also: [▶ Celtic Shamanism](#) [▶ Celtic Spirituality](#) [▶ Christianity](#)

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Celtic Shamanism

M. J. Drake Spaeth

Though coming into increasing popularity as a contemporary spiritual practice, Celtic shamanism has also generated quite a bit of controversy over the past two decades. The term “shamanism” is not a religion as much as it seems to be a term that refers to ancient techniques for altering consciousness to accomplish spiritual purposes (Eliade, 2004); nor is it in itself Celtic. There is no substantive historical evidence that individuals recognizable as shamans existed among Celtic tribes or Druid groups (Matthews and Matthews, 2002). Nevertheless, several folklorists and historians have noted intriguing similarities between elements of Celtic mythology, tradition, fairy tales, and art and practices traditionally identified as shamanic (e.g., Cowan 1993, 2002; Matthews and Matthews, 1994; MacEowen, 2002). These Celtic elements do, in fact, closely resemble what anthropologist Michael Harner (1990) has identified as common or nearly

universal elements of indigenous shamanism. He has labeled these elements core “shamanism”, and they are typically experienced in what he has identified as the “shamanic state of consciousness”, or “SSC” (Harner, 1990). These similarities have inspired a contemporary system of spiritual practices for healing, alteration of consciousness, and self development that proponents have termed “Celtic shamanism”. Celtic shamanism has been particularly popular among those of European and Celtic descent who are demonstrably hungry for a sense of spiritual connection with their ancestors.

Harner’s identification of common elements of shamanic experience around the world has led some to identify the shaman as an archetype – one of the universal thematic patterns of experience found in what Jung calls the collective unconscious (e.g., Cowan, 1993; Smith, 1997). Cowan (1993) identifies several elements as shared by both Celtic mythology and the shamanic archetype. To paraphrase Cowan they are (1) the ability to sojourn in the “Otherworlds”, (2) the assistance of animal guides or powers in order to acquire or retrieve wisdom or power, (3) an initiatory experience (usually a literal or symbolic death and rebirth) or other experiences of a calling to heal or quest for wisdom or power, (4) a transformational experience of interconnectedness of all things or a state of unity, and (5) abductions by Otherworldly entities in this case Faeries – into the Otherworld proper (pp.13–14). Matthews and Matthews (1994) additionally point out that contacts and communication with ancestors and otherworldly beings are frequent elements found in Celtic stories, as are omens found in appearances of animals and plants, as well as acts of nature (p. 2). These authors also argue that in these stories druids, poets, and seers are frequently inspired by divine wisdom and are identifiable as shamans. Finally, themes of heroic retrievals of lost objects of power, such as are found in the Grail quest stories call to mind Ingerman’s (2006) work, in which she describes in detail a key task of the shaman – namely, that of soul retrieval. Ingerman shows that throughout history, indigenous shamans have worked to bring back lost parts of a person’s spirit or soul that are regarded as having fled in response to trauma or illness. The fact that the Grail is frequently identified with the Sacred King himself (i.e., Arthur) supports a correspondence between Celtic and shamanic concepts.

This link between Celticism and shamanism may have important implications for psychotherapy and counseling – particularly when spiritual issues are a focus of consideration. Moodley and West (2005) point out that many forms of indigenous spirituality and healing practices (which often go back more than a thousand years)

are resurfacing and are enjoying popular contemporary practice – often in concert with traditional psychotherapy and counseling. Many such individuals find that such practices compensate for what they see as shortcomings of conventional therapeutic approaches due to lack of sensitivity to their particular experience of diversity or even outright contempt for “folk healing”. Celtic shamanism may afford individuals of European ancestry a means of connecting with their own unique cultural heritage. Familiarity with Celtic shamanism in psychotherapeutic contexts may enhance the therapist’s competence in the area of spiritual diversity, thereby contributing to an overall understanding of issues and phenomena related to diversity.

See also: [▶ Altered States of Consciousness](#) [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Heaven and Hell](#) [▶ Holy Grail](#) [▶ Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Celtic Spirituality

M. J. Drake Spaeth

Celtic spirituality is a contemporary term that encompasses practices, beliefs, attitudes, and values that are

loosely based on themes and remnants of Ancient Celtic traditions that survive in fairy tales and Celtic mythology. It is difficult to ascribe to the Celtic tribes an ancient, coherent, organized religious structure, though arguably Druidry in various permutations embodied religious elements. For this reason, the term “spirituality” is particularly useful when describing contemporary Celtic spiritual practices, as it is widely regarded as embodying less authoritative, organized, institutional, and dogmatic phenomena than is generally implied by the term “religion.” Many scholarly works, book, and websites are devoted to discussion of the distinction and relationship between religion and spirituality, a full consideration of which is beyond the scope of this article.

Contemporary Celtic spirituality routinely and syncretically blends Christian and Pagan elements of ideology and practice. For excellent examples of such syncretism, the reader is referred to O’Donohue (1998, 2000), Cowan (2003), and MacEowen (2002, 2004). All of these works focus heavily on the idea of “longing” or “yearning” as a significant feature of the Celtic spirit – longing for connection, for deep meaning, for a sense of power and significance, and for a realization of one’s place in the natural world. Drawing on such themes, deeply rooted as they are in mythology and practices that date back to pre-Christian Ireland, Wales, and Scotland primarily, practitioners of Celtic spirituality uniquely find a sense of balance and connection to others, to place, and to natural rhythms of life. Such a sense of connection arguably comes closer to a “universal” definition of spirituality than anything else.

Other Celtic themes utilized by practitioners of Celtic spirituality are shapeshifting (or identifying with animals, plants, stones, or other features of the natural world to experience a multiplicity of perspectives of the natural world); awakening to one’s place and purpose in the world; fostering recognition of the body as sacred and as the gateway to higher spiritual consciousness, initiation through rites of passage (or spiritual death and rebirth experiences); making choices that are in alignment with a higher purpose and accepting responsibility for said choices; living in balance and harmony with the cycles of seasons and of the earth; communing with ancestors and with the immanent divine spirit in the land; and recognizing the divine spark within oneself.

It is not difficult to discern within these concepts a strong correspondence to Humanistic-Existential and Transpersonal Psychology. Humanistic-Existential psychologists, such as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Victor Frankl, Carl Rogers, Fritz and Laura Perls, James Bugental, and Leslie Greenberg all speak articulately about the

psychological value of an active search for connection, meaning, and purpose in one’s life. They also emphasize that psychological health is rooted in a sense of moving from a state of fragmentation and separation into a state of balance, and wholeness and integration. They identify the value of living in congruence between one’s inner perceptions and values and the external reality of one’s life. The existentialists, in particular, stress the necessity of “waking up” and actively resisting a somnambulistic tendency to conform and surrender to the “herd mentality” – not to mention actively and responsibly making choices and exercising our inherent power and freedom. Transpersonal psychologists such as Ken Wilber, Stanislav and Christina Grof, Stanley Krippner, and Roger Walsh broaden and expand the definition of “human” to encompass a connection with the “higher” or divine aspects of ourselves and the world.

Celtic spirituality affords its practitioners a unique, culturally-congruent means of seeking and finding meaning and purpose in their lives. A culturally-competent psychotherapist or counselor would benefit from an understanding of these spiritual practices in order to help clients of Celtic and European background who are experiencing a sense of cultural disconnection that underlies more superficial problems, challenge, and difficulties.

See also: [Celtic Religions](#) [Celtic Shamanism](#) [Cultural Psychology](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Initiation](#) [Transpersonal Psychology](#)

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Center of the World

[Axis Mundi](#)

Centering Prayer

Chad Thralls

Centering Prayer is a method of Christian contemplative prayer based on the fourteenth century mystical text *The Cloud of Unknowing*. *The Cloud* offers spiritual guidance to one who is ready to progress in the spiritual life to nondiscursive prayer. Because the divine is ultimately beyond human comprehension, *The Cloud* envisions God lying above the one who prays with a cloud of unknowing in between. The goal of prayer is to focus attention on God by directing darts of loving desire into the cloud. Since prayer is understood as attention focused on God, the text envisions a second cloud, a cloud of forgetting, lying between the one who prays and the world. The anonymous author insists that any ideas or thoughts that arise during prayer are distractions that pull attention away from God and must be avoided by shoving them under this cloud of forgetting (Johnston, 1963).

Methods

Centering Prayer originated in the 1970s at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Two Trappist monks, M. Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating, have popularized this method of prayer through publications and retreats. The method itself is quite simple. One begins by concentrating attention on God. This is done by choosing a word that focuses one's desire for God. The word is then repeated slowly. Repetition of the word serves as an aid in focusing attention and desire onto God. In the course of prayer, one may find that the word is no longer needed and stop repeating it altogether. Next, during the prayer one will find that distractions inevitably arise. Instead of heeding the thoughts and images that clamor for attention, simply return to the prayer word. This helps return focus to God. Finally, after 20 min, end the prayer by repeating the Our Father (Pennington, 1980).

Distractions

Centering Prayer acknowledges that distractions are unavoidable during contemplative prayer. In *Intimacy with God*, Thomas Keating addresses the mental noise that plagues attempts to pray using this method. Much of this noise is simply distracting material, including items from our to-do list, intellectual insights, and the

temptation to reflect on how well the prayer is progressing. Keating asserts that other types of material that pop up such as long forgotten memories, fantasies, or disturbing images are symptomatic of deeper problems. Moreover, he claims that the practice of Centering Prayer can facilitate the healing of these emotional illnesses (Keating, 1994).

Healing

Keating explains how Centering Prayer contributes to healing by interpreting it as a cycle composed of four moments. The first moment of the cycle initiates the sacred word and establishes attentiveness to God. This ushers in the second moment which brings a deep sense of rest and refreshment. During this moment, Keating envisions that God is present in an analogous way to that of a therapist. Such a supportive relationship creates an atmosphere in which painful memories can be shared. Because such an accepting space has been established, in the third moment, Keating claims the unconscious unloads images that represent emotional wounds into consciousness. During the course of the prayer, these images are registered as distractions. Finally, in the fourth moment which Keating terms "evacuation," the emotional baggage is released from the psyche. Then the cycle continues by returning to the sacred word (Keating, 1994).

Distractions and the Unconscious

Ann Ulanov envisions how healing can occur through prayer in a different fashion. Sigmund Freud refers to the psychic life of the unconscious as primary process thinking. This level of the psyche is a raw, rushing flow of being composed of wishes, images, instincts, emotions, urges, and drives. One characteristic of the contents of the unconscious is that they continually attempt to communicate their presence to consciousness. Utilizing these concepts, Ulanov refers to the distractions that plague attempts to pray as "primary speech." She interprets them as unconscious material trying to get the attention of consciousness. Ulanov does not agree that healing occurs by the simple unloading and evacuation of unconscious emotional baggage. Instead, she recommends deliberately directing attention to distractions as they emerge during prayer. For her, it is by being honest about all the parts inside of us, and using them as conversation starters in a dialogue with God, that psychological healing occurs when one prays (Ulanov and Ulanov, 1982).

See also: [Christianity](#) [God](#)

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Chakras

Trish O'Sullivan

The term chakra (Sanskrit *cakra* but pronounced *chakra* and in general printed usage in the West) comes from the Hindu/Yoga tradition and is a Sanskrit term meaning wheel or mystical circle. The term refers to psychoenergetic centers in the subtle or nonphysical human body (*lingadeha*) discovered in ancient India. The chakras are believed to move in a circular manner and funnel universal energy into the human energy system. References are made in the ancient (ca. seventh Century BCE) Upanishads to an esoteric human anatomy composed of subtle life energy or *prana*. This anatomy is comprised of 72,000 *nadis* or channels along which subtle energy travels. Although the chakras or energy centers are not specifically mentioned in the *Upanishads*, the *Maitri Upanishad* (6.21) mentions the *Sushumna* channel which is central to the *Kundalini Yoga* philosophy and practice as are the chakras. The Upanishads also describe five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether associated with this subtle body.

Investigation of this subtle body by later Yogic and Tantric practitioners, led to a more thorough description including the three vertical channels – *Sushumna*, *Ida* and *Pingala* aligned with the spinal axis. It is in the Tantras composed in the medieval period that the term chakra was first applied in written form to these focal points or centers. The *Sat-Cakra-Nirupana* (ca. 1577) describes each of the seven chakras in detail. It was the translation of this text by Sir John Woodroffe (penname Arthur Avalon) entitled, *The Serpent Power*, published in 1919

that brought specific knowledge of the chakras and Kundalini to the West.

The five elements are associated with the first five chakras. The higher chakras are associated with spiritual knowledge beyond the physical realm. Knowledge of this subtle anatomy and the association with these elements spread from India to Tibet, China and Japan where distinct practices developed. For example, Chinese acupuncture is based on the flow of subtle energy or Chi through the nadis or meridians and the balance of elements in the body.

Tantrism and Yoga typically distinguish seven chakras aligned along the spinal axis. A reserve of spiritual energy or Kundalini is believed to abide in the *Muladhara* chakra located at the base of the spine. Meditation, breathing and mantra practices arouse this dormant energy and encourage it to rise up the spine through the *Sushumna* channel. During this process the other six chakras are encountered and energized. Depending on their energetic state they can either block or facilitate this upward flow of spiritual energy. Kundalini Yoga especially focuses on this subtle body and the raising of the Kundalini from the base chakra to the *Sahasrara* chakra at the crown of the head with the intention of attaining spiritual realization. However, all forms of Yoga have the intention of awakening and raising the Kundalini in order to stimulate moral and spiritual growth.

Just as the associated elements progress from gross (earth) to fine (ether) the energies associated with each chakra are believed to be more gross or lower vibration in the lower chakras and finer, or higher vibration, in the higher chakras. The spiritual journey is, thus, a developmental one with sequential steps or levels on the path to transformation of consciousness.

Each chakra is believed to control specific physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological functions and elaborate mandalas came to be associated with each. These mandalas include Sanskrit letters, colors, god or goddess with associated symbols, geometric shapes, an element, seed sound or mantra, animal and specific number of lotus flower petals (the chakras are sometimes referred to as *padmes* or lotuses) indicating the rate of vibration of the energy associated with the particular chakra.

There is variability related to the number and placement of the chakras e.g., *Sahasrara* is sometimes placed above the crown of the head. In Buddhist Yoga there are five such centers and in Hindu Yoga six or more chakras. Following is a table of the major chakras depicted in Hindu Yoga and located along the central *Sushumna* channel.

Chakras. Table 1 Seven Major Chakras

Chakra	Sanskrit translation	Location	Associated element
Sahasrara	Thousand-petaled	Crown of head	
Ajna	Command	Third Eye	
Vishuddha	Pure	Throat	ether
Anahata	Unstruck	Center of chest	Air
Manipura	Gem site	Solar Plexus	fire
Svadhithana	Own abode	Below navel	Water
Muladhara	Root support	Base of spine	Earth

Reference is also sometimes made to minor chakras located at various parts of the body.

While knowledge of the chakras has come to the West primarily from the Indian Tantric tradition, other religions such as the Jewish Kabbalists, Sufis and Taoists also describe energy systems and centers.

Psychology and the Chakras

Meditations and asanas have been developed by Yoga Masters to heal both body and mind and there are specific practices developed to open the chakras and alleviate anxiety and depression as well as medical illnesses.

The emergence of Western depth psychologies coincided with the translation and dissemination of Yogic texts in the West. However, the Western distinction between philosophy and psychology, its emphasis on empirical methodology and ignorance of subtle energy mechanics has prevented the acceptance of the chakras as a subject of serious consideration and research in the West.

Jung was very interested in the chakras and viewed them as symbolically depicting inner experience, and psychological stages of development. He thought of the Kundalini process as a metaphorical journey such as climbing a sacred mountain. A series of lectures he gave on this topic with J. W. Heur in 1932 reveals his deep interest and intensive study of available material, particularly Sir. John Woodroffe's *The Serpent Power*. Jung saw Kundalini Yoga as a process of individuation and translated Kundalini Yoga terms into those of analytical psychology. Jung viewed the system as strictly metaphorical and eastern spiritual realization as a projection of unconscious contents. At the same time, Jung also talked about Kundalini

as if it were a real phenomenon and warned that transitions from one chakra to another can lead to psychological crises. He cautioned Westerners away from experimentation with the chakras and Kundalini.

There is a phenomenon known as “meditation sickness” in the East, wherein headaches, chest pain or stomach aches may occur when the beginner practices excessively. This is believed to result from chi (kundalini energy) rising too fast. The antidote is to leave off meditation practice until it goes away. This may take weeks or months.

This ladder hierarchical model of the chakras corresponds at places to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with physical safety and security associated with the first chakra (Muladhara) and autonomy with the seventh (Sahasrara).

During the past few decades many books have been published about the chakras in the West particularly by New Age authors yet few psychotherapies have developed utilizing this subtle energy system. However, Western clinicians with experience with Eastern spiritual practices are beginning to develop psychotherapies incorporating this focus. OME (Organic Mind Energy) Psychotherapy and Seemorg Matrix Work are two such psychotherapies.

Reichian, Bioenergetics and Rolfing are related body therapies that work to release constricted vital energies in the body.

See also: [Hinduism](#) [Tantrism](#) [Yoga](#)

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Chan Buddhism

Wing-Shing Chan

Chan Buddhism is a major Chinese Buddhist sect attributed to Bodhidharma that emphasizes attaining Buddhahood, the supreme Buddhist religious goal, through enlightenment of one's own mind, which subsequently spreaded to Japan and named as Zen. In Chan Buddhism, the word "Chan" comes from "Dhyana" in Sanskrit (Soothill and Hodous, 1937), which refers to meditation, samadhi (one-pointed concentration or perfect absorption), but nevertheless goes beyond the meaning of dhyana to become the manifestation of wisdom with simultaneous perfect composure of the mind (Huineng, 1969).

With its focus on personal enlightenment of the mind in the present life, Chan Buddhism is characterized from the other Buddhist sects by its disrespect for religious rituals, sacred texts, godly figures or intellectual understanding, but instead emphasizes on meditation, intuition, master-student relationship and practising and realizing within the mundane here-and-now life.

Development of the Enlightenment Seat

Our Buddha nature, the mind of enlightenment, is considered to be ever present, just await for discovery through meditation, practice or direct intuitive insight. Lineage transmission between enlightened minds is stressed with Bodhidharma, transmitting the right enlightened mind from Buddha to the Chinese patriarch Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin and Hongren and to the sixth patriarch Huineng, considered the source for the subsequent flourishing of

the five Chan sects, including the dominant and still surviving Linji (Jap: Rinzai) and Caodong (Jap: Soto) sects.

The Six Patriarch's Platform Sutra, likely to be written by the disciple Shenhui (Hu, 1953), established Huineng (638–713) as beginning a Chan era of sudden enlightenment, for which the Chan sect is externally received and recognized.

Sudden enlightenment refers to the sudden, or quick glimpse of self-nature, Buddha nature or emptiness, without necessarily going through extended years of meditation or practice. Chan masters were recorded to be able to set off an enlightenment experience in their students through twisting a student's (Baizhang) nose to pain, skillful verbal remarks (Master Mazu) enlightening instantly a novice hunter, or banging a door on the student's (Yunmen) leg. Analytically there are probably two relevant causes that make these sudden enlightenment experience possible:

1. A significant piece of psychological (or spiritual) attachment is suddenly forced to detach and an enlightening experience is resulted (Chan, 2008).
2. The discursive mind is suddenly forced to halt or bypassed whereby the non-discursive enlightening mind is revealed.

The gradual enlightenment path refers to a more gradual, or relatively continual revelation of enlightenment in parts attained normally through extended years of meditation or practice.

Essentially the practice of Chan Buddhism had mainstreamed into two sects, namely, the Linji sect that emphasizes the sudden enlightenment path with instructional methods including shouting and hitting; the Caodong sect, predominantly a gradual enlightenment path that relies heavily on meditation practice.

The sudden enlightenment era of Chan in the Tang Dynasty gradually went to its historical downturn, and by the Song Dynasty, the myriad masterful ways of initiating sudden enlightenment had lost its transmission and the Chan sect began a more safeguard way of practice with more fixed form for enlightenment.

The Linji sect, attributed to Dahui (1089–1163), adopted the "Huatou" or "Gongan" method of practice. By huatou or gongan method, a practitioner is instructed to generate real "doubts" by paying attention to a phrasal excerpt of a gongan, the recorded open case of enlightenment experience; or the whole gongan itself, such as the phrase "What is Wu (nothing or emptiness)?" or the gongan whereby Master Zhaozhou said "Dog has no Buddha nature!" Vigorous immersion into the query might eventually lead to the disbursal of the "doubt mass" with a

shattering of the illusive mind so that one can suddenly “see” the Buddha nature.

The Caodong sect, through Master Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157), had come up with a method of practice called “silent illumination,” by which a practitioner practices a kind of formless (no fixed concentration focus) meditation (Chan, 2004) whereby non-discursive silence is coupled simultaneously with illuminative contemplation so that a non-moving mind with clarity and wisdom is gradually attained, which is itself enlightenment. This method was subsequently transmitted to Dogen who established the Soto Zen in Japan with a similar practice called Shikantaza (just-sitting).

In final analysis, there is no definite advantages of sudden enlightenment over gradual enlightenment, for sudden enlightenment can be quick but not thorough while gradual enlightenment can be slow but firm. Ultimately it is the degree of vexation dissolution and attachments disintegration (Chan, 2006b) that count toward attainment of no-self and genuine complete enlightenment.

Since the Ming Dynasty, Chan sect further declined in China as the Amitabha sect of recitation of Buddha’s name became more popular and prevalent. Many Chinese Buddhists combined the methods of Chan with recitation of Buddhas’ names. A common huatou within the Chan sect had become to investigate “Who recites the Buddha name?” transforming the Buddha name recitation into a huatou method that can lead to enlightenment.

The Chan sect today has witnessed some revival led by efforts of Master Sheng Yen (1930–2009), who had led numerous international Chan retreats on both huatou and silent illumination methods, and espousing a three stage Chan theory (Sheng-Yen, 1979) of (1) Small self, the discursive self of the ordinary people and beginning practitioners, (2) Big self, the unified self of the concentrated mind and harmonized body and (3) No self, the mind who has seen Buddha nature or attained enlightenment.

Distinctive Expressions of Chan Buddhism

Chan Buddhism is also renowned and distinguished from other Buddhist sect by its disrespect for literal medium and rational thinking, a strange exhibition of uncommon behaviors in the gongans and sometimes, a display of highly abstract symbolism in language and art. The underlying thread linking all the above Chan characteristics is actually a need to bypass the ordinary defiled and discursive cognitive thinking mind such that the pure

and non-discursive mind of enlightenment may have a chance to reveal.

Unlike other Buddhist sect, there is also a de-emphasis on precepts or practice. Absolute freedom and spontaneous rightful action appropriate to the circumstances are believed to be attained through enlightenment such that prima facie adherence to strict moral rules becomes both unnecessary and a hindrance. Famous gongans are Guizong’s ploughing dead a snake in a field work and Nanquan’s chopping a cat among disputes among monks.

The ultimate Chan practice is believed to be both effortless (no concentration effort) and methodless (everyday life as practice) (Chan, 2004) and that explains why Chan masters instruct students practice only by eating or excreting, wearing ropes or daily works with no meditation needed, e.g., Linji sleeping at the Chan meditation hall after enlightenment. The Chan sect is also well-known by its disrespect for religious symbols, such as Buddha, patriarch or sutras. This is in accordance with the need to attain absolute non-dwelling emptiness (Madhyamika, the middle way) for which any attachment to “sacred” symbols, even Buddha or Buddhism itself, could stand as the last hindrances to complete enlightenment.

Lineage transmission between master and students is considered essential in Chan Buddhism for it is the self-experience of realizing Buddha nature and liberating enlightenment that is important, not the understanding of religious facts, principles or the acting out of religious behavioral guidelines. Typical attainment verification guidelines include, e.g., the “*Ten Ox Herding Pictures*” (Sheng-Yen, 1988), which depicts the progressive stages a practitioner would go through, by the analogy of taming the mind like taming the ox; and Master Dongshan’s (Five positions of king and minister), a list of five successive Chan attainment stages through the transposition of the manifestation between wisdom and vexations (Chan, 2006a).

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Enlightenment](#) [Enlightenment Initiation](#)

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Chaos

Fredrica R. Halligan

In archetypal creation myths, the origins of the cosmos are believed to be a state or condition called Chaos. Even Western science with its "Big Bang" theory, can be construed as being an origin in chaos. In ancient wisdom we find many creation stories that began with chaos. In the Judaic tradition, for example, God's voice called out over the deep and thus did creation emerge from chaos and darkness. In similar fashion, in the Vedic tradition, when the Absolute spoke the primal word "Om," the wonders of the created universe emerged from chaos, each element pervaded by the Divine. Thus ancient visionaries seemed to recognize the intimate connection between chaos and creativity; and this is an interrelationship that many scientists have been actively exploring today. As Briggs and Peat state:

- ▶ Although we humans tend to abhor chaos and avoid it whenever possible, nature uses chaos in remarkable ways to create new entities, shape events, and hold the Universe together... Just what is chaos? The answer has many facets... To begin with, chaos turns out to be far subtler than the common sense idea that it is the messiness of mere chance... The scientific term 'chaos' refers to an underlying interconnectedness that exists in apparently random events. Chaos science focuses on hidden patterns, nuance, the 'sensitivity' of things, and the 'rules' for how the unpredictable leads to the new (1999: 1–2).

Chaos is ubiquitous. From weather patterns to the behavior of homing pigeons, from raging rivers to the nerves and blood vessels in the human body, from craggy coastlines to the intricacies of fern leaves, nature is filled with

complexity, and scientists are discovering common, archetypal patterns that underlie seemingly chaotic systems (Conforti, 2003). Moreover, science is discovering there is an enduring interrelationship between chaos and order. Like waves in the ocean, all the energetic patterns of life arise and fall; wax and wane. Chaos organizes itself into order; and order inevitably dissolves into chaos. The sequence – chaos to order to chaos to order – repeats itself in the ever-changing patterns of life.

Chaos Theory as a New Paradigm

Today's chaos scientists have rejected the compartmentalization of the sciences, where part-systems have long been studied in isolation from the whole – a compartmentalization that often leads to reductionism and oversimplification. Rather, the new inter-scientific paradigm crosses the fields of physics, mathematics, biology, astronomy, meteorology, psychology, physiology and more. James Gleick was among the first to recognize and articulate the interrelationships of chaos patterns across the varied scientific fields. He wrote: "Patterns born amid formlessness: This is biology's basic beauty and its basic mystery. Life sucks order from a sea of disorder" (Gleick, 1987: 299).

Among the many component parts of chaos theory, perhaps the most widely known is termed: "the butterfly effect," after Edward Lorenz's discovery in 1960 that tiny changes in initial conditions can have major impact on resulting weather patterns far away. This occurrence has been likened to the mathematical properties of feedback loops and iterative processes, both of which are common in many areas of nature. In his 1972 paper, "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wing in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?" Lorenz (1993: 181–184) sets about correcting misconceptions due to his use of the ancient Chinese proverb about the far-reaching effects of small variability such as a butterfly's wings flapping. But the fact remains that feedback loops and non-linear mathematical systems often appear to create chaos when, in reality, they are behaving precise laws that are often so subtle as to be undetectable. The very unpredictability of weather systems, for example, makes the current debate about global warming most intense. One must remember, however, that feedback loops often reach a point-of-no-return where one pattern is irrevocably shifted into another entirely different pattern. The butterfly effect lies behind many currently unknown subtle effects and unanswered questions. In climatology, for example, how much change in average temperature will cause sufficient ice-melt to irrevocably raise sea level so as to wipe away shorelines and inundate coastal

cities worldwide? Or the butterfly effect from the perspective of individual clinical health psychology: how much does a tiny taste of sugar affect a dieter's resolve? How much does a whiff of alcohol disturb the precarious balance of an alcoholic's life? Or in the complexity of a family system, how much can a single eyebrow raised in criticism trigger the eruption of chaos that may affect the entire system with repetitive, dysfunctional patterns?

Repeating Patterns

Another element of chaos theory that is well known is the mathematics of “*fractals*.” First introduced and named by Benoit Mandelbrot at IBM, fractals are complex forms that possess self-similarity at many different levels or scales – whether seen in a microscope or viewed from a great distance. Intricate patterns repeat in the many branches of a fern, for example, or in the folds and crevices of the human brain. In psychotherapy, similar patterns are seen over time when one studies the dynamics of an extended family system. This “multigenerational transmission process” described by Murray Bowen can also be conceptualized as a fractal viewed over time.

Just as chaos and order are interrelated, so too are such apparent opposites as competition and cooperation. They are complexly interwoven. “A complex chaotic system...contains a constantly unfolding dynamic in which what we call competition may suddenly become cooperation and vice versa. In chaotic systems, interconnections flow among individual elements on many different scales” (Briggs and Peat, 1999: 63). Furthermore, patterns repeat. Because it is thought that the system is “attracted” to a particular pattern of behavior, that pattern is called a “*strange attractor*.” Clinically, one needs only recall Freud's description of the “repetition compulsion” to know that these strange attractors are found in psychology as well as in the other sciences.

The spiritual dimension of chaos theory is found in the profound glimpses that this theory gives into the basic mechanisms that underlie all of life. In studying the interweaving complexities of chaos theory as it applies to all of the sciences, the sacred dimension of mystery is heightened and a sense of awe is engendered. We humans with our own complex patterns of intra-psychic and interpersonal group life, in many ways echo the complex patterns – the archetypes – that are being discovered increasingly in the entire creative/chaotic environment in which we are embedded.

See also: [▶ Creation](#) [▶ God](#)

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Charity

Kate M. Loewenthal

How has charity been seen in religious tradition? How has it been understood by psychologists? What are the relations between religious affiliation and charitable activity, and how well do we understand that psychological processes involved?

Religion and Charity

The practice of charity is demanded in all religions (Argyle, 2000): all major religions have clear requirements: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and others. Charity is generally seen in two ways in religious tradition. First, donating a fixed proportion of one's income and agricultural produce to appropriate beneficiaries is a religious duty. Religious traditions also endorse providing assistance – financial, food and whatever else is required – to the needy. These two practices overlap, but there are distinct religious duties: taking and donating a fixed proportion of property, even if there is no desperately needy recipient, and assisting the needy – even if one has already given away one's tithes, one is still obliged to help. Charity is considered as enhancing the spirituality of the donor, and is regarded by many commentators as the highest religious virtue (e.g., Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 1796/1973; Porter, 1993).

Psychology and Charity

In psychology, the term charity is seldom indexed in social psychology and psychology of religion textbooks. This does not mean the topic is seldom studied: charity has come under the heading of altruistic behavior in general (Macaulay and Berkowitz, 1970). Altruism has been

defined as “behavior that aims at a termination or reduction of an emergency, a neediness, or disadvantage of others and that primarily does not aim at the fulfillment of own interests” (Montada and Bierhoff, 1991), the behavior being carried out voluntarily.

There has been much debate about whether altruism, helpfulness and charity can be truly selfless, or whether they result from innate own-group and kin helpfulness, or other motivations which are not selfless. These include increased status, social desirability or social approval, and the assuaging of guilt (Carlsmith and Gross, 1968). More recently, Seligman (2002) has argued that the practice of charity and kindness stems from a psychological strength, the practice of which will result in greater psychological health. For example, Loewenthal (2007) cites the case of a depressed holocaust survivor who reported a steady gain in psychological well-being after being advised by a rabbi to give charity regularly.

How Does Religion Affect Charity?

Does religion promote altruism in general and charitable behavior in particular? Most recent work has supported the view that this is the case. For example, in the UK in 1993, those for whom religion was said to be very important, gave about \$50 monthly, compared to \$15 monthly from those who said religion was not important (Argyle, 2000). In the USA (Myers, 1992), weekly church attenders gave away 3.8% of their income, and non-attenders, 0.8%. Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink (1998) reported that charitable giving was affected mainly by whether a person professed a religion, regardless of what that religion was. The relations between socio-economic status and charitable giving are slightly complex, but on the whole, the better-off give away more. The straightforward explanation of these findings is that religiously-active people are likely to behave according to religious injunctions. The relations between religion and charity apply not only to financial giving, but to voluntary work (Lynn and Smith, 1991), and to humanitarian compassion (Perkins, 1992). Religiosity is a much better predictor of charitable giving and activity than is economic status – and religion predicts giving to non-religious causes, as well as to religious causes (Brooks, 2003).

Conclusions

We can conclude that there is growing evidence that religious activity and identity correlate very reliably with

the practice of charity, and some suggestion that charitable activity may promote psychological health. There is scope for more detailed investigation of the cognitive and motivational factors that underlie these effects.

See also: [Religiosity](#)

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Child, The

Philip Browning Helsel

In describing the significance of the child and childhood, a brief historical overview provides a perspective in which to place the developments of psychology and religion in

relation to the child. In the classical period, children were not considered individual beings, but were useful to the family and society in the fact that they would eventually become good citizens (Cunningham, 2005: 23). In antiquity, children were often abandoned when families were not able to take care of them, to the extent that almost every family had abandoned at least one child (Cunningham, 2005: 19). Christian emperors challenged this practice, but seemed to not enforce penalties for it (Cunningham, 2005: 25). Developments in theology increased the visibility of the experience of the child. With Augustine's *Confessions*, and his development of the idea of original sin, the child began to be seen as being "on par with the adult" in terms of its "moral dilemmas" (Cunningham, 2005: 26). Caregiving and childrearing began to concern adults in the Middle Ages, as evidenced by the publication of literature relating to the care of children (Cunningham, 2005: 29). However, it seems that the child of the medieval period was understood as less than fully human, being described as "lacking in adult attributes, marked by his or her deficiencies" (Cunningham, 2005: 34).

An important transition began to take place from the era of humanism and the Reformation, culminating in the nineteenth century. People started to believe that what happened to a child would contribute to what the adult person would become. Children thus became the subject of interest and even idealization. During the height of Romanticism, children were described as "fresh from the hand of God," but at the same time some Puritan writers called for "rigid disciplines" which would break the will of the child (Cunningham, 2005: 29, 69). During the eighteenth century, especially among the middle and upper classes, a "wall of privacy" separated the family from the wider world, and the home came to symbolize the safe haven from the degradation which surrounded it (Cunningham, 2005: 59). On the other hand, with the advent of industrialization, poor children were separated from their families at the age of ten and forced to work in grueling circumstances under the supervision of strangers (Cunningham, 2005: 89).

The twentieth century has been called the "century of the child" (Cunningham, 2005: 170). First, state governments took over from philanthropic organizations to provide compulsory schooling and outlaw child labor. Second, psychology demonstrated the influence of childhood on the adult self and began to see children as sexual persons. Finally, children began to be viewed as agents with rights (Cunningham, 2005: 160, 177). In the second half of the twentieth century, children asserted this autonomy as "parental authority declined," "[demanding] and

[receiving] entrance into the adult world" in their teenage years (Cunningham, 2005: 194). As children became members of the consumer culture, they began to exercise authority in ways that would have been unimaginable in previous centuries. In spite of this fact, children continue to be the victims of abuse and neglect, and are seldom seen as complete persons, either in religious settings, or within the wider culture.

Commentary

Psychology was born at the beginning of the "century of the child," and it provided its own view of childhood, suggesting that the riddle of the adult self was rooted in the experience of the child. Freud once claimed that the development of the super-ego was a direct result of the unusually long period of dependence on her parents which the human being experiences (Freud, 1923/1960: 31). In his controversial *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud described childhood as a time in which the child experienced sexual satisfaction at the hands of her caregivers and began to entertain fantasies in relationship to them (Freud, 1905/1962: 90, 93). Freud concentrated his clinical work on the oedipal period, spanning between the ages of three and five, when the child negotiates these fantasies. If they are unresolved and repressed, they can become the bedrock for future neurosis, but if they are accessed through psychoanalysis, they can serve as a source of creativity. Freud occasionally alluded to anecdotes about children, but only seems to have had one child patient, Little Hans (Freud, 1920/1961: 13). Most of his clinical conclusions about childhood were drawn from his interpretations of the free associations of his patients, attempting to break through the barrier of repression that blocked out all memory of childhood sexuality.

In a quite different approach, Carl Jung explored the prevalence of the Divine Child-motif across a wide range of religious and mythological material, and suggested the presence of a "child archetype" (Jung and Kerenyi, 1949: 111). This archetype gave the person who was in the process of individuation a ground in the "still existing state of childhood," thereby freeing her for future growth in responsibility (Jung and Kerenyi, 1949: 113).

Anna Freud began direct work with children which shaped the development of ego psychology, the theoretical field for which she was largely responsible. Erik H. Erikson began his psychoanalytic career teaching in a Montessori school under her tutelage, and continued this interest in the direct experience as a source of psychological insight. In his first book, *Childhood and Society*,

Erikson studied children in a variety of societies and cultures, placing the problems and concerns of children front and center (Erikson, 1950/1963). While Freud thought of dreams as the “royal road to the unconscious,” Erikson suggested that it was actually the play of children. Reflecting on the sayings of Jesus late in his life, Erikson marveled that Jesus claimed that the “kingdom” is only available to those who “turn and become like children” (Erikson, 1981: 348). Erikson considered this exhortation to the “preservation and reenactment of the wonder of childhood,” to be a humbling word to those psychologists who imagined they had “discovered” childhood in the first place (Erikson, 1981: 349).

The child’s earliest experiences became important in the object relations school of psychoanalytic psychology. Margaret Mahler’s influential theory of infant development traced the adult psyche back to the earliest experience of the child with his mother (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975: 43). From this perspective, the child’s relationship to his mother in the pre-oedipal period proved to be important to psychic health in even more fundamental ways than the child’s resolution of the oedipal complex. D. W. Winnicott, a pediatrician who became a psychoanalyst in the object relations school, focused his clinical work on the direct observation of mothers and infants, and developed the theory of the transitional object. The transitional object was an object chosen, or “created” by the child that existed in the space between mother and infant. This object received the child’s affection and rage, yet remained intact, thereby helping to establish the child’s own sense of self.

For Heinz Kohut, being denied the original experiences of childhood narcissism in which one is the object of love and attention can provoke serious and long-lasting damage in the child and subsequent adult. Kohut found himself increasingly working with persons who had an extremely fragile self-structure, including feelings of unreality and a strange sensation of the passage of time. Kohut suggested that while “classical analysis discovered the depression of the child in the adult,” his own version of psychology had “discovered the depression of the adult in the depths of the child,” in the child who senses that her development will not be fulfilled, and thus sabotages her own growth with isolation (Kohut, 1985: 215–216).

Religion has attempted to address the needs of children, but it has also perpetuated many myths that have been harmful to children. Judaism was born in a near-Eastern context in which child sacrifice was a current religious practice. In spite of the attempts to distance themselves from this demand, stories such as the binding of Isaac and the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter indicate

that such traces had not entirely disappeared (Bergmann, 1992: 76, 93). In a psychoanalytic view, such images perform an important function, bearing their roots in the “murderous wishes of children directed at their parents and murderous wishes of parents directed at their children” (Bergmann, 1992: 314). David Bakan focuses on the latter, suggesting that Job may have not lost his children, but wished they were dead, as a reflection of a father anticipating his own rejection (Bakan, 1968: 110, 116). Religion addresses the trauma of a forbidden and buried past, but in its attempts to do, it may sometimes leave traces of the original wish. In the case of Christianity, the trauma of these wishes are reflected again in the sacrifice of the Son to the Father (Bergmann, 1992: 315).

There are also more redeeming traces of the meaning of children within religion. As mentioned earlier, the statement of Jesus that all must become like children, as well as his invitation to children to be close to him provide counter-points to some of the cruel imagery of the Judeo-Christian tradition, even that which stands behind his own sacrifice. The intimacy with which Jesus addressed God, using the familiar Aramaic form for father, indicates the child-like nature of religious belief. Religious persons have often seen themselves as God’s children, and thus incorporated into a wider family in which they are cared for by God.

However, within religious circles, children themselves have often been neglected as sources of insight. While the education and moral formation of children has been a traditional religious activity, the experience of children itself has seldom served as a centerpiece of theological thought (exceptions are Coles, 1991; Miller-McLemore, 2003, Lester, 1985). Frequently those who educate children in religious faith are not given the same status as ordained leaders in the tradition. In the same way, religion frequently neglects the actual experience of children, focusing instead upon adult emotional and spiritual needs.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Divine Child](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Puer Aeternus](#)

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Chinese Religions

C. Harry Hui · Eddie C. W. Ng · M. Hannah Tai

According to the International Religious Freedom Report (2005), 8% of the population in Mainland China claimed to be Buddhists, and another 20–28% of the population practiced traditional folk religions. The latter include worship of local gods, heroes and ancestors, and often present as loose affiliates of Taoism, Buddhism or cultural practices of ethnic minorities. In Taiwan, 35% of the population claimed to be Buddhists, 33% Taoists, and 4% believers in *Tiende Jiao* and other traditional folk religions. However, the 2006 *World Fact Book* indicated that 93% of the Taiwan population could be followers of a hybrid of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Distinct religious classification may be difficult.

A substantial portion of Chinese people claim that they do not believe in any religion. Data showed that 59% of the population in mainland China are nonreligious (Johnstone, 1993). Some 8–14% called themselves atheists (Barrett, George, and Todd, 2001; O'Brien and Palmer, 1993). The 2001 *World Value Survey* showed that 55% are nonreligious and 24% are convinced atheists. In

Taiwan, 12–24% of the population call themselves atheists (Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, and Luijckx, 2004). In another study conducted in Taiwan, 43% of the respondents labeled themselves as not believing in any religion (Chou and Chen, 2005). The statistics presented above paint a confusing yet true picture, that it is difficult to arrive at clear distinction among religions in Chinese culture.

Taoism

Taoism could mean the Taoist school of philosophy as well as the Taoist religion. Tao (or *dao*) means “way”, everlasting and yet ever changing. Chuang Tzu believed that the world is in peace and harmony in the original state. Disorders arise because of human intending to manipulate and mistakenly dichotomize the world and our understandings of it. The only solution is to acknowledge the limitation and relativity of dichotomized views, and to embrace them all. Based on the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Taoism the religion emerged in the second century, being propagated as *Tianshi Dao* or *Wudoumi Dao* (Celestial Masters) and *Taiping Dao* (Great Peace). Much of its philosophy, values, and religious practices could be traced to its sacred text *Tao Te Ching*. However, as Lai (2003) noted, scholars on Taoism are still debating on what actually constitute the religion.

Certain concepts attributed to Taoism have found favor among some psychologists, especially those with a humanistic persuasion. They include:

1. *Qi*, or ch'i. According to Taoist belief, *qi* (energy) runs in every individual. Such *qi* is connectable to the energy of the universe. Davis (2004) applied this belief to organizational psychology, and posited that leadership energy similarly flows through the social network of an organization. Empirical evidence for *qi* is, however, lacking.
2. *Yin* and *yang*. The universe, as well as each individual person, is a reflection of the balance of two principles or natures, the *yin* (negative, darkness, weakness) and the *yang* (positive, light, strength). Health is when a person experiences a balance (or homeostasis) of the *yin* and the *yang*. According to Taoism, too much of one thing, however good in its own right, can be dysfunctional. It remains an empirical question how much is too much.
3. Taoism advocates being *wu wei*, which is effortless, spontaneous non-intervention in handling the external world. It entails the return to quiescence and

harmony with nature. *Wu wei* is the way to achieve absolute happiness, a high level of mental health (Yip, 2004). A leader exercising *wu wei* is, however, like adopting a less effective, laissez-faire style of leadership (Bass, 1985).

4. Intuition. In Taoist conceptualization, true understanding (*dao*) cannot be named but can only be experienced and understood through meditation and intuitive awareness. Intuition is knowing through personal and subjective experience, in contrast with the objective scientific method. Instead of being a cognitive process, intuition is spontaneous. It attends to the presence (Olson, 2002). According to Taoism, in spite of its elusive nature, intuition can be nurtured through experiential learning and formal education, like what clinicians have done to develop their clinical intuition.
5. Mindfulness. In Taoism, being mindful is when a person is fully involved in the present moment and focused on what is being done, rather than worrying about the outcome. This process enhances the wisdom of the person, by freeing the person from worries about the past or future, to perceive and understand oneself and others more accurately. This person can then readily attain peace and be able to work interdependently with others. The concept of mindfulness is also found in Buddhism.

In Taoism, a person is an integrated whole, embracing physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. Illness and suffering result from the disconnection of the person from himself/herself, others, nature and the universe. That is why it is important for a Taoist to enhance the harmony between yin and yang, and get in touch with the inner self. Through meditation, Taoism develops one's self-awareness and intuition, bringing about "an emotionally and spiritually balanced individual who relates harmoniously with others and with nature" (Olson, 2002: 161). In other words, this religion contributes to personality development and helps people attain humility, simplicity, genuineness, flexibility, adaptability, spontaneity, persistence and acceptance (Olson, 2002).

Learning Taoism may have positive impact on subjective well-being among senior citizens in China (Zhou, Yao, and Xu, 2002). Taoist philosophy has been incorporated into some cognitive psychotherapy to help college students high on neuroticism and patients with generalized anxiety disorder. The technique may improve coping and reduce neurotic symptoms. However, more empirical evidence on its effectiveness is needed. (Huang, Zhang, and Yang, 2001; Zhang, Young, Lee, Li, Zhang, Xiao, Hao, Feng, Zhou, and Chang, 2002).

Confucianism

In the midst of civil struggles, Chinese people in the suffering slowly turned away from their gods and spirits to focus on the problems confronting human society and governance. This is the *zeitgeist* in which Confucius (551–479 BC) lived. Aiming at restoring just rule and legitimate government of the early Zhou dynasty, Confucius advocated a new form of education and expounded ethical principles. He described *ren*, the "way" of the perfect man. Avoiding the subjects of the supernature and afterlife, Confucius would rather "revere deities and ancestral spirits, but keep them at a distance". His concern was on the earthly, human situation in the world. Thus some people consider Confucianism more a philosophy than a religion.

The influence of Confucianism diminished after the third century and the emergence of Buddhism. It was only until the eleventh century, by the effort of thinkers like Zhu Xi and Wang Yang Ming, influenced by Buddhist theories of mind and enlightenment, that Confucianism revived, consolidated and reclaimed its status among the Chinese elite. Despite the interest in spiritual elements such as self-awareness and meditation, the original goal towards establishing order within society remained unchanged in neo-Confucianism (Overmyer, 2002).

Behavior with other people is regulated in accordance with the "ethical system of benevolence-righteousness propriety (*ren-yi-li*)" (Hwang, 2001). *Ren* is showing affection to all humankind. *Yi* is respecting others. *Li* is treating others according to their status and roles. Confucianism has a strong faith in people's own ability and power in attaining perfection. According to Ho's analysis (1994), it is the root of parents' authoritarian moralism and cognitive conservatism, as well as children's high rigidity and low cognitive complexity. Nevertheless, it is also the basis of many Chinese people's high achievement motivation.

Buddhism

Buddhism took root in ancient India in the sixth and fifth century, BC and arrived in China in the second century, BC. Buddhism and traditional Chinese thoughts were at odd with each other in the beginning. However, Buddhism had an appeal to both the ordinary people and the intellectuals, because of its simple religious practice, sophisticated philosophy, promise of life after death, as well as a range of religious and social advantages such as full-time

religious vocation in an institution independent of family and state (Overmyer, 2002). Buddhism underwent much “sinicization”, incorporating some Taoist and Confucian concepts.

Buddhism has much to say about human motivation and emotion. For example, *sukha* is an enduring trait that arises from an equilibrium in mental state and awareness of the true nature of reality. It can be likened to happiness. Achieved through sustained training in attention, emotional balance and mindfulness, it results in changes in mood and even changes in temperament (Ekman, Davidson, Ricard, and Wallace, 2005). According to Buddhism, some mental states (such as craving and hatred) are afflictive regardless of their level or context in which they occur (Ekman, Davidson, Ricard, and Wallace, 2005). This view is different from the prevalent psychological perspective that emotions are adaptive (Cosmides and Tobby, 2008; Ekman, Davidson, Ricard, and Wallace, 2005).

Psychological well-being (e.g., happiness, peacefulness, personal growth, and self-reflective insights) seems to improve among participants in Buddhist retreats (e.g., Page, McAuliffe, Weisis, Ugyan, Wright, and MacLachlan, 1997). Tori and Bilmes (2002) observed a positive correlation of Buddhist beliefs with reaction formation, and a negative correlation with regressive emotionality and projection. They found that in Thailand, Buddhist monks’ defense mechanism (unconscious coping) was low in regressive emotionality and high in denial, reaction formation and repression when compared with a local sample.

Ancestor Worship, Folk Religions, and Animism

Chinese people worship natural objects (e.g., trees, thunder, etc.), heroic personalities (e.g., *Guandi*, etc.), and even one’s own deceased relatives. Many religious activities such as ancestor worship are based on a belief in afterlife (Overmyer, 2002). That is why in burial grounds for important people as early as the Shang dynasty, extravagant burial offerings including “decapitated human beings, horses, dogs, large numbers of bronze vessels, and objects of jade, stone and shell” (Overmyer, 2002: 258) can be found. To contact the deities, people engaged in sacrificial rituals. Sacrifices were made alongside requests for some benefits in return. According to Overmyer, this principle of reciprocity is the prevalent pattern of human-deity interaction throughout the history of Chinese religions.

A fear of the unknown and an inability to master nature are probably some psychological roots of this line of religious beliefs and practice. Inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze sacrificial vessels show how ancient Chinese asked for help or favor from their ancestors. It was believed that the longer ones had been dead the more powerful were their spirits. The deified ancestors are like the “intermediaries between their living descendants and the more powerful gods of natural force” (Overmyer, 2002: 258). Since they can bring harm or aids to them, it was “necessary to propitiate the ancestors to ward off their anger as well as to bring their blessing.” (Overmyer, 2002: 258). Besides this desire to gain and to avoid curse, there may also be a Taoist-based desire to become *xian*, namely deities. In addition, the Confucian doctrine of filial piety provides the ethical basis of ancestor worship. Ancestor worship are practiced not only to comfort the dead and to make them harmless, it also reflects the “authority on the part of the parents and filial piety on the part of the son” (Hsu, 1948: 276). The practice extends and strengthens the impact of ancestor in shaping the descendants’ personality as well as their lives.

Conclusion

The four religious traditions differ in terms of how the “self” is treated. The self is the ultimate goal being served by ancestor worship and animistic practices. In the Confucian tradition, people are viewed as embedded in a social network, with the family as the most important environment for personal development. The self is thus defined in terms of membership in a collective. In the Taoist tradition, the self is “but one of the countless manifestations of the Tao and . . . an extension of the cosmos” (Ho, 1995: 120). The ideal self is, paradoxically, selflessness. In the Buddhist tradition, construction of self is rejected while “owning” one’s self is an illusion and the source of suffering (Ho, 1995: 121). To Ho (1995), the commonality among the three religions is about psychological decentering. While the reciprocity principle in Confucianism masks the differentiation between the self and others, the selfless person advocated by Taoism embraces the dichotomy between self and others. The abandonment of selfhood in Buddhist tradition essentially puts the self and craving to death.

Historically and at a doctrinal level, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and animistic folk religions have distinct worldviews and belief systems. However, as these

religions evolved over the years, being formed and modified by the socio-historical contexts, there were competition as well as amalgamation among them. For example, the cosmology in the classic Confucian text *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (Taiji tushuo)* has incorporated Taoist description of genesis of the cosmos. Likewise, the neo-Confucian's ideas of self consciousness, innate knowing and meditation did not originate from Confucius or Mencius (another leader of Confucianism), but are rooted in the Buddhist philosophy and Taoist practice. Conversely, Taoism has adopted from Confucianism social ethics (such as loyalty, filial piety, and social responsibility towards the society) into its religious practice, and linked them to the Taoist philosophy of immortality. These adoption and fusion have been done by each religion to refine and supplement their own doctrinal systems.

At a practical level, Chinese people do not make clear distinctions among various religions. Chinese people worship deities and honor sages from more than one religion at the same time. It is therefore not surprising to find someone who claims to be a Buddhist to practice Taoist rituals, and a Confucian offering incense to a *xian*. Hui, Chan, and Chan (1989) found in a factor analysis of beliefs about death that the Buddhist view and the Taoist view congregate in the same factor. Regardless of the kind of religion one holds, it has impact on the way one interprets the world. Yip (2003) reported that Chinese religious beliefs affect the contents, manifestation and meaningfulness of delusion and hallucination of Hong Kong schizophrenic patients. Such influence on subjective psychotic experience would in turn affect one's cognition and behavior (Yip, 2003).

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Chan Buddhism](#) [▶ Confucianism](#) [▶ Taoism](#)

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Christ

Sharn Waldron

Christ as the Ideal Individual

Psychologically speaking Christ is not only the ideal individual, he is also the representative individual. The life of the evolving human being is lived in archetypal patterns, consciously or unconsciously. Christ's life is human life, and true wholeness is genuine Selfhood, which involves the recognition that this reality is one's own reality. Thus, by curious paradox, it is precisely in respect of those features that give Christ his uniqueness (his dual nature) that his essential identification with all humanity is all-important.

If Jesus had been seen only as a historical figure and his humanity had been regarded as the whole truth about him, then it is likely that his present effect would be no greater than Socrates or Plato. It is precisely because he was regarded or recognized and responded to as being God himself, and therefore beyond the reality of the historical, that his life takes on the quality of revelation. This recognition or response was shaped by the "consensus of unconscious expectation," and continues into the present because of the perseverance of this same unconscious in the contemporary western world.

Therefore, when Carl Jung speaks of the life of Christ, he is concerned primarily with that life as interpreted by some other person or group of persons. Jung ranges widely in his quotations about Christ and is prepared to establish the psychic facts of his life from the New Testament, the early Church Fathers, later exponents of orthodoxy, from the mystical traditions, from medieval alchemists and from dream experiences of contemporary men and women.

There is a miraculous element in Christ's birth, the account of the annunciation, Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit and the virginity of Mary. This miraculous element corresponds to the "non-empirical" genesis of the Self. Since the Self is a transcendent reality that encompasses the essentially unknown realm of the unconscious, it cannot by its very nature be known in empirical ways. Both the birth of Christ and the rise of the Self from the collective unconscious come upon one unawares. They are unexpected and surprise happenings, much like Jung's experience of the underground chamber and the vision of God's enormous turd shattering the cathedral.

The Bearer of Light

In spite of the extraordinary elements, the birth of Christ was an obscure and insignificant event by ordinary standards. He was born without the basic comforts and security of a home. He was born to parents who were powerless in the religious and political power structures of their day. His mother was a Galilean peasant woman and his father a carpenter. Shortly after the birth the child was supposedly taken on a trip to Egypt to escape the rage of the King. Almost nothing more is heard of the child until he is nearly 30 years old. This obscurity combined with the element of danger is symbolic of the extraordinary difficulties an individual must face and overcome in the attaining of psychic wholeness. The very possibility of achieving individuation is precarious. The emerging Self is realized by the conscious but is brought into consciousness by the unknowable and unpredictable forces of the unconscious.

The child Jesus is recognized by Simeon and Anna as the expected Savior of Israel. The Isaiah prophecy is repeated at this time, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Luke 2:25-38; Isaiah 9:5).

Jung speaks of the child god, or child hero, as a familiar archetypal figure in myth, religion, folklore, and in spontaneous psychic images in contemporary visions and dreams. The Christ child is only one among many such images: e.g., Apollo, Belder, Hercules. Each of these has, in common with Christ, an obscure or miraculous birth, threat from the outset of life, the apparently invincible powers over which he ultimately triumphs, a destiny to bring light into darkness, and a death brought about by something intrinsic to his existence.

Christ's childhood and the appearance of symbols of Christ in the form of the divine child, correspond to the necessary link that the Self forms with the primitive origins of humanity in general and with the individual person in particular. However, the significance of the Christ child and other child gods go beyond this. The child is represented as growing to become a future deliverer. The child therefore suggests potential. Individuation is a movement toward a goal. The child figure points to the necessity for the continued development of the emerging Self but it is a development that does not involve the severance of the necessary roots in the past.

Birth of Christ

The emergence of the child figure in the individuation process is an anticipation of the future synthesis of

conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore, writes Jung, “a symbol which unites the opposites: a mediator, a bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole” (Jung, 1951/1979: par. 278).

The Christ child is also recognized as the one who brings light into darkness. The theme of light opposed to and threatened by darkness, is recognized in connection with Jesus at a number of points in the New Testament and particularly in the writings of the Gospel of John. Light and day are, according to Jung, synonymous with consciousness and similarly darkness and night are synonymous with unconsciousness. Thus the advent of the bearer of light reflects the eruption of consciousness into existence and consequently its differentiation from the unconscious, a necessary pre-requisite of true Selfhood.

In this context the infant Christ can be understood as the archetypal child-god/child hero image, who performs the function of healing the individual and group by connecting back to the true origins; who gives a sense of destiny which is necessary to complete psychic wholeness, who unites the opposites of light and dark, human and divine, conscious and the unconscious, in order to form a transcendent reality, a wholeness which is the Self. The child is the irrational third that consciousness could not conceive of unaided and which provides the necessary union of opposites and psychic attraction by its meaningful, but essentially unknown, content. In the individuation process the Self has to be experienced in terms that take seriously the materiality of the body. The child symbol also fulfils this objective because children provide potentiality, the promise of growth and development but they also need to be physically cared for and nurtured.

Jesus of Nazareth

The Gospel records that after he commenced his public ministry Jesus had nowhere to lay his head: He lived a life of hardship, which culminated in the agony of Gethsemane. Christ's life parallels the process of individuation. In Jung's construction of this, there is much suffering and estrangement in the process of becoming individuated. In the individuation process, in a very real and frightening way, the rational person is threatened by this process, threatened with being swallowed up in a dimension greater than his ego can comprehend. All securities seem to be lost, menace seems everywhere present and there seems to be no clear resolution to the conflict (Jung, 1942/1948: par. 233). The experience of Christ upon the cross

signifies the dramatic and extreme nature of the loss of all values that must be endured before the supreme value can be realized (Jung, 1940: par. 149).

Christ was crucified between two thieves; the one destined for paradise the other for hell. The suffering emphasized here in the crucifixion clearly has a redemptive quality about it. Jung expresses the psychic analogy in terms of the crucifixion of the ego “in its agonising suspension between two irreconcilable opposites.” The confrontation between consciousness and the unconscious presents a tremendous threat to the ego but one that must be endured if the Self is to emerge. The ego must die, must relinquish its claims to being the center of the whole of psychic reality in order to make individuation possible (Waldron, 2003).

After death comes three days in hell in which the loss of all value seems to be a permanent state. Then follows the resurrection and the ascension and newness of life. In the genesis, that is, the creative process by which the Self moves from a state of primeval chaos and unconsciousness into consciousness, order and balance, the apparent chaos and absence of securities and order turn out to be a necessary part of the coming to terms with the depth of unconsciousness, in order to establish a new order of values and hence a supreme clarity of consciousness, by the integration of the contents of the collective unconscious into consciousness. The New Testament records few post-resurrection appearances and the nature of these is often veiled. The woman at the tomb does not recognize the risen Christ (John 20:11–15). The disciples on the Emmaus road did not know him until he broke the bread (Luke 24:13–35). The disciple Thomas needed to feel the wounds of Christ before he would believe the testimony of his compatriots (John 20:24–39). So too, says Jung, “the transferred values are not easy to find or recognise” (Jung, 1951/1979: par. 79).

See also: [▶ Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [▶ Christianity](#)
[▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Christ as Symbol of the Self

Sharn Waldron

The Self and the Christ

Jung wrote, “Anything a man postulates as being a greater totality than himself can become a symbol of the Self. . .” (Jung, 1948: par. 232). He also argues that not every image is fully adequate. For him, the figure of Jesus Christ is not a symbol of totality because it lacks evil and sin. Rather, it is Christ’s suffering at the hands of the collective society that is significant for it is an image of the suffering that the ego must go through at the expense of the unconscious, in the process of individuation (Jung, 1948: par. 233).

Within the process of individuation – the realization of the Self, the image of Christ suspended on the cross between two thieves aptly expresses the tension between good and evil and between consciousness and the unconscious.

It is a paradox, a statement about something indescribable and transcendental. Accordingly the realization of the Self which would logically follow from recognition of its supremacy, leads to a fundamental conflict, to a real suspension between opposites (reminiscent of the crucified Christ hanging between two thieves), and to an approximate state of wholeness that lacks perfection (Jung, 1951: par. 123).

Jung argues that the imitation of Christ does not consist of casting one’s burden on Jesus but means undertaking the same experience of life that Jesus had, the way of individuation. That is the great and liberating thing about any genuine personality; he voluntarily sacrifices himself to his vocation, and consciously translates into his own individual reality what would lead to ruin if it were lived unconsciously by the group.

There is a parallel between the symbol of Christ and the process of individuation. The incarnation of Christ is God becoming a human, the breaking into the world of consciousness from the unconscious, an integration of one with the other. For Jung, the Christ symbol is a part of the wider symbol of the Trinity. The Trinity symbolizes a process of development and consciousness that has taken place in the individual and the collective community over the centuries. Jung postulates that while the Trinity is symbolic of the process of individuation it is not a symbol of the goal of that process, the realization of the Self (Jung, 1954: par. 400).

Within this process, God the Father is representative of the unconscious state of childhood. At this stage of development, life for the child is habitual, and law-regulated. The Incarnation begins with the Son taking over the Father’s position. This is not reflective of a development of consciousness because the old customs are still retained. Differentiation and development of consciousness occurs when the individual begins to reflect, discriminate and suffer the conflict of the moral opposites resulting from his freedom from the law.

The advent of the Holy Ghost represents the recovery of the Father and his reintegration with the Son. Consciousness recognizes the unconscious as a higher authority that stands beyond the power of reason.

However, Carl Jung argues that a symbol of the Self requires a form that embraces good and evil, masculine and feminine. He perceives that evil and the feminine are both missing from the Trinity. Jung postulates the need for a compensatory essence within the god symbol. This is a fascinating development in Jung’s thought. He is proposing, out of his conscious, clinical rationale to add to and modify a symbol which he has postulated emanates out of the unconscious and therefore is transcendent and universal. Jung partially addresses the question in *Psychology and Western Religion* when he states:

- ▶ The God-image is not something invented, it is an experience that comes upon a man spontaneously. . . The unconscious God-image can therefore alter the state of consciousness, just as the latter can modify the God-image once it has become conscious (Jung, 1948: par. 289).

For Jung, the inclusion of the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary within the god image is psychologically more satisfying. He proposes a quaternity which he states:

- ▶ Is [a] consistent and logical restoration of the archetypal situation, on which the exalted station of Mary is revealed implicitly and must therefore become a ‘conclusio corta’ in the course of time (Jung, 1938: par. 122).

Behind this dialectic interaction between the Trinity and quaternity stands Jung’s hypothesis of the Psyche. In his continuing pursuit of this missing fourth dimension, Jung seeks to explore the relevance of Satan and Christ as the dark and light sons of Father. God the Father is the equivalent to the unconscious. Christ and Satan are symbolic representations of the tension between good and evil which originate in the development of consciousness. The continued incarnation of God in humankind through the Holy Ghost is representative of the process of individuation. The culmination of this

conception of the symbol of quaternity is the birth of the Self.

For Jung, Jesus Christ is and is not a symbol of the Self. Jung argues that in the New Testament figure of Jesus of Nazareth we see the development of a myth in which the portrait of Christ takes the place of the historical Jesus. It is significant and should be noted that Jung writes out of a time when one of the central issues in theology and biblical scholarship was the question of the differentiation between the historical Jesus and the overlays of reflection evident in the gospel narratives.

In this perspective, Christ became an object of his contemporaries' collective unconscious expectations, resulting in a general projection of divinity onto the figure of Christ.

The Christ and Jesus of Nazareth

The life of Jesus Christ has all the hallmarks of the hero's life: improbable origins, divine father, hazardous birth, miraculous deeds, symbolic death and resurrection. These characteristics point to the underlying archetypal idea of the Self that is present in humanity as an unconscious process. In this way Christ realized the idea of the Self. Jung postulates that the Christ figure is, "perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the Self, apart from the figure of Buddha." Jung appears to carry his own personal contradictions on this issue. While at one point he argues Christ is the most highly developed symbol of the self, a little later he argues that Christ is not an adequate symbol but is an image of the journey. Christ "becomes" an embodiment of the Self. It is perhaps because Jung is not able to separate himself from a Calvinistic interpretation of Christ which is rather Docetic in character. (Waldron, 2003) that he sees Christ as removed from the reality of normal human existence, and in this context he is able to parallel the Buddha and the Christ, which would seem an unlikely marriage. Buddha eschews the experience of human passion to attain paradise, but Christ embraces the passions, suffering and evil in order to transform them.

Docetism was a second Century heresy which conceptualized Christ as a phantasm in order to address an inability to conceptualize God existing in a material and finite human form. To the Docetists, their perception of God as utterly holy and good was incompatible with God's existence in the form of a human, for being human meant being subject to the imperfection of the flesh, to dirt, to suffering, and most significantly, to death.

In saying that Jung's view of the Christ is Calvinistic and as a consequence has a Docetic character I allude to the tendency of Calvinistic theology to have such a high view of the divinity of Christ that even though Calvin would say that Christ is fully human his work suggests that the divinity of Christ strongly overshadows his humanity. Calvin sees Christ as all good. He may be a human being but he is not a human being as others are human beings. He knows all. His words and actions are totally good. In his goodness he redeems us who are of sinful flesh.

Jung always addresses the Christ question from the perspective of Calvinistic Christology. In Jung's framework, the self-revelation of God in Christ illustrates the way in which the problem of opposites arises when God becomes an object of conscious reflection.

In the Christ figure, because evil is absent there is a void, a construct emanating out of a seemingly conscious reflection on the god-image. Jung sees the opposition between Christ and Satan as a more accurate reflection of the god-image (Jung, 1951 : par. 351).

When conscious reflection modifies the god-image, our sense of identity becomes based on our ideals of perfection instead of upon the complete psyche and the images emanating out of it. It is from this construct that Jung is able to differentiate between the god-image that is an aberration of one's unconscious and the god-image that is a totality, holding in tension the opposites and so engendering a reconciliation of the psyche.

Images of God

Jung reflects that while our images of god are a projection of our own unconscious, it is important not to confuse the image of god with that transcendent power which all images point to and hint at. As collectively and individually we move toward individuation, the god-image will, inevitably, correspondingly metamorphose to parallel the psychic reality. The transitions in the god-image are reflective of this journey. And yet, inevitably, the difference between the image of god which is a construction of reason and the image of god which represents the transcendent unconscious and is beyond perception of reason is only conceivable through our conscious perception. This conscious perception of the image of Jesus and the image of god is a reflection of our psychic journey. It is a reflection of our image of the Self.

See also: [Calvinism](#) [Christ](#) [God](#) [Hero](#) [Individuation](#) [Jesus](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Self](#)

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Christianity

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Christianity begins in the first century CE and occurs as an outgrowth of a variety of groups that constitute Judaism during this time. It has as its focus the figure Jesus of Nazareth who preached, taught and practiced an interpretation of second-temple Judaism and the Torah which drew both adherents and opposition. He was eventually martyred in Jerusalem ca. 33 CE. Christians claim that he was resurrected by God from the grave, and that he yet lives and is present as *ho Christos*, “the Christ” (meaning the “Anointed One”). Early believers gathered in their homes to worship and partake in rituals including the Eucharist and baptism. A variety of Christian groups emerged, including the Petrine following in Jerusalem, the Johannine community possibly in Palestine, the Montanists in Asia Minor who focus on eschatology, and the Pauline movement with its focus on Gentile membership. It is not until late first century and early second century that the “church” and Christianity as a religion begin to take form as an institution, evidenced, for example, in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 100 CE) who gives much attention to ecclesiology and the central role of the bishop as head of the congregation. “We are clearly obliged to look upon the bishop as the Lord (*ton kurion*)” he writes to the church at Ephesus (6.1). To the church in Smyrna he writes: “All of you should follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father; and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles. Respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything involving the church without the bishop” (8). For early Christians the Jewish

scriptures represented the authoritative sacred writings. At the same time a new collection of literature begins to emerge from an oral tradition of the sayings of Jesus. The letters of Paul represent the earliest Christian texts, and along with other writings deemed important by Christian leaders becomes part of the *New Testament* Canon. Together these writings which include stories, teachings, exhortations, parables, sermons, travel accounts and sayings relate the Jesus of history, and even more the Jesus of the theology. Paul speaks of encountering the posthumous Jesus in a vision experience and the potency of that experience for Paul leading to his Christian conversion (2 Cor. 12.1–10; 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.1–6). From this event Paul becomes passionate to include Gentiles into Christian membership, as he establishes church communities in places such as Corinth, Philadelphia, and Galatia. The NT canon consists also of the Gospels. The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as one who exorcizes demons and moves in mysterious secrecy amid the crowd and his followers. The Gospel of John presents Jesus who is the *logos* made flesh and dwelling in the material world. The Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as a social reformer, and the Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as a great teacher. In this way the gospel writers each present Jesus in ways specific to their own socio-political and religio-spiritual concerns. They all however present Jesus as the bringer of a new age. In Mark Jesus is clear to say: “The time has been fulfilled (*peplērōtai ho kairos*) and the kingdom is near; repent and believe in the good news (*euaggelion*) (Mark 1.15; cf. Matt. 4.17; Luke 4.15; cf. John 13.31–33). With regard to the era of Christianity, Jung refers to the emerging of the Aion, or *piscus* (Latin, “fish”), the new archetype embraced by the collective (unconscious). The fish is symbolic of Christ coming to the surface and made manifest as the true Light (1 John 2.8–11) in the waking, conscious world. Early Christian catacomb include the fish as symbol of Christ, the Greek spelling for fish, *ichthus*, taken to mean “Jesus Christ Son of God, Savior.” In the Gospels there are accounts of Jesus providing fish to feed large groups of people (Mark 6.35–44; Luke 9.10–17; Matt. 14.13–21; cf. John 6.1–13), and in the Gospel of John Jesus’ final post-resurrection appearance is to the disciples whom he causes to have a great catch of fish, a portion of which they all share as a meal (John 21.1–14). The early church into the Middle Ages struggles to define the relationship between the human and the divine in the figure of Jesus. The Council of Nicea (325 CE), consisting of about 300 bishops called together by the Roman Emperor Constantine, is significant for establishing the notion of *homoousios*, Christ being of the same substance

as the Father. Through Constantine's conversion to the faith Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman world, which includes the western Latin church and Rome and the eastern Greek church with its center at Constantinople. Many of the religious beliefs and practices of these two traditions remain into the present time.

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

Chthonic Deities

Sukey Fontelieu

Chthonic is from the Greek, $\chi\theta\omicron\nu\nu\iota\zeta$ or *khthonios*, meaning “of the earth” and is used in reference to that which is beneath the surface of the earth, or the underworld and its state of darkness. Chthonic also refers to a state of abundance. For the ancient Greeks, chthonic was not to be confused with the visible layer of the soil, where Demeter reigned as the goddess of the harvest or with Gaia, the earth mother who bore and united with Ouranus and is a primal life force (Farnell, 1908/1971). Rather, chthonic implies lower, abundance, darkness, and death.

The chthonic deities and heroes were worshipped in their own cults and sacrificed to in specific ways that differentiated them from Olympian deities. For example, black-skinned animal offerings were preferred for sacrifice to the chthonian gods and light skinned for the Olympians. However, any sort of strict lines of demarcation to categorize the Greek's system of religious affections meet with frustration. The line between the chthonic and the Olympic is immediately blurred as soon as one considers Persephone, Hermes, or, for that matter Zeus himself, who had cults where he was worshipped with the epithet *Zeus Chthonios* (Burkert, 1977/1985).

A chthonic deity, then, is the carrier of the projection of human nature's instinctive drives and dark, rejected propensities and yet is also a fertile and divine source of abundance. Aspects of human nature that were wisely discerned by the ancient Greeks with caution and recognized as potentially dangerous in humans were nonetheless honored in their gods. Through rituals the Greeks were participating in a relationship with the projected darker parts of their own nature. Devotion to this principle has fallen into disuse.

Psychological Implications

Today, rather than a reverential attitude toward the awe-some power of the chthonic force, even in psychological systems and religions, much of this drive is the target for a life long battle to contain, banish, or defeat it in oneself and in society. Unlike the Greek chthonic cults, today darkness is not worshipped, it is feared. Denial of the dark side of the soul (dark did not mean evil to the chthonic cults, but implied an insufficiency of illumination) inevitably creates projection of one's own unacknowledged urges onto others.

Death was considered transformative for human beings in religion in the ancient Greek cults and is still thought to be so today. Today, only if the darker aspects of the personality are defeated does the transformation end in a better life. The dead were understood to be of aid to the living by the Greek cults and all mortals went to the underworld after death. Immortality was not bestowed upon a mortal based on a judgement of the quality of their life. The chthonic cults worshipped their ancestors and heroes at their gravesites, believing that the dead were able to deliver oracular messages that could help them with their daily burdens.

Dualistic Thinking

Dualistic thinking categorizes the chthonic in a split between good and bad. Chthonic is bad. Olympian is good. But to the ancient polytheistic cult members this would be a gross oversimplification. They might even view it as the one psychological state they perceived as sinful: hubris. The chthonic gods and goddesses all had healing and destructive tendencies, as did the Olympians.

The Greek God Pan

One well-known example of the chthonic is personified by the Greek goat god Pan. Pan's cult began in Arcadia on the Peloponnesian peninsula. He was half divine and half beast, a god of fertility, the hunt, and an aide to men and the divine in battle. He also brought panic and unbridled sexuality. Other Greek chthonic cults worshipped Hermes, Hades, Persephone, Dionysus, Hecate, and Haephestus among others. Each carried different shades of the chthonic spirit, which the polytheistic Greeks saw as aspects of the many sided mystery that surrounded and animated all of life.

See also: [▶ Dualism](#) [▶ Pan](#)

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Circumambulation

Paul Larson

Circumambulation is a religious practice of walking around a sacred site. It can take at least two different outward forms; each with a slightly different but related psychological meaning. The first use of sacred walking comes in the form of a communal act of celebration of a particular deity or saint. At various times in the religious calendar of ancient Egypt, an image of the god was taken out of its shrine and paraded for the people to see. In many Roman Catholic countries, statues of saints are taken around the plaza on the saint's festal day. These acts of circumambulation are a kin to an animal ranging over the domain of its territory. The parade marks the loyalty of the local populace to the patron deity or saint. Another form is solitary or more solemn pilgrimage. An example of this would be the circumambulation of Mr. Kailash in Tibet. This is a multi-day journey and involves not only the physical travail of a difficult and long hike, but becomes a focal period of reflection, meditation and devotion.

In either form, the act of circumambulation is a human attempt to create or observe what Eliade (1959) termed "sacred space" and "sacred time." In the act of marking off a space through physically walking its circumference, humans create a boundary between the sacred and the profane or mundane aspects of their world. In the course of the journey of circumscribing a space, the person or group exists in sacred time. Often the opportunity provided by a day long or even multi-day event allow individuals who participate to enter into ecstatic trance states or deeply focused meditational states even as they are active in a bodily sense.

See also: [Mandala](#)

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Circumcision

Mark Popovsky

General

Circumcision refers to the removal of the prepuce (foreskin) covering the glans of the penis. Egyptian mummies from 2300 BCE. were found circumcised and earlier wall paintings suggest that the practice began long before. Approximately one-sixth of the world's men today are circumcised; the vast majority are Muslims or Jews. Throughout history, the basis for the procedure has traditionally been religious or cultural; however, in America, Canada and Australia, many men are circumcised for medical or esthetic reasons.

No consensus exists as to how circumcision originated. Anthropologists have proposed theories including that it began as a mark of defilement for enslaved man, that it served as a sign of cultural identity similar to a tattoo and that it once was believed to enhance fertility. Today, circumcision is the norm among Muslims, Jews, some African churches, several African tribes and Australasian Aborigines.

Judaism

Religious Jews traditionally circumcise male babies on the eighth day unless there is a health-related reason to postpone it. The act is performed by a *mohel* (circumciser) who need not be either a rabbi or a physician. The baby is held firmly by the *sandak* (holder) who is usually an elder male relative. Traditionally, the procedure is done without anesthetic. In pre-modern times, blood was sucked from the penis following the cut. Among most Jews today, this is done only symbolically using a straw.

Circumcision is understood by Jews to signify acceptance into the covenant between God and the Jewish people whereby Jews agree to follow the laws of the

Torah and God, in turn, agrees to bless the Jewish people. An early iteration of this covenant between God and Abraham is described in Genesis 17; the passage concludes with the command for all of Abraham's descendants to be circumcised. Covenants in biblical times were often sealed by severing an animal, with the implication that the party who breaks the covenant will suffer a similar fate. In Hebrew, the verb meaning to seal a covenant translates literally as "to cut." It is presumed by Jewish scholar that the removal of the foreskin symbolically represents such a sealing of the covenant. A number of sovereigns, beginning with Hadrian and Justinian, attempted to forbid the practice among Jews and anti-Semitic rhetoric throughout Western history has often included a notable anti-circumcision component. Some Reform Jewish theologians of the nineteenth century argued that circumcision should be abandoned as it ran contrary to the Jewish principle of universality. Despite common misconceptions, a child born to a Jewish mother is considered fully Jewish regardless of whether or not he has been circumcised.

Christianity

With Paul's teaching that faith served as a sufficient prerequisite for conversion to Christianity, circumcision fell away as a religious ritual for early Christians. It is explicitly rejected as a requirement for conversion in Acts 15:3–11 and Galatians 5:6 but non-therapeutic circumcision was never forbidden by the Roman Catholic Church until the fourteenth century. The practice has been retained in Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

Islam

Though circumcision is not mentioned explicitly in the Koran, it is considered to be a binding "prophetic tradition" among Muslims. There is a great diversity of opinion among Islamic jurists as to the proper time for the ritual to be performed. Often it is during the first 40 days of life, most commonly on the seventh day; however, it can be as late as age seven in some communities. Who performs the circumcision and how varies significantly from community to community in the Muslim world.

Psychology

Freud understood Christianity as a "religion of the son" which held an Oedipal desire to kill the "religion of the

father," Judaism, from which it was born. Freud further viewed circumcision in Judaism as symbolic of man's submissiveness to God. Consequently, by rejecting circumcision and thus removing that symbol of submission, the "son" asserts its authority over the "father." Freud views circumcision as symbolic of castration and he posits that much anti-Semitism may be rooted in the anti-Semite's fear of castration. Other psychoanalyst theorists have disagreed with Freud, arguing that, far from serving as a symbol of castration, circumcision gives the penis the appearance of a permanent erection. The ritual then may seek to ensure fertility and the continued existence of a group which perceives itself as threatened.

Contemporary Debate

A passionate debate as to the value of circumcision rages across the literature in the fields of medicine, psychology and anthropology among others. Proponents often cite medical benefits and the importance of respecting cultural traditions. Opponents generally focus on the pain of the procedure to the infant and rights of the neonate. No solid data exists as to the long-term psychological impact – positive or negative – of circumcision on the individual. The mere intensity of the debate attests to the fact that the practice strikes deep psychological chords for many.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Rites of Passage](#)

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City

David A. Leeming

Cities (and villages) have traditionally represented various concepts associated with the idea of centering. For many cultures their major city or village is the World Center.

In Egypt creation itself occurred when a primal mound rose from the Nile and became the cult center at Heliopolis. Delphi, home of the Greek oracle, was the navel of the world. Any village into which the people emerged from Mother Earth into this existence is the World Center, as in the case of many of the pueblo cultures in the American Southwest.

Most ancient and medieval cities were built around a central temple or church, often defined by walls with four gates representing the four directions. In a sense, then, cities were mandalas, representing wholeness and security and a sense that through the structure of the city the inhabitants participated in that wholeness. In terms of collective psychology, cities have represented not only wholeness but a reasoned barrier against the chaos surrounding their walls. Cities were often referred to by the feminine pronoun and a constant fear was of the ravishing of the city by invading armies. In mythology, as in history, the fall of a city is a terrible tragedy equated with the psychological and emotional destruction of the culture. The fall of Troy is a prime model for this tragedy, its gates penetrated and its streets filled with the murdering invaders.

Cities, like humans, can be corrupted and can serve as a model for the psychological corruption of a people. A sphinx torments the sinful city of Thebes and inside at its heart we find the specific crimes of incest, regicide and patricide in the person of Oedipus, who lacks the one psychological quality he needs, self-knowledge.

Cities sometimes have mythological, spiritual and political significance related to particular events. As we know in connection with Jerusalem, a city can be holy to more than one people. Jews, Muslims, and Christians who have fought for the right to occupy that city have, from their points of view, fought for their cultural souls, for their very being. Take away Jerusalem and the people in question no longer are connected to what or whom they believe themselves to be. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept," sings the psalmist of the Hebrew Exile to Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (wither away) (Psalm 137).

In the *Republic*, Plato discussed the city as an expression of our lack of self-sufficiency and our need to look for help beyond ourselves – i.e., in the collective experience. Ultimately, then, the city, whether Jerusalem, Troy, Athens, Thebes or Heliopolis, is a mandalic model for a culture's psychic wholeness, a model, like the heroes who defend it, of the collective Self, the perfect union of the society's psyche in both its unconscious and conscious forms.

See also: [Axis Mundi](#) [Mandala](#)

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Clitoridectomy

Stefanie Teitelbaum

Introduction

Clitoridectomy, the removal of the clitoris, is a term and practice that is not mentioned in formal psychological or psychoanalytic literature. There is incidental mention in medical texts of Western women in Europe, America, and Australia in the nineteenth century subjected to psychosurgical clitoridectomy as treatment for hysteria and to prevent masturbation, but these surgeries never became common practice. The significance of clitoridectomy is within Islamic religious and cultural tradition. The Qur'an does not mention clitoridectomy but there is a hadith, the oral tradition relating to the words and deeds of Muhammad, discussing the physical alteration of the female genitalia in language unclear to both Arabic and English speaking people.

Religion

African Tribal Religions

Clitoridectomy predates Islam, in ancient African tribal religions. There is much debate as to which force, the old tribal or Islam is the primary religious force in African female genital cutting (Badawi, 1989; Roald 2001).

Islam

Clitoridectomy is one of several ceremonial procedures often referred to as female circumcision, female genital

cutting, or female genital mutilation. This is a Sunni tradition, now debated among Sunnis. Shi'ites have never practiced female genital cutting.

The four procedures are differentiated (Roald, 2001) as

1. Circumcision; the removal of the prepuce or hood of the clitoris.
2. Clitoridectomy; the removal of the clitoris.
3. Excision; the removal of the clitoris and of all or part of the labia minora.
4. Infibulation; the removal of the clitoris, labia minora and all or parts of the medial part of the labia major. Infibulation is practiced mostly in the Sudan.

In one of the earliest efforts of a scientific, systematic inquiry into practice and psychological impact of female circumcision, the phrase female castration first appeared. In his small sample of female circumcision in Egypt, none of the samples were circumcisions, all were castrations – clitoridectomy and excision (Badawi, 1989).

The Arabic word, *bazr*, from the circumcision hadith is alternatively translated as prepuce of the clitoris, or the clitoris itself. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies clitoridectomy as Type I Female Genital Cutting, including both circumcision and clitoridectomy, reflecting the Arabic dual definition. The WHO Type I clitoridectomy subsumes both. Muslim opponents of all forms of female circumcision quote Holy Qur'an in their argument, saying that clitoridectomy alters Allah's creation and is the work of Satan. The strength and authority of the clitoridectomy hadith is questioned by Islamic clerics and scholars because, as Dr. Muhammad Salim al-Awwa, Secretary General of the World Union of the Muslim Ulemas states "in Arabic language, two things or persons may be given one quality or name that belongs only to one of them for an effective cause" (Kurzman, 1998).

Cultural Psychology

The psychological and psycho-sexual function of female clitoridectomy is also debated. Scholars, clerics, and women who have been circumcised and/or castrated speak of controlling sexual desire, enhancing sexual pleasure, limiting sexual pleasure, the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, and even making the female genitalia more beautiful. Information about the psychological impact of clitoridectomy is also split; some are devastated, some report enhanced self esteem at being beautiful within a culturally defined beauty. Some women report frigidity, some report increased sexual

pleasure. There are reports of adult women who had sexual experience prior to clitoridectomy reporting no difference in sexual pleasure (Roald, 2001). The split in psychological experience is blurred because of reporting circumcision and clitoridectomy as one category (Badawi, 1989).

Commentary

Freud considered clitoral sexuality to be an infantile mimicry of male phallic sexuality, an expression of penis envy in the service of denying a woman's biologically determined identification as a castrated being. To resolve her Oedipus Complex, the girl must identify with her mother and reject the subsequent maleness of her clitoris. This is accomplished by the psychical mechanism of decathexis or emptying of the clitoris' libidinal excitement in favor of the passive receptor of the vagina, thus fulfilling the destiny of feminine submissiveness that is determined by a woman's anatomy (Freud, 1905, 1924, 1925, 1933). Freud's theory of female sexuality might be considered clitoridectomy by decathexis, or psychical atrophy, but most clearly a function of the unconscious. If Islamic clitoridectomy represents an externalization of unconscious fantasy, this kind of externalization happened within Freud's intimate circle. Princess Marie Bonaparte, a devoted friend and student of Freud's subjected herself to a clitoral surgery to facilitate psychical decathexis and cure frigidity despite Freud's vehement objections. Bonaparte sought to do psychological research about excised women when she lived in Cairo during World War II, but was prevented from doing so by the Egyptian government (Walton, 2001).

The concept of female castration anxiety and unconscious fantasy has been a topic of psychoanalytic inquiry which began during Freud's lifetime, challenging Freud's castration complex as being strictly male (Abraham, 1920). The difference in unconscious fantasy and psychical structures regarding castration in Islamic women who have grown up with clitoridectomy in their collective cultural consciousness has not yet been explored. To do so at this time, utilizing Freudian-derived work on female castration would be imposing a Western lens on an Islamic unconscious. Clitoridectomy seems unquestionably repellent to the Western soul, and objective observations are easily swept away in passionate moralism and disgust. Vehemently supported and opposed within Muslim communities, the only seeming point of agreement about clitoridectomy is that the dilemma needs to be addressed within its own communities without Western interference or the imposition of Western sensibilities (Roald, 2001).

Psychoanalytic theory postulates that male circumcision is experienced as symbolic castration (Freud, 1909). This unconscious confusion contributes to the difficulty of defining and signifying clitoridectomy as either circumcision or castration. The Freudian unconscious would not differentiate circumcision from clitoridectomy nor differentiate prepuce from clitoris, in parallel with the confusion of Arabic definition. East and West may need to return to God's covenant with Abraham, the circumcisions of Isaac and Ishmael, and follow the journey of those two circumcised boys to modern times to open a meaningful dialogue between psychology and religion about current day clitoridectomy.

The word clitoridectomy does not appear in psychoanalytic literature and the phenomenon is thus far unsignified in a psycho-linguistic lexicon. In a Lacanian perspective, real meaning exists in the space behind the signifier and the absence of key signifier in a chain of signifiers creates a hole in the Symbolic Order leaving psychotic phenomena. The passionate madness surrounding clitoridectomy limits the dialogue between psychology and religion.

See also: [▶ Castration](#) [▶ Circumcision](#) [▶ Complex](#) [▶ Cultural Psychology](#) [▶ Femininity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Lacan, Jacques](#) [▶ Rites of Passage](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Coincidentia Oppositorum

Hillary S. Webb

God as Unity and Multiplicity

According to fifteenth century cardinal, mathematician, and mystic Nicholas Cusanus (also referred to as Nicholas of Cusa and Nicholas of Kues), the *coincidentia oppositorum* – or “coincidence of opposites” – constitutes the “least imperfect” name for God and was the means by which humanity could achieve religious toleration and, ultimately, world peace. Cusanus’ concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum* later influenced the work of a number of Western scholars, most notably Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, who considered the psyche of each individual to likewise be a coincidence of opposites – a blend of conscious and unconscious elements which together constitute a harmonious and unified whole called the “Self.”

Nicholas Cusanus (1401–1464) has been called “the first modern philosopher” (Bond, 1997: 17) in part because of the era in which he lived, but perhaps more importantly because he is considered responsible for heralding a new stage in the deconstruction of language and epistemology. Unlike most of the Christian theologians of his time who held a monotheistic vision of God as a supernal power that exists independent of the physical world of existence, Cusanus stood out as a controversial figure because of his belief that God does not exist separately from Creation, but rather is both transcendent of and immanent within it – a simultaneous *unfolding* of Oneness into multiplicity and the *enfolding* of multiplicity within the One.

- ▶ [W]hen I am at the door of the coincidence of opposites, guarded by the angel stationed at the entrance of paradise, I begin to see you, O Lord. For you are there where speaking, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, reasoning,

knowing, and understanding are the same and where seeing coincides with being seen, hearing with being heard, tasting with being tasted, touching with being touched, speaking with hearing, and creating with speaking (Cusanus, 1453/1997: 252–253).

Because God is infinite and absolute, Cusanus argued, all things in existence are aspects of God, without which God would not be adequately represented. For Cusanus, this concept had not just theological significance but social implications as well, for he believed that it was the inability to accept all forms of religious worship as a necessary reflection of God that was the cause of humanity's most devastating conflicts. He felt certain that if people were educated to the truth of this idea, humanity would recognize its ultimate unity, and there would be perpetual peace.

But, as he bemoans in *De Visione Dei* (“On the Vision of God”), “How can the intellect grasp you, who are infinity? The intellect knows that it is ignorant and that you cannot be grasped because you are infinity. For to understand infinity is to comprehend the incomprehensible” (Cusanus, 1453/1997: 258).

The “Least Imperfect” Name for God

For years, Cusanus struggled to find a way of describing his vision of God as both a unity *and* a plurality, an infinitude *and* a finitude. In what was perhaps his defining work, *De Docta Ignorantia* (“On Learned Ignorance”), Cusanus considers the difficulty of “naming” God, for – due to the limitations of reason-driven language – there is not one name that is not opposed to another. If one describes God as “this,” it implies that God is not “that.” However, since God is everything, there is nothing that God is not. For example, to call God “Absolute” implies that God is not “Not-Absolute.” Therefore, Cusanus argued, any description for God must acknowledge and reveal its own limitations, for since God is everything, there is nothing that God is not. Because of this, many of the names that Cusanus used included linguistic contradictions such as “One-and-All,” “All-in-One.”

In 1453, on his way home from Constantinople where he had gone with the hope of reuniting Eastern and Western Christendom, Cusanus claimed to have had a mystical vision in which he conceived of the “least imperfect” name for God: the *coincidentia oppositorum* or “coincidence of opposites.” The *coincidentia oppositorum* was not a description of God, Cusanus insisted, but an explanation of how God works. That is, God was not “*the*” coincidence of opposites, but rather “*a*” coincidence of opposites.

Although branded as a heretic by some of his contemporaries, Cusanus and his use of the name *coincidentia*

oppositorum as a way of describing the simultaneous plurality and unity of the Absolute had, and continues to have, a profound influence on the work of later Western thinkers. Religious historian Mircea Eliade used the term frequently in his work, citing the *coincidentia oppositorum* as being a representation of “man’s deep dissatisfaction with his actual situation, what is called the human condition” (1969: 122) and of humankind’s “nostalgia for a paradoxical state in which the contraries exist side by side without conflict” (1969: 122).

The Psyche as Coincidentia Oppositorum

Within the discipline of psychology, the *coincidentia oppositorum* found its most prominent articulation in the work of Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology. For Jung, the *coincidentia oppositorum* became a kind of meta-archetype to describe the workings of the human psyche, which he saw as being made up of binary oppositions such as conscious-unconscious, anima-animus, persona-shadow.

Like Cusanus, Jung devoted himself to tackling the problem of opposites. But while Cusanus focused his attention on the social and religious implications of this idea, Jung emphasized its use as a symbol for the “Self” – the core essence and totality of the psyche. The Self, Jung wrote, “can only be described in antinomian terms” (1951/1968 9ii: 63) for it is the dialectical unity of “both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It is the ‘uniting symbol’ which epitomizes the whole union of opposites” (1966 16: 265). Jung believed that all psychological imbalances (such as neurosis, addiction, and various dissociative disorders) represented a “self-division” (1917/1966 7: 20) – a state of disunity with oneself due to this war between various processes within the psyche. “The self is made manifest in the opposites and in the conflict between them; it is a *coincidentia oppositorum*” (1944/1968 12: 186), he wrote. The individual would not be whole until these opposing parts were brought into harmony within the Self. Jung believed that psychological healing could be achieved through the ego’s confrontation with and ultimate reconciliation of the “shadow” aspects of the unconscious. Only by doing so could one begin to withdraw projections and integrate the seemingly antithetical aspects of one’s personality into a single, indivisible unity or whole. He called this process “Individuation.”

More recently, the *coincidentia oppositorum* as a symbol of both spiritual and psychological transcendence has been highlighted in the work of the contemporary philosopher Ken Wilber (2001), as well as others in the field of transpersonal psychology.



See also: [God](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Self](#)

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Collective Unconscious

John Ryan Haule

In Jungian psychology, the totality of inherited potentials, or the full complement of archetypal patterns that are universally human. In addition to ego-consciousness, lie all the forgotten material of an individual's lifetime (called personal unconscious) as well as the vast reservoir of latent possibilities that belong to the human species (collective unconscious).

Many popular discussions of the collective unconscious give the mistaken impression that it is a sort of storehouse of images or even a memory bank for everything that has ever happened in the course of the world.

Jung insists that it is not images or memories that are inherited but rather the capacity to recognize, imagine and enact typically human patterns of thought and action. The collective unconscious is best understood as the sum of all the behavior patterns we inherit with our DNA: the capacity to learn and speak a language, for instance; the propensity to fall in love, form lasting bonds and propagate; the set of aptitudes for nurture and mothering; and so on. Thus the seemingly effortless facility that very young children show for distinguishing linguistic patterns in the conversations going on about them, as well as for assimilating a huge vocabulary and the grammar to organize it. Such inborn facilities for language illustrate several aspects of the collective unconscious: (1) an inherited capacity to recognize relevant stimuli in the environment, (2) the motor capacity to reproduce sounds and gestures in order to communicate, (3) the possibility of combining those typical acts, ideas and images in countless ways, and (4) the fact that all typically human patterns take on cultural variations, as the language capacity will become specified as the mother tongue of Japanese, Arabic or English. On the basis of the collective unconscious, we recognize typical forms of human behavior when we encounter them, intuitively know how to respond and also know how to enact them ourselves.

We not only enact the archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious, we also use them – or, more accurately, use the capacity to recognize and to imagine such patterns – consciously or unconsciously to reflect upon our lives. The evidence for such acts of imagination and their effects upon us when we encounter them are to be found in, among other things, literature, philosophy, theology and dreams. Some dreams seem to be nothing more than variant retellings of the events of the previous day and can be understood without reference to the collective unconscious. Others that refer to crises, challenges and life-transitions, however, may be expressed in imagery that seems archaic, numinous, uncanny and impersonal. These are images and themes in which the typically human patterns of the collective unconscious (archetypes) emerge relatively free of personal associations and take on mythic significance.

All of evolution is implicitly present in the collective unconscious. For it not only gives human beings a common foundation that accounts for the survival of our species and forms the basis by which we naturally understand and relate to one another; but it also connects us with our primate cousins, who are also highly social beings who groom one another to form friendships and also cultivate “political” alliances for personal and communal advancement. Indeed, since the collective unconscious represents the sum of our inherited capacities, it

links us to every DNA-bearing creature on earth. Jung imagined peeling the unconscious like an onion until he arrived at the psyche of an amoeba upon reaching the center.

The narratives of myth and the constructs of theology all express, in one way or another, the fundamental realities of the collective unconscious. Indeed, because they originate in that domain of the psyche which all humans share, such doctrines and stories move us deeply and seem to be eternally true. Religious rites, ceremonies, and rituals are also expressions of the collective unconscious that automatically engage the psyches of all participants, bring them into harmony with one another, and generate altered states of consciousness within which some of the originating ideas and aspirations of the tradition can be re-experienced in the present by each individual.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Numinosum](#) [▶ Personal Unconscious](#) [▶ Psyche](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Communal and Personal Identity

John Ryan Haule

Personal identity, one's own individuality, is a relatively late acquisition – both in life and in human history – and in its best sense not at all to be taken for granted. It is, in fact, an achievement, given the powerful influence of socializing

pressures promising acceptance and support at the price of conformity. Personal identity emerges from communal identity only with effort and often longs to return. Sometimes personal identity changes and grows as an individual moves from one communal identity to another.

Emergence of the Personal

Human life begins within the mother and is so thoroughly dependent upon her bodily processes that a nascent human psyche can hardly be expected to distinguish its own experiences from those governed by the bloodstream and nervous system of its fleshly environment. Total dependency continues after birth in a different form, where the life, language and customs of the family environment provide the socially interpreted world within which the infant's consciousness is fostered and shaped. The smiling, babbling, exclaiming protolanguage shared by care-giver and infant are the foundation not only for language learning but also for socio-cultural indoctrination. A child begins to discover its individuality somewhat later, as disappointments and conflicts provoke conscious awareness of oneself and the unique otherness of each human mind.

As adults, we live in an environment that is tacitly structured by socially favored ideas, images and assumptions which go largely unnoticed and uncriticized. They are implicit in the news and entertainment media, in casual conversations, notions of politeness, etc., forming a collective consciousness that is taken for granted and that shapes even one's private thoughts. At bottom, communal identity is governed by a condition of *participation mystique* that provides security and belonging. Ritual and myth enact and articulate this largely unconscious foundation of communal identity.

Rites of Passage

In “traditional societies” – a loose phrase that describes communal life as it has been practiced over the vast course of human history – communal identity is ritually and mythically differentiated into life stages separated by rites of passage related to birth, maturity, reproduction and death. For example, childhood ends with puberty rites that provide the individual with a new adult identity and role in society. The consequences of such rites shape the daily lives and experiences of every member of a community. While the newly defined adult steps directly and finally into communally established responsibilities and roles that belong to maturity, every other member of

the community must relate to the new initiate as to a full-status adult; all interactions and expectations that concern that individual will have changed.

Rites of passage change a person's social identity, but always within a larger communal identity. True individuality is perhaps only possible in a more complex social world like that of the modern West, where communal identity in the traditional sense is no longer possible and where individuals are exposed to a variety of social customs, religious traditions, and the like, thereby revealing the less-than-absolute authority of any of them. Much of the meaningfulness of human existence is lost in the disillusionment that comes with modernity, one symptom of which is the longing to return to a simpler time with clearer definitions of what is right and wrong. Hence the recent rapid growth in fundamentalist religions.

Cultural Differences

Although modernity is disruptive, it lays down a challenge as well; for in the world as it exists today, religiously defined communal identities are no longer effective for most people. Consequently, each individual must find his or her own mythic foundation in the sense of what Jung has called one's "personal myth" and Kohut has described as "the self's nuclear program." Real personal identity is not a pose like individualism and not to be found in following fads. Rather it is discovered as one's own meaningful relationship to the universally human themes of the collective unconscious.

The tension between communal and personal identity may be quite different in the East, for many studies have shown that the Western model of individuality is not shared by the East. In the West, it is commonly said that the squeaky wheel gets the grease, whereas in the East it is said that the nail that sticks up will be pounded down. Similarly, figure/ground studies of picture interpretation have shown that the central figure in a scene is not perceived in the East as standing out from and opposed to the ground as it is in the West, but rather as standing in dynamic relationship with the ground. Evidently therefore, in the East, communal identity is far more important than personal identity.

Religions of the Dispossessed

Individuals and minorities within a society that have been labeled as deviant or irrelevant have historically reacted to their exclusion from an honorable membership in their

society by reinterpreting the symptoms of their unworthiness as signs of election to subgroups that pursue ecstatic experience – often direct experience of the spirit world through possession trance. Some 90% of worldwide societies have one or more institutionally recognized form of pursuing altered states of consciousness, while 74% have possession trance religions that offer an honorable communal identity to individuals whose personal identity is viewed as inadequate by the larger community. As a consequence of such new membership, their personal identity is potentially transformed and made honorable, although it must be pointed out that, again, such an individual's communal identity is stronger than her personal identity. (Women, for reasons of gender discrimination, are more apt to become trance mediums than are men.)

Evidence shows, however, that all societies have used religious rituals to alter the consciousness of their members at least since the Upper Paleolithic and very likely much further back in human history – indeed, ritual behavior has also been documented in primates in the wild. Communal rituals draw individuals together into an emotionally satisfying group identity, and are also used to reduce suspicions and hostilities between groups that need to cooperate with one another on behalf of common goals.

See also: [Collective Unconscious](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Participation Mystique](#) [Rites of Passage](#)

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Communitas

John Eric Killinger

Introduction

From the Latin, *communis* (community, fellowship, condescension, affability), various meanings of *communitas* (a term taken up under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church traditions) include joint possession in the hands of a religious community; stock-breeding society; land subject to rights of common; the whole of the clergy and the people; common property tax in mass; sworn association; urban commune; the commonality of the inhabitants of a city having the status of a commune (especially in connection with a military expedition); the Commons (estate of the realm); and the common people. This Latin term was taken and developed by cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1920–1983) to describe a society during a liminal period that is unstructured or rudimentarily structured with a “relatively undifferentiated comitatus, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders” (Turner, 1969a: 96).

The Moment and Marginality of Communitas

Communitas is a “moment” in or out of secular structure. It seems to be possessive of an effervescence, making this moment one of religious creativity. One is reminded of the troubled waters in the pool of Bethzatha in John 5:2–9 (Aland, et al. 1998: 259–260). Turner’s work with communitas often goes hand in hand with concepts of pilgrimage, although recent anthropological studies on pilgrimage such as Eade and Sallnow (1991/2000) take issue with this idea with regard to pilgrimages to Lourdes. Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that Turner’s work has greatly influenced countless anthropologists and the deepening of psychological understanding of human beings. The acquired sacred component in liminal space proffers a suitable container for empathic holding of woundedness and the bringing of notions of the divine into shared consciousness. Even such work with psychoidal realms as that of Raff (2000) indicate the creation of communitas for those undergoing the process of individuation.

Communitas emphasizes the marginal, the alien, the alien foreignness of ourselves (Kristeva, 1989/1991). It

is the emptiness at the center that can only be identified or apprehended through its hybridization, or in-betweenness, with social structure. Communitas, like liminality and hybridity, is often subjunctive in mood; that is, it thrives in the imaginal world of possibility rather than concretized fact. As a threshold, it possesses an immediacy akin to Bergson’s *élan vital*. One moves from structure into communitas and back to structure with renewed vision. Vision quests, *rites de passage*, contemplative prayer, spiritual retreats, and fasting are all part of the anti-structure of communitas; however, their purpose is to redirect, reframe, and re-vision the structures in which we live. Communitas is therefore viewed as cyclic, placed in a dialectic with structure in such a way that the revolutionary quality of communitas is summoned and participated in, structure is re-entered, and communitas is summoned again.

Turner’s Differentiations of Communitas

Turner (1969b) differentiates three types of communitas. The first of these, existential (or spontaneous) communitas, is often approached in the form of a “happening,” or noteworthy event typically involving audience participation.

A second type of communitas Turner designates as normative. This occurs when the spontaneous or existential communitas is organized into a lasting social system. Such a system might include a religious sect, such as the Branch Davidians, Heaven’s Gate, and millenarians. As with any structuring of movements, communitas tends to lose its anti-structural quality as it grows more organized as in, for example, an institution.

The third form of communitas is ideological. This is a utopian model based on existential communitas that can be expressed as an outward form of an inward experience of a happening. This is not unlike the question of the Westminster Larger Catechism (Office of the General Assembly, 2000), “What are the parts of a sacrament?,” to which the catechumenate replies, “The parts of a sacrament are two: the one, an outward and sensible sign used according to Christ’s own appointment [the water of baptism and/or the bread and cup of the Lord’s Supper (eucharist)]; the other, an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified” (p. 223). We could then say with Turner that structure is pragmatic and this worldly, whereas communitas is speculative and generates imagery and philosophical ideas. Taken further, if psyche is image, communitas is soul-making.

Turner’s spontaneous/existential communitas is equated with the community of Martin Buber’s (1947/2002)

“essential We,” or the I-Thou relationship built up in community. Tribal rites, vision quests, or other forms of invoked communitas are not for seeking the pleasurable company of relationship. Rather, in invoking communitas one is seeking transformative experience that goes to the root or core of a person’s being in a profound and shared (even sharable) fashion. Psychoanalysis as a sort of communitas rationalizes Lacan’s (2005) recognition in 1974 of the triumph of religion as a triumph of structure over movements. It is why he retorts that psychoanalysis will be around for while longer as there always needs to be a revolutionary component.

Providing optimal occasions for communitas are life in the fringes, interstices, and margins of structural forms. Communitas can also arise from inferiority, described as coming from beneath structure. The ability to give free rein to imagination, entertain, and hold the doubts, mysteries, and uncertainties of negative capability also provides the circumstances of and for communitas. This works well for individuals, but not necessarily for groups that consider themselves in situations of communitas.

Communitas occasionally is associated with visions or theories of world catastrophe. Examples of such perceived catastrophic consequences of communitas include the People’s Temple led by Jim Jones, the frenzy of the Y2k transition, and millennialist religious cults, sects, etc. Despite the infrequency of catastrophic associations with communitas, there remains the danger of severe discipline, the circumciser’s knife (as in the establishment of a mark of the divine’s chosen in the story of Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac).

There is the communitas of withdrawal, of retreat. This form of communitas involves partial or total withdrawal from participation in the social structures of the world. Examples include Jesus the Nazorean, the Buddha, the Prophet Muhammad, Gandhi, Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, even the Rose-beetle man of Gerald Durrell (1956/1984). Vision quests, hermitage, and retreat are also types of the communitas of withdrawal. Curiously, such examples as these either have a connection with or are possessed by the numinous.

Communitas offers a number of benefits. Among these mentioned by Edith Turner (2004) are joy and healing, the gift of “seeing,” mutual help, the experience of religion as religion – not just Jewish, Muslim, or Christian, for instance, but *religion* – and the gift of knowledge (*gnosis* as opposed to gnosticism). Other attributes might include long term ties with others as others, a humanistic conscience that supports, uplifts, accepts, sustains, and celebrates all of humanity (not just a small portion of it), and the ideals of human rights.

Communitas becomes structural when, like grace or the bestowal of favors, it becomes routinized. Turner (1974) notes the similarity between structural communitas and Freud’s repetition compulsion. Expressions of routinized communitas include monasteries, convents, initiation camps, and communes.

Not unlike the scholastic notion of *haecceity* (Duns Scotus) or the individuation process of Jung, communitas preserves individual distinctions. Despite sharing the same cognate with *communio*, communitas is not the same as communion because there is no merging. It’s more akin to synchronicity. It is not realizable, for it is a force, a dynamic. Turner (1987) argues that communitas is not being realized because “individuals and collectives try to impose their cognitive schema on one another” (p. 84).

Communitas is finally analogous, according to Turner (1983/1987) with flow, owing this understanding to the world of positive psychologist M. Csikszentmihályi. In this understanding, action and awareness are one, and Turner observes that there is no flow when we are aware that we are engaged in the act of flowing. As long as structural rules and framing crystallize out of the flow rather than are imposed upon it from without, communitas can be observed as taking place. Communitas is then viewed as an imaginal framework, a third space container suitable for an *Einführung* (a feeling into something) of holding, viewing, and bringing of notions of the divine into shared consciousness.

A Critique of Communitas

The theory of communitas has recently been critiqued (Eade and Sallnow, 1991/2000) in its associations with the practice of pilgrimage. The criticism argues that if aligned with pilgrimage, communitas is presented as a model of determinism, and this Eade and Sallnow see as limiting the usefulness of communitas. Sallnow’s assessment is that “the most helpful, pre-analytic image to hold in mind is a tangle of contradictions, a cluster of coincident opposites” (p. 52). This would align itself with the idea of the alchemical *massa confusa* (a.k.a. *prima materia*) and the concept of synchronicity, components the importance of which Turner acknowledges throughout his work. Another problem they view is that in identifying pilgrimage as communitas, a spurious homogeneity is imposed upon pilgrimage, prejudging its complex character as a phenomenon. While not finding fault with the value of the theory of communitas per se, Eade and Sallnow opt to neglect its capacity for and maintenance of negative capability that itself seems intrinsic to

the pilgrimage experience. Instead, they replace negative capability with the power of religious hierarchies to determine the outcomes of pilgrimage. A rebuttal in the form of reminding us that this critique is simply a return to structural *communitas* is given by Edith Turner (2004).

Despite the recent critique of *communitas* with regard to pilgrimage, it should be understood that *communitas* as anti-structure really means it is an inversion of the normal. In this respect, we are open to the play and fascination of mirrors as apophatic third eyes. *Communitas* thus extends our gaze, including our backward gaze or re-gard. We are negatively defined – not contradicted – as *neti. . . neti*: neither this nor that. We are thus opened up to new experience and meaning-making such that we can work and play well with Others as we see ourselves as Others, too.

See also: [▶ Buber, Martin](#) [▶ Contemplative Prayer](#) [▶ Gnosticism](#) [▶ Pilgrimage](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Rites of Passage](#)

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Compassion

Krystyna Sanderson

The word compassion comes from Latin *com-* (with, together) plus *pati* (to bear, suffer). Compassion can be defined as “deep feeling for and understanding of misery or suffering and the concomitant desire to promote its alleviation” (Paiano, 1999: 1–291). Another source describes compassion as “the capacity to be attracted and moved by the fragility, weakness, and suffering of another” (Downey, 1993: 102).

Compassion in the Bible

The Hebrew word for compassion, *rahamim*, refers to the womb or uterus. Just as the womb is the source of biological human life, so God’s compassion is the source of life itself. God acts as a womb, and the place of birth is the vehicle of compassion (Trible, 1978: 55). Psalm 103 names compassion as a paternal attribute of God: “As a father has compassion for his children, /so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.” And Isaiah 46:3–4 portrays God as a mother bearing the house of Israel.

The Christian Gospel refers to the coming of Christ as an act of God’s compassion (“For God so loved the world. . .” – John 3:16). In the story of the feeding of the four thousand, Jesus says, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some

of them have come a long way” (Mark 8:2–3). Compassion is given a high priority in the parable of the Good Samaritan: “But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Luke 10:33–34). The parable of the Prodigal Son also highlights compassion: “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20).

Compassion in Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists and psychoanalysts must first look at their own suffering before they can join their patients as fellow sufferers and participants in the individuation process. The psychotherapist has to be compassionate toward self in order to be compassionate toward the patient. One’s own suffering can help one to soothe the suffering of another.

Genuine compassion is clearly differentiated from pathological symptoms that can mimic compassion but are only disguised forms of narcissism, projective identification, inverted envy, or even masochism, sadism or apathy.

Freud

Compassion clearly plays a major role in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, but already in 1911 Freud had identified a hazard in the natural tendency of the analyst to frame, define and resolve the issues emerging in the course of therapy. Instead, the therapist should exercise *evenly suspended attention*, not imposing his own feelings and interpretations on the proceedings. “If he follows his expectations,” Freud wrote, “he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows.”

Jung and Kohut

Jung’s *unprejudiced objectivity* and Heinz Kohut’s *vicarious introspection* express related concepts. Jung believed that suffering is unavoidable and that what matters is how one responds to suffering. He saw acceptance of suffering as paramount in the developmental process that he called individuation.

Rogers

Carl Rogers’ *unconditional positive regard* addresses more directly the exercise of compassion in the therapeutic context. In Rogers’ view, it is not enough for the therapist to be a nonintrusive partner to the therapy. The therapist must *care* for the client with an active, positive concern. Such active concern, Rogers believed, created the most favorable setting for the client to employ their own internal resources for personal growth.

Both in psychological and theological terms compassion gives suffering meaning and purpose and is a vital connection between personal relationships and the relationship between the individual and God.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychotherapy](#)

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Complex

Craig Stephenson

Etymologically, the English word “complex” derives from the Latin *complexus*, “embrace” or “sexual intercourse,” from *complecti*, “to entwine,” made up of the prefix *com*

meaning “together” + *piectere*, meaning “to braid.” In the natural and social sciences in general, the word “complex” denotes a system composed of interconnected or related parts that, coming together as a whole, manifest one or more properties not evident from the properties of the individual parts. In mathematics, a complex number consists of a real and an imaginary part, either of which can be zero. In psychology, complexes are organized groups of ideas and memories that are, for the most part, outside awareness but that carry enormous affective power when activated, their presence significantly altering the psychic system as an entwined or braided whole.

Even though Freud and Breuer use the term “complex” in their early studies of hysteria, Laplanche and Pontalis, writers of the seminal *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, attribute its theoretical importance in psychoanalysis to Jung’s studies in word association. Freud regarded Jung’s empirical investigations with complexes (measured as delayed responses to stimulus words as well as by psychogalvanic response) as an important experimental corroboration of his theoretical concept of the unconscious. But Freud increasingly shunned the term “complex” after Jung and Adler placed complexes at the center of their theories as natural phenomena. That is to say, orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis regards complexes, including Freud’s Oedipus complex, as symptoms resulting from failed acts of repression, whereas Adler’s individual psychology and Jung’s analytical psychology do not theorize complexes as synonymous with neurosis.

Adler employs the concept of a complex to account for psychological strategies such as the “will to power” and self-aggrandizement which individuals adopt often to avoid difficult feelings of inferiority. Jung characterizes conflicts between ego consciousness and other complexes as painful but not necessarily pathological: “A complex becomes pathological only when we think we have not got it” (Jung, 1942/1954: para. 179). For Jung, a feeling-toned complex is an image to which a highly charged affect is attached and which is incompatible with the habitual attitude of the ego. Often attributable to a trauma that splits off a bit of the psyche or to a moral conflict in which it appears impossible to affirm the whole of one’s being, a complex is a splinter psyche that behaves with a remarkable degree of autonomy and coherence, like an animated foreign property within the sphere of consciousness. It can override will or volition and block memory; that is to say, the individual ego is relatively powerless in a conflict with an unconscious complex. In his essay, *A Review of the Complex Theory*, Jung explicitly describes this as “a momentary and unconscious alteration of personality known as identification with the complex,” although the

opposing phrase “assimilation of the ego by the complex” could just as appropriately convey the action (Jung, 1934/1960: para. 204).

Freud extended the work of Charcot and Janet with regard to hysterical symptoms when he realized that complexes as symptom-producing ideas rooted in unconscious affects needed to be abreacted. But Jung argues that psychoanalytic theory does not adequately convey the power and the positive potential of these symptom-producing ideas. Jung portrays Freud as wanting to unmake as illusion, to reduce to a psychological formula, what Jung describes in psychological terms as a “complex” but also, at other times, as a “spirit,” “god” or “daimon.” And Jung argues that his theory contributes to and corrects psychoanalytic theory by emphasizing the inherent ambiguity of complexes which the ego experiences as negative: “Spirits are not under all circumstances dangerous and harmful. They can, when translated into ideas, also have beneficial effects. A well-known example of this transformation of a content of the collective unconscious into communicable language is the miracle of Pentecost” (Jung, 1920/1960: para. 596). Jung employs a deliberately equivocal language of psychological “complexes” that are also “spirits,” in order to honor their ontological claim as un-lived potentialities of the personality. These forcefully seek to incarnate in time and space, and kinetically push the individual psyche towards a more genuinely integral organizing or entwining of its parts, a process which he calls “individuation.”

Jung argues that the technique of personification provides a psychotherapeutic means by which the ego can free itself from the affective power of an unconscious complex. In his memoirs, as well as in his theoretical writings, he describes his experiments with the personified image of the complex. Jung observes that if, rather than simply suffering the active complex’s often difficult affect, we deliberately enter a state of reverie and permit the complex to manifest spontaneously to conscious awareness as a personified image, then we depotentiate its power over ego consciousness and makes interpretation possible:

- ▶ The essential thing is to differentiate oneself from these unconscious contents by personifying them, and at the same time to bring them into relationship with consciousness. That is the technique for stripping them of their power. It is not too difficult to personify them, as they always possess a certain degree of autonomy, a separate identity of their own. Their autonomy is a most uncomfortable thing to reconcile oneself to, and yet the very fact that the unconscious presents itself in that way gives us the best means of handling it (Jung, 1962: 187).

Hence, an important component of psychotherapy focuses upon supporting the ego of the patient within the frame of the transference-countertransference relationship to the point that it can experience the autonomy of the unconscious complex as a splinter psyche and eventually reconcile itself to the contradictions inherent in psychic reality through a personified confrontation and meeting. Jung depicts the images and affects of a complex as clustering around an archetypal core which is both ambiguous and numinous. As a result, an archetypal aspect of the experience of the Otherness of the psyche may cause the analytical container to feel tinged with numinosity. As contradictory as this may seem, in order to address contemporary mental disorders cast in the secularized language of “mind” and “complexes,” the practice of psychotherapy needs to take into account a religious function in the experience of healing.

Post-Jungian theorists detach Jung’s definition of the religious function in psychotherapy from connotations of an esoteric system of belief. At the same time, they defend it from classical Freudian interpretation that sees it as a component of transference phenomena which constitutes resistance and an obstacle to the process of healing. Jung’s concept of synchronicity provides an important framework for understanding the numinous aspect of complexes experienced within clinical settings which is otherwise professionally considered taboo, and for considering the interaction of religious and scientific imagery. This is important because there are potential risks within the transference – and for the therapy in general – when the religious dimension of psychotherapeutic practice is either not processed consciously but acted out in the transference and counter-transference, or is only interpreted reductively, that is to say, as infantile and illusory. Jung argues that psychotherapeutic healing depends on the degree to which the therapist carefully considers the implications of this religious function when the Otherness of unconscious complexes manifests in the temenos of the therapeutic encounter.

Extrapolating from Jung’s theorizing, James Hillman’s archetypal psychology suggests that, by taking into account the inherent multiplicity and pluralism of the psyche, Jung’s theory of complexes compensates for the dangers inherent in the oneness of modernist Western cultures and the Western practice of an ego-oriented psychology of self development. The personification of unconscious complexes provides an effective means by which one adopts the paradoxical position of, on the one hand, claiming the personified aspects as one’s own and, on the other hand, experiencing their distinctness from ego consciousness and their autonomy. Furthermore, psychological complexes

demand a dramatically engaged and lived response to the unconscious as Other, in contrast to intellectualizing and conceptualizing unconscious contents which will not be psychotherapeutically effective.

Whereas psychiatry associates personification with the irrational and pathological hallucinatory phenomena of Dissociative Identity Disorder and psychosis, Jung normalizes it as a natural psychological process through which complexes manifest. This process is comparable to what psychiatrist Laurence Kirmayer, in his review of cognitive research on dissociation (1994), designates as a component of “reverie.” Indeed, Kirmayer (1999) describes the recent psychotherapeutic work of Witztum and Goodman precisely in terms of split-off aspects of the self which are experienced as supernatural entities and spirits. Witztum and Goodman report that patients, addressing their suffering through reverie and a manipulation of symbols rather than through abreaction and reductive developmental-based work, effectively reorganize cognitive schemas, unconscious dynamics and interpersonal interactions.

Jung’s theory of complexes proposes a looser definition of personhood than Western thinking traditionally promulgates. Jung describes this theoretically in terms of “the serious doubt [which the existence of complexes throws] on the naïve assumption of the unity of consciousness” (1934/1960: 96), and also personalistically in the last words of his memoirs wherein he acknowledges “an unexpected unfamiliarity with myself” (1962: 359). When psychoanalysts such as Goldberg (1980, in Samuels, Shorter, and Plaut, 1986: 32–35) write that “a person is a collective noun,” they affirm Jung’s theory of complexes, of a multiplicity of conscious mental functioning, as well as aligning contemporary psychoanalytical theorizing with current research into the inherent dissociability of normal cognitive functioning.

See also: [Adler, Alfred](#) [Ego](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Compulsion

Dianne Braden

Etymology

The noun, compulsion, generally means the state or experience of being compelled. It is the irresistible urge to act, regardless of the rationality of the motivation. In its verb form, compel expands qualitatively to include meanings such as force, drive, constrain, and sway. It comes from the Latin verb *pellere*, (past part. *pulsus*) meaning to push, drive or strike. The extended form *pelna*, comes from the Latin verb *appellare*, to drive to, address, entreat, appeal, or call. Each and all of these contribute to psychological and religious interpretations of compulsion.

Elaboration

Compulsion, referring to repeated, irrational action (distinguished from OBSESSION involving repetitive thought) is a phenomenon that by its very nature bridges more than one domain. Although this experience is neither exclusively physical, psychological nor spiritual, it manifests powerfully and problematically as all three. As a physical experience, compulsions fall under the category of addictions of all kinds. Specialists in substance abuse disorders range in focus from alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, shopping, sex, love, and relationship; and this list is not exhaustive. Caught in a compulsive cycle to re-experience the original pleasurable exposure to the substance, people become trapped in a whirlpool of cyclical agonies. In spite of negative

consequences, the compulsion to repeat a certain action dominates the will of the individual and a pattern of predictable, yet irresistible actions follow.

In the realm of psychology, Sigmund Freud's first observations about compulsion include the curious desire in the psyche to repeat experience even though the return to it could not possibly be pleasurable (Gay, 1989: 602–). Referring to this as the “repetition compulsion,” Freud noted that his earlier thinking surrounding the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain could not explain a need to revisit experiences that cause suffering.

Object Relations theorists and analysts focused on the internal objects in the psyche and addressed compulsions as rooted in the inescapable desire to possess, reject, or relate to the object. Michael Balint talks about artists and performers of all kinds as ultimately serving a need to be seen by and thereby possess the object (Balint, 1959). This gives new meaning to the saying that “the show must go on.” Perhaps the need of some of the great painters, like Claude Monet, who painted more than one hundred paintings of the lilies, answered a similar call.

But it was Carl Jung who first ventured into a spiritual understanding of compulsion's dynamics, thinking first that certain compulsions bore witness to a lack of moral restraint. While early therapy met with such compulsive behaviors more confrontationally than is acceptable today, Jung touched on the necessity of the analytic relationship to challenge a moral deficit. “Unless the doctor and the patient become a problem to one another, there is no cure” (Jung, 1961: 142).

Later, and more specifically, Jung addressed the problem of alcoholism in a letter to one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. He had come to see compulsive drinking as a spiritual quest of deep proportions, a destructive cycle without the possibility of cure if there is no spiritual component to the recovery (Adler and Jaffe, 1972: 623–625).

Compulsion thus spreads its wings over the physical, the psychological and now reaches into the spiritual experience of the “call.” Religious history the world over describes the individual compelled to move beyond their ordinary circumstances to take up the demands of a larger existence. St. Francis of Assisi quit the trappings of nobility and a career-driven life to minister to the poor. His devotion to the faith revealed to him in a series of visions moved him to the founding of a new religious order and later canonization. Joan of Arc would have died an obscure French peasant had she not heeded the voices of saints that came to her in a vision, “calling” her to lead her country's army to victory against the British after the Hundred Years' War. Compelled, surely beyond reason

at the time of the Inquisition, Joan held to her beliefs and was burned at the stake for following a compulsive service to a larger authority.

Compulsion presents a dilemma in terms of how to view it. For some, perhaps it is no more, nor less, for that matter, than the physical experience of addiction. Based on a compulsive need to re-experience the initial pleasure, the negative consequences are outweighed by even the hope of finding it. For others, perhaps it is a psychological coping mechanism to manage anxiety over the loss of the original object. Or at depth, compulsions herald movement toward an enlargement of the personality. And finally for others, compulsion could answer a larger call of divine proportions; a response to a certain kind of destiny that effects the larger community and culture (Braden, 2008).

See also: [Individuation](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Confession

Morgan Stebbins

The act of confession either begins a process of reparation or affirms the subject’s relationship with the transpersonal. That is, one can confess wrongdoing or confess one’s faith. In most religious traditions the former is accomplished through ritualized admission, absolution, and repair, while psychologically it begins the formation of therapeutic trust and unburdens the subject of poisonous secrets. The confession of faith can occur at moments of trial (martyrdom), or of ritual inclusion (initiation), and in the secular world can take the form of moral statements or even scientific stances which are determined

by unconscious assumption rather than a rational or integrated practice (see especially Nietzsche, 1992).

The word confess is made up of the Latin *com* (together) and *fateri* (to acknowledge), indicating that a process of change begins both *with* another person and by *admitting* that which is in error. A confession of faith can be seen as an acknowledgment of a relationship with the transpersonal. Both modes experientially parallel the psychoanalytic encounter.

In the Catholic tradition, penance is a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through the priest’s absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to rectify them. The whole process of confession is referred to as a “tribunal of penance,” because it is seen as a judicial process in which the penitent is at once the accuser, the person accused, and the witness while the priest pronounces judgment and sentence. The church father Origen is explicit: “[A final method of forgiveness], albeit hard and laborious [is] the remission of sins through penance, when the sinner . . . does not shrink from declaring his sin to a priest of the Lord and from seeking medicine, after the manner of him who say, ‘I said, “To the Lord I will accuse myself of my iniquity” ’” (Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus 2:4* [A.D. 248]). The Council of Trent (*Session Fourteen, Chapter I*) quoted John 20:22–23 as the primary scriptural proof for the doctrine concerning this sacrament, but Catholics also consider Matt. 9:2–8, 1 Cor. 11:27, and Matt. 16:17–20 to be among the Scriptural bases for the sacrament (The Catholic Encyclopedia). This multilevel mediation of sin can be thought of, psychologically, as the careful exploration of the scripture, or transpersonal psychic reality, inscribed in the mind of a patient and read, through translation of the symbolic material, in to an analytic session.

Protestant sects in general disavow the necessity of an intermediary between the faithful and God so that confession is a matter of a sincere admission of wrongdoing in prayer, and the asking of forgiveness. In practice this also can occur in a communal and ritualized form during service or to another person if he or she has been wronged by the sin committed. Jung interpreted this historical move away from mediation as quite precarious, since most people did not (and do not) have the necessary strength of character and interior conceptual equipment to directly encounter and live with the transpersonal, whether characterized as an archetypal unconscious, an instinctual inclination, or a social movement such as a political ideology or a new age spiritual system. Typically a subject without firm mediation is either overwhelmed by a psychic flood or reverts to some

type of collective response but without the benefit of *knowing and choosing* the system.

Various sutras encourage the Buddhist to confess to someone who is able to receive the confession (usually a superior in the temple, or a monk). The confessor should at a minimum understand the ethical precepts and ideally should have some experience in following them. The point of confession is to *experience remorse* and to reflect on the consequences of one's actions in order to *exercise restraint* in the future. In practice this results in a sense of relief. Confession does not absolve the Buddhist from responsibility for the actions committed. The *karmic* consequences of such actions will still manifest.

The following story illustrates the relative nature of confession in Buddhism (Sāmaññaphala Sutta - DN 2, various translations, but see also Macy, 1991). The king Ajattasattu had killed his mother and father and has usurped the crown. His conscience bothered him, and so he went to confess to the Buddha. The Buddha said to the king: "Indeed, King, transgression [*accayo*] overcame you when you deprived your father, that good and just king, of his life. But since you have acknowledged the transgression and confessed it as is right, we will accept it. For he who acknowledges his transgression as such and confesses it for betterment in future, will grow in the noble discipline."

The word *accayo* means "going on, or beyond," and in the moral sphere, means acting outside the established norms – so transgression is quite a good translation. However once the king departs, the Buddha says to the monks: "The king is done for, his fate is sealed, bhikkhus. If the king had not killed his father. . . then as he sat there the pure and spotless dhamma-eye would have arisen in him" (Walsh, 1995: 91ff). So it is quite clear that there is no hope for the King regardless of how many cycles of life he uses to work off his karma. Psychologically we can understand this as the harsh but all too common experience that some people are not going to get better (whatever the definition of getting better might be), regardless of treatment or effort. There is also in this story the aspect of appropriate teaching, meaning that for each listener, the king, the monk, and the reader, there is something quite different to integrate.

In Islam, confession in the sense of declaration of faith is very central, being one of the five pillars of Islam. Distinct from this is the act of seeking forgiveness from God, called *istighfar*. Confession of sins is typically made to God and not man (except in asking for forgiveness of the victim of the sin). It is one of the essential parts of worship in Islam. This act is generally done by repeating the Arabic words *astaghfirullah*, meaning "I seek forgiveness from Allah."

Again we can see that a concept of relationship between the subject and the transpersonal is central and that the locus of authority rests in the latter. This attitude is in stark contrast with the social and economic norms for most populations at this point in history.

In Judaism, like Islam, confession is an important part of attaining forgiveness for both sins against God and another man. In addition, confession in Judaism is done communally in plural. Unlike the Christian "I have sinned," Jews confess that "We have sinned." An early form of this confession is found most directly in Daniel 9:5–19, especially verses 5, 9, 18–19, where the supplicant acknowledges himself merit-less, and asks for God's forgiveness based only on God's own merit, and that God's name should not be tarnished among the nations.

For Jung, confession was the first of four stages or levels of the analytic process. In some cases, confession is all that is needed for a complete resolution of suffering, and it would be merely a personal agenda for the psychoanalyst to push beyond that. In other words, embedded in the symbolic material is a moral imperative specific to the movement of psyche itself, and it is this that forms the psychological imperative. However, if the analyst detects that further exploration is needed according to the symbolic communication from the psyche of the patient, Jung outlines three more stages of education, elucidation, and finally transformation (Jung, 1955).

Confession appears quite universally in religious traditions (this includes tribal cultures not specifically discussed, as presented for example in the journal *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, May, 2007), so we can safely translate it as the psyche's need to both orient itself in terms of interpersonal and social norms (because another person is necessary and often the mistreated party must be addressed as well) as well as relate to those areas of transgression against the transpersonal center of meaning. For the latter, it is seen as critical that this practice of relating happen in a dyadic manner and in a protected environment. In this way the journey of insight and integration begins.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Christianity](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Sin](#)

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Confucianism

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Confucius was born 552 BCE in the district of Tsau, China during the 20th year of the reign of emperor Ling. Little is known about his childhood. According to one myth, Confucius' mother Chāng-tsâi gave birth to him in a cave on a hill as instructed a revelatory dream experience. The child was born in the night protected by two dragons who kept watch on the left and the right of the hill. At the time of the birth a spring of warm water from the floor of the cave bubbled up cleansing the child, who was extraordinary in appearance. At age 19, Confucius married a woman of the Chien-kwan family from the State of Sung. They had a son, Lî (*The Carp*) shortly after. According to an inscription, Confucius had at least one other child – a daughter who died at an early age. Confucius first worked as a keeper of public grain stores and public fields. He later served as a public teacher in his early twenties, never refusing a student who desired to learn, and eventually becoming teacher to students of the wealthy caste. In 501 BCE he was appointed chief magistrate of the town of Chung-tû, and his authority in the State continued to grow. He died 479 BCE. Some time afterwards public worship of Confucius began, including sacrificial offerings throughout the empire. The primary literary sources for Confucianism include “The Five *Ching*” and “The Four *Shu*.” The five *Ching* (“textile” connoting regularity and constancy) are thought to have been used by Confucius for study. The oldest text, the *Yi*, contains a system of symbols used to determine cosmological and philosophical order in what is perceived to be chance events. The *Shih* (ca. 1000 BCE?) contains 305 poems of folk songs, festive songs, hymns and eulogies. The *Lî Chî* dates possibly to 300 BCE and contains social forms and rites of the Zhou Dynasty (1122–256 BCE). The *Shû* contains the history of past Chinese heroes and Dynasties. Of its 58 chapters 33 are thought to be

authentic, dating to the sixth century BCE. Instruction in Confucianism mostly occurred through use of “*The Four Books*,” which became the core curriculum for the civil service examination in the Ming (1368–1644 CE) and Qing (1644–1911 CE) dynasties. “*The Four Books*,” is an abbreviation for “*The Books of the Four Philosophers*.” The *Tâ Hsio*, or “*Great Learning*” is attributed to Tâ Shān, a disciple of Confucius. Containing reflections on the teachings of Confucius by some of his followers, it represents the first step for learners and aims “to illustrate illustrious virtue, to renovate the people, and rest in the highest excellence.” (1) Knowing this place of rest may enable a “calm unperturbedness” and a tranquil repose. (2) Issuing chapters expand upon the aim for virtue through the comments of Tsāng. One is to allow no self-deception (VI.1), make thoughts sincere (VI.4), and cultivate the mind, thus not being under the influence of the passions which leads to incorrect conduct (VII.1). In matters of governing, the regulation and wellbeing of the royal family has central place: “From the loving example of one family a whole State becomes loving” (IX.3). Similarly, when the sovereign shows compassion toward the young and helpless, “the people do the same” (X.1). The *Lun Yü*, or “*Digested Conversations (Confucian Analects)*” consists of the sayings of Confucius compiled some time after his death. It gives instruction and guidance on how to be the “superior” person (II.2). One who loves virtue rather than beauty, serves his parents and his prince, and speaks sincerely with his friends is one who shows learning (I.VII). He is one who in wanting to enlarge himself seeks also to enlarge others (VI.XXVIII). He requires much of himself, and little from others, and so avoids resentment (XV.XIV). As a youth one should be filial in the home and respectful towards elders outside of the home. He should be earnest and truthful, overflowing in love and “cultivating the friendship of the good” (I.VI). Of the manner of governing – a subject often addressed, the “Master” says: “When a country is well-governed, poverty and mean conditions are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill-governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of” (VIII.VIII). The *Chung Lung*, or “*Doctrine of the Mean*” is attributed to K’ung Chî, the grandson of Confucius. Not unlike the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the mean* has a primary focus, which is the “path” called “instruction.” It is never to be left for an instant (I.1–2). Attention to the path yields the states of equilibrium and harmony, and in its furthest reaches it contains secrets unattainable even by sages (XII.2). It is never far from a person, and the practice of reciprocity – “What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others” – is evidence of being near the

path (XIII.3). One who is superior embraces this course; one who is mean lives contrary to it (II.1). One who is superior “stands firm in his energy,” cultivating a friendly harmony without being weak, and standing erect in the middle, without inclining to either side (X.5). The fourth writing consists of the writings of Confucius’ successor, Mencius (372–289 BCE). The book contains dialogues between Mencius and various Chinese kings. Distinct from the concise manner of Confucius’ teachings, Mencius’ discussions are more elaborate and extended. The Four *Shuú*, along with the Five *Ching*, relate the cultivation of heightened consciousness through disciplined and considered practice of detailed and focused instruction. This orientation aims toward the experience of a tranquil, orderly state of being, one which is founded upon the implicit relationship between the individual and the collective. Self-control and socio-political regulation are essential means toward a desired harmony, and thus there occurs the emphasis upon the *praxis* of teachings and values. Confucianism in this way, at least in its beginnings, is not so much a religion as it is a teaching about how to live according to philosophical principles and reflections. As such, it sets forth initially little notion of deity worship. It is based upon life experience and observation of the natural world. In the Four Books the forcefulness of “conscious” existence appears to occur at the expense of the recognition and embrace psyche-soma movements such as *coniunctio*.

See also: [▶ Chinese Religions](#)

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Conscience

Kate M. Loewenthal

How has conscience been seen in religious traditions? How has it been understood by psychologists? What do we

know about the psychological processes involved in the links between religion and conscience?

Religious Views of Conscience

The divine “still, small voice” (I Kings 19, 12) has often been used to depict conscience, the spiritual inner voice offering and urging the morally and spiritually correct path for the individual. Conscience in traditional Western religion is a given part of human constitution, but one that may be drowned by bad habits, temptations, poor upbringing, bad examples, and lack of moral education and direction. Conscience is sometimes depicted the “good inclination,” arguing with the “evil inclination,” both striving for the attention and obedience of their owner (Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 1796/1973). Current writings on religious education are often informed and made complex by current psychological understandings of the nature of conscience, of moral growth and of philosophical issues (e.g., Astley and Francis, 1994).

Psychological Views of Conscience

There have been important psychological contributions to the understanding of conscience. This selective overview will mention the contributions of Freud, Erikson, Frankl, Kohlberg, and Gilligan. A more detailed discussion of conscience from the perspective of the psychology of religion may be found in Meadow and Kahoe (1984).

The controversy surrounding Freud’s views have masked the force and accuracy of some of his observations. He was one of few twentieth century psychological writers to give attention to conscience, an important topic otherwise widely overlooked. Freud (1924, 1940) suggested that young children experience specifically sexual feelings towards their opposite-sex parent. The wish to possess the parent is foiled by the knowledge that the parent is already owned, and by fear that the same-sex parent will seek jealous retribution on the child. This so-called Oedipal situation is resolved by the child’s identification with the same-sex parent. This gains the approval of both parents, and enables the child to gain vicarious possession of the opposite-sex parent. Aspects of this theory remain controversial, although few would argue with young children can experience intense need for control, intense attachment to their parents, or that intense positive and negative feelings can be experienced by young children and their parents. Freud’s account of girls’ development is particularly fraught with difficulty.

The key point however is that, however identification with the same-sex parent comes about, there is an internalization of the parent-figure which becomes the foundation of the G-d image. Parental attitudes are introjected, forming the basis of the super-ego, experienced as the conscience. This may have a strongly punitive character, and a distinction is sometimes made between the harsh, introjected super-ego, and the inspiring, internalized ego-ideal.

Frankl (1975) trained in Freudian psycho-analysis but developed a very distinctive variety of psychotherapy, sometimes known as existential therapy. In Frankl's view, the over-riding motive is the will to meaning. The guide in the search for meaning and purpose is the conscience, of transcendent origin, and the therapist's role is to support the client in their search for meaning, a search which is fundamentally spiritual (Wulff, 1997).

Like Frankl, Erikson (1950) was a European-trained psychoanalyst, who moved the USA and developed very distinctive ideas about the nature of psychological health and growth. Erikson was probably the most influential twentieth-century psychologist to give attention to *virtue*. He put forward an elaborate – and plausible – account of psychosocial development as continuing throughout the life-span, with virtues resulting from the successful negotiation of the challenges at different life stages. Potential psychopathology occurs if emerging capacities are not nurtured and supported. Erikson described eight stages in all, and it is during the third stage – from approximately ages two to five – that conscience and guilt make their appearance. As the understanding and use of language develop, along with the capability of independent action, the child may experience guilt as a consequence of adult reactions to aggressive and uncontrolled actions. Guilt may become destructive, resulting in inhibition and self-righteousness, or it may impel the child towards worthy ideals, constructive initiative and purposeful action.

We have seen that both Erikson and Frankl emphasized sense of purpose and focus on ideals as important functions of the healthy conscience. Both Freud and Erikson indicated the psychopathological functioning of the conscience whose development has been instilled too coercively or punitively. Finally, we have seen that Freud and Frankl see a close relationship (or identity) between the conscience and G-d.

We turn now to developmental theories of morality, considering Kohlberg (1976) as an exemplar. Kohlberg (1975) traced the development of moral thinking from the stage at which morality is bound by utilitarian considerations (what is good for the self), and then by prescribed rules, then through stages in which social welfare

and social justice are the highest considerations, to a stage (probably not widely attained) in which an autonomous, individualized morality is concerned with universal ethical principles. In this developmental scheme, an intrinsic conscience is a feature of the stage involving autonomous morality. Kohlberg suggested that women were less likely than men to attain the higher stages of moral development, being more bound by social welfare considerations. This view attracted a strong response from Gilligan (1982), who suggested that while men are concerned with justice, which is inflexible and abstract, women's primary ethical standard is care for others, which is flexible and context-sensitive. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) emphasized the importance for women of connected knowing, which is non-evaluative, whose motive is to understand another person in order to live together in harmony in spite of differences. These and other writers have directed attention to variations in the ways in which conscience and morality are governed, indicating the importance of gender, social factors, and cognitive development.

What, empirically, is known about the relations between conscience, religion, and psychological factors?

It is generally found that religiously-identified and religiously-affiliated people behave “better” than do others. This is consistent with the possibility that religious identification and affiliation promote knowledge of moral rules and the self-monitoring of behavior in accordance with these rules. So for example, religious people are less likely than other to engage in criminal behavior (Baier and Wright, 2001), and extra-marital sexual behavior and recreational drug use (Rostosky, Wilcox, Wright, Randall, 2004; Mattila, Apostolopoulos, Sonmez, Yu, and Sasidharan, 2001). Religious people are more likely than others to engage in charitable activity (Inaba and Loewenthal, 2009), and in deliberate moral practice and moral expertise (Rossano, 2008). The effects of religion are not always straightforward, for example the effects of religion may vary with gender (Rostofsky et al.) or with style of religiosity (Batson, 1976).

The effects of religion on moral behavior are broadly consistent, and we might ask whether this is because religious people have greater knowledge of moral rules, because religious people feel greater shame at the thought of wrongdoing, or religious people feel greater guilt.

Shame is normally defined as the result of social anxiety, the experience of others' knowledge that one has done wrong and/or is bad. Guilt is individualized moral anxiety, the experience of ones own knowledge that one has done wrong and/or is bad (Freud, 1926; Meadow and Kahoe, 1984). Work on religion in relation to guilt and shame suggests that guilt may

be higher among the religiously-active, though findings are mixed (Hood, 1992). Shame is not higher among the religiously-active compared to others (Luyten, Corveleyn and Fontaine, 1998). Maltby (2005) has shown a complex pattern of relationships between different styles of religiosity, and different types of guilt, for example intrinsic (“sincere”) religiosity may be linked to healthy guilt. These findings have been produced in western, generally Christian cultures, and we know little as yet about guilt, shame and religion in other cultural and religious contexts.

This overview has suggested three broad conclusions. One is that we may distinguish between two aspects of conscience: a harsh, introjected super-ego, and an internalized, encouraging and inspiring ego-ideal. Second, empirical work broadly supports the view that religion is generally associated with “better” and more moral behavior. Third, religion may generally promote guilt but not shame. The psychological processes involved in understanding the relations between religion and conscience deserve closer study, for example effects in different cultures and religious groups, the influence of religious role models, and the development of different styles of religiosity and their relations to conscience.

See also: [▶ Erikson, Erik](#) [▶ Existential Psychotherapy](#)
[▶ Frankl, Viktor](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#)

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Consciousness

F. X. Charet

Introduction

The term consciousness has acquired several meanings but it is generally associated with “the experience of awareness” though there is no consensus as to its cause(s) or extension. In the closing decades of the twentieth century the phenomenon of consciousness attracted a considerable amount of attention from persons working in a variety of areas but especially in the neurosciences and cognitive sciences. While various theories have since been advanced to account for the phenomenon of consciousness none have gained sufficient support to amount to more than proposals. The shared and seemingly reasonable assertion of the dependency of consciousness on

neurophysiological processes has largely held the day though even here there is a range of opinions and some concerns about the limitations of such an assumption. In view of the aforementioned, what the precise relationship is between everyday consciousness and what can broadly be termed religious or transpersonal remains unclear and offers a rich field for future exploration and research.

Historical Development

There is an earlier, cross-cultural and continuous history of reflecting on consciousness as well as various techniques and practices to bring about its alteration and extension that has been insufficiently explored and evaluated. These are largely to be found in the religious and spiritual traditions of the planet. In the modern west, the first systematic and rational examination of consciousness begins with the distinction, commonly associated with Descartes (1596–1650), between the physical and the mental. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for subsequent discussion and debate as to its legitimacy and this continues until today. Variations of mind/body dualism, psychophysical parallelism, immaterialism and materialism held sway among philosophers in Europe over the next century. An increasing inclination towards empiricism can be found in thinkers like Locke (1632–1704) who distinguished between outer sense and inner sense, the former having to do with the experience of things and the latter with the experience of the experience of things. Such ideas along with interests in making correlations between, and attempting to localize, mental processes in the brain laid the groundwork for an empirical psychology. Nevertheless, Kant (1724–1804) undercut such optimism by denying the possibility of an empirical psychology on the grounds that while the brain could be systematically studied, mental phenomena were subjective and therefore inaccessible to the scientific method. This distinction between objective and subjective is mirrored in contemporary discussions of the problematic relationship between third person (scientific) and first person (subjective) approaches to consciousness and the so-called “explanatory gap” that is a consequence (Shear, 2000; Velmans and Schneider, 2007).

Psychological Perspectives

Subsequent developments in the study of human physiology and especially the anatomy of the brain and nervous system led to an increasing emphasis on measuring and correlating physiological and mental processes, the latter increasingly perceived as being dependent on the former.

The outcome of this was the founding of a laboratory based, experimental psychology by Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) that William James (1842–1910) well understood but found so abhorrent. James’ own contribution was to widen the margins of an increasingly narrow physiologically based psychology to include the possibilities of a multifaceted approach to the study of consciousness, utilizing a number of methods and inclusive of transpersonal experiences as canvassed in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). His ambitious proposal for the exploration of consciousness was not implemented after his death and with the consolidation of experimental psychology and the emergence of the behavioral school in the following decades, consciousness was effectively removed from being a plausible focus of academic attention and research (Taylor, 1996).

Largely outside of academic psychology, a number of different but related developments occurred that would have significant consequences for an understanding of consciousness and especially consciousness beyond the margins of everyday experience. This took two forms: the investigation for purposes of treatment of various mental states that were determined to be mildly to severely pathological and the investigation of exceptional mental states that appeared to be non-pathological and of a parapsychological or transpersonal nature.

The first of these is exemplified by the psychoanalytic school associated with Freud (1856–1939) that led to a psychology that interpreted abnormal mental states as indicative of psychological dysfunction and illness and extended this to religious and transpersonal experiences. For the most part, Freud understood consciousness as biologically determined and the consequence of sense perception even if it functioned to mediate between the outer and inner world, the latter being largely unconscious and of a psychosexual nature. Any claims that attempted to legitimize religious belief or a more expansive consciousness were deemed evidence of regression to an earlier psychological state and indications of neurosis or a more serious psychotic condition. Psychoanalysis effectively eclipsed most other interpretive models of the psyche and psychodynamic processes and discouraged any views of consciousness as extending beyond the perceptual reality of the ego. Like behaviorism, its own ideological limitations prescribed its views on what constituted consciousness. Remarkably, psychoanalysis, once the dominant and seemingly unassailable technique and reigning theoretical force in psychotherapy, has since suffered what appears to be an irreversible decline in the mental health professions (Paris, 2005). Its status in the current debates about the cause, nature and purpose of consciousness appears to be correspondingly peripheral.

The second approach is to be found in the investigation of exceptional mental states that were deemed to be non-pathological and was undertaken by researchers associated with the Society for Psychical Research. F. W. H. Myers (1843–1901) can be taken as the chief representative of this group. His work is rich and suggestive in offering a way to accommodate a broad range of experiences of consciousness and, not least, his notion of “subliminal self,” a larger sphere of consciousness housed in the recesses of the personality that James considered potentially revolutionary for the understanding of consciousness beyond the margins of everyday (Gauld, 1968). The investigations and theoretical proposals about the nature of consciousness coming from this group were almost completely overshadowed, if not discredited, by the rise and dominance of psychoanalysis. More recently, with the decline of psychoanalysis and the emergence of an interest in a broader view of consciousness, Myers’ work has come under detailed reexamination, providing a theoretical framework for the possibility that though consciousness is correlated with, it is not necessarily entirely dependent on, neurophysiological processes (Kelley and Kelly, 2007).

Another related perspective should also be mentioned at this point and that is the one associated with C. G. Jung (1875–1961). While initially a colleague of Freud’s, both Jung’s formation and the range of his interests and originality of his ideas place him in an independent light. In many ways, he brings together the psychodynamic approach and a vision of consciousness that extends well beyond the personal and pathological. This is embodied in his conception of the psyche as a self-regulating system consisting of consciousness, the personal and the collective unconscious, and with a drive towards greater consciousness that Jung termed “the process of individuation.” The deeper archetypal structures of the unconscious and the relationship between psyche, spirit and matter that preoccupied Jung’s latter work is rich in insights and theoretical possibilities for an understanding of religious and transpersonal experience (Main, 1997). The significance of Jung’s psychology for the understanding of consciousness has been largely ignored in academic circles and hence yet to be adequately assessed. Along with James, he is one of formative influences in the emergence of Transpersonal Psychology (Cortright, 1997; Daniels, 2005).

Current Discussions

The so-called cognitive revolution in the neurosciences in the second half of the 20th century has sparked

considerable interest in the relationship between brain function, cognitive processes and the issue of the origin, nature, and purpose of consciousness. This interest has largely occurred among neuroscientists and persons working in the areas of cognitive science and philosophy of mind. The shared perspective of most working in these areas is rooted in the assumption that a scientific approach to the study of consciousness is the one best suited to attain dependable results. A second shared assumption that is widely acknowledged is that consciousness is dependent on and the outcome of as yet understood neurophysiological processes (Velmans and Schneider, 2007).

After decades of research, speculation and discussion it appears that the phenomenon of consciousness has not yielded to the various attempts to explain its cause(s) and purpose in scientifically acceptable terms. In fact, the extensive literature on consciousness indicates that for all the effort and theory making, it now appears that an exclusively scientific approach has so far fallen short of coming to terms with the “hard problem” of accounting for phenomenal experience and bridging the now famous “explanatory gap” between first-person and third-person approaches to consciousness. In other words, the determinedly third-person scientific approach in its bid for objectivity has not come up with a satisfactory explanation for what causes the subjective first-person experience of consciousness. This quandary has occupied much recent discussion but there is still optimism that a detailed correlation of third person observation and first person experiences, utilizing the sophisticated technologies of brain imaging and other techniques, will eventually lead to more dependable data upon which a theory could be built. Not all share this view. In fact serious questions have been raised about the need to reexamine some of the assumptions that inspire such optimism, such as the exclusive dependency of consciousness on neurophysiological processes, that are implicit in what has passed as the normative scientific approach to the phenomenon of consciousness (Kelly and Kelly, 2007). Moreover, it would seem to be reasonable, given that subjective experience is essential to consciousness, to consider exploring the neglected phenomenon of the experience of first-person consciousness, a by no means easy task (Varela and Shear, 1999).

To undertake to develop a rigorous methodology of first-person empiricism presents a considerable challenge, and not least because of the claim that objectivity and the conventional scientific method are the only means of attaining any degree of certitude. Yet, arguably, without first-person input, there is the risk of accomplishing little more than measuring ever more precisely the outside of

the fishbowl of consciousness. And while arguments have been made about the limitations of introspection for the attainment of insight, it is becoming increasingly clear there are traditions of disciplined introspective analysis, developed in various cultures over the ages that have attained a remarkable degree of understanding about the geography of the inner landscape of consciousness. These mental disciplines and contemplative practices could be of considerable value in exploring and excavating the inner world of consciousness (Shear, 2006). And in the contemporary West, techniques and approaches have emerged that have contributed to the mapping of the inner realm, such as Jungian and Transpersonal Psychology, both of which offer methods of disciplined introspection and analysis, largely ignored or dismissed by current neuroscience and those working in the philosophy of mind (Cortright, 1997; Daniels, 2005). If research into these techniques is pursued, in the course of time, a sufficient amount of accumulated experience and data could make a significant contribution to understanding the phenomena of consciousness and eventually lead to the bridging of the “explanatory gap” between third and first person consciousness (Lancaster, 2004).

Yet, admirable as this proposal is, it nevertheless still confers on science a position of authority and even sovereignty over the entire field of consciousness that begs for examination. The qualifications and even reservations that are worthy of consideration have to do with the degree to which the scientific model remains implicit in the proposal of supporting first-person empirical approaches in the study of consciousness. This ignores the fact that there are other, equally valid ways of knowing (Gadamer, 1989). Moreover, undue privileging of the first-person perspective and especially assimilating it to a scientific model may, once again, end with limiting knowledge and truth to the control of the scientific method. In the case of religious or transpersonal events, this has the unfortunate consequence of reducing the spiritual and transpersonal to personal experience, uncoupled from the context of the traditions and communities that nurture such experiences. The result is to make such events vulnerable either to turning into extravagant forms of isolated beliefs and practices or being subsumed by an exclusivist scientific understanding, both to the detriment of the wider culture. The upshot of this is to require that religious and transpersonal knowledge claims be deemed valid or falsified only if they can or cannot be evaluated and replicated through various forms of strictly controlled disciplined methods of introspection (Ferrer, 2002).

If such an approach claimed the high ground, it would be a further step in the direction of what has been called

“the empiricist colonization of spirituality,” something that many transpersonal theorists have been unknowingly working towards in spite of their intent and claim to do otherwise. There are other ways to include the spiritual into a transpersonal model of consciousness, and one is to follow the tracks of the religious traditions and cultures themselves that, after all, provide the sources and context for most of the spiritual experiences people have. Instead of the experiential and empirical approaches and their limitations, perhaps a participatory perspective that is inclusive and pluralistic and is expressed in personal, interrelational, communal, and place-based ways would be more adequate (Ferrer, 2002).

To conclude, it would seem that a multifaceted approach to the study of consciousness would have the value of freeing researchers from the hegemony of scientific empiricism, as well as providing a way to steer cautiously through the channel of first-person consciousness and transpersonal experiences. After navigating these areas, a foundation could then be laid for a multidisciplinary and even transdisciplinary perspective where a disciplined pluralism would pervade and all parts of the spectrum of consciousness would be given due consideration, including perspectives from other cultures and times, religions and spiritualities.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Self](#) [Transpersonal Psychology](#)

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Contemplative Prayer

Ann Moir-Bussy

Contemplative prayer, sometimes known as Centering Prayer, Meditation and Mindfulness has a long history of practice within both Western and Asian religious and metaphysical traditions. Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Hindu, Greek, Jewish and Islamic sources all have examples of varying forms and practices of contemplation. Contemplation is the focusing of the mind on a single theme, idea, or spiritual concept. Through contemplation what is focused on gradually reveals its depth and secrets to the mind of the meditator, who gradually becomes aware of the whole of which he or she is a part. Contemplation is about silence and stillness, about receptiveness, listening and love “Be still and acknowledge that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). In the Christian tradition the early Desert Fathers referred to HESYCHIA: stillness, quiet and tranquility, the purpose being to create a solitary place where one could still the mind and focus in love on God or on God’s word within. Contemplative Prayer is seen as a relationship with God. It is an opening of one’s mind and heart to the Ultimate mystery and goes beyond thoughts and emotions. It is in this receptive silence and listening that one finds contact or relationship with the Indwelling Trinity.

Mystical Traditions

Many of the mystical traditions use meditation or contemplation to reach transpersonal states of non-duality. Benedict, in the sixth century, developed a particular way of contemplating the scriptures – *lectio divina*. Eastern Orthodox practice used the Jesus Prayer for contemplation

and this is well described in *The Way of the Pilgrim*. John of the Cross also wrote extensively about the way of contemplation leading to divine union (see Arraj, 1986). From the Christian West many mystical writers emphasize the effect of the contemplative’s encounter with God as one in which the Spirit of God becomes one with the subject. Thomas Merton could be described as perhaps the most prominent Christian contemplative of the twentieth century and he classified Christian contemplation into three types. First from the teaching of the early Greek Fathers: active contemplation, natural contemplation and mystical theology or “infused” contemplation (Rothberg, 2000). Other authors who brought renewal of contemplative practices to modern times include M. Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating (Scotton et al., 1996).

Mindfulness

Both the Buddhist and Taoist traditions speak of mindfulness – a wakeful awareness or presence to both the internal and external workings of oneself, again for the purpose of opening one to an inner consciousness. Thich Nhat Hahn, a Buddhist, sees the purpose of mindfulness as the development of what he terms “interbeing” – being in touch will all aspects of one’s relationship to others and to the universe. This includes inner and outer relationships, a connectedness, in the present moment.

Individual and Awareness

Carl Jung’s psychological teaching about the stages of life has a direct relevance to Christian prayer. Jung’s focus on the symbolic life and the need to journey inwards with focus and attention to bring what is in the unconscious into consciousness is similar to the contemplative journey, Jung’s term for the God archetype in a person was the Self and the journey to individuation was a process of integrating all aspects of one’s person and being governed by the Self. For him it was also a reciprocal relationship. Edinger (1984) comments on Jung’s notion of Christ’s incarnation being a ‘continuing’ incarnation, and that “in psychological terms, the incarnation of God means individualization” (p. 84). In other words, the incarnation takes place within each individual. This process requires awareness of the trans-personal self within one’s psyche and then living as one with the self. This transformation can be achieved through contemplative prayer, mindfulness and meditation.

Psychological Effects

Cortwright (1997) summarises research that has been done on meditation used in psychotherapy as having five possible effects: relaxation and self-regulation strategies; uncovering repressed unconscious contents; revealing higher states; reciprocal inhibition and growth of new consciousness and transformation. While the focus in Christian contemplative prayer was not on these effects but more on a deeper knowledge of God, all contemplatives from the Desert Fathers through to modern day contemplatives experienced varying phases of the above. In striving for stillness and in listening to the Word within, they encountered many aspects of themselves both frightening and repulsive (unconscious contents), both conflict and struggles; they strove for self-emptiness of a nihilation of self (in Buddhist terms), till transformation was achieved. Psychotherapy can enhance spiritual practice and conversely a spiritual practice such as contemplative prayer and mindfulness can enhance one's psychological wellbeing. From a Freudian psychological perspective, contemplation is similar to the technique of free association in that the latter leads a person to a progressively deeper understanding of what is significant and meaningful (Cortwright, 1997). It leads, as noted above, to a greater unfolding of the self, an opening of intuition and creativity.

See also: ▶ Centering Prayer ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ John of the Cross ▶ Meditation ▶ Merton, Thomas

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Conversion

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

Conversions are dramatic turning points in life, tied to external or internal events (personality processes and traumatic events), and leading to the re-assessment of one's life, then to identity change, and then a biographical break with the past. It is higher self-esteem, or self-love, which allows us to define the new identity. During times of stress and crisis, as during times of individual distress, there is a regression to “artistic,” religious, or magical ways of thinking. When realistic coping fails, magical thinking takes over. When realistic coping seems to be failing or futile, individuals may turn to magical or religious ways of coping. When all hope is lost, these ways of coping do seem worthwhile.

Magical gestures that aim at reaching a conscious break with past and the shedding off of one's identity, include name changes, body changes, and “sex change.” These magical or symbolic gestures are not usually sufficient for a real metamorphosis in personality. A name change does not lead to personality change, and a new nose does not do it either. Even a “sex change” often fails to bring about happiness, and these intentional scripts often end in disappointment.

Testimonials of conversion tell us of a miraculous transformation, from darkness to a great light, from being lost to being found. There is a sharp contrast between earlier suffering and current improvements. The conversion narrative always includes a wide gap between the past and the present, between corruption and redemption. The power of transformation through enlightenment is proven through this gap. In many religious traditions pilgrimage, leading to conversion, is the magical route to achieving private salvation and healing.

Every religion tells us stories of miracles and transformations. For most people, they remain stories about events that happened long ago and far away. For others, they become part of their own personal history, which they are ready to share with us. These cases of rebirth should command our most serious attention, because what they represent are indeed immensely positive transformations, which are impossible under any other conditions. The lame do not start walking, and the blind do not enjoy the sweet light of day; these miracles do not often happen. But those who find themselves psychologically lame, self-destructive and desperate, sometimes emerge from darkness and belie everything that happened earlier in their lives.

In all conversion stories a past of doubt and error is transformed into a present of wholeness in one great moment of insight and certainty. This is a new birth, leading to a new life. And the new birth often follows reaching the lowest depths of despair, and consists of (in the words of William James) "... an unexpected life succeeding upon death... the deathlike terminating of certain mental processes... that run to failure, and in some individuals... eventuate in despair." And the new birth creates a wider belief in "... a world in which all is well, in spite of certain forms of death, indeed because of certain forms of death – death of hope, death of strength..." (James, 1902/1961).

Since William James, and even before, students of religion have looked closely at the phenomenon of conversion. First, because it is dramatic in the phenomenological sense. We have reports of "mystical states," visions, hallucinations, and voices. These may all be regarded as psychotic symptoms, but they are tied to even more dramatic events. The convert reports a cognitive illumination, a sudden apprehension, and a comprehension, of a divine plan for the cosmos and for individual destiny. The emotional reactions accompanying such a momentous revelation can then be easily justified and accepted. What the individual experiences is a true revolution.

The descriptions offered by James focuses on the subjective report of identity change and conscious mood change, which follows a narrative formula. It can be regarded as a literary or folklore genre, a miracle narrative so easily predictable, and so tend to doubt it. The convert's autobiography is divided into Before and After. Life until the moment of epiphany is described as wasted, a total mistake.

This formula is reminiscent of the death-rebirth idea, basic to initiation rites in tribal societies. Death and resurrection are claimed by the convert as his path to salvation, and his movement closer towards the sacred

realm. There is another level, beyond the dramatic subjective "experience": objective reports which indicate a change in behavior and functioning, a true miracle cure, putting previously uncontrollable drives under good control.

A small minority within the small minority of converts in this world (99.9% of believers follow their parents' teachings) consists of those whose conversion has been followed by dramatic changes for the better in their lives. How do we account for successful, stable, conversions, which we might think of as "overachieving." There are cases involving a real sea-change in actual behavior, as sinners become not always saints, but productive members of society, self-destructive behaviors are dropped, and a lifetime of failure and hate is changed into garden variety (or better) love and work.

In these cases the self-reported identity change is tied to a role change, a victory, maybe temporary, over pathology, subjectively viewed as a victory over destiny. Because many of the people undergoing transformation are deeply disturbed, even a temporary improvement, as it happens in many cases, is impressive.

The religious career of a seeker, or a convert, is a totally modern idea. In many cultures today, religious identity is still determined by kinship, and considered immutable, like "race". It is a matter of birth within a certain family. The idea of individual choice and voluntary change is in itself a relatively novel idea, tied to secularization and individualism.

Conversion experiences start with conversion dreams. Salvation stories appear in response to dreams of a new self, a new society, a new world. We have to approach the phenomenon of the religious imagination, and the inevitable collisions between religious fantasies and reality. The phenomenon of fantasies about self-transformation and world-transformation, which is so common among humans, plays a major role in the history of religious movements. An examination of salvation dreams should start with the individual search for security and wholeness and with the general idea of self-transformation.

Susan Sontag, in an interview on the BBC, on May 22, 2000 said that the American dream is to reinvent yourself, be born again, but this is not just an American idea, it is a universal modern dream, and possibly a universal human dream. The broadest frame of reference we can use is the common human phenomenon of attempts to escape and transcend destiny and identity. I include here any attempt to redefine biography and identity against "objective" conditions defining that identity. Such attempts at rebirth, at identity change through private salvation, may be quite common in certain historical situations.

We may speak about a private utopia, as collective utopias are less and less in vogue. Dreams and actual attempts at escape and rejuvenation should be examined on the basis of context, content, or consequences, and point to a whole range of possibilities. The fantasy of escaping one's destiny, the dream of identity change is all too human. So many people see their lives so far as a first draft. We all dream of being of becoming somebody else and something else, breaking with our destiny. This is the dream of private (and collective) salvation. More or less often we feel "I am stuck in this life situation but I should be somewhere else". Behind the explicit, outspoken fantasy of a new self or a new world lie unspoken processes, which always parallel to those on the surface.

The source of self-reported rebirth is found in internal, conscious and unconscious, conflicts. These conflicts are solved and a balance is reached through an attachment to a set of beliefs, specific ritual acts, changes in everyday behavior and functioning, and support by a group structure. The problem with psychological rebirth is its inherent instability. Real transformation is hard to come by. The illusion of rebirth may lead to good outcomes, but is often insufficient to maintain balance inside a personality system long beset by disharmonies and imbalances. This is clear when a variety of purely secular strategies, from psychotherapy to plastic surgery, are followed on the road to self-transformation.

Every successful case of individual rebirth is the result of an internal truce among opposing personality elements. One possible interpretation assumes that in conversion we see what is called a "super-ego victory". An internal conflict between the conscious ego-ideal and the unconscious, archaic, parental, introject is won by the latter. The child becomes more parental, and this often happens in post-adolescence, as the child grows older.

Another interpretation of successful conversion uses Freud's concept of moral masochism. According to classical psychoanalysis, the super-ego is formed as sadistic impulses directed at the parent are recoiled and internalized. Then the super-ego, parentally derived, commands self-effacement, if not self-sacrifice, as the punishment for aggressive fantasies. In moral masochism, the super-ego is satisfied through submission and humiliation. The outer peace and happiness observed in many converts is the result of this final peace between ego and super-ego, which releases all the energy that was put into the conflict for productive use. This may be the source of many positive, altruistic behaviors. The yearning for peace and wholeness is met by religion through the internal peace between super-ego and ego. At the conscious level this is experienced as acceptance by God or Jesus, forgiveness

and love, reported by converts ever since St. Augustine of Hippo. Freud suggested that what is achieved through super-ego victory is a reconciliation with one's father and with all paternal authorities, including father gods. We forgive our parents and are forgiven by them in turn. Of course, this happens in fantasy, and we are not talking of real fathers but imagined ones, consciously and unconsciously.

Another possible explanation is that the convert has gone through the internalizing of a loved and loving imaginary object, which then supports the whole personality system. This internalized object may serve as a new super-ego, supplying the ego with a control system, which has been missing, and making possible a real control of destructive impulses. A similar process may take place in secular psychotherapy. Early infancy splitting of the mother into good/bad object operates in converts who reach a state of complete euphoria, denying negative impulses and negative realities, which are bound to resurface nevertheless.

But at another level, a psychological analysis may direct us to noting that cases of rebirth actually represent a way of expressing hostility towards one's parents. In terms of individual and family dynamics, every identity change is a rebellion against one's parents, who usually created the earlier identity, and against one's past. When a young individual, who grew up in the average family, joins a new religion, he is declaring a revolt against his parents. He may rebel also through finding a new, better parent in his secular psychotherapist, and psychotherapists are always better parents. The message of a child's conversion is often one of denouncing parental hypocrisy and shallowness. On a collective, generational level, finding new identities is a total ideological rebellion. The new religious identities constitute in many cases a rejection of the faith of the parents, and of the parents' everyday lifestyle. At the same time, the rebellion against the parents may also mean the assumption of the parental role.

What should we make of all these different and sometimes contradictory speculations? Only the realization that in cases of true self-transcendence, something important and far-reaching must be going on beneath the surface. The process is one of accepting authority, loving authority, or internalizing a loving and supportive, (but still demanding) authority. What happens in these conversion miracles is an experience of love, both giving and receiving of love. On a conscious level, this is the unconditional (or maybe conditional) love of God, and St. Augustine has already reported on that. On an unconscious level, it is the unconditional love of a father, a mother, or a total parental image.

See also: [➤ Freud, Sigmund](#) [➤ James, William](#) [➤ New Religions](#)

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Conversion (Islam)

Ali Kose

Islam makes a distinction between conversion to Islam and conversion from Islam. The former is called *ihtida* or *hidayah* (divine guidance), whereas the latter is *irtidad* (apostasy) (Watt, 1980: 722). Islam introduced the concept of *din al-fitrah* (innate religion) to express that everyone is endowed at birth with a natural ability to know God. The Qur'an states that every soul before creation was asked the question by God "Am I not your Lord?" and the souls answered "Yes!" to it. Thus, Muslims consider all children as Muslims until they reach puberty. The tradition of the Prophet puts that "children are born possessing the *fitrah*, and it is their parents who turn them into Jews, Christians or Muslims" (Faruqi, 1979: 92). Therefore, by converting to Islam one turns to the religion which is already present in him by nature. It is for this reason that some converts to Islam prefer the word revert to convert (Kose, 1996: 101). In Christianity one cannot have a conversion experience unless the Will of God is involved (John 6: 44). In Islam, likewise, the act of conversion is attributed to the Will of God (Qur'an 10: 100).

How to Become a Muslim

There is no specific procedure or ritual for joining Islam. The only condition for the person who converts is to

declare, usually in presence of two witnesses, the *shahadah*: "I bear witness that there is no God but God (Allah) Himself, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger." Anyone who says this credo is considered to be a Muslim. However, one is recommended to undergo the greater ablution (*ghusl*) to purify the body symbolically of the earlier ignorance or disbelief. The new Muslim is supposed to believe in such basic creeds of Islam as the accountability in the afterlife and all Prophets (Qur'an 2: 136), and also commit himself/herself to keeping the five pillars of Islam (praying, fasting, giving alms, etc) as well as abstaining from alcohol, pork, and adultery.

It is believed that one's sins, upon embracing Islam, are forgiven by Allah and having the purification of the greater ablution signifies this belief. On embracing Islam one may or may not select a Muslim name unless his present name has an un-Islamic trait. Circumcision is not obligatory upon adult (male) converts. The act of conversion to Islam should be voluntary, conscious, and out of free choice, relating to what the Prophet said: "declaration by tongue and affirmation by heart." There is nothing to prevent a person from becoming a Muslim; no conditions are imposed, none is debarred for Islam considers itself a universal religion.

A Muslim man has the right to marry a Christian or a Jewish woman (Qur'an 5: 5). A Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian or a Jewish man according to Islamic jurisprudence though there is not a Qur'anic prohibition. It is forbidden for a Muslim man or woman to marry someone who does not believe in God or an idolater or polytheist (Qur'an 2: 221).

The Propagation of Islam

Great religions of the world may be divided into missionary and non-missionary based on the definition that in missionary religions the spreading of the truth and the conversion of unbelievers is considered to be a sacred duty by their founders or scriptures. Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam may be classified as missionary while Judaism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism fall into the category of non-missionary (Arnold, 1913: 1).

The propagation of Islam is called *tabligh* or *dawah* (literally means call or invitation). Both words are used in various verses in the Qur'an. *Tabligh* means to make available to non-Muslims the message of Islam. The Qur'an (16: 125) commands the Muslim to enable others to share and benefit from the religious truth. The word *dawah* is used in the sense of the religious outreach or mission to exhort people to embrace Islam as the true

religion. *Dawah* also covers the mission directed at fellow believers (Denny, 1987: 244). The primary aim of *dawah*, if directed to the Muslims, is to remind them of the teachings of Islam. In the case of the non-Muslims, the objective is to enlighten them about Islam. However, Islam does not have an institutionalized form of missionary work if missionary means the deliberate activity or to send representatives to win converts. Islamic mission is regarded being a duty of every Muslim rather than being an option. Thus, Muslims are charged with the responsibility of being the model of right conduct for all mankind. The absence of clerical order imposes on every Muslim the obligation to understand the message of his/her religion and to convey by precept and example to non-Muslims who inquire about Islam (Qur'an 16: 125). It is the Muslim's responsibility to pave the way to reconcile non-Muslims to Islam. For example, The Qur'an (9: 60) demands Muslims to render the legal alms (*zakah*), levied on every Muslim who is wealthy to the people whose hearts have been recently reconciled, namely converts or potential converts, among others (Hamidullah, 1979: 155).

However, Islam has made it explicitly clear that the diversity of ideologies and creeds is natural to mankind. The Qur'an (2: 256) states clearly that there is no compulsion in religion. Many Muslims today believe that the age of proselytization is gone and Islam, being a fairly well-known faith, needs no active mission to attract converts. To them, the stability of Muslim family life, the absence of drinks, drugs, etc., and the overall discipline of Muslims, in particular those who live in the West will itself send powerful signals to non-Muslims. Studies reveal that converts to Islam enter into the fold of Islam by various means and for a variety of reasons. Some accept it after studying it for a long time, and some enter it in order to be able to marry a Muslim or after marrying a Muslim. Many converts recount that their conversion was the result of the positive example of Muslims. Thus, both intellectual and emotional motifs play a great part in conversions to Islam, especially in western context (Poston, 1992; Kose, 1996).

See also: [Circumcision](#) [Islam](#) [Ritual](#) [Sharia](#) [Sin](#) [Qur'an](#)

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Cosmic Egg

David A. Leeming

Cosmic Egg in Creation

The cosmic egg motif is a major symbol in creation myths, occurring in all parts of the world.

Ancient Egyptians saw the cosmic egg as the soul of the primeval waters out of which creation arose. In one story the sun god emerged from the primeval mound, itself a version of the cosmic egg resting in the original sea.

One Chinese creation myth describes a huge primordial egg containing the primal being, the giant Pangu. The egg broke and Pangu then separated chaos into the many opposites of the *yin* and the *yang*, that is, into creation itself.

The Satapatha *Brahmana* of India contains the story of the desire of the original maternal waters' desire to reproduce. Through a series of prolonged rituals, the waters became so hot that they gave birth to a golden egg. Eventually, after about the time it takes for a woman or a cow to give birth, the creator, Prajapati, emerged from the egg and creation took place.

The Pelasgians of ancient Greece explained that it was the original being – the goddess Eurynome (a version of the Greek Gaia) – who laid the world egg and ordered the cosmic snake Ophion to encircle it until it hatched the world itself.

The later Orphic cult in Greece preached that in the beginning there was a silver cosmic egg, created by Time that hatched the androgynous being who contained the seeds of creation.

In Africa a Dogon myth says that in the beginning, a world egg divided into two birth sacs, containing sets of twins fathered by the creator god, Amma, on the maternal

egg. Some say that Amma was the cosmic egg and fertilized himself.

The Polynesian Tahitians have a myth in which the god Taaroa began existence in an egg and eventually broke out to make part of the egg the sky. Taaroa, himself, became the earth.

The practitioners of the Bon religion in Tibet sing of three cosmic eggs, which led to creation.

As an object prone to fertilization, the egg is an appropriate symbol and metaphor for the idea of potentiality. It is pre-creation chaos waiting to become cosmos. In psychological terms it is the pre-consciousness of the given culture – the collective being waiting to be made conscious of itself. To quote psychologist Marie Louise von Franz, “we can easily recognize in it the motif of preconscious totality. It is psychic wholeness conceived as the thing which came before the rise of ego consciousness, or any kind of dividing consciousness” (von Franz, 1972: 229). In short, the egg is a symbol of pre-differentiation, differentiation being the essence of the creation of anything. The egg contains within itself male and female, light and dark, all opposites in a state of union. It is perfect entropy and signals the existence of creative power from the very beginning. By extension, the cosmic egg is a symbol of the individual’s pre-conscious state before the process of individuation allows for the hatching of Self.

See also: [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Primordial Waters](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Creation

Rod Blackhirst

In a religious context the word “creation” refers to the cosmogonic moment or cosmogonic process or else, as a

noun, to the manifest world. In modern terminology we might speak of the former as the formation of the world or universe (usually in scientific terms from the “Big Bang” or some similar cosmic event) and the latter as the “environment.” In pre-scientific worldviews it was usual to hold that life, humankind, the Earth and the heavens were created in their original form by the action of a deity or deities, and the world at large was referred to as “the Creation,” the product of that Divine act.

The modern scientific worldview, and especially the theory of evolution, has undermined the simplest versions of these traditional beliefs, but religious people still understand the origins of the world and humanity in mythic terms, often along with rather than as antithetical to the scientific worldview. However, among some people these matters are still controversial and they insist upon a literal understanding of religious creation myths along with the outright denial of scientific theories. This view is usually styled “creationism.” Conversely, believers in the scientific accounts of the origins of man and the universe often regard these as a conclusive refutation of traditional religion and the existence of God. This controversy has been especially acute in the United States where proponents of creationism have challenged the teaching of evolution as an unquestioned truth in schools. Such proponents are usually guided by a literal reading of the account of the creation of the world in the Bible’s Book of Genesis.

Leaving aside literalist creationism, traditional religious and spiritual cultures use myths and symbols to explain the great mysteries of life. Mythic and symbolic accounts of creation abound. The creation may be a deliberate act by the gods or it may be the result of an accident or miscalculation. It may occur in stages, as in the Genesis account of creation over 6 days, or it may take place in a single act, as in the Islamic account where God (Allah) merely makes a decree (kun = the verb “to be”) and it comes to pass. The creation may stem from nothing (creatio ex nihilo) or it may be presented as order being brought to pre-existing, chaotic materials. It may be regarded as a gratuitous act by the Divine in which case the creation is said to be utterly other than the deity or it may be regarded as an act of Divine self-disclosure or self-externalization (emanationism). Very often in mythological forms found throughout the world the creation is the result of a sexual, generative act such as the copulation of a Sky-god with an Earth-mother or sometimes by an autoerotic (masturbatory) act by a single deity or else instantaneous parthenogenesis. In other cases analogies are taken from the animal realm, such as the primordial “World Egg” of the Orphic cults of ancient Greece. In some traditions a primordial god

vomits up the creation or it results from some other bodily elimination.

In more philosophical cosmogonies the root of creation might be sound or it might be light, it might be auditory or it might be visual. In the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist religions the creation extends from the sacred, primordial syllable AUM (Om) which, like a seed, contains all things within it. Similarly, in Christianity, the Gospel of John proposes that “in the beginning was the (Divine) Word.” Alternatively, in many myths, there is first darkness and the creation comes about when a light (or fire) is kindled in the darkness, the darkness is dispelled and the forms of the world appear. The idea that light is the creative stuff of the cosmos is very ancient.

There are, in any case, countless variations and often diverse accounts within the same tradition. In the ancient Egyptian tradition, for instance, there were numerous creation myths existing side by side and it would be wrong to suppose that the Egyptians favored any one more than the others; each reveal different understandings that are complementary to each other and present different aspects of a total theology. Even in the Bible’s Book of Genesis textual scholars identify two accounts of creation taken from two earlier sources. In fact, the familiar account of creation over 6 days with which the Book of Genesis begins (called the Priestly account) is the latter of the two. The older account, now embedded in the second chapter of Genesis, is the story of the creation of the garden of Eden and of Adam and Eve. Some reckon the story of the Flood as another type of creation myth taken from Mesopotamian sources now found woven into the Biblical narrative. Many creation myths have water as the creative element; life and the world emerge out of the creative waters. According to some interpretations such myths are related to human genesis from the waters of the womb. More generally, many creation myths depend upon parallels between human and cosmic birth.

Commonly, in many traditions, the deity who creates the world is presented as a lesser deity or a lesser aspect of the Supreme and transcendent deity, in which case he is usually called the “demiurge,” a divine craftsman who crafts the world from raw materials according to a celestial model. In dualistic systems this demiurge is often portrayed as evil since he brings into being the world of suffering and decay. In more positive accounts, he is said to be perfectly generous and the creation is a result of his overflowing generosity and beautiful handiwork.

In psychological terms, the point of creation represents the moment of ultimate potential and unlimited creativity. There are some modes of therapy – such as Arthur Janov’s “primal therapy” – that propose a

psychological return to the moment of birth, or even conception. In the arts, artists will often seek an experience in which they feel connected to the moment of cosmic creation. A famous instance of this can be found in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s celebrated visionary poem Kubla Khan where the poet – under the influence of opium – is transported to a “fountain of creation” that is the source of creativity.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Genesis](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Om](#)

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Criminology

Jessica Van Denend

Criminology is the state of “being” a criminal, a designation generally accompanied by social stigma. A criminal is someone who commits a crime, or in other words, breaks or fails to comply with a law or rule. Implicitly then, is the presence of a governing authority dictating law and enacting punishment for failure to adhere to it. The word crime originates from the Latin root *cernō* and Greek κρινω = “I judge.”

How social criminality relates to breaches of divine law or covenant – sin in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or *pāpa* in Buddhism and Hinduism – has been complicated and contentious through the centuries. Roman Catholic canon, Puritan moral law, Islamic sharia, and Jewish halakah are examples of religious legal systems which claim absolute and all-encompassing jurisdiction over their adherents, and yet must still navigate with political power structures and power-sharing with people from other or no faith. One has only to look as far as contemporary politics

in the United States to see the line of demarcation between civil and moral law, debatably able to be held as an abstraction, grow complicated and even become erased in practical application as pathology, moral wrongdoing, and criminal activity become blurred: legal prohibitions against alcohol-consumption, miscegenation, and homosexuality, being some historical and not-so-historical examples. Depth psychology complicates the matter even further, undermining the simplicity of legal and moral judgments by raising the possibility of motivations and impulses for criminal activity that lie outside the conscious self. What is one's culpability or moral responsibility for actions that result from forces outside one's conscious control, outside one's, in religious terms, free will? Despite his wisdom and incredible intellect, it was not his own decision making but a bigger fate – announced through a prophecy given by the Oracle at Delphi – that eventually dictated Oedipus's path and led to his tragic crimes.

A lot of energy has been put forth in psychological studies towards a new definition of criminality that incorporates the unconscious; the criminal and his/her unconscious has become a fascinating object of study. All of these accounts must stake their place within the nexus of biological, psychological, and sociological factors. Cesare Lombroso, a fin de siècle criminologist, thought criminality could be detected as biological degeneracy, which would appear in particular physiognomic features. Others were more inclined to see criminality as housed within psychic reality. It was this view that made Wilhelm Stekel optimistic that criminality could be cured or even eradicated through psychoanalysis, stating, "Perhaps this change of the social order will go so far that in times to come criminals will be analyzed instead of being punished; thus the ideal of a world without a prison does not appear as impossible to us as it did to a former generation" (1933).

Freud gave the famous and still clinically utilized depiction of the "pale criminal," who commits crime out of an unconscious sense of guilt that expresses itself as a "need for punishment" (1916, see also Reik (1925) and Fenichel (1928)). Anna Freud discusses criminality that results from defused aggression (1972), while others (Alexander and Staub, 1956; Bromberg, 1948; Stekel and London, 1933) will talk about criminality as the opposite end on the scale as a neurosis – a too-lenient superego that cannot control criminal tendencies from the id. Melanie Klein will directly contradict this: rather than weak or non-existent, she says, the criminal's super-ego is overly strict, which causes the criminal to feel persecuted and seek to destroy others (1988/1934). Another tendency is to place criminality in an earlier, infantile stage of psychic development, whether in pre-oedipal rather than oedipal processing of guilt (Klein, 1988/1927), a pre-genital

narcissism that is guided by wants and entitlement (Murphy, 1967), or a fixation in the anal-sadistic stage (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978; Simmel, 1920). Others, including Simmel, Westwick, and White add an increased emphasis on the impact of physical and social environments, making room for an understanding of criminality as social protest. D. W. Winnicott links the criminal back to the deprived child, who once had and then lost something good-enough from the environment (1984, 1987). Object-relations school will look at criminality in terms of the nexus of family and social relationships (Buckley, 1985; L'Abate and Baggett, 1997). Criminal acts have been speculated to as both transitional phenomena that attempt to create communication and dependency, (Domash and Balter, 1979) and as a impasse-creating defense against emotional contact and relationship (Ferro). According to Lacan (1966) the criminal is one who mistakes the symbolic for the real. Lastly, new understandings of shame (Gilligan, 2003) and of trauma have also fed into criminological studies and a more complex understanding of how victims become victimizers; Sue Grand discusses the "catastrophic loneliness" caused by "malignant trauma" that perpetuates evil (2000). A tangential piece of these studies has been the evolving studies on the criminality of women – back in interest these days in the US due to rapidly increasing rates of female incarceration.

Analysis

These studies, while useful towards increasing understanding and implementation of the knowledge of the unconscious, are at their weakest when they profess a definitive characterization of the criminal; taken in their entirety it seems obvious that the question of what we do with the bad in ourselves and how we contain or act on urges to hurt others are as unique and individual as (and connected to) Freud's Oedipal gateway or Jung's process of individuation. What is not unique, depth psychology and religion suggest, is that they are present. The earliest founding story of the Abrahamic traditions, that of the fall from the Garden of Eden, although interpreted differently by different traditions, is based in the concept of a primal crime, inherited by all people. (Freud too, in *Totem and Taboo*, narrates a creation myth in this vein). According to most interpretations of these stories, who we are as people is born out of a criminal act, and in effect, in religious terms, our "fallenness," as well as the potential for further criminality, lies in every one of us. In the words of Ferenczi: "I must look for the cause of my own repressed criminality. To some extent I admire the man who dares

to do the things I deny to myself” (qtd. by Costello, 2002) Or Dostoevsky: “Nobody in the world can be the judge of the criminal before he has realized that he himself is as much a criminal as the one who confronts him” (1957). Or Jesus: “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?” (Luke 6:41–42, NRSV).

Seeing the criminal as an object of study, then, has the potential to reify him/her as a subjective other, separate and quantitatively different from the investigator. It is important to ask what function morality is serving, who is doing the judging, and when do those human authorities benefit from remaining unquestioned or invisible or equated with the divine. Also, there is further thought to be done on the process of transformation from crime (action) to criminal (person) – when actions designated as “good” or “bad” designate people as inherently “good” or “bad.” DeGrazia writes that society has a stake in maintaining the clear split between “good” and “bad,” arguing that we need the preservation of order and of our ability to make decisions based on knowing who is bad and who is good (1952). Perhaps, yet we cannot pretend that we live in world without principalities and powers. William A. White writes that “the criminal becomes the scapegoat upon which [man] can transfer his own tendency to sinfulness and thus by punishing the criminal be deludes himself into feeling a religious righteous indignation” (1966, see also Menninger on the desire for vengeance). Neil Altman lists criminality, along with exploitation, greed, unrestrained sexual passion as displaced by white people on to persons of color.

Lastly, studies focusing solely on the individual criminal can have the unhelpful consequence of obscuring the equally if not more relevant criminality of groups, societies, and nations. Jerome Miller criticizes psychologists and other social scientists for their complacency towards an emphasis on individual pathology, being willing to provide “the labels necessary to proceed with the most punitive recommendations available” (2001). Even some laws may in fact be criminal, as advocates against segregation, apartheid, systems of colonialism would historically attest, and as opponents of, for example, the Rockefeller Drug Laws in New York State would argue today.

Religion must answer to Freud’s criticism of it as an agent of moral repression; it must decide how much of its function is indeed in reinforcing prohibitions or how much it also has a stake in providing a new space with which to evaluate the power structures, a separate authority that may trump improper usage of power and inequitable power structures. Historically, it has been the mechanism by which good and bad are kept far apart,

and inequities are maintained, as well as the voice of conscience that, for example, led a few pastors to resist Nazi power, even by becoming criminals. Perhaps there is something to be said for breaking the rules. Jung took issue with religion aligning itself too much with the “good.” Freud (1910) criticizes him for suffering from the “vice of virtue.” He writes, “One must become a bad character, disregard the rules, sacrifice oneself, betray, behave like an artist who buys paints with his wife’s household money or burns the furniture to heat the studio for his model. Without such a bit of criminality there is no real achievement.”

See also: [Evil](#) [Original Sin](#) [Sin](#) [Taboo](#)

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Crucifixion

Krystyna Sanderson

Crucifixion (from Latin *crux*, cross) is a method of execution in which the condemned is tied or nailed to a cross, pole or tree and left to hang until dead. It was employed in ancient Rome until Christianity became the state religion

in the fourth century, and has been used, less commonly, in various places around the world to the present day.

Christ's crucifixion is described in all four gospels, and is pivotal to the Christian understanding of redemption. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). In Christian faith, Christ overcame sin and death on the cross; hence the cross becomes for Christians the symbol of life and hope.

Psychologically understood, crucifixion can be seen as the acceptance of personal suffering and the consequent realization of one's own individuation, when the ego becomes a part of the self. When Jesus on the cross cries out in the words of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he portrays, in psychological terms, a crucial phase of individuation. Jung wrote, "Since 'the soul is by nature Christian' this result is bound to come as infallibly as it did in the life of Jesus: we all have to be 'crucified with Christ,' i.e., suspended in a moral suffering equivalent to crucifixion" (Jung, 1953).

See also: [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Individuation](#) [Jesus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Cultural Psychology

Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska

Cultural psychology represents a middle stage of psychological reflection between cross-cultural and indigenous psychology. All of them to various degrees take into account the fact that the cultural context in which an individual operates makes a difference for their perception of the surrounding world.

Migration and Acculturation Strategies

The cultural diversity of the world represents an obvious fact for any observer. This fact becomes even more salient

when people of different backgrounds meet through both voluntary and involuntary migration. Migration implicates acculturation changes that result from the fact that people of different cultural background come into face to face contact. These changes pertain to both groups. Different theoretical approaches stress the fact that cultural groups involved in acculturation might display different level of agency, as well as the fact that the acculturation process might be unidirectional or bidirectional (Sam, 2006; Rudmin, 2003). They are four general strategies of acculturation: *assimilation* when individuals adopt a new culture and simultaneously abandon the original cultural identity; *integration* when individuals opt for maintaining the original culture and also adopting the new culture at the same time; *separation* when individuals maintain the original culture without seeking contacts with the new culture; and *marginalization* when no contact with the original culture is maintained and when contact with the new culture is possible. No matter what acculturation strategy is selected or possible, individuals involved in the process experience both shared similarities and marked differences between themselves and others.

Reasons of Bias in Academic Psychology

In spite of this reality psychology as an academic discipline is mostly pursued from one specific perspective i.e., that of western scholars. Such a situation leads inevitably to ethnocentric attitude towards encountered diversity. The concept *ethnocentric* has been introduced by William G. Sumner in 1906 (Berry et al., 2002). It describes the tendency for using norms of one's own group as the model for perceiving other groups. The behavior of others gets evaluated and judged via one's own system of standards for what is deemed correct and proper. The assumption is supported by what is sometimes referred to as the principle of "psychic unity" of humankind i.e., the conviction that there is a central processing mechanism inherent in all human beings and therefore that perceived diversity between people is inconsequential. The central processor remains context and content independent. Such a perception of human nature is supported by the reality of who and where the majority of psychological research takes place.

A recent content analysis study of the "*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*," has clearly pointed to the fact that 99% of the articles were written in the West, with 92% of the articles coming from the United States and Canada (Quinones-Vidal, Lopez-Garcia,

Peneranda-Ortega and Tortosa-Gil, 2004). Theories, data, and research methods are also rooted in Western tradition. One might say that research is conducted on samples drawn from a population which is nontypical for the majority of the world's population, or even more so it can be considered as anomalous because of the differences related to wealth, individualism, and secularism. Analysis of articles in leading psychological journals in the 1994–2002 period in which culture appears as one of the key-words demonstrates that in journals devoted to experimental and cognitive psychology this is the case for 1, 2% of the articles, in journals for clinical psychology 4, 3%, for developmental psychology —4, 3%, and in journals for social psychology 4, 8% (Norenzayan and Heine 2005).

Psychologists became concerned about the underestimated role of culture in their discipline in the 1960s. Concept of culture "usually refers to a particular group of people and includes their values, or guiding principles, and behaviors, or typical activities. Those values and behaviors are symbolized in the things that the group of people produces, such as art, music, food, and language. All those things are passed down from generation to generation" (Mio, Barker-Hackett and Tumambing, 2006: 6).

Approach from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Psychology

The beginning of a new field of psychology, cross-cultural psychology, which started to take seriously the cultural diversity of humanity, can be linked to the first journals in the field: *The International Journal of Psychology* in 1966 in Paris, and *The Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* in 1970 in United States. The main questions raised by psychologists representing this field pertain to the problem of to what degree western psychological theories describe accurately experiences and behaviors of people who are born and raised in other cultures, and whether there are any culture-specific psychological constructs.

Cross-cultural psychology conducts research on the similarities and differences of people coming from different cultural and ethno-cultural groups. It also analyses relationships between psychological, sociocultural, and biological factors, as well as changes in these factors (Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen, 2002). Research conducted from the perspective of cross-cultural psychology is comparative. It is conducted in two or more national, ethnic, or cultural groups. Differences found in these groups are explained by cultural characteristics of the groups. Cross-cultural psychology uses two kinds of

concepts: *etic* (universal) and *emic* (local). *Etic* represents concepts which are universal in all cultures (all cultures have some kind of language, art, family structure, mythology, rituals) while *emic* represents elements which are unique to a given culture. For cross – cultural psychologists culture serves as an explanatory tool for encountered differences. A major concern of cross-cultural psychology is to find research methods that allow for the “psychic unity” of humanity to be revealed in spite of cultural differences between people living in different contexts. Lots of efforts are placed in finding test materials and research tasks that can be used across cultures.

Approach from the Perspective of Cultural Psychology

Cultural psychology represents an attempt to take culture more deeply into account. In contrast to cross-cultural psychology it does not presume the premise of “psychic unity” that to some extent permeates approaches of cross-cultural psychology. According to Richard A. Shweder: “Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotions” (1991, p. 1). For cultural psychology humans are constructing meanings in a socio-cultural environment. This environment becomes an intentional world. Objects existing in the world are receiving meaning through human involvement with them and reactions to them by members of given culture. “Cultural psychology is a study of intentional worlds. It is a study of personal functioning in particular intentional worlds” (Shweder, 1991, p. 3) An individual can be understood correctly only in the surrounding of her environments. The role of the psychologist is to discover both the meaning which gets attributed by an individual to her environment and the influence of this environment on the individual. What cultural psychology shares with its predecessor cross-cultural psychology is the fact that the majority of the research has been conducted by western scholars, applying western-based psychological concepts and theories assuming a universal character (Gregg, 2005).

Approach from the Perspective of Indigenous Psychology

Criticism of universality in psychological theories came from psychologists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and

the Middle East, who had been trained in the West. Upon returning to their countries of origin they faced problems and numerous difficulties when attempting to apply supposedly universal theories in their home setting. These difficulties have stimulated a desire to create more adequate means and methods based on the understanding “that each culture should be understood from its own frame of reference, including its own ecological, historical, philosophical, and religious context” (Kim, Yang and Hwang, 2006: 5). A review of various definitions of indigenous psychology points to the fact that... “the definitions all express the same basic goal of developing scientific knowledge system that effectively reflects, describes, explains, or understands the psychological and behavioral activities in their native contexts in terms of culturally relevant frame of reference and culturally derived categories and theories” (Yang, 2000: 245–246). Indigenous psychology advocates a descriptive approach according to which it is necessary to first understand how people function in their natural context. The need for such an approach comes from the fact that some of the cultural facts present in a specific cultural context cannot be understood correctly unless analyzed from the perspective of that cultural context. An example of massive decline of church attendance of Polish immigrants after their arrival to Great Britain (statistics provided by the Polish Catholic Mission in Great Britain claim that only 8% of Polish immigrants practice their religion while in Britain, with the remaining 92% loosening their ties with Catholicism) cannot be correctly understood without analyzing the cultural differences in which religious practices are taking place in Poland and in the United Kingdom. The important aspects here of being in a new cultural context are: multiculturalism and religious heterogeneity in Britain as contrasted with cultural and religious homogeneity in Poland; flexible and private patterns of religious practice amongst the native British population in contrast to the strong pressure in Poland to attend religious services because of a feeling of national identity based on religious affiliation (Poles-Catholic) and boredom and lack of understanding for Poles when experiencing English-language church services in Britain, instead of services conducted in the mother tongue in Poland. In conclusion, for both research on and psychological clinical services that address human religiosity taking place in different contexts, both cultural psychology and indigenous psychology seem to offer a much more promising ground than cross-cultural psychology.

See also: [➤ Migration and Religion](#) [➤ Religious Coping](#) [➤ Ritual](#) [➤ Syncretism](#)

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Culture Heroes

David A. Leeming

Most cultures have culture heroes. Typically, the culture hero assists the creator by living with the newly created humans in the world and teaching them religious rules and ceremonies and ways of survival. In short, the culture hero, unlike the warrior hero or the questing hero, establishes the community's institutions and traditions; he literally establishes "culture." This is not to say that the culture hero cannot also become a warrior or a questor. The culture hero sometimes takes the side of the people

against the creator. In the interest of his people and their survival he can, for instance, steal fire, as Prometheus does from Zeus. Or he can be a trickster who sometimes introduces unpleasant aspects of human life. Coyote, in a Maidu Indian myth, brings death. In matrilineal cultures the culture hero can be female, as in the case of the sisters "Life-Bringer" and "Full Basket," who teach the Acoma Indians how to live.

Often the culture hero's powers can be attributed to divine origins. He can be conceived miraculously through divine intervention in the human world. This is the case with Jesus and the Buddha, both in a sense culture heroes, as they teach the people new ways of survival, albeit spiritual rather than material survival. Culture heroes make their societies safe by struggling against monsters and can even die for their people, sometimes transforming themselves into food that will ensure survival, as in the case of Jesus, who becomes spiritual food, or the many Native American versions of Corn Mother or Father, who become sustenance for the body.

The culture hero, then, nurtures the given culture and, metaphorically, *is* the culture, the ultimate embodiment of what the culture is. It is this fact that leads to the psychological meaning of the culture hero. The culture hero embodies the very soul of a culture. He represents much more than the Ego, the central reference point of the collective consciousness of the culture. Rather, he is the embodiment of the culture's Self, i.e., the collective totality of the culture's unconscious and conscious psyches, fighting the monsters that live within us all and establishing the balance and reason we need to survive in the world. To give an example, Carl Jung wrote of the Christ as the symbol of Self, and insofar as Jesus can be seen as a culture hero he becomes for Christians the Self, the wholeness which individuals and the culture as a whole strive to discover within. The same could be said of Muhammad for Muslims or Manabozho for several Native American groups, or the Buddha for Buddhists. Ultimately, the culture hero is who we are or who we could be. The culture hero is Self knowledge.

See also: [Hero](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Myth](#) [Self](#)

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Cupid and Psyche

Alice Mills

Myth of Cupid and Psyche

The myth of Cupid and Psyche (Cupid is sometimes known by his Greek name, Eros, and is sometimes called Amor, meaning “love”) is a story within the longer story of Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*. This longer story is a witty, obscene and ultimately religious tale of bodily and spiritual transformation. Within it, the story of Cupid and Psyche ends with the transformation of the human princess Psyche to goddess. Psyche was the youngest daughter of a king and queen who offended Venus, goddess of beauty and sexuality, by claiming that she is no more beautiful than their child. Venus sent her son, Cupid, to make Psyche fall in love with the worst of men, but he fell in love with her instead. Apollo’s oracle prophesied that she would marry a monster and when her parents left her on a mountain-top to meet her fate, Cupid had her brought to his palace where they lived blissfully. Psyche never saw her husband and only met him at night in bed. If she had been able to endure this condition until she gave birth to their daughter, it would have been lifted and she would have become a goddess. Psyche’s two jealous elder sisters visited her and persuaded her that she was married to a monstrous snake, which she must kill. Psyche took a lamp and knife, but when she saw the glorious god asleep in bed, she fell deeply in love with him, wounding herself on his arrow. She burned his shoulder with a drop of oil from the lamp and Cupid left, reproaching her for her disobedience. Psyche sought the aid of the gods to find her beloved Cupid, but in vain, until the angry Venus set her the task of sorting a heap of seeds, an impossible task for a human that was achieved for Psyche by some helpful ants. Then Venus ordered her to fetch some wool from her lethally aggressive golden sheep. A reed of the stream advised Psyche to wait until evening when the sheep were calm, and then she picked up the wool that the sheep had lost in the field. The next task was to bring water back from the source of the Styx, fatal river of death, and here Psyche was helped by Jupiter’s eagle. Finally Venus sent her to the underworld to bring back a box of beauty from Persephone. This time Psyche was helped by a tower which told her how to enter the underworld and leave it safely, taking coins for the ferryman and bread for the guardian dog, Cerberus, and instructed her not to aid the dead who would plead for her help from the waters

of the Styx. Following this advice, Psyche gained the box but opened it along the way and fell unconscious. She was brought back to life by Cupid and Jupiter raised her to goddess. Their child was Voluptas (“pleasure”).

Neo-Platonic Interpretation

Apuleius, who wrote this story in the second century AD, was educated in Platonic philosophy at Athens and deeply interested in the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris; the main story ends with initiation into these mysteries. Apuleius’ tale of Cupid and Psyche has long been understood as a neo-Platonic allegory of the ascent of human consciousness from earthly to divine love. In another of his works, the *Apologia*, Apuleius speaks of two Venuses, one the goddess of carnal love and the other of a higher form of love. “Psyche” is a Greek word which had by Apuleius’ time become roughly equivalent to the Christian term, “soul.” Classical representations of Psyche show her with butterfly wings, alluding to her transformation to goddess. To interpret the whole myth of Cupid and Psyche in terms of the neo-Platonist ascent of human consciousness, however, divests it of *The Golden Ass*’s sexual urgency. His Cupid is a splendidly embodied deity who bears the weapons that inflict compelling sexual desire as they wound, and there is little evidence that Psyche gains enlightenment or moves from her earlier state of sexual desire to a spiritual form of love at the end of her story. In fact she commits more than one act of disobedience to the gods and is ultimately rescued by Cupid rather than gaining him as the ultimate prize in a hero-quest.

Christian Interpretation

The neo-Platonic interpretation of Apuleius’ tale proved easy to adapt into a Christian framework where Psyche was equated with the soul. Again the tale had to be desexualised in order to fit the neo-Platonic preference for the ideal and spiritual over the material and bodily. Psyche’s malicious revenge on her sisters (whom she sends to their deaths, telling them that Cupid is in love with them) is censored from this kind of interpretation, as is the birth of Voluptas. Instead, neo-Platonic Christian interpretations focus on the ordeals and Psyche’s close encounters with death, and identify Cupid with Christ as the God of love. This process of desexualising the myth is comparable to the allegorising of the Old Testament’s equally sexual Song of Songs as a celebration of Christ’s love for the Church.

Jungian Interpretation

Apuleius' story has drawn the attention of two eminent Jungians, Marie-Louise von Franz and Erich Neumann, both of whom interpret it as depicting the development of consciousness. For Neumann, Venus is the archetypal Great Mother; Psyche must differentiate her consciousness and take responsibility for her own actions. Psyche's true act of heroism is to disobey Cupid and look at him by lamplight. Von Franz speaks of Psyche as an anima figure within a man's unconscious: in this interpretation, it is the man who must differentiate his consciousness. As Betsy Hearne points out, both of these Jungian interpretations run into trouble when Psyche achieves apotheosis, joining what for Jungians would be the collective unconscious of the Olympian pantheon. As with the neo-Platonic interpretation, there is also the issue that Psyche does not display very much wisdom along her path of ordeals. Instead, she desponds and disobeys, ultimately sending herself into a sleep of death from which the god must awaken her rather than achieving an enlightened state of consciousness.

Freudian Interpretation

Apuleius' myth is a forerunner to the fairytale, Beauty and the Beast. As a Freudian interpreter of fairytales, Bruno Bettelheim pays close attention to the sexual implications of Beauty and the Beast in his *The Uses of Enchantment*. In his reading, this fairy tale alludes to the pubescent girl's anxious fantasies of sex with a man, which she imagines as bestial. Such a reading of Cupid and Psyche would give full weight to the birth of Voluptas and also to the jealous sisters' fabrication that Psyche has inadvertently married a monstrous (phallic) snake. Bettelheim's discussion of Apuleius' myth, however, accords surprisingly well with those of the Jungians, understanding it as an allegory of the gaining of higher consciousness. Bettelheim sums up the story as dealing with "the difficulties man encounters when the highest psychic qualities (Psyche) are to be wedded to sexuality (Eros)" (Bettelheim, p. 293). This reading runs into exactly the same problems as before, that Apuleius' Psyche exhibits suicidal despair and disobedience but can hardly be seen as a model of the enlightened consciousness.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Myth](#) [Psyche](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Curanderismo

Sana Loue

Origins

Curanderismo is a healing system that is prevalent throughout Latin America. Although reliance on this system of care by individuals of various Latino heritages in the United States has been documented, the prevalence of its use is unclear. This approach to healing has often been referred to somewhat disparagingly as "folk medicine" or "folk healing."

Healing activities within the tradition of curanderismo are performed by (male) *curanderos* and (female) *curanderas*; all three terms derive from the Spanish verb *curar*, meaning to heal. (The remainder of this discussion will utilize the term *curandero* to refer to both male and female healers in this tradition.) Curanderos are to be distinguished from *parteras*, women who serve as midwives, although they are most frequently not registered as such; *yerberos*, who heal exclusively through the use of herbs; *sobadores*, practitioners who devote their attention to sprains and muscle aches; and *hueseros*, or bone-setters. Individuals who practice any of these traditions are believed to be endowed with a *don*, or gift, of healing; adherents believe that the *don* is bestowed on the individual by God, while opponents of the tradition believe it is conferred by Satan.

Scholars have asserted that, as practiced by some believers, curanderismo often reflects six major influences: Judeo-Christian traditions, early Arabic medicine,

beliefs associated with European witchcraft, Native American healing practices, current beliefs relating to spiritualism, and modern medicine. The resulting system of healing is premised on religious beliefs relating to the maintenance of harmony between nature, the self, and spirit. Disease or illness is viewed as the result of a lack of harmony between the individual and his or her environment; the curandero is charged with the task of removing this imbalance and restoring harmony.

Illness Causation and Healing Practices

The lack of harmony between the individual and his or her environment may result from physical, psychological, social, and/or spiritual causes. Illnesses are recognized as originating through the action of natural agents, as is the case with tuberculosis disease, or through the action of a supernatural agent (e.g., a *bruja*, or witch), as may be the case with unemployment, marital difficulties, and alcohol dependence. Curanderos can address the presenting problems and effectuate healing using any of three levels, or avenues, of treatment: the material, or physical, level; the spiritual level; and the mental level.

Healing targeting physical illness at the material level often relies on rituals involving the use of herbs, fruits, eggs, and oils. Treatment may also include massage or prayer; a minority of curanderos will provide vitamin injections. In situations in which the illness is believed to have resulted from an imbalance of hot and cold properties, the curandero may attempt to restore balance by prescribing a treatment that will eliminate the excess or augment the deficiency. The “hot” or “cold” nature of a condition or treatment is an inherent property. Family members and individuals within the client’s social network are often enlisted to aid in the healing process.

Healing at the spiritual level requires that the curandero enter into a trance in order to establish a connection between the material and spiritual domains. The curandero essentially functions as a medium through which the spirits can work to effectuate the requested healing. The spiritual forces are able to cause, diagnose, and cure illness on the spiritual level.

Less commonly, the curandero may effectuate healing on the mental level. This requires that the curandero channel mental energy from his or her mind directly to that part of the client in need of treatment. It is believed through this focused mental energy, the curandero is able to halt the growth of the illness-affected cells in the client’s body and promote the healing process.

Common illnesses for which individuals may seek treatment from a curandero include *empacho*, a digestive blockage that is often treated with teas made from specified herbs; *bilis*, an ailment thought to be caused by excessive bile resulting from extreme anger that can be cured through the use of prescribed laxatives; and *mal ojo*, or “evil eye,” for which treatment may be effectuated through a ritual involving a raw egg.

Several illnesses for which curanderos may be consulted are clearly psychological or emotional in origin. These include *susto*, or “fright,” and *nervios*, literally translated as “nerves.” *Susto* is believed to result from a single specific incident, such as witnessing a death or accident, being involved in an accident, or being suddenly surprised or frightened. Crying, trembling, and insomnia are common symptoms, but *susto* may also present as a lack of appetite or vomiting. Prayer, herbs, and massage are thought to be beneficial.

Depending upon the particular Latino subgroup, *nervios* may refer to the disease *nervios* or to specific symptoms of an illness. Women, sensitive individuals, and older adults are believed to be particularly susceptible to the disorder. *Nervios* can be brought about by family problems, worry, stress, and anger, and may be manifested by headache, depression, yelling, worry, pacing, high blood pressure, insomnia, and loss of control. Treatment may consist of counseling, pills, prescribed teas, speaking to another person, and/or calming oneself.

Benefits

Individuals with serious medical problems are often referred by the curandero to Western medical providers. Depending upon the nature of the illness, however, patients may also consult with curanderos as well. Clients may rely on both approaches for various reasons. First, clients may be unable to afford the cost of a medical doctor and will delay or avoid such care unless the illness is perceived as a serious one necessitating such attention. Second, because curanderismo views the mind and body as inseparable, and illness is to be addressed by examining the total context in which it occurs, a curandero may focus on elements of an illness that may not be attended to by medical doctors, such as the underlying stress that is giving rise to the client’s headaches. Third, the curandero’s reliance on rituals to address the supernatural origins of a situation may help to restore the client’s hope, such as in the case of unemployment or marital disruption.

Consultation with a curandero brings other advantages as well. The attribution of the illness to an external source, whether natural or supernatural, relieves the individual of blame for his or her condition. The curandero's enlistment of the client's family and friends to assist in the implementation of the treatment helps to create a loving and supportive environment through which the client can progress towards healing. In situations in which the illness does result from the client's own actions, the curandero can invoke the aid of spiritual forces, thereby providing the client with an additional source of strength, support, and hope.

See also: [▶ Healing](#) [▶ Shamanic Healing](#)

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D

Daimonic

Stephen A. Diamond

The contemporary term “daimonic” (Latin spelling *daemonic*) is based on the archaic Greek word *daimon* (*di-mone*). The genesis of the daimon idea is decidedly difficult to pin down. Empedocles, the fifth-century BC pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, employed this term in describing the psyche or soul; to be even more precise, he identified daimon with self. Some classical scholars say “daimon” was used by writers such as Homer, Hesiod, and Plato as a synonym for the word *theos* or god. Still others point to a definite distinction between these terms: “daimon” referred to something indeterminate, invisible, incorporeal, amorphous and unknown, whereas “theos” was the personification of a god, such as Zeus or Apollo. The daimon was that divine, mediating spiritual power that impelled one’s actions and determined one’s destiny. It was inborn and immortal, embodying all innate talents, tendencies (both positive and negative), and natural abilities. Indeed, one’s daimon manifested as a sort of fateful “soul” which spurred one on toward good or evil. The earliest pre-Christian conception of daimons or *daimones* considered them ambiguous – rather than exclusively evil – beings, and predates even the great philosophers of ancient Greece. Minoan and Mycenaean daimons were seen as attendants or servants to deities, rather than as deities themselves, and were imagined and represented as half human/half animal figures, such as the fearsome Minotaur of Crete.

It was believed during Homer’s day (circa 800 BC) that all human ailments were brought about by daimons. But daimons could also cure, heal, and bestow the blessings of good health, happiness and harmony. Plato (428–347 BC) alluded to the daimonic realm in his writings, deeming the daimon the noblest aspect of the psyche present in everyone, and referring to the great god of love, Eros, as a powerful daimon: “All that is daemonic lies between the mortal and the immortal. Its functions are to interpret to

men communications from the gods – commandments and favours from the gods in return for men’s attentions – and to convey prayers and offerings from men to the gods. Being thus between men and gods the daemon fills up the gap and so acts as a link joining up the whole. Through it as intermediary pass all forms of divination and sorcery” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 69). According to Plato, seeking spiritual wisdom and truth honors one’s daimon, while inordinate preoccupation with worldly matters desecrates it. Perhaps the most famous example of the daimon in action is found in Plato’s story about the treasured *daimonion* of Socrates: a supposedly supernatural, metaphysical (i.e., spiritual) inner “voice” or intuitive knowing which dissuaded Socrates since childhood from making mistaken decisions but, ultimately, brought about his indictment, trial and demise for teaching students “false daimonia.”

C. G. Jung (1968) points out that “the Greek words *daimon* and *daimonion* express a determining power which comes upon man from outside, like providence, or fate, though the ethical decision is left to man” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 70). The original Greek word *daimon*, notes Jung’s disciple M. L. von Franz (1985), “comes from *daiomai*, which means ‘divide,’ ‘distribute,’ ‘allot,’ ‘assign,’ and originally referred to a momentarily perceptible divine activity, such as a startled horse, a failure in work, illness, madness, terror in certain natural spots” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 70). She points out that “in pre-Hellenic Greece the demons, as in Egypt, were part of a nameless collectivity” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 66–67). In the words of another insightful scholar, “Plutarch reveals to us the function of these *daimones*. They are the source in us of emotions good and bad” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 69). The implications of this statement for the practice of psychology and psychiatry are profound.

Daimons, Demons and Devils

Daimons, at first, were potentially both good and evil, constructive and destructive, depending in part upon how the individual would relate to them. But one of

Plato's pupils, Xenocrates, separated the gods and daimons, shifting the destructive aspects of the gods onto the daimons. Thus began the gradual degradation of the daimon into our modern misunderstanding of the demon as exclusively evil, and the ascendancy of the Judeo-Christian conception of the Devil as evil incarnate. Indeed, our modern English terms "demon" and "demonic" are derived from the Latin spelling of this classical Greek concept popularized during the Middle Ages: *daemon* and *daemonic*. During "the Hellenistic and Christian eras," surmises May (1969), "the dualistic split between the good and evil side of the daimon became more pronounced. We now have a celestial population separated into two camps – devils and angels, the former on the side of their leader, Satan, and the latter allied to God. Though such developments are never fully rationalized, there must have existed in those days the expectation that with this split it would be easier for man to face and conquer the devil" (cited in Diamond, 1996: 70–71). Around the rise of Christianity, the old daimons started to disappear, their ambiguous Janus-like nature torn asunder. "Evil" and "good" were neatly divided, and the daimons, now isolated from their positive pole, eventually took on the one-sided, negative identity of what we today refer to as "demons."

For millennia, the enigmatic concept of the daimonic lay lost in relative obscurity, recognized and valued only by a few astute artists and philosophers. But the daimonic as a vital psychodynamic model was resurrected in the twentieth century by contemporary theologians and psychologists, notably C. G. Jung, Paul Tillich, and Rollo May. Psychologist Rollo May (1969), following the lead of existential theologian Tillich, defined the *daimonic* as

- ▶ any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both. When this power goes awry, and one element usurps control over the total personality, we have "daimon possession," the traditional name through history for psychosis. The daimonic is obviously not an entity but refers to a fundamental, archetypal function of human experience – an existential reality. . . . (cited in Diamond, 1996: 65).

For May, much like the earliest Greeks, Egyptians, Hebrews and Hindus, the daimonic is an essentially undifferentiated, impersonal, primal force of nature incorporating both the *diabolic* and *divine* aspects of being – without deeming them mutually exclusive.

Evil, Creativity and Spirituality

This numinous, archetypal, transcendent *coniunctio oppositorum* of the daimonic resurfaced in contemporary culture in art too, as in the case of Hermann Hesse (1965) describing the paradoxical deity Abraxas in his book *Demian*. And the intensely passionate creative and destructive drives of the daimonic on the individual can be most clearly observed in the lives and works of prodigious artists such as van Gogh, Beethoven, Picasso, Melville, Jackson Pollock, Richard Wright, and Ingmar Bergman among many others. Indeed, there has always been a direct link between creativity and the daimonic, as described by Jungian analyst M. Esther Harding (1973), who writes that

- ▶ the poets of all times have felt themselves to be filled with a divine influx. . . . For a short space of time such an individual feels himself to be made whole through submitting to possession of his being by a power greater than himself. . . . There is no doubt that life is renewed through contact with these instinctive depths, dangerous though such a contact [can be]. . . . Individuals who have had such experiences assert that they attained a sense of redemption. . . . through such a consummation of union with the daemonic force, which they conceived of as God (cited in Diamond, 1996: 136).

The archetypal notion of the daimonic, while remaining unknown to most moderns, subtly informs much of what we today refer to as "depth psychology" (see Depth Psychology). For example, C. G. Jung's Analytical Psychology is founded upon and incorporates the original ambivalent quality and possession-prone nature of the daimonic, as evidenced in his definition (1945) of *demonism*:

- ▶ Demonism (synonymous with daemonomania = possession) denotes a peculiar state of mind characterized by the fact that certain psychic contents, the so-called complexes, take over the control of the total personality in place of the ego, at least temporarily, to such a degree that the free will of the ego is suspended. . . . Demonism can also be epidemic. . . . The epidemic form includes the induced collective psychoses of a religious or political nature, such as those of the twentieth century (cited in Diamond, 1996: 97–98).

Jung's classic conception of the "shadow" is closely related to that of the daimonic in its connection to destructive possession, creativity, and spirituality. The daimonic undergirds, transcends and remains closer to Jung's earliest conception of the shadow insofar as it is a unified paradigm incorporating (but not clearly

differentiating between) the popularized Jungian doctrine of the shadow together with Eros, Thanatos, the id, libido and the archetypes of anima, animus, and the Self, while retaining “the decisive element, that is, the choice the self asserts to work for or against the integration of the self” (May cited in Diamond, 1996: 105). Like the shadow, the daimonic only becomes evil (i.e., demonic) when we begin to deem it so, and subsequently suppress, deny, drug, or otherwise strive to exclude the daimonic from consciousness. In so doing, we unwittingly participate in the *process of evil*, potentiating the violent eruptions of anger, rage, social destructiveness, and assorted psychopathologies that result from the daimonic reasserting itself, with a vengeance, in its most negative forms.

However, the daimonic, unlike the demonic, is as deeply involved in the process of creativity as evil. As May (1969) explains, “the daimonic was translated into Latin as *genii* (or *jinni*). This is a concept in Roman religion from which our word ‘genius’ comes and which originally meant a tutelary deity, an incorporeal spirit presiding over the destiny of a person, and later became a particular mental endowment or talent” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 262). When we consciously choose to constructively integrate the daimonic into our conscious personality, we participate in the metamorphic *process of creativity*. This movement toward what Aristotle termed *eudaimonism* – the capacity to live happily and harmoniously with the daimonic – is also an essential aspect of any authentic spiritual development. Spirituality, indeed, can be fundamentally defined as a capacity to love the daimonic. This *amor fati*, as philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche phrased it, is a spiritual achievement of the highest magnitude. “For God,” Diotima tells Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium*, “mingles not with man; but through a spirit [daimon] all the intercourse and converse of god with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 290–291).

Acknowledgement

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See also: [▶ Analytical Psychology](#) [▶ Demons](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Devil](#) [▶ Shadow](#)

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Dalai Lama

Paul Larson

The Dalai Lama is the most widely recognized Tibetan religious figure. The current one, born in 1935 as Tenzin Gyatso is the fourteenth in the succession of tulkus, reincarnated lamas, to hold his title. The name “Dalai” (Mongolian for “ocean”) was conferred in 1578 by Altan Khan, a Mongolian ruler who was seeking an alliance with Tibet. There had been two previous incarnations in the lineage, so the one so named (Sonam Gyatso) became known as the third Dalai Lama, and the two previous ones taking this title posthumously.

The young boy Tenzin Gyatso was recognized as the incarnation of this lineage in 1937, but as he was only 2 years old, a regent ruled in his place until 1950. Tibetans have viewed themselves as independent of China, but have had a close political relationship with China for a long time as well. In 1950 the Communist government of the People’s Republic of China asserted its claim over Tibet and enforced it with military occupation of the country. The Dalai Lama cooperated with the Chinese at first, visiting Mao Tse Tung in Beijing in 1954, but he fled to India in 1959 in the wake of an unsuccessful revolt and now resides in Daramsala. He is considered to still be the leader of the Tibetan people in exile.

Spiritually, the Dalai Lama is considered an incarnation of the Boddhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Tib. Chenrezig), the embodiment of compassion. It is this quality that has

marked his diplomatic efforts to both assert Tibet's claim of autonomy as well as find a realistic accommodation with the Chinese government. His efforts on behalf of his people as well as his leadership efforts toward inter-faith communication resulted in his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. The current Dalai Lama has also become involved in dialog with some of the leading neuroscientists through their shared fascination with the nature of human consciousness.

Of all of his predecessors, the other one most widely studied in the West is the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682), known as the “Great Fifth.” He was the first to have significant civil authority over Tibet and constructed the Potala Palace in Lhasa, which was the seat of the Dalai Lama until 1959. Under his rule, the Gelug lineage prevailed as the leading one of four major lineages.

See also: [Bodhisattva](#) [Esoteric Buddhism](#) [Tulku](#)

Dance and Religion

Jennifer Amlen

Dance generally refers to human movement either used as a form of expression or presented in a spiritual, social, or performance setting. Dance is also used to describe methods of non-verbal communication as forms of body language between humans or animals. Animals use dances such as the bee dance or mating dance. Movements convey specific information.

Dancing, combined with musical accompaniment, is one of the oldest rituals in religion and circle dancing has been one of the most common ritualized dances throughout the history of time.

During the Egyptian Pre-Dynastic period (5500–3100 BC) there were depictions of female figures, probably of Goddesses or Priestesses, dancing with their arms raised above their heads. The act of dancing was an important component of celebration and ritual in Ancient Egypt. Dance was much more than just an enjoyable pastime in Ancient Egypt.

The earliest known form of dancing was done in a line or chain referred to as chain dancing. The ritual of chain dancing is believed to have first appeared over three thousand years ago, possibly in Ancient Greece. In Greek mythology the God Apollo was called the Dancer, the God

of medicine, music, and poetry. In Sparta, a province of ancient Greece, it was the common law that parents were to teach their children to dance beginning at 5 years of age. The types of dance were also used in Israelite society. This included the circular or ring dance as well as the processional dance. These dances were often used to celebrate specific events, such as David and the people of Israel dancing before the Ark of the Lord, which represented the presence of God.

It is written in Sanskrit that the Hindus believe that the whole Universe was brought into existence as the manifestation of Nataraja-the Supreme Dancer. In Hinduism, there are 23 celestial beings called Apsarases, who dance to please the gods and express the supreme truths in the magic of movement.

In the thirteenth Century, Sufism was established by Rumi, the Persian poet. Sufism was a mythological off spring from the Muslim religion. “The Whirling Dervishes” believe in performing their dhikr in the form of a dance and music ceremony. The Mevlevi were a well established Sufi Order in the Ottoman Empire, known for their dance which was performed as a form of worship. During the Ottoman period, the dance of Mevlevi Sufism spread into the Balkans, Syria, and Egypt. The Sufi dance and tradition is still being practiced in many countries.

Chain dancing was the original form of dance in pre-Christian Europe. During the early middle ages in Western Europe, Christian carols and hymns were sung and danced in “stanza.” The original meaning of “carol” is to dance. Carol is believed mean “dance circle,” and it is accompanied by singers. The definition of stanza is to halt or stop. The worshippers stood still in a circle with their attention to the center of what was being celebrated. From the 1150s to the 1350s the carol was a popular dance and song performed throughout Europe. Priests danced with the parishioners during the early medieval period. The purpose of the dance was to allow the souls to get lost in the majestic rhythms. However, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries the dance became controversial, and the hierarchy began to ban the dancing for the common people.

Over an 80-year period, from 1774 to the 1850s, the Shakers in America developed a repertoire of dances ranging from spontaneous shouting, falling, skipping and turning dances. They danced in patterns of squares, lines, and circles, performed with precise and unison hand gestures.

In 1890 the Ghost Dance was a religious movement that was incorporated into numerous Native American belief systems. The traditional ritual in the Ghost Dance was also a circle dance, in which participants

gathered without partners in a circle to dance to musical accompaniment.

Commentary

In 1916 Jung categorized dance/movement as a form of expression from the “active imagination.” Jung emphasized the importance of balance and harmony, and attested that modern humans rely too heavily on science and logic. He suggested that it was more beneficial to integrate spirituality and incorporate the unconscious realm into one’s life. Jung incorporated a variety of approaches for the use of active imagination, and this technique has expanded to include nonverbal expressions, such as dance and movement. Jungian movement therapy addresses psychosomatic disorders concerning the body-mind interrelationship and the flow of energy. The use of the Jungian technique of active imagination through authentic in-depth-movement, is a gateway for the unconscious to communicate the process and direction of one’s therapy. Active imagination is neither dreaming nor guided fantasy; rather, its purpose is to build the bridge between the passive, receptive awareness of the inner unconscious material responding to the conscious in any form. Jung understood that “wholeness” resulted from establishing a working relationship between the conscious and the unconscious levels of the psyche.

The most common type of therapy today incorporating dance is called Dance Therapy.

In dance therapy the primary belief is that the body and mind are interrelated, and the state of the body can affect the mental and emotional wellbeing both positively and negatively. Dance therapy explores the nature of all movement. Dance therapists have been able to diagnose and help solve various psychological and somatic problems through observing and altering the kinesthetic movements of a client. Gestures such as standing still, sitting down, or moving one’s hands in protest, are considered an expression of movement in dance therapy. There are several different forms used in dance therapy, including encouraging and observing one’s authentic movement in individual or group sessions. There are often various forms or gestures suggested by the therapist.

Marian Chace, who was a modern dancer in the 1930s, officially developed dance therapy. She decided to stop her professional dancing career and teach dance instead. In her classes, she noticed that some of her students were more interested in the emotions they expressed while dancing (fear, loneliness, anger, etc.) than in the mechanics of the moves they made. She began encouraging them

to express themselves by emphasizing more freedom of movement rather than technique. By the 1940s, she started the profession of Dance Therapy.

In the 1960s Mary Whitehouse developed an approach to dance therapy by combining the use of active imagination and analysis. The purpose was to acknowledge all the material that emerged from unconscious levels, and to then carefully move the patient towards greater balance, health, and creativity. In ego psychology, the “observing ego” is needed only to maintain a coherent sense of self, so that one is not overcome by overwhelming uncontrollable emotions from the unconscious. It exercises a selective function, choosing what it wants to attend to, and deciding when and in what way to act. Thus, the conscious and unconscious levels of the psyche enter an ongoing dynamic relationship with each other, in which both are essential. Gestalt therapy and bioenergetics also incorporate movement and physical expression of the non-verbal content. Lowenian- Bioenergetics is a type of therapy that combines working with the body and mind to move beyond emotional blocks, and is based on energy flows. In Fritz Perls- Gestalt Therapy, one strives to become more whole and creatively alive, to be free from the blocks and unresolved issues that diminish fulfillment and growth. Both these types of therapy incorporate the body, mind and energy that one is experiencing in the present moment, just as any form of rigorous dance does.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Rumi, Celaladin](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Dark Mother

Kathryn Madden

The primordial Dark Mother and her values of transformation have existed in the human psyche since ancient times. Her image is specifically apparent in the Black Madonna, Mary Magdalene, Hecate, Demeter, and numerous other female divinities of the earth.

The Dark Mother, as a figure of mythology, is created at the collective archetypal layer of the psyche. Her image appears in all cultures: African, Hindu, Christian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and countless other cultural and religious sources. In 15,000 BCE, Africans sketched fifteen figures of the dark mother in red ochre on the walls of the *Grotto dei Genovesi* in the Egadi islands south of Palermo, Italy. The images existed fifteen millennia before the common era (Birnbaum, 1993: 26–28).

Black Mother: Ibla Nera

The characteristics of *Ibla nera* or black Ibla, a contraction of the name of the Anatolian (ultimately African) goddess Cybele brought to Sicily by traders from west Asia, were transferred, in the Christian epoch to the Black Madonna. These images are speculated to have been found in this cave dwelling 100,000 years ago when *Homo sapiens* migrated out of Africa. Archeologist Marija Gimbutas gathered the evidence of the civilization of the goddess in Old Europe (Gimbutas 1982, 1989, 1991).

Figures of the Dark Mother found in France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and Eastern Europe, dated

25,000 BCE were located along paths of paleolithic migrations out of Africa and are located near post-Christian sanctuaries of Black Madonnas (Cavalli-Sforza, 1994, 1995). The origin of her veneration can be traced to the Sinai where Africans created the oldest religious sanctuary in the world in 40,000 BCE at Har Karkom, later called Mount Sinai (Birnbaum, 2001). Sanctuaries of *Ibla nera* have been found in Sicily as well as in the later rituals of sibyls and priests of the Dark Mother who reflect the impact of violent Indo-European invasions (Gimbutas, 1991, Chapter 10).

Archaeological artifacts and sanctuaries of the Dark Mother found in Italy, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia, were evidence of cultures of women, peasants, and others who were negated by the dominant patriarchy as “dark.” Historically, these cultural regions retain evidence of religious heresy and were sites of uprisings for justice and equality in which women were persecuted as witches. The cultural folk wisdom about justice found its roots in the collectively-inherited ethic of justice in the African culture of Isis who was venerated throughout the known world in the first centuries of the common era.

During the time of the Spanish Inquisition and Counter Reformation (fifteenth–eighteenth centuries) power was consolidated by persecuting “dark” others: Jews, Moors, heretics, and women. Catholic and Protestant clergy continued to identify certain women with the devil. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, the handbook of the Inquisition, was used as a reference to put women to the stake who differed from the *status quo* of church, civil law, and societal custom.

Compensatory Rituals

In an atmosphere that persecuted and repressed the earthy, fecund, and sexual nature of women, various rituals and festivals arose to compensate for the one-sidedness of the dominant culture. The values of the Dark Mother – justice and equality – were kept alive by godmothers whose rituals resisted patriarchy. Celebratory experiences such as *Carnavale* evoked spontaneous eruptions from the unconscious of the common peoples, enabling European peasants overtly to express feelings of defiance towards church and state.

During the fifteenth–eighteenth centuries, the church persisted in associating the color white with purity and the color black with evil and the devil. In contrast, the rituals of the common people interpreted the color

black as good (Guastella, 1887: 68ff). In most Old European traditions, black was associated with fertility and the womb of life (Gimbutas, 1989: xix–xx, 198). Dreams, the messages of the unconscious, so threatening to the Church and doctrinal codification, were believed to reveal divine messages. In dreams that came to the fore during *Carnavale*, a black egg signified fecundity; a dream of a white egg represented loss, sadness and tears. In general, the color black in dreams was considered a good omen.

Numerous rituals continued throughout the early centuries representing memories, feelings, and images held deep in the unconscious heart of the culture. Regular pilgrimages were made to the Dark Mother, most typically represented by the Black Madonna. During these pilgrimages, the participants wore masks. A group of women covered with black silk capes, their faces hidden except for one eye, would sing and dance while carrying torches, representing the act of Demeter searching for her daughter. As the journey toward the edge of town continued, revelry ensued that lasted throughout the night. The procession of pilgrims would reach the statue of the Dark Madonna at dawn. There, they would behold an image of the great mother Cybele which was sculpted into the mountain (Guastella, 1887: 125).

Psychological Aspects

The chthonic aspects of the Dark Mother and the other feminine figures can be explored psychologically and symbolically from the perspective of the archetype of the Great Mother as described by twentieth century Jungian analysts Carl Jung and Erich Neumann. Drawing from primordial and collective origins, the dark and the chthonic – chthonic pertaining to dark, primitive, mysterious and primal instincts that come to us directly through nature – balance the viewpoint of human consciousness that respects only the light and spiritual aspects of an archetype.

As an archetype, the Dark Mother represents life, death, earth and sexuality, and deep transformational energy. She has been associated with nurturing, birthing, caring for children, the sick, the elderly, and the dying. The Dark Mother is often represented in myth as the Queen of the Underworld or one who travels to the Underworld. The Underworld does not necessarily represent Hell but more a place where souls reside between lives; thus, a space, or interval of liminality.

One figure who is typically associated only with the light and spiritual aspects of the archetype is Mary the

mother of Jesus. Mary, however, is a paradox. If her unconscious values are truly explored, she creates a powerful dynamic by incorporating body as well as spirit, power and vulnerability, the value of death, as well as life and rebirth.

The official presentation of Mary has been as an object of veneration emphasizing qualities of an over-spiritualized, submissive model of a woman ignoring the normal desires and aspirations of flesh-and-blood women. Throughout the centuries, the sketchiness of Mary's scriptural features has been filled in with cultural content that has emphasized such opposite qualities as stature and humility; courtly elegance in contrast to her solidarity with the poor. Yet, as an historical and symbolic figure, her maternity is central.

Jung called Pius XII's proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption on 1 November 1950 "the most important religious development for 400 years" (Jung, 1973: 567). The importance of the proclamation was that it gave expression to what he called "a spiritual fact which can be formulated as integration of the female principle into the Christian conception of the Godhead" (Jung, 1973: 8). The proclamation represented official ecclesial sanction for an idea that had been rooted in popular piety, as witnessed in the veneration of the Dark Mother, for many centuries. The Assumption signified the living archetype forcing its way into consciousness. Jung concluded that "the symbol in the Catholic Church is alive and is nourished by the popular psyche and actually urged on by it. But in Protestantism it is dead" (Jung, 1976: 8).

Jung earlier had criticized the one-sided masculinity of the Trinity [see Trinity] and had suggested that the psychic approach to the Christian godhead might be conceptualized more appropriately by a quaternity, with Mary as the fourth "person." He believed that the two Marian dogmas (The Immaculate Conception, proclaimed by Pius IX in 1854 as well as the Assumption) confirmed Mary's status and function as incorporating a feminine element in the human understanding of the nature of God.

Jung's enthusiasm for the Marian doctrines has been received reluctantly on two principle fronts: church officials, both Protestants – many of whom regard Marian devotion as close to idolatry – and Catholics, who deny the proclamations about Mary's divinity and insist that worship, as opposed to veneration, must be reserved for the triune God alone.

Analytical psychologist Mary Daly maintains that the Mary symbol has been a two-edged sword. The symbol has a power that "the most oppressive of the

Christian churches has captured and used. . .tamed and domesticated [through] the plaster statues, the saccharine prayers, sermons, poems and hymns and the sexist theology that has explained it” (Daly, 1973: 83).

While a study of variations of the Great Mother throughout history reveals that images of Mary are clearly adaptations or reworkings of earlier mythic figures such as Ishtar, Astarte, Isis, Cybele, (c.f. Harding, 1955: 99), Daly argues that Mary is not only connected to the ancient collective past but is also a prophetic figure. Mary conveys female autonomy and also an integrated relatedness. Daly credits Jung with recognizing the corrective of the dogma of the Assumption. Jung succeeded in “raising” matter and unconscious evil – so often attributed throughout history to woman or “dark otherness” as material or earthly-to divine status. Jung thereby contributed toward healing dangerous splitting and projective activity, although we still are witness to such projections in many contemporary cultural arenas.

The figure of Mary, in her symbolic potential to heal the gap between personal and impersonal in a feminine approach to the divine, “recover[s] to full consciousness. . .the tangible reality of women’s experiences and the symbolic reality of the feminine” (Harding, 1955: 124). She does so by making us conscious of qualities and attributes of the Great Mother as also having also a “Dark” or elemental, earthly nature that has not been acknowledged in official theology and only partly recognized in popular piety.

Archetypal Aspects of the Positive and Negative Great Mother

Jung and his student Erich Neumann expand upon the paradoxical elements embodied by the figure of the Great Mother. Archetypes are aspects of the collective unconscious, a vast transpersonal realm which remains hidden from direct observation but may be inferred or hypothesized through psychic ideas or images as they are expressed in dreams, fantasies, delusions, myths, stories and symbols. Archetypes have an innate propensity to order experience along certain patterns.

One crucial archetype that can be inferred from behaviors and ideas that emerge and develop from birth onward (or perhaps before) is that of the mother. The mother archetype generates and releases certain patterns and perceptions from the child’s unconscious so that the child develops behaviors, feelings, and activities that form

a “mother” pattern within the child’s experience of reality. These images can be positive or negative depending upon how the child is mothered in reality and upon his/her cultural and social context.

Gradually the child’s experience of a personal mother is augmented, refined and fleshed out by other aspects of mothering by grandmothers, godmothers, nannies; social institutions and ideas such as “mother country,” and cultural constructs such as myths, fairy tales, and religions. Jung calls this intricate interlacing of feelings and experiences the “mother complex” (Jung, 1969, para. 156–198). Although the contents of the mother complex are supplied by the child’s experience of self and other, these contents are activated and shaped by the generative, numinous archetypal core at the unconscious center of the complex.

In *The Great Mother*, Neumann analyzes the “symbolic polyvalence” of the mother archetype. Extracting from the wealth of images, symbols, beliefs and rituals that cluster around the Great Mother, he is able to formulate the structure of this archetype.

Neumann explains two feminine “characters”: elementary and transformative, each of which has two aspects: positive or negative. He sets up two sets of antinomies: fixed versus fluid, light versus dark, illustrating the various characteristics and activities of the Great Mother as ranging along a series of concentric circles built around these axes (Neumann, 1963: 82). The elementary character is at the core, and the successive stages of transformation radiate outward from it to the farthest circle from the center, which represents extreme spiritual fluidity. Yet, within each stage or circle there is a degree of coloration, shading from light to dark, that represents the positive/negative range.

By means of his conceptualization, on the “positive” side, the elementary maternal character of fixity can represent nurture, containment, safety, peace. On the “negative” side, fixity becomes entrapment, devouring, death. Analogous to developmental maturation and spiritual growth, these opposites can become fluid and transformative. The transformative maternal character can range from the highly evolved spiritual ideals such as wisdom and immortality. An untransformed, undeveloped maternal character results in an experience of entrapment, dissolution, diminution, even madness and death.

Neumann uses the figure of the Virgin Mary as virgin and mother to depict “high” and “light” in his diagram. Along with such figures as Demeter and Sophia, Mary the God-bearer inhabits the realm of good nurturing

and spiritual wisdom. These are the aspects that have been presented by the official church and that have inspired much about her that is virtuous, moral, and noble.

Yet, an excess of only sweetness and goodness can produce a conscious imbalance, an overly-idealized image. In a religious symbol, such one-sidedness can lead to psychological lifelessness. As Jung noted in his introduction to *Women's Mysteries*, an archetype only presents itself in a numinous way if it is clothed in symbolic language, in adequate symbols.

The Great Mother that is transformative – elementary, negative as well as positive, gives us an integrative whole that is timeless and numinous. We need the personal and archetypal elements of the mother archetype, inclusive of the qualities of the Dark Mother, to become conscious in us. Any archetypal symbol of transformative significance incorporates body as well as spirit, power as well as submissiveness, death as well as life.

See also: [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Mary](#) [▶ Mary Magdalene](#) [▶ Sophia](#)

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Dark Night of the Soul

Kathryn Madden

John of the Cross was a Spanish poet, Roman Catholic mystic and a Carmelite priest in the sixteenth century who said “you cannot find the light unless you enter the darkness.” As a founder of the Discalced Carmelites of the Catholic Church and a friend of Saint Teresa of Avila who became his spiritual director, John attempted reforms of the Church for which he antagonized the religious and political hierarchy and was imprisoned in 1577. In his prison cell he wrote the *Spiritual Canticle* and began *Songs of the Soul*. After escaping from prison in 1578, he went to Andalusia, where he wrote prose on mystical theology, notably *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night of the Soul*.

The Contemplative "Dark Night"

John spoke of the *Dark Night of the Soul* as a period of passive purgation that the soul undergoes once having transitioned from active to contemplative spirituality. The Dark Night is a purging purification before one is brought into the full ecstasy of mystical union with God. John described this purgation as drawing one's spirit away from its ordinary sense of things so that it can become completely aware of its divine senses. Although it is difficult conceptually to describe mystical experience with God, the phrase “dark night” can be understood as a metaphor for John's spiritual journey. His “soul's flight” entailed an experience of the privation of light as the necessary deprivation of everything that comes between a human being and the perfect love of God.

John defines this experience specifically in *Dark Night of the Soul*:

- ▶ This dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual

natural and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation, or mystical theology... Inasmuch as it the loving wisdom of God, God produces striking effects in the soul for, by purging and illuminating it, God prepares the soul for the union of love with God's being (Peers, 2005, Bk. II, ch. 5).

In the dark night of the soul, the soulful essence of the individual experiences suffering and there is intense longing for God. If an individual has relied upon a prayer life, the reliability and consistency of traditional prayer suddenly becomes labored and unrewarding. The person experiences isolation and abandonment by God. This period of acute desolation, which is a transitory state, feels "dark," frightening, and even life-threatening.

Other descriptions of the dark night refer to at one extreme as holy, and at the other extreme as spiritual madness, spiritual emergency, or spiritual crisis. Any of these terms can equally relate to the unique experience in which, from a religious perspective, the soul encounters an ultimate test of faith, endurance, purification, and surrender on the path to finding God. Those who have passed through this "night" express a sense of spiritual emergence and freedom.

In contrast to being a negative event, the dark night of the soul is thought by those whose practice contemplative prayer to be a stage of growth in which an individual achieves a deeper level of contemplation: growth from verbal prayer to mental prayer.

One experiences a closer relationship to the divine. Although the wait makes one feel extremely vulnerable, fearful, and temporarily out of control; in the end, the former self with its old assumptions dies. For some, the dark night is a long, slow, painful, and repetitive process. For others, the dark night is intense and rapid. The length of time most likely relies upon the individual psyche and what needs to be examined and surrendered to God toward change.

Psychological Analogues

Psychologically-speaking, the dark night is a profound experience that strips away our false self and brings to awareness deeply buried traumas or developmental failures that can be integrated toward individuation: a mature sense of wholeness. Regardless of whether we consider the dark night to be a religious or psychological experience, or both, if the person is able to endure it, his or her life will be extremely changed toward a newly-centered consciousness; in psychological terms

toward a realignment of the ego with the Self, the central archetype of order.

In the development of the ego-Self alignment, the ego will no longer be the center of its own universe but will be dedicated toward this new center of being with a confidence that something larger is working within the individual toward accomplishing things for the greater good. As this new center emerges, the temporary state of "spiritual madness" fades. Gratitude and joy abound.

We surpass the "depressive position" of psychoanalytic thought and live from a more truly authentic self. Purged of false projections and unfounded beliefs about ourselves and others, our life-path becomes guided by a series of synchronous events: simultaneous occurrences with no discernible casual connection. These synchronous occasions give us a new sense of freedom. The limited view of the ego is no longer the sole guide of our destiny. Our real mission in life begins to unfold. Spiraling ever deeper into a dimensional labyrinth inclusive of psyche, soul, body, and spirit, our consciousness expands to include greater intimacy with that which is transcendent and eternal.

Because of the abyssal emptiness and feelings of desolation of the dark night of the soul, it has been compared to the psychological manifestation of madness or depression: what Carl Jung called "the Night Sea Journey." Still others believe that the dark night leads us into the most intimate sanctum of the soul, to that primeval pre-existent "gulf" that was the soul before it became incarnate on earth.

Regardless of perspective, what we do know is that the dark night of the soul is a painful and lonely process during which our consciousness is clouded with uncertainty. The entanglements of the ego seem, however, to have some purpose in their unraveling: unveiling a new center. The process in which this disentanglement occurs can appear, psychologically-speaking, as a form of depression. Yet, this depression is purposeful in that the psyche is striving toward the goal of soul-retrieval. From this perspective, perhaps there are spiritual aspects of depression.

Soul Retrieval

As a play on the well-known phrase of John of the Cross – *Dark Night of the Soul*, is it possible that occurrences of depression, at least some forms of it, are a necessary first phase in the retrieval of soul? Are there instances in which soul that has become lost, isolated, devoid of meaning in our modern, stressful world purposefully

succumbs to forms of depression that are necessary for greater wholeness?

From an analytical perspective depression is not always perceived as a disease in need of fixing. Depression is a matter of coming home to the soul. It is not an illness to be cured. It is the cure.

Carl Jung claims that, along with a withdrawal of libido from *consciousness*, what occurs is “an accumulation of value – for example, libido – in the *unconscious*” (Jung, 1966: para. 344). An example of this would be a person whose conscious world “has become cold, empty, and grey; but [whose] unconscious has become activated, powerful, and rich” (1966: para. 345).

Analyst Esther Harding expands upon this, explaining that one hallmark of depression is that “all energy disappears into the unconscious” Depression, whatever its degree, “depends on a withdrawal of libido into the unconscious” (1970: 1). Harding makes an even more provocative observation by claiming that the withdrawal of energy or libido from the person’s conscious world comes about because some unconscious content, some unknown element has risen up into consciousness and has exerted an attraction upon it” (Harding, 1970: 3). In other words, there are certain aspects of depression that are being driven by the force of the central regulating factors of our psyche. Something unconscious is striving to be integrated. Harding calls this purposeful activity on the part of the psyche a “creative depression.”

Dark Night: Creative Depression

From a Jungian orientation, the notion of creative depression is outlined by John Weir Perry, an analyst known for his work on spiritual emergencies. Perry summarizes the process of working through the dark night of a creative depression. He uses the term “acute episode” to describe the stages of creative depression (Perry, 1999: 63–64):

1. A reordering or reorganization of the ego, in which we mostly deal with the alienated parts of our ego; a crisis in growth and development.
2. A charged feeling of death and rebirth.

The reference here is to a symbolic death and rebirth not about actual death.

During an acute episode, the feeling is of great ambivalence, doubt, feelings of alienation, depression, and recurring dreams. These symptoms are signs that the unconscious is trying to get our attention.

Jung would say that this activity is being directed by the central core of the psyche, which he calls the Self. According to Jung, “The archetype of the Self is the primary ‘ordering force in the unconscious.’” It is the archetype of the center which evokes primordial images similar to the universal motifs of religions and myths. These images are emotionally powerful, and they most often appear in our dreams and fantasies. Like all the archetypes, the Self is part of the deepest layer of our unconscious the layer which Jung calls “collective” or “objective.” Although we experience the Self as existing within our subjectivity, it is not our property. The Self possesses its own independent life.

3. A third aspect of the acute episode is the feeling of regression. Regression serves to bring something unconscious into our conscious awareness.
4. Forth, the transcendent function is a crucial factor in the acute episode.

We can identify the workings of the transcendent function when we experience intensified conflicting polarities or opposites within ourselves. We find ourselves wrestling with feelings and images that are at great odds. The human psyche works through this function toward a synthesizing resolution in which the two opposites are resolved into a “uniting third.” The uniting third brings new growth to the personality.

5. Fifth, in an acute episode there is an abundance of imagery which is powerful and numinous. Numinous pertains to images that are wholly other. These images tend to break in and shatter our typically one-sided conscious perspective. Numinous imagery often has to do with an aspect of the god-image.

When an acute episode occurs, the first images to emerge are usually persecutory or fearful images such as thieves, devils, inner saboteurs, ferocious animals, or reptilian images. These images feel as if they are trying to destroy anything positive or life-giving.

6. Sixth, eventually the person settles down into a state of coherency and clarity with a new vision and identity. The ego’s experience of dying finally gives way to the idea of being born or giving birth. This birth “is the fundamental ground of the whole experience” (Perry and O’Callaghan, 1992: 4).

For instance, a patient in treatment might suddenly become terribly agitated, restless, distraught, confused, and tearful, as if wrestling with his or her fears in an internal dialog that is difficult to externalize. If the person is a religious person, he or she might pray for hours, finally regressing and curling up into a ball, alone, worn down

with tears. Guilt, shame, and depersonalization may come to the fore. The persecutory part of the psyche begins to drown the ego in a spiraling vortex of self-blame.

The person increasingly withdraws inward, feeling traumatized, abandoned by figures whom he or she had trusted. In the middle of these feelings, the person finds herself or himself in the throws of an acute episode. Initially, it may feel like an overt panic attack or a nervous breakdown. The ego, as the central aspect of conscious identity, may be convinced that it is dying.

Some people have described the initial symptoms as if they are crumbling apart, cracking out of their skin, finding it difficult to breathe. The walls of the ego's defenses are disintegrating. As the contemplatives have demonstrated, prayer, journaling, or any form of writing or expression helps to give an outlet for these strong feelings.

It is strenuous for the ego when the Self intentionally draws psychic energy back into the unconscious, but this is necessary so that the otherness of the transcendent function can function. As the transcendent function begins to function, points of view arise in the person's dreams and waking fantasies that are contrary to whatever position their ego holds. It is as if two voices are in dialog, each with contrasting points of view.

Conflictual Opposites

Great inner conflicts can arise around moral stance. The opposites within can polarize to an extreme: hedonism versus morals, one political stance over another. Moral confusion, especially in medieval times, was equated with the devil and possession. The internal voices thrash back and forth, each justifying an opposing position. The disparate voices thrash back and forth.

What becomes apparent in an acute episode is that what the values we have been so assured of have been primarily according to the ego's point of view. Tremendous indecision ensues. The ego flounders. In its confusion can become identified with both sides of the opposites.

On the one hand, we regress back into the world of the biological parents and struggle with unresolved developmental issues. On the other, we are dealing with the primordial and symbolic parents of the archetypal realm. This clash of forces can feel as if we are in an ideological, spiritual, or cultural battle with the entire collective consciousness, as John of the Cross felt he was in the time of Reformation.

Keeping up the dialog – inner or outer – is important because the opposites must be separated first before they can begin to integrate. Both positions of conflict need to become conscious. This tension of opposites makes room

for the transcendent function. Each position is given freedom of expression to justify itself without consciously forcing a resolution.

As the preliminary thrashing of opposites subsides, the contrary positions begin to settle. The person may undergo an intense period of melancholy with apparently no relief. Yet, eventually spirit breaks through. As one patient described:

- ▶ a lantern of intense light rose up behind my eyes. It illuminated my thoughts. I suddenly had access to deep insights. This light was so positive and good. Images flashed before me of sexual activity that I had identified with the devil. I fell into sorrow over the object of my lost-love – my once idealized biological father. Then an image of Christ came to me. I was filled with certainty! Christ: a reality! I started reading the Bible even though I had not been to church in seventeen years. Certain words lifted off the page and were three-dimensional. Bliss! I slept easily feeling safe and contained.

In this brief clinical example, we can see how an acute episode of a creative depression can bear the potential of soul-retrieval in which the symbolic death that a person undergoes is something like gazing into a dark night. Yet, as Jung discovered among the Latin writings of Desiderius Erasmus: *Vocatus atque non vocatus, Deus aderit*. Bidden or unbidden, God is present.

See also: [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Depression](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Daseinsanalysis

Todd DuBose

Daseinsanalysis, the German word for “Existential Analysis,” is based on the phenomenological anthropology of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and the subsequent development of his thought for clinical endeavors in the 1940s by two Swiss psychiatrists, first, Ludwig Binswanger (1881–1966) and then Medard Boss (1903–1990). Differentiating from both psychoanalysis and other styles of existential therapy, Daseinsanalysis is distinctive in its analysis of *Dasein*, or quality of “being there” in the world.

Martin Heidegger proposed that human existence has an ontological, or general and foundational, structure that is expressed in “ontic,” or concrete, ways of living out unique compartments in the world (Heidegger, 1962). Yet, Heidegger argued that understanding these concrete and specific ways of living in the world requires a prior awareness of how these unique ways of being-in-the-world relate to the broader understanding of human existence as an ontological whole. Heidegger distinguished between an analysis of *Dasein*, and Daseinsanalysis as a clinical practice, seeing the former as a philosophical anthropology on which the latter is based. Daseinsanalysis addresses particular ways each human being moves in the world in the light of the larger ontological structure of human existence.

Heidegger wanted to leave the word, “*Dasein*,” untranslated in order to avoid the inaccurate equation of “*Dasein*” with concepts such as “person,” “ego,” or “self.” *Dasein* is not a “thing” or a fixed and encapsulated entity, but a phenomenological *process* in which cleared space and the lightening of existential constriction and burden allows for the possibility of phenomena to “show themselves.” *Dasein*, both concealed and revealed, discloses itself through existential givens, which are inherent conditions all human beings live out in our everyday existence. They are, specifically, temporality, spatiality, coexistence, mood or attunement, historicity, bodyhood, and mortality. Moreover, *Dasein* discloses itself within the equiprimordiality of human existence. By saying that human existence is equiprimordial, we mean that we all simultaneously live our lives within three modes of Being: the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* (Heidegger, 1962; May, Angel, and Ellenberger, 1958; Boss, 1979).

The *Umwelt* is our biological and environmental existence. Our *Mitwelt* is our “with-world,” or relational world, which entails the quality of “being-with” in our

relationships (i.e., close, distant, conflictual, etc.). Our *Eigenwelt* is our lived experience, which is the unique ways we experience ourselves living through situations. No one mode of existence dominates and takes priority over any of the other two. No one mode of existence can be extracted from the other two. Pain, stress, and hypertension are examples of how the three modes of existence mutually shape and are shaped by the other two. Our integrated, equiprimordial comportment through our everydayness always and already finds itself within the integrated existential givens in the world. The world is not a place to locate persons and things, but a web of meaning and backdrop against which aspects of our lives come to make sense to us, come to disclose themselves to us.

Through embracing inherent limitations in each moment, that is, our finitude, facticity, and contingency in existence, which Heidegger called our “thrownness,” we can more authentically live out our “ownmost” possibilities in the world. Relinquishing this call towards our ownmost possibilities, and instead, succumbing to being defined by culture, the status quo, or just allowing life to carry one along and define us without claiming one’s own life as one’s own, is a life of inauthenticity. Existence, in its ontic sense, is a perpetual movement between authenticity and inauthenticity, as well as between freedom and finitude. Meaningful experiences in life are those that occur within the embrace of one’s limitations in the search for immanent possibilities.

Binswanger, Boss, and other Daseinsanalysts align with psychoanalysis around the value of a human existence coming to know itself through the movement from concealment to disclosure, but differ significantly from psychoanalysis regarding its more mechanistic understanding of mental processes (Binswanger, 1967; Boss, 1963, 1977, 1979). As such, key constructs of the psychoanalytic project, such as the psyche, the unconscious, transference, and projection are jettisoned outright, or, at least significantly altered in their meaning. Furthermore, Boss believed the therapeutic question guiding clinicians should not be the psychoanalytic persistence on a determinative past as expressed in the word, “why?,” but, instead, should be the more hopeful, future-oriented, and more inviting question, “why not?” Our future impacts us as much as our past, as Daseinsanalysts see it, and both our lived future and lived past disclose themselves in the present, or, here and now, comportment in the world. Boss, and other commentators of Boss’ work, have argued, then, that Daseinsanalysis is “purified” psychoanalysis, having rid itself of unnecessary metaphysics and engineering conceptualizations of mind

that are not phenomenologically experienced anyway (Stadlen, 2005, 2007).

In relation to other existentially-oriented therapies, Daseinsanalysis also differentiates itself by insisting on the “thrown” nature of our world situations. We are never *absolutely* free, as some more humanistically bend existentialists may argue, but lean into our possibilities within *situated* freedom. Likewise, Daseinsanalysis does not see the person as an ego, psyche, or any kind of “thing-hood,” but sees the person as inextricably interwoven in the world. The person is how one moves in the world. What is seen in the world is not a static “it,” but a process of being, a comportment through situations. The relationship of Dasein and the world is coconstructive, as the world is disclosed as it is only in light of the presencing of Dasein being “all there.”

Commentary

Spirituality is an inherent aspect of Daseinsanalysis and is understood as transcendence within and through immanence (Driver, 1985). One’s experience of transcendence, understood as the experience of unfolding and living through one’s ownmost possibilities, is enframed by embracing one’s being-unto-death, or embracing one’s situational and ontological limitations, including, of course, but not exclusively our the end of our biological existence. One’s “thrownness,” though, is an everyday and every moment phenomenon. Several theorists have tried to compare Heidegger’s work to other religious traditions, such as Taoism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism, which is evidence to the universality Heidegger’s work could offer to such diverse life worlds, as the impulse to comparisons is predicated on qualities that may easily be deemed “spiritual,” in the existential way, that are embedded within both the ontological and ontic expressions of *Dasein-in-the-world*.

The very ontological structure of *Dasein* is what Heidegger called, “solicitude,” or care. This is not primarily a feeling of empathy, but an inherent intending and enacting of significance. Each moment of experience intends and responds to his or her world’s call to significance. We are always and already attuned, intending, called by and responding to, meaningful encounters in the world. I call this approach “pastoral” in that its focus is on clearing space and lightening burdens such that disclosures of possibility can show themselves. It is “pastoral” in its alignment with one’s own most possibilities within the tragic dimension of life’s “thrones,” or finitude. This approach is very

incarnate and finds transcendence by courageously enacting one’s own most possibilities while embracing one’s death amidst the tragic dimension of life.

Daseinsanalysis values meditative releasement, as Heidegger’s calls it, or letting-go while exploring phenomena, rather than a habit of calculative manipulation and control of situations and persons. Letting-go shows itself in uncovering, clearing, unburdening, disclosing, and releasing phenomena to show themselves as manifestations of *Dasein’s* being-there, and never being-elsewhere-beyond existence. In other words, transcendence does not occur outside of existence, for the Daseinsanalyst, but within it. Transcendence, however, is the heart of Daseinsanalysis, where the therapeutic questions and goals are on freedom towards how one would like to be in the world, and what seems to be constricting their freedom to be so. Hence, rather than fall short of a true integration of psychology and religion through incomplete comparisons and contrasts, or juxtapositioning of one against the other, Daseinsanalysis provides us with the possibility of a discourse and language that could provide a true integration of our present day separatism, if one agrees that transcendence is found in and through immanence. In the clearing of space and the lightening of burdens, modes of being-in-the-world are uncovered and truths of existence show themselves in ontic particularities. What is also interesting to consider is how Daseinsanalysis can provide a foundation for multicultural considerations, given that we all live through equiprimordial and existential givens in the world simply by being human beings, but take up those experiences in very unique ways. We then could celebrate a true communion of diversity.

Daseinsanalysis is practiced around the world, and is centralized in the International Federation of Daseinsanalysis, including countries such as Brazil, Greece, Belgium, France, Hungary, Austria, Canada, England, The Czech Republic, and, of course, Switzerland. Originally having its training headquarters in Zurich, which was originally limited to medically trained psychiatrists, the apparent exclusivism sparked points of contention among some Daseinsanalysts (Stadlen, 2005, 2007). Today, though, Daseinsanalysis is growing in appreciation in the United States and is taught in the human science oriented doctoral programs in psychology. As it continues to spread in awareness and appreciation, more and more clearings will provide space for freeing us all to live more into our ownmost possibilities.

See also: [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Heidegger, Martin](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Lived](#)

Theology ➤ Meaning of Human Existence ➤ Phenomenological Psychology ➤ Psychoanalysis

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Death Anxiety

Bonnie Smith Crusalis

Definition

Fear of death can be defined as the anxiety experienced in daily life caused by the anticipation of death. It can be the result of facing death through illness and aging, or experiencing circumstances that force a confrontation with the idea of death. It can also include many aspects of dying, such as pain and suffering, feelings of abandonment, loss

of dignity, and of “non-being,” not living up to one’s potential (May, 1983; Heidegger, 1962).

Denial

“...No one believes in his own death. In the unconscious, everyone is convinced of his own immortality” (Freud, 1953–1966).

Ernest Becker, the author of Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Denial of Death*, maintains that death denial is a basic human motivation and a universal biological need. The terror of death is so overwhelming, he says, that man conspires to keep it buried in the unconscious network of defense mechanisms where it is repressed.

Irvin Yalom, noted American existential psychiatrist, would agree that death anxiety is a basic tenant of human existence. Rarely though, Yalom maintains, do clients present in therapy settings with the complaint that they fear death. Instead, they appear with a variety of death anxiety-avoiding coping mechanisms and denial-based strategies that are not effective.

Boundary Experience

Regardless of Yalom and Becker’s contention that fear of death underlies anxiety in general, death anxiety is not always buried. Columbia University’s Dr. David Forrester discusses a “readiness” or Mortality Stage in which a physically healthy, cognitively intact individual reaches the end of the emotional denial of death, and becomes acutely aware of his or her own mortality. The Mortality Stage is so distinct that all of life prior to this stage can be subsumed under the rubric the Immortal Stage. Experiences that trigger the Mortality Stage can be any loss, or events such as war, terrorism, famine, genocide, pandemics, or even minor accidents. A “boundary” experience is Yalom’s term for this heightened awareness, which he defines as an event or urgent experience that propels one into a confrontation with one’s mortality.

Death Gives Life Meaning

Because the heart of existentialism and existential therapy is the attempt to resolve the conflict or tension created when an individual confronts one of life’s ultimate concerns such as death, existential therapy, essentially an exploration of one’s life meaning, has been used successfully to integrate

spirituality into end-of-life care (Breitbart, 2004). Prior to the public awareness and acceptance of the work done by Elisabeth Kubler Ross, end-of-life care was primarily concerned with symptom control and pain management. Following Kubler-Ross' *Death and Dying*, palliative care literature began to emphasize a need for a greater emphasis on spirituality and meaning along with interventions to help patients examine these areas of their lives. It is this examination that offers an individual the potential to live purposefully by embracing the inevitability of death.

"Though the physicality of death destroys us, the idea of death may save us" (Yalom, 2002: 126). English existentialist Emmy van Deurzen agrees: "Life and death are two sides of one coin. They cannot be had without each other, they should not be kept apart and in isolation."

See also: [Anxiety](#) [Dark Night of the Soul](#) [Daseinanalysis](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Faith Development Theory](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Grace](#) [Purpose in Life](#)

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Defenses

Giorgio Giaccardi

Defenses are ways by which the psyche aims at avoiding threatening affects, above all anxiety. The notion of

defense was introduced by Freud with reference to hysteria (Freud, 1894: 47). The defense mechanism involved in hysteria is repression, which causes the expulsion of a painful affect or idea from the conscious ego. During the following 30 years Freud would use the term repression with reference to defensive processes in general. This special status of repression was due to its role in the constitution of the unconscious as such. In 1925 however Freud reintroduced the concept of defense as an inclusive category encompassing not only repression but also other mechanisms which he had been identifying in the meanwhile (Freud, 1926: 163). The analysis of ego defenses was to become subsequently a major theme in psychoanalysis, thanks also the pivotal study on the topic by Anna Freud.

A subsequent line of development, which paralleled the extension of psychoanalytic theory and practice beyond neurosis and its application to borderline, narcissistic and schizoid personalities, consists of the analysis of primary defenses (also named primitive, dissociative, archaic, psychotic and archetypal).

Ego Defenses

When the ego experiences distressing affects resulting from the perceived incompatibility of an experience, idea or feeling, it succeeds in defending itself from the related anxiety by "turning this powerful idea into a weak one" and "robbing it of the affect – the sum of excitation – with which it is loaded" (Freud, 1894: 47). The sources of anxiety are superego demands, external situations, overpowering or conflicting instincts (Freud, 1936: 54–65). Neurosis occurs when a defense mechanism fails to ward off anxiety or when other portions of the id claim a "compensation" – in the form of a symptom – having being damaged by the operation of a mechanism of defense (Freud, 1924: 183). Exceedingly rigid defenses loosen the relation to reality and hold up the emotional development of the individual (Winnicott, 1985a: 168).

Freud also regards religion as a form of collective neurosis based on regression to infantile dependence on the father, rooted on child-like feelings of impotence and defending against superego anxiety. Specific defense mechanisms employed are obsessive ceremonials, devaluation of intellect and altruistic surrender, all in the service of repressing instincts thus avoiding related guilt and anxiety. Freud notes that the impulses that religions strives to suppress are not merely of a sexual nature, but concern any instinct that "springs from egoistic sources" (Freud, 1907: 127). One typical defense against such instincts was identified by A. Freud as "altruistic

surrender” of “our own instinctual impulses in favor of other people” (Freud, 1936: 11–134).

A. Freud lists nine basic mechanisms of defenses: repression, regression, reaction-formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self and reversal into the opposite, to which she also adds sublimation as a more sophisticated and complex defensive activity of the ego (Freud, 1926: 44). However this list is far from exhaustive, as A. Freud herself goes on to describe further mechanisms such as identification with the aggressor and denial. All aspects of mental life can serve a defensive function. For instance, McWilliams (1994: 117–144) also includes intellectualization, moralization and sexualization among the defenses of the ego. Jung’s notion of regressive restoration of the persona (Jung, 1966: 163–168) may also be regarded as a defense mechanism against anxiety.

Defenses may be classified according to the nature of the mechanism which protects from anxiety, which might either affect the instinctual process itself (like displacement, reversal and turning round upon the self) or merely prevent it from being perceived by the ego (like repression and projection). Bowlby suggests that the operation of defense mechanisms can be spotted when patterns of behaviour, thought or feeling “[are] carried out under pressure, absorb an undue proportion of the person’s attention and [are] visibly undertaken at the expense of something else” (Bowlby, 1980: 66).

Jung often refers to repression of psychic contents as the process constituting the personal shadow. He views confrontation with the shadow as a moral problem and an essential task in the process of individuation – a viewpoint which underpins his aim of “treating” Christianity by showing the importance of integrating the repressed, or “missing fourth,” into its conscious attitude (Stein, 1985: 171). However, Jung is also of the opinion that as long as a defense works it should not be broken down as the patient may need it as a protection against overwhelming experience. This is particular so in the case of defenses with a religious content, like the “Catholic defense” (Jung, 1958a: 45), on which Jung writes: “If the patient is a practising Catholic, I invariably advise him to confess and to receive communion in order to protect himself from immediate experience, which might easily prove too much for him (. . .) I reinforce a means of defense against a grave risk, without asking the academic question whether the defense is an ultimate truth” (Jung, 1958a: 44). But if the patient’s dreams “should begin to destroy the protective theory” Jung feels that he has “to support the wider personality” of the patient (Jung, 1958a: 45), in other words work on his/her individuation. This latter aim

cannot always be pursued, as the need to maintain the defense may be paramount: “People may have to go back to the Church when they reach a certain stage of analysis. Individuation is only for the few. . .” (McGuire and Hull, 1980: 394).

A concept related to (but distinct from) defense is resistance, which is the force that protects the work of defenses and its accessibility to the conscious ego. Overcoming resistances is for Freud one of the cornerstones of the psychoanalytic enterprise. In *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*, he identifies five types of resistances, of which three derive from the ego (repression, transference resistance and resistances which proceed from secondary gains), one from the id (repetition compulsion) and one from the superego (unconscious guilt and need for punishment) (Freud, 1937: 238). The latter two account for what Freud came to recognize as sources of an intractable resistance to the analytic cure (negative therapeutic reaction). In particular, the archaic superego in Freud’s late view takes on split-off aggressiveness and thwarts recovery by attacking the ego. This new understanding proved pivotal in the development of the study of primary defenses.

Primary Defenses

According to Melanie Klein, primitive defense mechanisms are aroused by two forms of anxieties that derive from the activity of the death instinct (or fear of annihilation), i.e. depressive and persecutory anxieties. Defenses against the former are manic ones (omnipotence, denial, triumph and contemptuous control), while the main defenses against persecutory anxieties are splitting and projective identification. All these are called primitive defenses because, as Freud noted (Freud, 1926: 164), they are employed before the separation of ego and id and the formation of the superego.

Winnicott examined in detail manic defenses, which use external objects “in the attempt to decrease the tension in inner reality” (Winnicott, 1975: 132), specifically by denying depressive anxiety and guilt. Ultimately, manic defenses use reality as a reassurance against the experience of death. Any form of psychological organization (including psychosis itself and the experience of oneness with God/universe) which effectively defends against the threat of breakdown and annihilation may work as a primitive defense.

Winnicott also suggested that the ascension of Christ could be seen as an instance of manic defense of an “ascensive” nature, psychologically akin to light-headedness and

elation: “Each year the average Christian tastes the depths of sadness, despair, hopelessness, in the Good Friday experiences. The average Christian cannot hold the depression so long, and so he goes over into a manic phase on Easter Sunday” (Winnicott, 1975: 135). Another example of manic defense in religion is when an aspect of reality is not acknowledged as internal, like “a preacher [who] feels as if God speaks through him,” but denies his own “parenthood of the internalized object” (Winnicott, 1975: 133). However, in line with Jung’s position of respect for defenses, Winnicott also emphasizes that “in the analysis of the most satisfactory type of religious patient it is helpful to work as if on an agreed basis of recognition of internal reality, and to let the recognition of the personal origin of the patient’s God come automatically as a result of the lessening of anxiety due to the analysis of the depressive position” (Winnicott, 1975: 133). On the other hand, anti-religious attitudes could be seen as manically defensive too: people in analysis “jeering at religion (. . .) are showing a manic defense in so far as they fail to recognize sadness, guilt, and worthlessness and the value of reaching to this which belongs to personal inner or psychic reality” (Winnicott, 1975: 135).

Archetypal Defenses

Kalsched offers a post-Jungian formulation of primary defenses in which they are referred to as “archetypal defenses” and “defenses of the self” because they “seem to be coordinated by a deeper center in the personality than the ego” (Kalsched, 1996: 17). They cause a split in the psyche between a progressed part that protects “whatever is left of true selfhood” (Kalsched, 1996: 174) and a regressed part that encapsulates what Kalsched names the “personal spirit” of the individual. Splitting allows disconnecting from unbearable affects and annihilation anxiety, at the cost of blocking individuation, i.e., the incarnation of the self in life. Both parts are experienced by the ego as “daimonic objects” through which “divine activity could be glimpsed – either for good or for evil” (Kalsched, 1996: 148). Kalsched envisages in the ultimate anti-life character of these defenses a “compelling image of what Jung called the dark side of the ambivalent Self. (. . .) The damage to the inner world is done by the psyche’s Yaweh-like rage, directed back upon the self” (Kalsched, 1996: 17).

Kalsched’s formulation mostly draws upon Winnicott’s false self (Winnicott, 1985b), Bion’s attack on linking (Bion, 1984), Stein’s archetypal defenses (Stein, 1967) and Fordham’s defenses of the self (Fordham, 1974),

which Kalsched amplifies and develops by delving into the archetypal perspective. Fordham, in particular, observes how defenses of the self oppose and undo any potentially developing link and aim “to keep the way open to regression, or maintain it as it is” (Fordham, 1974: 193). The direction of this regression is towards “an infantile perverted state of mind” (Fordham, 1974: 198). As Marcus West argues throughout his recent study of narcissistic disorders (West, 2007), this form of regression is particularly enticing for people whose ego-functioning is so underdeveloped that they constantly need a vicarious self-regulating other. In this process – in which projective identification is the main defence mechanism involved – they experience very intense affects, of a positive sign if sameness is registered and negative if this expectation is frustrated. In both cases, emotions may have an ecstatic and numinous quality which however, as West concludes, may militate against the development of the ego thus further enhancing recourse to primary defenses.

Hillman’s take on defenses brings a different understanding of the psychic processes regulating instincts and affects. He draws upon Jung’s contention that the archetypal image and the instinct belong together in the same archetype, the images being regarded as self-portraits of the instincts. Jung already recognized the connection between defences and images: “Instinctive defence mechanisms have been built up which automatically intervene when the danger is greatest, and their coming into action during an emergency is represented in fantasy by helpful images which are ineradicably imprinted on the human psyche” (Jung, 1958b: 345). Hillman further elaborates this idea by arguing that any archetype has in itself an instinct-inhibiting power, which does not deny or displace or reverse the instinct, but makes full experience of it through its related images and may influence instinctual behavior by reflecting on and transforming the images. This form of defense differs from sublimation because it maintains the connection to the original instinct, while allowing alternative outlets other than compulsive action or flight. Hillman exemplifies his argument by showing the self-inhibiting properties of instinctual phenomena linked to Pan, like panic and masturbation (Hillman, 2000). Similarly, Murray Stein refers to the self-inhibiting properties of the archetype as “healthy paranoia” (Stein, 1983: 95) and maintains that both the drive to meet the unconscious and the protection from it stems from the same god, Hermes. In this approach, instinct regulation, psychological reflection and pursuit of wholeness – which has a numinous quality, because active and conscious encounter with the unconscious is “an

essentially religious struggle” (Stein, 1983: 105) – are intertwined in a way which is quite far from the Freudian conceptualization of a trade-off between instinct and civilization. The implications of this position on religion are far reaching, particularly on the importance for religious images, symbols and rituals of remaining in touch with the instincts which they also have the function to inhibit and contain.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Christianity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Numinosa](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Deism

[Deus Otiosus](#)

Deity Concept

David A. Leeming

Deities are created by humans – usually in their image – to express our sense of where we came from and to express a sense of significance and protection. Deities are believed to be aware of us and our needs. They are ultimate progenitors, ultimate parent. Psychology has taught us how important our mental depictions of and memories of our parents are to any real understanding of our own identities. As far as we can tell, the concept of divinity has almost always been present in human consciousness and human life. We have indications of the concept at least as early as the cave paintings, rock carvings and other artifacts of the Paleolithic. Deities of many sorts have arisen over time. Sky gods, mother goddesses, fertility deities, tricksters, storm-weather gods, creators, warrior gods were ubiquitous in the ancient world. Baal and El reigned in Canaan until the Hebrew Yahweh replaced them. Hera and Zeus ruled the heavens in Greece until they were turned into mere statuary and literary characters by the Christian God. Many ancient deities still rule. Devi, Vishnu and Shiva still dominate the temples and shrines of India. Spider Woman and the Great Spirit still have power in the sweat lodges, dances, *kivas*, and mountains of Native North America. Nigerian Binis have their separated Mother Earth and Father Sky. The Japanese have their sun goddess Amaterasu, the ancestor of their emperors. There are gods who are said to have become incarnated as humans – Jesus as the Christ or Messiah, Lord Krishna; and the other

avatars of the great god Vishnu; and some would say the Buddha.

There are many possible explanations for the concept of deity. A significant proportion of the human race argues that divinity first revealed itself to humanity in the form of personal beings. Others have seen deities as metaphorical expressions, symbols of the mysteries of the universe, reflections of our sense of the numinous, our sense of a realm of existence that is beyond the physical, beyond our understanding. For some, gods, being immortals, are the embodiment of our instinctive drive to establish a permanent order in the universe, of which we, as the allies or offspring of deities, can be a part. A universal theme reflected in the archetype that becomes our many versions of divinity is our need to feel that we are meaningful inhabitants of a meaningful universe, that we are ultimately “parented” as cultures and as a species. In this sense, divinity is a metaphor for the furthest extension of which the human mind is capable at any given time. Not surprisingly, then, deities change with the times, taking ever new forms, even as the essential archetype remains constant, veiled in its eternal mystery.

A generally accepted truth of psychology, itself the source of one of the dominant myth systems of the modern era, is that we are what and who we are not only because of our genes but because of our “background” experience, an important part of which is our parenting. Creation myths are collective stories of parenting by deities. In these myths, our worlds, our cultures, and we ourselves were created by the original deities. When we are asked about these parents there will inevitably be limitations on our actual knowledge but also, as the myths of psychology teach us, on what we are able to “face.” And, of course, our parents – actual and cosmic – are themselves the products of their own past. The understanding of deities and their role in our lives, like the memory and evaluation of parents, involves a complex process of delving into the past and overcoming strong forces of “denial.” It often means seeing our parents’ limitations and the inadequacies of our visions of them as well as their positive traits.

See also: [♻️ God](#) [♻️ God Image](#)

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Deluge

David A. Leeming

Flood myths are ubiquitous. They are found in Native American and African cultures, in ancient Greece and Egypt, in India, Oceania and South America. More often than not flood myths are outgrowths of creation myths. Typically, the creator is dissatisfied with creation, usually because of the sinfulness of humanity. In order to make a fresh start, the creator floods the world, destroying everyone and everything in it except, in some cases, for a flood hero, who is sometimes accompanied by his family and representatives of various animal and plant species. These survivors live to populate a new world. The oldest extant version of the flood myth is that of ancient Mesopotamia, contained in the Gilgamesh epic. This is a version remarkably close to the biblical version contained in Genesis.

Perhaps the best way to understand the psychological significance of the flood myth is to suggest an analogy to the rite of baptism, or purification by water, as practiced by many peoples since early times. In baptism the individual is symbolically drowned by submersion in the water only to be “reborn” into a religious community as he or she emerges. The individual dies to the old life and is reborn into the new. The waters of baptism are analogous to the maternal primal waters of creation. In the flood, humanity is collectively baptized, as it were; we die to the old creation and are reborn, through the flood hero, into the new creation.

In another related sense, then, the flood ritual represents the ever existing hope for a second chance, for a new beginning. The flood hero, whether the biblical Noah or the Sumerian/Babylonian Ziusudra/Utnapishtim, is the representative of that hope within us. Locked in the ark of survival, Noah is the collective psyche on its Dark Night of the Soul, moving through darkness to the ever hoped for renewal that is wholeness.

See also: [♻️ Baptism](#) [♻️ Dark Night of the Soul](#) [♻️ Primal Waters](#)

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Delusion

Lorna Lees-Grossmann

Delusions can be defined in a general sense as a belief that is false. The more rigorous definition implies that the belief is the result of some sort of pathology, and that it adheres broadly to the conditions laid out by Jaspers: certainty, incorrigibility and the impossibility or falsity of its content. The belief must be held with absolute certainty; the holder must be unable to be swayed by any counter-argument or evidence to the contrary, no matter how compelling the evidence; and the content of the belief must be such that it would be unbelievable under normal, non-pathological circumstances. Delusion is distinct from beliefs arising from disorders or trickery involving perception: delusional beliefs do not arise from incomplete or false perceptual information, rather perceptual information may be manipulated or interpreted to bolster the delusional belief.

Jaspers

The DSM-IV definition retains a broad similarity with Jaspers' criteria:

- ▶ A false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everybody else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. The belief is not one ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture (e.g., it is not an article of religious faith).

In spite of this general definition's broad acceptance, counter-examples have been produced for all of these criteria, the most notable being labeled the Martha Mitchell effect: a belief may be labeled delusional because of its apparent falsity, although it may in fact be true. Martha

Mitchell, wife of the attorney general at the time of Watergate, was labeled delusional when she persisted in asserting that there was illegal activity going on inside the White House. The leaking of information from the White House later proved the truth of her claims.

Further to the Martha Mitchell effect is the impossibility of ascertaining the truth-value of some statements. Religious beliefs fall into the category of beliefs with no determinable truth-value. The distinction between ordinary religious beliefs and delusional beliefs with religious content is that of shared-ness: a religious belief that is shared by many is not classifiable as delusional, whereas a similar belief held by one or a very small number of people may be thus classified.

Munro

Munro (1999) suggested a more rigorous series of criteria to separate delusions from false beliefs. A delusional belief is expressed and held with unusual conviction, and the holder is particularly unreceptive to contrary evidence. So far Munro is in line with Jaspers, however the further criteria include a strong emotional investment in the belief, with a concomitant over-sensitivity, suspicion or hostility to questioning of or about the belief. Normal behavior and logic patterns are generally unaffected, except in areas of the believer's life that are affected by the delusion. The internal logic of the belief may be preserved, although the resulting behavior may be out of keeping with the normal social context.

There are some delusional beliefs that allow a person to continue their lives in a reasonably normal fashion. In the main, however, with the lack of universal agreement about what precisely constitutes a delusional belief, the key criteria used for psychiatric diagnosis are practical: a belief should be considered delusional if it is definitively bizarre, is held with excessive conviction, especially if the believer is not amenable to counter-arguments against it, and if the belief causes distress to the holder. If a belief meets the criteria for a delusional belief, and yet causes no distress or even improves the believer's quality of life, then some psychiatrists would prefer to allow the belief to remain unexamined. As with Freud's categorisation of religious belief, some untrue or unprovable beliefs are helpful to the believer, and their loss may cause further, unnecessary distress.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#)

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Demons

Craig Stephenson

The Middle English word “demon” derives from the medieval Latin *demon* and the Latin *daemon*, from the Greek *daimon* meaning “deity,” that is to say, a god or goddess. Inherent etymologically and historically in the English word is an ambiguous mixing of the ancient Greek notion of spiritual beings in addition to the gods and goddesses, not necessarily evil, with the postexilic Hebrew thought of harmful spiritual entities, the Persian notion of conflict between light (Ahura Mazda) and dark (Angra Mainyu) forces, and the Synoptic Gospel accounts of Jesus exorcising evil spirits that had invaded human beings, causing mental and physical illnesses (e.g., Matthew 8:28, 12:22, Mark 5:1, 3:22, Luke 8:26, 11:14). The contemporary use of the English word “demon” is for the most part skewed negatively to suggest one of an army of negative supernatural entities under the leadership of the devil or Satan, despite attempts to reintroduce the more positive connotations of an attendant daimonic attendant spirit.

The Hebrew word *shedim* meaning “demons” inscribes a hierarchy of evil forces in Jewish religion. In the Talmud, the *mazziqim* or “harmful spirits” are governed by a king named Asmodeus and a queen called Agrath bat Mahalath with 10,000 demonic attendants. Some medieval commentators such as Maimonides and Menahem Meiri either ignore the Talmudic references to demons or read references to evil spirits allegorically as describing, for instance, a bedeviling and persistent melancholy. However the medieval Kabbalistic movement further develops Jewish demonology, mapping a vast realm of demonic powers which parody the sacred. In Islamic tradition, maleficent entities such as *djinns*, led by a Satan-like Iblis, test the faith of true believers; those who

fall prey to such deceiving demons are treated in the Koran as liars and hypocrites. In similar ways, Buddhism describes demons functionally as forces that obstruct the achievement of nirvana. Hence, the Christian notion of demons as legion (i.e., “or we are many” is the demon’s name in Mark 5:9) but occupying a lesser position within a cosmological hierarchy of beings, finds correspondences in other cultural contexts.

The relative subservient position of demons in these hierarchical cosmologies carries important implications for how we deal with the distress they cause. For example, investigating demon possession within the Karava caste community of Galle, Sri Lanka, anthropologist Bruce Kapferer (1983/1991) finds Sinhalese demons occupy a less powerful place in the vertical hierarchy of being than deities and humans, but demons cause illness by creating the illusion that they can tyrannize and thereby disorder human beings. Kapferer characterizes the demonic as “a false oppressive totalitarian world which refuses possibility” and a possessed Sinhalese person as fragmented, reduced, and alienated (suffering from *tanikama*, meaning “aloneness”). Through the ritual process of exorcism, the Sinhalese differentiate between demons and deities who also have the power of generating illusions, but only for some ultimately edifying purpose. Kapferer argues that Sinhalese exorcism publicly affirms the given cosmological structure and at the same time presents the suffering individual with an opening into the possible. On the one hand, *yaksabhuta cidyava* as “exorcism” literally denotes taking the demon out of the possessed patient and transferring it to the basket, from there to the exorcist, and finally to a cock as sacrificial scapegoat. On the other hand, *yaksabhuta vidyava* as “the science of spirits” enacts the diagnostic problem of differentiating demons from deities, and addresses the suffering of the possessed individual by reordering what the demonic has disordered: “In the *vilakku pade* the dancers place torches at the demon palace, lighting it up and opening it to view. The demon palace is revealed in its full completed objective meaning as not just the place of demonic disorder, but also as the place in which the deity resides” (Kapferer, 1983/1991: 281). Kapferer emphasizes that the Galle Sinhalese differentiate between demons and deities who both create illusion, but for different ends. Demons cannot be transformed or reconstituted at a higher level in the cosmic hierarchy; they can only intensify the chaos of lower-level orders of the cosmic whole. Sinhalese exorcists, as “scientists of spirits,” light up the demon palace and thereby alter the sufferers’ perceptions of their suffering, emphasizing not so much the exorcising of the tyrannical spirit as the placing of the demonic in context

with the divine, illness in relationship to health, disorder with order.

Freud wrote a psychoanalytical interpretation of a historical case of demonic possession (1922). A Bavarian painter, Christoph Haitzmann, came to Mariazell near Vienna in 1677 to ask for deliverance from visions and convulsions caused by a pact with a devil which was coming to term after 9 years. This case begins with the death of Haitzmann's father and with the metamorphosis of his image into the demonic. In a series of paintings, Haitzmann portrayed his dead father gradually transformed into a demon with breasts and holding an open book in his hand. Through the rites of exorcism, Haitzmann felt himself released from two pacts he said he had signed with his demon. In the end, however, he chose not to return to his work as a painter but to enter the monastic life. Freud reads the case as a neurotic evasion of the ambivalent image of God-the-Father in which Haitzmann unconsciously defended against feelings of abandonment and deprivation. Freud portrays Haitzmann as having avoided the necessary mourning of the natural father and interprets the selling of his soul as a neurotic attempt to recast himself as son and obedient subject to a nurturing father-figure, to remain within the classic Oedipal complex rather than live his adult life bereft. By submitting himself through the pacts to the father-as-demon, Freud argues, Haitzmann employed a "feminine attitude" by which he neurotically preserved his threatened status as "son" for a period of nine years. For Freud, Haitzmann's demonological neurosis permitted him to continue to feel contained within the inferior status of vassal-like "subject" and "son," even though at great psychological cost and with much suffering from convulsions, visions and creative blocks, culminating after nine years in a crisis and eventually a shift into another form of containment, the holy orders. Freud knew well medieval textbooks on witchcraft such as *Malleus Maleficarium* and wrote to Fliess about the correspondences he could see between a possessed demoniac and a hysterical patient, between an inquisitor/exorcist and an analyst, between demons and repressed affects. In terms of psychological economies, he theorized that maintaining neurotic solutions such as Haitzmann's takes a terrible toll, repression stealing libido that would normally be accessible to the ego.

Furthermore, in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917/1984), Freud describes how a bereaved ego "cannibalizes" and "incorporates" a lost object in order to deny its death. In healthy mourning, he argues, the ego needs to both internalize and eventually expel this incorporated object. In melancholia, the ego finds itself destructively supplanted

and ruled by this increasingly obstructing object with no possibility for change. Clearly, for Freud, Haitzmann incorporated and thereby resurrected the lost father, his ego suffering under a subsequent demonic tyranny for 9 years until he sought deliverance from his symptoms through exorcism. For these reasons, Freud considers Haitzmann's subsequent maneuver out of his subjugation and into the order of the brethren as perhaps progressive but still evasive, neurotic and, by implication, diabolical, the neurotic splitting perpetuated by the decision to enter a cloistered order rather than to take up again his vocation as painter. Lacan would read this psychoanalytically as a failure to endure a confrontation with the Otherness of the "réel": "that before which the imaginary falters, that over which the symbolic stumbles, that which is refractory, resistant" (Lacan, 1966: ix-x).

In a definition of demonism for the *Schweizer Lexikon*, Jung (1945a/1954) accounts for the phenomena of demonic possession by referring to his theory of complexes. At the same time, his definition introduces a collective component. For instance, he describes the demonomania of the Ursuline nuns at Loudun as an epidemic comparable to what he calls the "induced collective psychoses" of the twentieth century; as a result, any interpretation of an individual's suffering such as that of the Mother Superior Jeanne des Anges should take into account not only the possibility of trauma and the activation of repressed contents in the personal unconscious but also the effects of the collective unconscious. In other words, Jung would argue that Jeanne des Anges's demonological neurosis psychically infected the other Ursulines, polarized Loudun, and drew crowds from across Europe because her possession articulated not only a personal repressed conflict but a social dilemma in which the collective unconscious was active. Curiously, in his definition of demonism, Jung doesn't refer to evil or to his theory of the shadow, an inferior part of the individual personality and of the collective which, he would claim, can be integrated only in as much as it can be realized and suffered. Elsewhere, in connection with evil, Jung argues that while conscious constructs tend towards ternary forms, natural totalities form fours, the implication being that any teleological movement towards wholeness would require the inclusion of a fourth element which consciousness is inclined to abhor or reject; so, he observes, "In the case of the religious triad the Fourth is obviously the devil, a metaphysical figure missing in the Trinity" (Jung, 1973, 1: 412). Jung's short definition of demonism also doesn't explicitly mention his notion of a positive "daimon," but this is perhaps implied in his references to trance, shamanism, and spiritualism.

Freud and Jung were addressing not seventeenth century but twentieth century Western problems in which psychological disturbances manifested more in terms of organic illnesses than of gods and demons. In an essay written in 1945, Jung makes this comparison explicit:

- ▶ Psychology has discovered where those demons, which in earlier ages dominated nature and man's destiny, are actually domiciled, and, what is more, that they are none the worse for enlightenment. On the contrary, they are as sprightly as ever, and their activity has even extended its scope so much that they can now get their own back on all the achievements of the human mind. We know today that in the unconscious of every individual there are instinctive propensities or psychic systems charged with considerable tension. When they are helped in one way or another to break through into consciousness, and the latter has no opportunity to intercept them in higher forms, they sweep everything before them like a torrent and turn men into creatures for whom the word 'beast' is still too good a name. They can then only be called 'devils'. To evoke such phenomena in the masses all that is needed is a few possessed persons, or only one. Possession, though old-fashioned, has by no means become obsolete; only the name has changed. Formerly they spoke of 'evil spirits,' now we call them 'neuroses' or 'unconscious complexes'. Here as everywhere the name makes no difference. The fact remains that a small unconscious cause is enough to wreck a man's fate, to shatter a family, and to continue working down the generations like the curse of the Atrides. If this unconscious disposition should happen to be one which is common to the great majority of the nation, then a single one of these complex-ridden individuals, who at the same time sets himself up as a megaphone, is enough to precipitate a catastrophe (Jung, 1945b/1954: par. 1374).

Jung's use of the words "primitive" and "primordial" to account for the phenomena of demons leaves him vulnerable to charges of primitivism when he discusses other cultures, but here he applies the words to twentieth-century Western European culture in order to contradict its rational bias:

- ▶ I use the term 'primitive' in the sense of 'primordial' and. . . I do not imply any kind of value judgment. Also when I speak of a 'vestige' of a primitive state, I do not necessarily mean that this state will sooner or later come to an end. On the contrary, I see no reason why it should not endure as long as humanity lasts. So far, at any rate, it has not changed very much, and with the World War and its aftermath there has even been a considerable increase

in its strength. I am therefore inclined to think that autonomous complexes are among the normal phenomena of life and that they make up the structure of the unconscious psyche (Jung, 1934/1960: para. 218).

Clearly, Jung locates his definition of demonism in the present tense and in parallel with contemporary events.

See also: [Complex](#) [Daimonic](#) [Devil](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Possession](#)

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Depression

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What is depression? How is it seen by psychological, psychiatric and religious authors? How is it related to religion and religious factors?

What is Depression?

Depression is a term referring to a disabling and prevalent psychiatric illness, major depressive disorder (unipolar depression). But the term also refers to a number of other,

related states. Unipolar depression must be distinguished from (1) depressed mood, which is a normal emotional response to adversity, especially involving loss, which if transient is not considered a clinical problem, (2) bipolar disorder, a relatively uncommon psychiatric condition involving uncontrollable swings from elated manic phases, to low, depressive phases, (3) Dysthymic disorder, a milder disorder involving the symptoms of clinical depression, but as few as two such symptoms (plus depressed mood) qualify the sufferer for the label dysthymic. There are a number of varieties of major depressive disorder and dysthymia, for example seasonal disorder. Further, in clinical research, the term depression is sometimes used to refer to a measured dimension, varying in the number and sometimes intensity of the symptoms of depression.

Returning the commonest meaning of the term depression: major depressive disorder is considered present (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) if at least five of the following have persisted for at least 2 weeks, of which at least one is depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure:

1. Depressed mood most of the day, every or nearly every day
2. Diminished interest or pleasure in all or nearly all activities
3. Significant weight loss or gain
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia
5. Psychomotor agitation or retardation
6. Fatigue or loss of energy
7. Feelings of worthlessness, or excessive or inappropriate guilt
8. Difficulty in thinking or concentration, or indecisiveness
9. Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempt

Although there may be some biological predisposition, the most popular view of the causes of depression involves a diathesis model, in which a causal event or difficulty involving loss precipitates depressed mood, which can become a clinical condition in individuals who are vulnerable. Vulnerability factors may include early experience of loss (such as death of a parent), inadequate social support, low self-esteem, and heavy caring responsibilities, and there is some evidence of cultural variation in the factors that make people vulnerable to or protect them from depression (Brown and Harris, 1978; Loewenthal, 2007; Butcher, Mineka and Hooley, 2007). Widely-used treatments include medication and psychotherapy, for example cognitive-behavioral therapy. It is worth noting that of all

psychiatric conditions, depression has perhaps excited the most controversy. It has been a prime example for the anti-psychiatry movement, led by Szasz (1974), arguing that it cannot be regarded as an illness, though it involves great suffering. Szasz argues that the illness model of mental illness leads to medication, custodial care and other treatments being wrongfully and coercively applied. In spite of Szasz, the view of (clinical) depression as illness remains dominant.

This essay will look at views of depression in religious sources, and some of the effects of these views. The essay will consider the widely-cited claim that religious people are less prone to suffer from depression, and will consider the factors which may be involved in this effect. Finally we will consider recent attempts to deploy religious and spiritual factors in the therapeutic process.

How Has Depression Been Viewed in Religious Sources? What Are the Effects of these Views?

In religious writings, it has been suggested that melancholy may be a spiritually valued, possibly chosen state (see Frost, 1992), and even if not chosen, depression and melancholy may be viewed as opportunities for spiritual growth, increasing religious trust (Loewenthal, 1992). Much recent work in positive psychology has offered evidence in support of these pious hopes: post-traumatic spiritual growth has now been empirically affirmed as a possibility. Thus Shaw, Joseph and Linley (2005) concluded from their systematic review of published empirical work that religion and spirituality are usually, although not always, beneficial to people in dealing with the aftermath of trauma. Traumatic experiences can lead to a deepening of religion or spirituality, and positive religious coping, religious openness, readiness to face existential questions, religious participation, and intrinsic religiousness are typically associated with posttraumatic growth. Positive psychology in general has been advanced as effective in the treatment of depression and as harmonious with a number of core religious teachings and spiritual values, such as the practices of helping, and of forgiveness (Seligman, 2002; Joseph, Linley and Maltby, 2006). Such religiously-encouraged practices are now found to have beneficial mental health effects.

Although in religious writings, melancholy and depression have been generally viewed as normal responses to adversity and loss, and as foundations for a deeper faith, lay religious persons may regard depression as a failure of religious faith (Cinnirella and Loewenthal,

1999). For example: “Sometimes we assume that depression can always be overcome through prayer – that good Christians don’t suffer from depression” (quoted in Schroedel, 2008). Greenberg and Witztum (2001) quote several rabbinic leaders who suggest that prayer, religious song and other religious coping methods may be sufficient. Indeed they may be in some cases, but where they are not, the cloud of depression thickens. In spite of the frequent helpfulness of religious ideas in coping with the miserable psychological consequences of adversity, religious coping may not always do the trick, and there is an ongoing concern that when religious coping fails, this may be seen as a personal failure, inadequacy of the individual, leading to deeper depression.

It is also important to note that clergy are often trusted as resources for mental health care, generally more so (by their congregations) than the mental health professions. Thus religious teachings about depression and coping, as delivered by the clergy person, may be an important resource. A minority of clergy may actively mistrust the mental health professions, and warn their congregants against the use of professional help (Leavey, Loewenthal and King, 2007).

This religious teachings on depression have been mixed, and have had mixed effects – depression itself may have some spiritual value as a springboard for spiritual growth, religious faith, religious practices and religious leadership may be helpful in coping with depression. However the failure of religious coping can have a damaging effect on a person who is already depressed, and the advice of the minority of religious leaders to avoid professional mental health practitioners may not always be in the best interests of those suffering from depression.

The Association Between Religiosity and Low Levels of Depression

It has been widely concluded that there is an overall, consistent relationship between indices of religiousness and lower levels of depression (Worthington, Kuru, McCullough et al., 1996; Koenig, McCullough and Larson, 2001; Loewenthal, 2007). In spite of inconsistencies in the assessment of religiosity, and of depression, the relationship is fairly reliable, though not strong, and not always consistent. What are the factors involved? Three kinds of effects have been identified:

1. *Social support*: religious groups endorse and encourage helping in times of adversity. This includes in-group as well as out-group helping (Inaba and

Loewenthal, 2008). Additionally, the existence of a social circle of friends and sympathetic listeners can be an important protective factor. Thus Shams and Jackson (1993) found that unemployed Muslim men in the North of England were less likely to become depressed if they were religiously active, meeting regularly in the mosque for friendship and support, as well as prayer and religious study.

2. *Religious coping*: religiously-active people are likely to engage in religious worship, study and prayer, and this will develop a repertoire of religiously-based coping beliefs which are drawn on in adversity, such as “this is all for the best,” “I feel that G-d is supporting me,” “there must be a reason for this even if I can’t see it now” (Loewenthal, MacLeod, Goldblatt, et al., 2000). The study of religious coping has been effectively established by Pargament (1997), who has reported a number of robust effects. Particularly important is the effect that good psychiatric outcomes (in adversity) are associated with positive religious coping beliefs, such as those listed above. Poor psychiatric outcomes are associated with negative coping beliefs, such as “G-d is punishing me (because I am bad),” “There is no purpose in this,” “G-d has abandoned me.”
3. *Lifestyle factors*: Religions endorse and encourage aspects of lifestyle which can have an important impact on wellbeing. Thus for instance religious Jews and Christians have been shown to report fewer disruptive life-events – particularly, they report fewer family-related disruptions, less arguments, family violence and divorces. Disruptive life events are strongly associated with the onset of depression, and thus the lower prevalence of depression in the religious groups studied may be (at least partly) traced back to the religiously-supported value placed on harmonious family life and marital stability (Prudo, Harris and Brown, 1984; Loewenthal, Goldblatt, Gorton et al., 1997).

The finding that religious coping can have an impact on clinical outcome – sometimes positive and sometimes negative – has led to the development of exciting attempts to bring spiritual and religious factors into stronger focus in the course of psychotherapy. After many years of excluding religion and spirituality from the psychological therapies, Pargament and his colleagues have introduced a wide range of suggestions about how religious and spiritual factors may be included (Pargament, 2007). Spirituality – defined as “the search for the sacred” – is central for many clients in psychotherapy, and therapists need the tools and the sensitivity to address the spiritual

dimension in a systematic way. Spiritual coping may be used to conserve, protect and develop the sacred, it may lead to growth, it may lead to decline, it may be part of the solution, and it may be part of the problem. For example, one woman was in despair because she felt she had committed an unforgivable sin. The therapist was able to liaise with the client's priest, and the priest, therapist and client were able to develop a successful reconciliation. A strong merit of the work led by Pargament is the emphasis on an evidence base for findings, which may do much to enhance the scientific acceptability of clinical work involving spiritual and religious factors.

This essay has defined depression, considered how it has been viewed in religious writings, considered some of the ways in which it may be affected by religious factors, and finally, the ways in which religious and spiritual factors have been brought to bear in therapeutic work.

See also: [▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [▶ Religious Coping](#)

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Depth Psychology and Spirituality

Lionel Corbett

Introduction: A Spiritual Approach to Depth Psychology

For many depth psychologists with a spiritual orientation, psychology and spirituality are two perspectives on an identical reality, because the divine manifests itself by means of the psyche. Dourley (1981) has pointed out that the psyche is sacramental, since it is a medium of connection to the sacred and it has its own transpersonal dimensions which reveal the sacred or the holy. The depth psychological approach to spirituality appeals to direct, personal experience of this level of reality, and eschews reliance on doctrine, dogma, religious tradition or religious authority.

This approach claims that the personal and transpersonal dimension of the psyche are inextricably intertwined, so that when we study sacred experience we invariably study the structure and dynamics of the psyche at the same time. Similarly, transpersonal elements are invariably present even in what seems to be purely personal material, even if we are unaware of them. Therefore, to separate spirituality and psychology is largely a convention based on habit, cultural preference, and academic turf. Here I make the usual distinction between religion as an institution with prescribed beliefs and practices, and spirituality in the sense of a subjective relationship with the sacred or with the divine in a traditional sense. Or, based on our personal experience of the transpersonal dimension, our spirituality is our acknowledgment of spiritual forces at work beyond human understanding, or simply our personal way of dealing with life's ultimate questions.

Soul in Depth Psychology

From antiquity until the early nineteenth century and the subsequent rise of psychology as an academic discipline, what we now call psychology was understood to be a science of the soul. This is again the attitude of many contemporary depth psychologists. Although there is no agreement on the meaning of "soul" in their literature, for many depth psychologists the words "soul" and "psyche" are roughly synonymous terms. Psychotherapy, for instance, is understood in the etymological sense of that word as service to the soul. Most of these psychologists agree that whatever might be the nature of the psyche or the soul, it can be thought of operationally as an ontologically a priori, spiritual essence within the person, not necessarily in the traditional theological sense but as the deepest subjectivity of the individual, that level within us that gives meaning and significance to our lives.

Most depth psychologists would object to attempts to reduce the psyche or soul to an epiphenomenon of brain, because, as Jung (1964/1970) puts it, we assume that the psyche is a domain of existence in its own right, indeed a cosmic principle coequal with physical being, and that the psyche arises from an unknown spiritual principle (1960/1969). Indeed, many depth psychologists believe that spiritual reality contains and organizes what we refer to as material reality. One has to address in one's own way the potential problem of dualism that arises here. One can for example simply bracket the traditional soul-body or mind-brain dilemma for practical psychotherapeutic purposes, or one can think of these as two aspects of

the same reality, experienced in different modes because of the limitations of the human perceptual apparatus. One can use a personally appealing metaphor to avoid dualism, for example by thinking of psyche and body as a gradient of different densities of emanation from a unitary source. The physical body is at one end of this spectrum, while consciousness is at a more subtle level of the same energetic process.

Archetypes as Spiritual Processes

The depth psychological approach to spirituality views the psyche's intrinsic organizing principles, what Jung called the archetypes, as spiritual principles within the psyche. This allows depth psychologists to see archetypal processes as spiritual "organs" within the psyche that perform different functions, just as, in antiquity, these forces were personified and thought of as gods, goddesses, or spirits. Archetypal patterns contribute to the structure of the individual psyche because they form the core of intrapsychic structures or complexes, so that there is always a transpersonal aspect to our psychological life, including our psychopathology. That is, spiritual elements are important in forming the structures of the personality, so that to study these structures psychologically is at the same time to study the dynamics of the sacred within the personality. Thus, rather than envision the transpersonal dimension as entirely transcendent, for the depth psychologist it is located deeply within human subjectivity. Traditional theologians are concerned that this perspective reduces a supra-psyche divinity to a purely psychological phenomenon. However, if the psyche is real and the holy manifests itself thereby, no reduction is implied.

The Religious Function of the Psyche

Because of the psyche's intrinsic religious function, which means its ability to either generate or mediate numinous experience, the psyche is a continuous source of personal revelation. Many traditional religionists believe that revelation is restricted to events such as the handing down of the Torah at Mt. Sinai or by means of the life of Jesus. For Christian fundamentalists, revelation ended with the completion of the New Testament. In contrast, the depth psychologist believes that numinous or mystical experiences as described by Rudolph Otto (1958) continue to occur to all of us in dreams, as waking visions, through the body, as synchronistic events, in the natural world, during creative work, during periods of physical illness or

psychopathology, induced by entheogens, or spontaneously for no apparent reason (Corbett, 1996, 2007). Typically, the eruption of the numinosum into ordinary consciousness is more likely to occur when the hegemony of the ego is relatively weakened by severe stresses.

Experiences of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* may or may not take a traditional form. Biblical examples are the experience of Moses hearing the voice of God speaking to him from a burning bush (Exodus 3: 2–6), or the experience of Saul on the road to Damascus, blinded by a bright light as the voice of Jesus speaks to him (Acts 9: 1–9). However, numinous experiences may be completely novel, and may not be related to the religious tradition of the subject, in which case their content may be difficult to understand, even though their emotional quality is unmistakable. Even when they do not have a traditional content, they are recognized by their emotional quality; they are awesome, dreadful, uncanny, making one feel that one has been addressed by something not of our ordinary world. Often we feel humbled, captivated, perhaps blessed by them.

Of most importance to the depth psychologist is that numinous experiences are usually intimately related to the psychology of the subject, which is why Jung stressed their healing quality. Sometimes they address the subject's immediate existential problem, while at others they speak to a developmental difficulty, an emotional problem, or they affect the course of the individual's individuation process. They may produce a religious conversion experience or prevent suicide, although it is important to note that in fragile personalities they may trigger a psychosis or a "spiritual emergency."

Because of their emotional intensity, numinous experiences have a self-authenticating quality; they produce a subjective conviction of their ontological reality that is difficult to deny. Nevertheless, for the materialist, whether psychoanalytically or biologically oriented, such experiences are typically reduced to some form of psychopathology by dismissing them as hallucinatory, hysterical, the result of residual primary narcissism, a regressive merger with mother, or due to a pathological brain process. In contrast, for the depth psychologist, as for Rudolph Otto, these experiences are *sui generis*, and not reducible. For the depth psychologist, they can be considered to be the experience of direct contact with the archetypal dimension of the psyche. Either they originate in what we refer to as the unconscious, or the unconscious acts as a medium of transmission of the numinosum which originates "beyond" the psyche. This epistemological problem cannot be definitively solved, but it is not important for practical psychotherapeutic

work, which requires that we discern the significance of the experience for the subject's life, relate it to the subject's psychological structures, and assist with its integration if necessary.

Spirituality as an Integral Aspect of Human Psychology

There is evidence (from burial practices, cave paintings, stone monuments, and the shamanic traditions) that our early human ancestors practiced various forms of spirituality for tens of thousands of years prior to the advent of the monotheistic traditions. Obviously there are several ways to interpret this fact. There are "explanations" for the origin of religion from all schools of psychology, while biologists believe that spirituality developed with the evolution of brain structure, although there is disagreement about whether religious belief was directly adaptive or whether religion is just a byproduct of our evolution. However, to have a scientific explanation for a phenomenon does not mean it is not real. The psychologist can legitimately argue that human beings have a spiritual sensibility because there really is a spiritual dimension, and we are drawn to it because it is an essential level of our being, just as thirst would not have evolved if we did not need water.

If spiritual experience is the experience of something both real and important to us, and our spiritual sense is a source of human motivation, spirituality is properly part of the province of psychology. It may be argued that for the depth psychologist to study spiritual experience smacks of an encroachment on theology. But this would only be the case if we were to speculate on the origin of this experience or on its absolute nature, whereas we simply accept this genre of experience as an empirical reality. Its source – for example whether it may originate in a divinity beyond the psyche – remains a matter of faith.

The depth psychological approach suggests that we have no need to tie our spirituality to any particular religious tradition. The established religious traditions have long insisted that the sacred may only be approached in their terms, using their rituals, sacraments, sacred books, and so on. However, many people experience the sacred in personal ways that may have little to do with the ways in which our religious traditions insist that it manifests itself. Our contemporary consciousness, influenced by advances in quantum physics, cosmology, and depth psychology, requires that we approach the sacred with these developments in mind.

Edinger (1984) has suggested that our culture is beginning to experience a new dispensation, a new means by

which divine grace emerges into the world, and a new God-image. The ancient Hebrews experienced the divine handing down law cast in stone, followed by the Christian experience of Christ as the incarnation of the God of love. Our felt sense today is that we are in relationship with the transpersonal psyche, which incarnates in everyone and communicates through personal experience of the numinous rather than by means of a set of laws or a particular savior. It is too early to tell if Edinger is correct, but if he is, the depth psychological approach to spirituality will be one of the pillars of this emerging spiritual form.

See also: [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#)

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Descent to the Underworld

Kathryn Madden

In Christian theological doctrine, Christians affirm in the Apostles' Creed their belief that Jesus descended into Hell (Gk. κατελθόντα εἰς τὰ κατώτατα; L., *descendit ad*

inferos, or underworld), on the Saturday between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. His descent is understood as an act of liberation of the unredeemed souls who had been banished to hell from the beginning of time. It is believed by most Christians that Christ raised with him those from all previous times who were deemed by God to be worthy to enter the kingdom of eternal life. Although this declaration of faith is made in the Christian Apostles' Creed, there is no specific mention of the event in the gospels other than some inferences in Acts 2:24:

- ▶ But God raised him up having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

Acts 2:31 further states that:

- ▶ He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption (The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 1991).

John 2:6 describes Jesus' death as three days and three nights in the heart (*en te kardia*) of the earth. The apostle Paul draws in Romans from Deuteronomy 30:12–13 and Psalm 71:20 to describe the death of Jesus as a plummet into the abyss (*tis katabesetai eis abussion*) and the ascent of the resurrection as a rising from the dead (*ek nekron anagagein*). As forecast in the Old Testament, Hebrews (2:14–16), Jesus was to encounter the actuality of death as the only course by which his divine being could conquer evil.

In the Jewish tradition, beginning with the early Hebrew peoples, Hell was referred to *Sheol* [sh'ól], the common place of the dead. *Sheol* was an underground abode comprised of numerous levels. The dead were tortured according to the degree of their earthly sins. There below was also Gehenna, the lake of eternal fire where the fallen were forever tormented by flames.

The theme of human descent to the underworld does not exist in the Old Testament except in how God rescued people from death (Psalm 9:13; 30:3; 86:13; Isa 38:17; Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7). For example, when Saul summoned the prophet Samuel through the witch of Endor to consult the dead (1 Sam 28:3–25) there an indication of bridging the realm of life and death. In general, the notion of human descent was censured by Old Testament Law. In modern Judaism, an increasing distinction arose between the place in which the unrighteous dead dwelled (Hades) and a separate place in which the righteous dead resided (Luke, 16:22–23).

The late Hebrew literature of the apocryphal texts contributed to how the notion of descent was conceptualized in the Apostles' Creed. These included the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* and *the Acts of Pilate* (ca. 3 AD).

The *Gospel of Nicodemus* prophesized that Jesus would raise the dead in Hell just as he had raised Lazarus. Apocryphal literature often referred to the *Decensus Christi ad Inferos* which portrayed a conflagration between Christ and Satan, the god Hades.

In the second and third centuries, the early church fathers Tertullian, Clement, and Origen treated Christ's descent as literal. Their authoritative testimony anchored the event in Christian belief although it was not entered in to the content of the Apostles' Creed until around the seventh century.

The concept of the descent to the underworld derived from numerous oral traditions, legends, and literary forms borrowed from antiquity, which undoubtedly influenced the writers and redactors of scriptural literature. The myths recorded by Homer, Hesiod, Aristophanes, and Virgil featured a protagonist's heroic return from the underworld that involved transforming evil into good, death into life, torment into faith in relation to a salvific figure. Many of these legends became living religions lasting thousands of years.

In the literature of ancient Egypt, Hades, or Amenti, pertained to the place of the hidden god. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* attests to specific rites and rituals in which an initiate would venture into the underworld with the goal of transformed consciousness. The Egyptian rituals inspired the Greek Mysteries, Eleusinian Mysteries, and Mithraism, which were liturgies of symbolic death and rebirth that emulated the earlier worship of Osiris. The discourse in Colossians 2:9–15 of the New Testament pertaining to *The Lord's Descent into Hell* may imitate these earlier traditions. The ritual of baptism became representative of symbolic death and rebirth.

In ancient Greece Hades [Gk. unknown, unseen, hidden], became known in various cultures as Gehenna, Tophet, Abaddon, Naraka, jahannan [Hind.], Aralu [Babylonian], Hel, Nifhel [Norse], the inferno, the pit, the abyss, the nether world, the region of the dead, the abode of the damned, the place of torment, visitation with the shades (ancestors) below, or limbo, the realm of departed souls. The descent typically involved a confrontation or encounter with the god who ruled the terrain of the underworld.

One of the most celebrated initiates connected to the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries (seventh century BCE), was Persephone, the daughter of Demeter who was seized by the god Hades and taken into the underworld. The myth of Persephone and Demeter remained in the collective culture as a religion for over two thousand years.

Another descent myth of the Greek Mysteries was the Orphic Mystery. Orpheus had a beautiful wife, Eurydice,

[Εὐρύδικῆ, Εὐρυδική] as well as a talent for playing the lyre. One day while dancing in the fields, Eurydice was bitten by a poisonous snake and died. Orpheus ventured to the underworld in an attempt to bring her back to human life. One version of this legend tells of Orpheus playing his lyre so enchantingly that Cerberus, the sentry of Hades, fell asleep. Orpheus then entreated the god Hades to return the soul of Eurydice to life. His wish was granted with the qualification that Orpheus must walk ahead of his wife and never look back until they had returned to the world of the living. Orpheus failed. He was never to see his beloved wife again (Guthrie, 1993: 171 ff.).

Christ's descent into Hell and subsequent Resurrection corresponded with the rituals and themes of these ancient civilizations. In early cultures, the triumph over death often coincided with the harvesting seasons of the agricultural year. The Greeks understood Hades as fork in the road where one might enter *Tartaros*: an existence of endless punishments; or, at best, one could be ushered into a paradisaical existence where their loved ones awaited – the Elysian Fields.

Until approximately 500 AD, the descent ritual was an inherent part of a sect of secret teachings known as the Greek Mysteries. The initiate's descent was both symbolic and literal. One was isolated in an underground cave or hollow in order to confront an internal universe. Analogous to modern analytical psychology, the symbolic quest, like C. G. Jung's mid-life challenge, was a *telos* (Gk. *telete*), an end goal and ultimate completion of one's potential for psychological and spiritual development.

In every culture of ancient civilization the collective psyche gave birth to initiates who made the descent and were magnified into the heroes of myth, for example: Gilgamesh, hero of the Babylonian epic; Ishtar who descended into Aralu; the goddess Astarte of Phoenicia and her consort Adonai who journeyed into the Akkadian Hades; the Great Mother Cybele of Asia Minor with her consort Attis. Others included Dionysos, Herakles, and Krishna.

A consort, guide, master teacher, high priest or priestess prepared the initiate for the journey, similar to the modern role of the psychotherapist where one descends into his or her unconscious, internal world and is accompanied by the presence of a therapist. The role of this consort was also to warn an initiate about the possible disintegration of the personality during the process and potential madness upon return.

There was an emphasis upon preparation for "going deeper," and a series of pre-trials to pass successfully including fasts and purification rites. One needed a strong

constitution, a sturdy ego, and a maturity of character. The initiate was trained to relinquish memory, desire, and will so that the physical self and personal psyche could succumb to a temporary death-like state (Apuleius, 1984, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 21, 23) which was often described as darkness. Plutarch, too, underwent an initiation ritual describing the proximity of *teleutan* and *teleisthai* – *to die* and *to be initiated* – (Plutarch, 1987, *Fragments*: 178). In the depth of this slumber, the mysteries of life and death might also be revealed. In the Egyptian Mysteries, Apuleius exclaims this experience of illumination: “at midnight I saw the sun shining with a splendid light” (Plutarch, 1987, *Fragments*: 23).

If not sufficiently prepared, the participant could experience a threshold of annihilation. Face-to-face with the god of the underworld, – what in modern psychology C. G. Jung would call an encounter with the archetypal shadow – the individual only could endure only with the qualities of humility and willingness. If the seeker was able to make it beyond the more dangerous stages, the reward was a beyond death experience of immortality.

The Egyptian myths, the Mystery Religions, and the apocryphal texts of Early Christianity were sources for accounts that followed throughout the centuries in various genres, for example, the English Mystery Plays of medieval times, which centered on the theme of the Harrowing of Hell and of Dante’s *Inferno* (Canto X. Circle vi).

Inspired by Virgil’s *Aeneid*, philosopher Dante Alighieri wrote about the descent into Hell in “The Inferno” from his *Purgatorio*. In this work he speaks of the lowest Hell replete with “malicious and furious demons” as the City of Dis [cf. Dis]. Dis is the most abyssal abyss of ultimate despondency. This underworld represents the bowels of the universe and the bleakest recesses from anything alive or life-giving. In Dis, there is no promise of hope or of a caring and sustaining divinity; only evil and despair.

As represented in Dante’s illustration of unconscious life, those who reside in the darkness of Hell are forever alive, yet spiritually dead. What greater cruelty to human consciousness and to the uniqueness of an individual than to be completely unknown, and unconscious. In the abyss of Dis, there is no possibility of the life of the soul without the redemption of another. For Dante, at the end of time, the forgotten non-souls who have not “known” Christ, are lost forever to the possibility of being known within the unity of the divinity. These are individuals who have turned their focus toward the sterility of selfish egotism in contrast to offering gratitude for their very being. Control, power, greed and envy relinquish them to an eternal Hell of non-being.

Psychology

Analogous to the Nekyia, or night sea journey of Carl Jung the descent into the underworld has powerful and purposeful psychological intent [cf. Abyss; Dark Night of the Soul]. The ego falls into the unconscious for an extended time to eventually emerge as a person reborn. The transformed individual seeks to “obey a higher will.”

Jungian analyst Edward Edinger concurs that this “fall” or plunge into the psyche represents the ego’s intentional descent into the unconscious because the ego has been “beckoned.” The awareness of the conscious ego is, in the interim, eclipsed and carried into the lower world where it rescues certain contents of the unconscious and even conquers death itself. For Edinger, the death and resurrection of Christ is an archetype that exists in the collective psyche that is analogous to the process which lives itself out in the individual seeker (initiate). The collective God-image must necessarily undergo death and rebirth throughout certain periods of history, he tells us, thus, the continuing necessity of willing initiates to bring forth “the godhead.”

Jung views this prolonged “disintegrative” encounter as the psychological equivalent of the integration of the collective unconscious, which is “an essential part of the individuation process” (Brome, 1981: 159). The unconscious underworld needs ego consciousness to raise it (Brome, 1981: 39). What Dante called Dis represents all that is yet unknown to human consciousness. Dangerous components of the shadow aspects of human consciousness exist externally and dangerously so, as long as the projective nature of the psyche remains shut away within the crypt of the individual and collective psyche.

Drawing from anthropologist and scholar Mircea Eliade, Marie Louise von Franz (1975), likens Jung to the shaman whose “main function is the healing of personal illnesses and disturbances in the life of the collective” (Eliade, 1964: 8 passim). Like the shaman or medicine man, certain individuals are forced into a particular inner way as a result of the collective culture around them. As the person feels summoned, “he sets himself apart, turns contemplative; often he receives his call through a dream experience” (Eliade, 1964: 21). Readiness is crucial to survive the dying of the old self, the former ego, and the emergence of a new self.

The individual is carried off to the underworld where he or she is often dismembered or suffers other tortures. Like the duel-possibility of the Greek path of the underworld, one may also be carried off to heaven where instruction is received from a divinity, a female figure, an invisible heavenly spouse, or a magical anima

(von Franz, 1975: 100) The central element is always the same: death and symbolic resurrection (Eliade, 1964: 5, 56).

Contemporary Jungian analyst, James Hillman agrees with Jung in *The dream and the underworld* (1979b), that it is Psyche who beckons us into the depths. Being polytheistic in contrast to monotheistic, Hillman is more synchronous with the worldview of antiquity: there are many gods and goddesses in the psyche personified as archetypal manifestations, but there is not necessarily anything divine or transcendent beyond the psyche. Spirit reveals itself in image from the depths of the soul, which Jung, Edinger, Dante, and the masters of the Mysteries would agree with. Yet, for Hillman and the Greeks, images *are* the divinity.

In contrast to Jung, Freud's classical perspective views images, dreams, or waking dreams of descent into the underworld, as Oedipal themes related to castration anxiety. Freud emphasizes incestuous content with the repeated theme of the psyche's need to destroy phallic symbols (Boss, 1973: 273). For instance, a patient might dream of a church tower, an image that dream by dream becomes more differentiated. A Freudian psychoanalyst working with such a dream most likely will interpret reductively the increasing specificity of the church tower as a collection of images that relate back in the patient's developmental life. The image becomes reduced to that of genitalia or "to a preconceived unconscious complex, thus paying a disservice to the spirit" (Robbins, 2008).

What is crucial when working with the deeper layers of the psyche (the underworld), the patient, with the analyst's guidance, will begin to amplify dream images in a non-pathological manner, giving the individual the opportunity to dig more archeologically into the collective underpinnings of the psyche at large, which often not only produces religious or spiritual images, but a feeling of confidence that one is connected to very deep roots with a supra-personal divinity. One discovers that religious dreams and symbols have their fundamental origin in archetypal structures that are universal, timeless, and shared in common with all people.

Regardless of the psychological school of thought, the chthonic and instinctual of a psychological complex need to be given as much primacy as the spiritual and transcendent, therefore avoiding abstractions or over-intellectualizations. A Jungian perspective can lean too far toward "spirit," with a tendency to universalize a patient's imagery. This inclination can be reductive in if there is an essentialism underlying the image.

A balanced discernment means that one truly descends into the depths of "pathos," or one's pathology,

and yet, does not remain imprisoned in the darkness, enmeshed with the god of Hades, Hell, or the archetypal shadow – for this would certainly flag a potential psychosis that would need spirit and sustenance to pull one out of this psychotic morass.

The word pathology is comprised of pathos and logos. The logos of pathos exists in an ever-precarious balance. One can succumb to the instinctual nature of soul but miss the logos of spirit. The logos of spirit pulls one back into the world of the living, into the light with a renewed sense of direction and purpose fueled by the experience of spirit *in* the body. This experience is shared by the ancients and the moderns – when it occurs, it will never be forgotten for one will be forever changed. The marriage of pathos and logos gives life to the soul which endures forever.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Eleusinian Mysteries](#) [Mystery Religions](#) [Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#)

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Deus Absconditus

Meredith Lisagor

Evolution and Variants of a Theological Concept

Ancient Egyptian and classical Western mystery religions can be said to rest upon the inscrutability of deity, but a concept of god as partially knowable yet ultimately inaccessible by any sort of mediation is the fruit of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Various detailed by different theologians as early as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215), notions about god as hidden, or Deus Absconditus, generally take their biblical warrant from Isaiah 45:15, “Truly, you are a God who hides himself.” Old Testament injunctions against seeing or looking upon god and New Testament recapitulations (e.g., “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him.” John 1:18) may also have influenced discussions of deity’s purposeful invisibility. But the crafting of theology based on the hiddenness of God would not occur until the Protestant Reformation.

Cited chiefly in context of the indefinability of the one transcendent god in words, concepts, or images, *hiddenness* was significant to early Christian thinkers only as it was implicit to the direct self-revelation of a personal god. In short, while God had revealed something of His personal nature in Jesus Christ, whatever was not known he had chosen to hide.

Clement, a polite opponent of Gnosticism, proposed that through illumination by Christ as the incarnate Logos, humanity, being made in God’s image and likeness, could and was even meant to gradually understand God, the otherwise “Unknown.” For his pupil Origen (ca. 182–254), humanity’s likeness to the divine pointed to a kinship between them. And God’s Logos, revealed in Christ, then hidden again after the resurrection, was “an example,” imitation of which would make the faithful proper “partakers of the divine nature” (Origen, 1979: 319) at Parousia.

However, John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), in vehement rejection of the Anomean Arians’ presumption that they understood God’s very essence, proceeded from the conceit that God was in truth wholly other, utterly

“unapproachable” as stated in 1 Timothy and “unsearchable in His judgments” as declared in Rom 11:33. In this, Chrysostom apprehended the psychic consequences for the individual in relationship with such divinity, and, according to theologian Rudolf Otto, spoke to the very core of the creature’s experience of the numinous, which is unrational, terrified, and yet drawn to it in fascination.

Augustine (ca. 354–430) engaged the idea of God as hidden and unknowable in His essence, but emphasized the way in which God’s visible miracles draw one toward Him through the love and faith they inspire. Pseudo-Dionysius (ca. fifth century), adumbrating the mature Christian mysticism of the high Middle Ages, envisioned the possibility of ascending to the very “ray of the divine shadow” (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1978: 135), however, only by “renouncing all that the mind may conceive [about God]” (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1978: 137). Nicolas Cusanus (1401–1464) elaborated on the nature of such renunciation in his *Dialogue on the Hidden God*. But it was Martin Luther (1483–1546), driven by recurring bouts of self-doubt, guilt, and despair, who gave the most trenchant and exhaustive attention to the notion of Deus Absconditus.

Luther’s life-long emotional and psychosomatic sufferings, which he termed *Anfechtungen*, made him question whether they were assaults by the devil or God Himself, who though all-loving had nonetheless subjected His only begotten son to the extremity of suffering. If the latter, Luther concluded, “God hides his eternal goodness and mercy under eternal wrath, righteousness beneath iniquity” (Luther, 1972: 62). Thus, everyone will know periods of rejection by Him, as had Christ on the cross where God was simultaneously revealing His redemptive love. Indeed, the godhead embraces all contraries, and its justice – in wrath or grace – is hidden from reason. Only through faith in Christ crucified, insisted Luther, can one approach God’s true nature, and “believe him merciful when he saves so few and damns so many. . .” (Luther, 1972: 62).

With the Age of Reason, concern about God’s hiddenness waned. At the dawn of modernity, the last notable reflection on the topic is to be found in the *Pensées* of mathematician and Roman Catholic-convert Blaise Pascal (1623–1662). In these reflections he proposes that God hides Himself so that humanity might come to Him by an act of will; to be fully revealed would make Him a matter of fact, requiring no commitment from the believer.

God and the Splitting Phenomenon

Among modern thinkers, Martin Luther’s doctrine has occasioned much critique, both theological and psychological.

Erik Erikson, in a definitive biography, sees Luther as achieving in the construct of institutional religion “a living reformulation of faith” that points one back to “basic trust” (Erikson, 1962: 257), a feature essential to the healthy emergence of ego that is often impaired by the censure of the later developing super-ego. Luther’s *Anfechtungen* were, psychologically speaking, reactions to a highly charged super-ego forged in the milieu of a censoring father. According to Erikson, by conceding that behind God’s wrath and prior to it exists compassion, Luther not only approached a resolution to his personal struggles but also rehabilitated religion’s capacity to reaffirm the beleaguered “basic trust” of the faithful.

While theologians debate the nuances of Luther’s exact meaning in his highly varied use of Deus Absconditus, Rudolf Otto credits the reformer with revitalizing rational theology by identifying his personal terror and fascination with experiences of the divine. C. G. Jung, who asserted that the “only statements that have psychological validity concerning the God-image are either paradoxes or antinomies” (Jung, 1953: 11n), affirms that Luther had grasped a critical nonrational truth when he spoke of God’s dark side: His doctrine can be said to hold up the numinous, disowned shadow material of the collective unconscious, which must always be considered the natural habitat of contraries.

A truth, then, that both Luther’s theology and personal history illuminate from the Object-Relational vantage point is the inherent – to be sure, essential – tendency of the human psyche toward *splitting*. Luther’s God could easily symbolize the psychic field on which an ego that cannot tolerate ambivalence keeps internal objects separated into good and bad, comforting and punishing – God as the compassionate beloved, a representation of the cossetting mother who reflects the infant’s goodness back to it; God as persecutor, hostility split off, and projected. Harry Guntrip, discussing the splitting of ego itself – into *libidinal*, *central*, and *antilibidinal* – notes how an individual will both repudiate (through the antilibidinal ego) and defend a weak libidinal ego against “outer world pressures and inner world fears” (Guntrip, 1992: 184) by hiding it behind central ego aggressiveness, obsessive self-mastery, addiction to duty, and physical illness. Despite Erikson’s characterization of his triumph, Luther – renowned for volatility, hyper-scrupulosity, and an assiduous work ethic – never overcame periodic depressions and psychosomatic crises.

It must be acknowledged that the phenomenon of splitting is implicitly central to any conceit of Deus Absconditus, for regardless of the interpreter – and whether or not God is envisaged as the thing of which humanity is Its image and likeness or a screen for human

projections – God hidden represents half a perennial debate: the Godhead’s immanence versus Its transcendence. In their delineations of the ways in which the Hidden God might be known, Clement and Origin, Augustine and the Christian Mystics all point to Christ as signifying a reconciliation of these modes and mooted, if not resolving, the issue of hiddenness. In psychodynamic terms, what they intuited was that Christ represents a well-integrated psyche, the still point at which good and bad objects stand in healthy tension. At the same time, he models the ways in which *introjection* and *projection* facilitate development and relationship: Where Jesus as human was awakened to his divinity, he may be said to have introjected the Father (divine or personal), making Him indeed immanent even immediate and available as a building block of ego and an internal-object world; while Jesus ascended becomes the projected image of an ideal, transcending (or eluding) the domain of the ego yet remaining in relationship with it.

An Affect Regulation Take

A suggestive point arises at the convergence of Object-Relations and Attachment theories in recent discussions of neurobiology and affect regulation. The elusive-but-desired or (as in the case of Luther) unpredictably present-but-critical “God” might be identified with an unconscious internalized object that resulted from neurologic imprinting caused by experiences of “self-interacting-with-a-misattuned-dysregulating-other” (Schore, 1974: 473) – *mother or father*. That is to say, the consequences of a primary caregiver whose affect fails to reflect the infant’s enthusiasms at critical junctures (and/or meets the infant with impatience, disdain or anger) are not only psychic storage of self- and other-representations corresponding to the misattunement, but also orbitofrontal cortex development primed for future affective replications: A psychobiological expectancy for consequent relations – unto a relationship with a God – to recapitulate the affective experience in the original misattuned dyad. Otherwise put, Deus Absconditus could be hardwired.

Freudian and Jungian Takes

Perhaps nothing speaks more potently to the concept of the Hidden God than Freud’s theory on the origin of religion as the murder of the primal father by sons who wanted unimpeded access to the primal mother (*Totem and Taboo*, Freud, 1957). The father’s elevation to the status of a god is a sublimation aimed at palliating

guilt and eradicating the crime from racial memory. In this context, a fantasy of a Hidden God might be considered a redoubling of the sons' effort to shield themselves from return of the repressed memory. And Isaiah's assertion that God "hides himself" would be a disingenuous displacement of responsibility – since it is we who have done the hiding. Returning to Luther, his Oedipal conflict with a harsh and disapproving father, which lasted a lifetime, could be said to have made him less able to combat the repeated "return of the repressed," and more highly identified with Christ as the son who suffered to atone for collective sin (the disguised primal murder). To go this far, however, is to be obliged to suggest Luther's subjective identification with Christ as exalted in resurrection to equal status with the Father; which Freud could say any Christian does vicariously in the transformed totem meal, the Eucharist, where God is present but hidden. The Christian, thus, stirs the repressed memory of an archaic crime in regular ritual; and, theoretically, we could say that he or she may never be able to fully outgrow the regressive ambivalence of the Oedipal drama.

In Pascal's contention that God is purposefully hidden, we also find classical psychoanalytic implications. Certainly, the thesis suggests the voice of the super-ego: God, or something higher in the human makeup, has expectations of the believer; and trust as an accomplishment of good ego consolidation is more valuable (to the internalized father and the ego) than an act of memory which does not engage the individual's value assessing capacity. Placing the thesis, then, in the context of the primal murder, Pascal may be thought to have unconsciously recognized that the internalized father wants the faithful to recognize the primal crime and to atone through an act of character, with consciousness and volition – and he is not going to make it easy. More practically speaking, the super-ego wants the ego to recognize its obligation to master the impulses of the id.

For C. G. Jung, the realm of the instincts, the unconscious, calls the ego to acceptance and humility. Its task is not so much to subordinate drives as to negotiate with them, and to learn as best as it can their symbolic language. Neither, however, is the ego to be subordinated by the unconscious. It should learn that it is itself archetypal and elemental of the greater psyche represented by the *Self* – the correlate of totality, wholeness, the impersonal God, whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere, as St. Augustine observed. Augustine was also able to approach the idea that we shall not know God in His essence, but rather by as much of the instinctive numinosity as consciousness can metabolize. And such is the

wisdom that informed the Pseudo-Dionysus when he saw that one might understand something of divinity only after one renounces what the mind (thinks it) knows. Jung would say, perhaps, that God's very nature is hiddenness and it is only through letting go of qualifying and quantifying intelligence that consciousness experiences the true intimations of wholeness.

See also: [Affect](#) [Augustine](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Ego](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Gnosticism](#) [Id](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Logos](#) [Luther, Martin](#) [Mystery Religions](#) [Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#) [Numinosum](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Protestantism](#) [Self](#) [Super-Ego](#)

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Deus Otiosus

David A. Leeming

In many religious traditions the creator god essentially retires from the world he has created and leaves it to others to run – to humans or lesser gods. In short, he does not interfere with the world once he has created it. His mythological relative is the Deus Absconditus who more actively absents himself from his creation. For the purposes of psychological interpretation, the two types can perhaps be considered to be synonymous. Many African creator gods leave creation to tricksters or to their sons. Sometimes, as in Greek, Anatolian, and Indian mythology, the old high god is forced out and is replaced by young upstart deities. Christian theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther, have used the hidden god concept to emphasize that God is unknowable but that we can know God through the tangible “living” Christ, Jesus. Deists, on the other hand find in the Deus Otiosus – the clock-maker God who made the world, wound it up and then left – simply a rational explanation for life as we know it.

The psychological importance of the Otiosus/Absconditus is complex. For some peoples it expresses a “family” that senses desertion by the father and the consequent trials and tribulations of life. For others – Aquinas and Luther, for example – it signifies the gift of the God revealed or embodied in the Christ with whom the worshipper seeks emotional and psychological unity. Mystics of all traditions would find positive psychological energy in the “hidden” god within with whom the individual achieves perfect union or Self. For Deists the God who withdraws gives the gift of psychological and moral independence and self reliance. For the atheist the Deus Otiosus is a myth used to excuse the evils of life. For those who doubt but long for a better life the hidden god is an inner security longed for but painfully absent.

See also: [▶ Deus Absconditus](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Devil

Jeffrey Burton Russell

Origins

The word “devil” derives from Greek *diabolos*, meaning “adversary.” In Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Muslim traditions, the term applies to a single spirit of evil whose function is to oppose the will of the good God. In Zoroastrian tradition, and in the Manicheism that derives from it, the Devil, named Ahriman, is a god of evil and darkness in opposition to the god of goodness and light, Ohrmazd. The two gods struggle against each other until the end of the world, at which Ohrmazd will triumph and annihilate Ahriman. In Jewish tradition the Devil is most often identified as Satan, though he also has many other names. In the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) Satan’s role is usually unclear, and often the term “satan” is used as a generic term for an opponent. When the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek about 200 BCE, the term *diabolos* entered scriptural usage. Though only marginal in earlier Hebrew thought, the Devil, under various names, became of much greater importance in Jewish pseudepigraphical literature (materials falsely claimed to have been written by ancient Biblical figures such as Enoch) from about 100 BCE to about 150 CE. The mutual influence of Hebrew and Zoroastrian thought is still unclear, but in any case the Devil was a hugely more sinister power in the pseudepigrapha than in the Hebrew Bible.

Christianity

This is precisely the period in which Christianity arose, and the power attributed to Satan in the New Testament and in other early Christian writings, though less lurid than in the pseudepigrapha, and never as great as that in Zoroastrian texts, is nonetheless a huge threat to Christ, to the Christian community, and to Christian individuals. He is tempter, accuser, tormentor, and jailer of the

damned in hell. In addition to the canonical Christian writings, a number of allegedly Christian but actually Gnostic texts, mainly from the second century CE, derived their ideas from the pseudepigrapha and took the power of the Devil to almost Zoroastrian extremes. For most of the gnostic sects, the cosmos was a battleground between the God of light and spirit on the one hand and the Devil, lord of darkness and matter on the other. Thus the gnostics created a matter/spirit dichotomy, which they melded with the Zoroastrian good spirit/evil spirit dichotomy. Such a dichotomy was explicitly and firmly denied by orthodox Christianity, in which the Devil's power, though great and fearful, was always weaker than that of Christ. Anyone calling on Christ against the Devil would be saved, and at the end of the world, Christ would cast Satan and his fellow demons forever into hell. Belief in the existence of a Devil as the personification of evil has never been a necessary Christian dogma, but tradition, based on the New Testament, assumed his reality, and in certain periods of history, notably the second to fourth centuries CE and the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries CE, his power was widely believed to loom large. In the latter period, terror of the Devil was the motive force behind the witch craze.

Islam

Muslims, unlike Jews and Christians, believed that their scripture, the Qur'an, was dictated word for word by God through an angel to the prophet Muhammad. Thus no word of the Qur'an could be ignored, so the existence of the Devil (called Iblis or Shaytan) could not be denied. However, Islam differed from Judaism and Christianity in another important sense: the will of Allah prevails in every place throughout all time. This means that opposition to Allah either by humans or by spirits was limited entirely to what God wills to allow.

Polytheism

As opposed to the religions above, most religions recognized no single spirit of evil. The problem of evil was solved in a number of different ways. Some religions posited deities combining good and evil in themselves, such as Quetzalcoatl in ancient Guatemalan religion and Vishnu in Hinduism, where he was both creator and destroyer. Another solution was "doublets," pairs of gods in which the good side has one name and the evil side another, as with Hathor/Sekhmet and Horus/Seth in

Egypt. Yet another solution was to have groups of generally constructive deities at odds with groups of generally destructive ones, as in the asuras and devas in ancient Persia and India. Another was to have gods who are amoral or at least very inconsistent in their morality, as in Greco-Roman religion, where the traits assigned to each deity were wide and varied. Artemis/Diana, for example, was patroness of childbirth and virginity, animals and the hunt, the moon and the underworld. Still another way, in some Hindu and Buddhist thought, was to deny the existence of any real evil, considering good and evil part of *maya*, the illusion that anything in this world is real, an illusion that must be transcended in order to reach enlightenment.

Romanticism

In the West since the nineteenth century, alternative approaches to the Devil multiplied. That century was marked by the esthetic movement known as Romanticism, which emphasized feelings over reason and rebellion over tradition. For Romantics such as Victor Hugo, the Devil became a hero symbolizing the revolt of the human spirit against secular and religious authority. The Devil as hero re-emerged in the late twentieth century in Satanism, a cult whose followers tended not to take their beliefs seriously; those who did take Satan seriously held the meaningless view that a being whose concept was *invented* to represent evil is actually good.

Modern Criticism

Much more dominant in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the growth of physicalism, pragmatism, and deconstruction. These brought about a re-evaluation of evil and thus of the Devil. Physicalism was the philosophical belief that only material things that can be quantified are real, and so the spiritual exists only as an illusion. In such a view evil itself is only an outdated metaphor for antisocial behavior. Twenty-first century psychiatry tended strongly to the view that most, if not all, psychological problems are the result of genetic, hormonal, and even molecular malfunctions. Freudian psychoanalysis, which dominated from the end of the nineteenth past the middle of the twentieth century, held that evil sprang from the repression of sexual and other strong feelings into the unconscious, which distorted the repressed feelings into ideas and behaviors that the conscious was unable (without analysis) to deal

with. Freud of course dismissed the concept of the Devil as unhelpful and even harmful, as people often projected their hateful feelings onto other people. Psychoanalysis was inherently pragmatic in its goal of helping people adjust successfully to their environment. Jungian analytical psychology took the Devil more seriously as one of the archetypes that the universal human mind invented (or perhaps inherited) as a way of understanding evil, which Jung took seriously itself.

Deconstruction, which dominated philosophy the last three decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, maintained that every human concept was an infinitely malleable construct. There being no absolute truth or, indeed, any truth at all beyond what the individual constructs for himself or herself, each concept can be infinitely deconstructed. Thus the Devil exists or does not exist depending on what you believe, and his characteristics were whatever you think they are. Along with the Devil, evil itself was deconstructed to mean whatever an individual found inappropriate or repulsive. No concepts, even scientific, logical, or mathematical ones, were excluded from deconstruction, so that, *a fortiori*, fuzzier theological and philosophical views such as the Devil were swept away. Deconstruction mated with pragmatism to produce the dominant view that no concepts were true, so that good and evil were merely constructs that those with power force upon those they dominate and manipulate.

Still, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw a large religious revival in many parts of the world, and Christians and Muslims who remained true to their theological traditions took the Devil seriously, as a supernatural entity or at least as a powerful metaphor of the existence of radical evil.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Demons](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Zoroastrianism](#)

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Dionysos

Alexandra Krithades

Dionysos (*Bacchos* in Latin) is the son of Zeus and Semele. He was twice born, and the special circumstances of his birth indicate his unusual nature and the special place he occupies in Greek mythology and religion.

His mother Semele (possibly a goddess of Phrygian origin) was tricked by the jealous goddess Hera into requesting Zeus to appear before her in all his radiance. He reluctantly did so, and she was incinerated by the fire of his lightning. The baby, of six months gestation, was rescued from his dying mother's womb, and sewed into Zeus' thigh, to be gestated a further three months. When Dionysos was born, he was brought to the mythical Mt. Nysa to be raised by nymphs. This aspect of his history echoes his father Zeus' early origins. His life threatened by his devouring father Chronos, the infant Zeus was spirited away by his mother to be raised by nymphs on Mt. Ida in Crete.

The Orphic version of Dionysos' beginnings also includes a "twice born" element. According to this tradition, Dionysos was the offspring of Zeus and Persephone, and became the fourth ruler of the world, after Ouranos, Chronos, and Zeus. The Titans were jealous of the child, and plotted to destroy him, perhaps, with the incitement of Hera. They distracted the child with a mirror and other toys, then killed him and tore his body into seven pieces. Apollo, on orders of Zeus, collected his limbs and took them to Delphi. Athena saved the heart, and brought it to Zeus, who then enabled Dionysos to be reborn. In a rage, Zeus killed the Titans with his lightning. They were burnt to soot, and from this soot a substance was made from which humans were fashioned. Since the Titans had ingested some of the god, mankind is seen in the Orphic religion as part divine and part Titan.

His survival of fire, and/or dismemberment point to a key psychological aspect of Dionysos. His myth expresses

the inevitability, even necessity, of destruction within the psyche, as well as the psyche's ability to be reborn in the face of such destruction. The experience of dismemberment is something that most people who enter psychoanalysis or psychotherapy feel to some degree. In the beginning of analysis, analysts often have dreams with dismemberment motifs. The work of analysis involves the dismantling of personality structures, attitudes, and adaptations that no longer serve the individual or his/her life force.

Dionysos' survival of these experiences is an expression of the indestructible aspect of life itself, not on the level of the individual, but life as a force of nature, that is larger than our egos alone.

Dionysos is seen as having both masculine and feminine traits. He is associated with various animals, including the bull, the lion, the snake, the leopard, and the dolphin. He is depicted as both young and old, and is the most elusive of all the Greek gods. In the plant world, he is associated with the grapevine, ivy, the pine tree, and the wild fig.

His myths and cults are always a challenge to established social order, and often have a violent or bizarre element. He effects radical change through his epiphanies. To the rational ego, he represents a magical, enchanted realm. He is depicted as being always on the move, revealing himself in many different epiphanies, more than any other god in Greek mythology.

Dionysos in antiquity was principally the god of wine and intoxication. In addition, he presided over ritual madness or ecstasy (mania in Greek). The mask was a significant symbol of his presence, and thus ancient drama was devoted to Dionysos. Dionysos' nature was to transcend boundaries. The normal, conscious identities of his followers are subverted. His presence is fluid, full of illusion, and contains the opposites. He effects transformation, both negative and positive, from the viewpoint of the human ego.

Though scholars for years thought that the cult of Dionysos originated in Thrace, and was brought more recently into ancient Greece, the discovery of the name Dionysos on Linear B tablets from Mycenaean Pylos, dated circa 1250 BC indicates that he was present in mainland Greece well before. In Homer's *Iliad*, he is referred to as a "joy for mortals" (*Iliad*: 14.325). And in Hesiod's *Theogony*, he is described as "he of many delights" (*Hesiod's Theogony*: 941). Dionysos is seen in Greek religion as having invented or discovered wine, and given this "ambivalent" gift to mankind, much as Demeter gave the gift of the grain to mankind.

In ancient Greece, wine festivals were held in many areas. The oldest of these seems to be the Anthesteria, held in Athens each spring, when the new wine was drunk. It also celebrated the mythic arrival of Dionysos from across the sea. Other festivals included the performance of tragedy and comedy. Festivals that celebrated Dionysos were characterized by revelry, which included licentious and obscene behavior, the reversal of social roles, and cross-dressing by males. Processions of phalluses were paraded through the streets, though there are no extant depictions of Dionysos with an erection, unlike Hermes or Pan.

While alcohol intoxication is one of the darker aspects of Dionysos' gift to mankind, the ritual madness associated with his myth and cult was not associated with drug or alcohol use. The initiates in his cult, the maenads, were "seized" or possessed by the god. They behaved ecstatically, dancing wildly on remote mountaintops, and their rites were seen as "mad" only by those uninitiated. Most of the participants were women. In vase paintings, Dionysos and his followers tear apart live animals with the bare hands and eat them raw. We do not know if this actually occurred as part of the cultic practice, however, it reiterates the tearing apart of the young Dionysos by the Titans.

The worship of Dionysos had a very important psychological function. It emphasizes the value and importance of excess. In allowing for the suspension of the structures of everyday life, it enabled individuals to contact the darker, more irrational aspects of their nature in a ritualized way; to let go of ego control and space/time constraints and engage in mystical experience; and thus have access to the deeper non-ego realms of the psyche, what Jung calls the Self, for the purpose of inner transformation. His rites promoted the dissolution of differences, and the experience of a primordial unity with others, with nature and the mystical realization that life and death are one.

Thus, we see that Dionysos was also associated with death. Heraclitus, the fifth century philosopher famously said that Hades and Dionysos are one. His myth includes a story of descent to the underworld to bring his mother Semele back from Hades. Tombs were very frequently decorated with Dionysos and his maenads in the ancient world.

From a psychological perspective, it makes sense that Dionysos is associated with death, because the ecstatic, transgressive experience he brings happens through the temporary suspension of ego functioning, and individual identity. Dionysos brings an otherness of experience. He is considered the most epiphanic of all the Greek gods,

bringing metamorphosis and transformation. For those who bring a negative attitude, it is a dark, frightening experience, but for those who bring a positive openness, it is transcendent.

See also: [▶ Apollo](#) [▶ Dismemberment](#) [▶ Ecstasy](#) [▶ Orpheus and Orphism](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Twice Born](#)

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Discernment

Elisabeth Koenig

Introduction

To discern means to separate or distinguish between or among things. In religion, generally speaking, discernment, sometimes called discernment of spirits, means skill in discriminating between those influences that enhance or lead to a fuller relationship with God or transcendent reality; or, where no belief in transcendent reality is held, to fuller appropriation and implementation of one's value system. Psychologically, discernment is an intentional practice which develops the ability to act in accordance with those agencies that are conducive to integration of the personality, and which avoids or resists those influences that would bring about psychic fragmentation or disintegration. For the purposes of discernment, influences within the subject, such as dreams, images, and thought processes, or without, such as relationships with others and political or social context, are understood to have equivalent value and effect. Although meanings vary among traditions, discernment may be characterized as a

process that encourages seeing clearly enough to make well-considered decisions which take into account and integrate the multiple dimensions of life, i.e., intellect, affect, body, relationships, principles, values, work, income, expenditures, play, creativity, religious community, etc., with a particular concern for God, transcendent reality, or a unique system of values. Moreover, discernment's clarity of vision is most often linked with detachment from the promptings of inordinate desire which muddy the waters and make clear discernment unlikely or impossible.

Research into discernment can play an important role in today's debates about the nature of religious experience, especially where a tension is felt between the individual and the collective, the mystical and the prophetic, or the personal and the political. Eschewing an isolating emphasis on personal experience, the process of discernment is understood to unite dimensions of the human witness that are, *at once*, objective and subjective, e.g., historical, textual, moral, theological, aesthetic, political, economic, and communal, *and* personal, psychological, visionary, spiritual, particular, and perspectival. The interpretative strategy called discernment predisposes individuals both to appropriate for themselves and to contribute to the meanings of the historical and communal realities of which they are a part.

Judaism

Discernment is a biblical term with a long and complex history. In the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures), King David was reputed to have a divine gift of discernment: a wise woman of Tekoa exclaimed of him, "The word of my lord the king will set me at rest; for my lord the king is like the angel of God, discerning good and evil" (2 Sam. 14: 17). Job claims discernment for himself: "Is there any wrong on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern calamity?" (Job 6: 30) The Lord, when worship of him has become superficial and empty, threatens to punish the people by taking away a self-professed, but false ability to discern: "The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden" (Isaiah 29: 14). Finally, and of great significance for our discussion, wherever several different Old Testament prophets professed to speak for God and disagreed with each other, the ancient Hebrews recognized that a moral and spiritual awareness which could distinguish between the authentic and the counterfeit was of utmost importance. Among the prophetic books, Jeremiah focuses the most on the problem of discernment because his witness to God was more

directly contested than that of the other prophets. Thus the classic discussion of the criteria for critical discernment of prophetic authenticity is in Jer. 23: 9–32, where false prophets are identified by their worship of false gods, including Baal; their promise of good news rather than judgment; false claims to have received a word from God or to have had visions or dreams; immorality; and absence of counsel from the Lord (Moberly, 2006).

Christianity

Although the New Testament gospel narratives depict a process of discernment whenever a decision for or against God or Jesus is made and when demons are cast out by the power of God incarnate in Jesus (cf. *inter alia*, Mat. 8: 31; 12: 28; Mrk 3: 22; 16: 9; Luke 4: 33; 8: 2; 8: 35, etc.), they do not develop the meaning of the term. However, there are passages, like Matt. 5: 8, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God,” which suggest that the topic was uppermost in these authors’ minds. More to the point, the First Letter of John enjoins, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (4: 1). But it is Paul, more than any other New Testament author, who explicitly engages the concept of discernment and he does so for the sake of building up the community of the church. For Paul, discernment (he uses several different words to denote the process: *dokimazein* = test oneself out in practice; *diakrinein* = discern; *anakrinein* = discern, examine; *aesthesis* = discernment, perception) is a gift of God’s Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 1–11). Paul makes a distinction between the “unspiritual” (*psychikos*) and the “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*), where the “unspiritual” would have natural abilities not specifically related to the agency of the Holy Spirit: “Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (*anakrino*)” (1 Cor. 2: 14). Moreover, Paul links discernment with love: “And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow with knowledge and all discernment (*aisthesis*) to help you determine what is best” (Phil. 1: 9). (Loving as a prerequisite for accurate knowledge or discernment became a favorite theme among medieval theologians.) Finally, for Paul and the patristic authors who interpreted his letters, Christian discernment hinges on a felt participation in the paschal mystery: it is believed that true discernment only happens when a situation is viewed through the lens of the cross of Jesus. This ability is enhanced through dramatic reading of the gospel

narratives and through participation in the eucharist. Paul speaks of baptism into Christ’s death as the condition for Christian adulthood (Rom. 6: 5f.). Practically speaking, discernment as governed by the cross means that Christians try, by God’s grace, to neutralize the natural effects of envy and strife with a spiritual humility that graciously gives up its own will, desire, or honorific place to the other. Moreover, there is a spiritual seeing, or discernment, that accompanies such submission (Johnson, 1983; McIntosh, 2004; Moberly, 2006).

The patristic period saw a real flowering of the concept of discernment. *The Life of Antony* by Athanasius (c. 295–373) shows Antony out in the desert, struggling for decades with demons who have tried to compromise his relationship with God. In time, these external entities came to be viewed more and more psychologically as dynamics within the soul. For example, Evagrius Ponticus (346–399) in his *Praktikos* and *Chapters on Prayer* speaks of “eight evil thoughts” that afflict monastics and need to be overcome by prayer and other spiritual practices, such as fasting and vigils. John Cassian (c. 365–435), while believing with his predecessors that both good and evil spirits really exist, is more interested, in his *Conferences*, to teach his monks that the near objects of discernment are not actually external spirits, but movements within the soul, like thoughts, images, feelings, and judgments. For Cassian, discernment is a coming-to-terms with these inner movements that results in a state of equilibrium, as it did for Antony, Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–254), Evagrius Ponticus, Diadochus of Photike (mid-fifth century), and many others (Sweeney, 1983). Theologians of the medieval period were also drawn to the discernment tradition. Julian of Norwich, for example, in her *Book of Showings*, correlates discernment with growth in contemplation (Koenig), and Catherine of Siena’s *Dialogue* is replete with teaching on discernment. For Thomas Aquinas, the concept of discernment gives way to an emphasis on prudence which relies more heavily on the rational faculty and is less integrative than discernment.

But it was left to Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) to gather together the patristic teachings on discernment and codify them in usable form. His *Spiritual Exercises*, which are decisional and concern the discernment of religious vocation, are the *locus classicus* for Christian training in discernment. In the form of a 4-week retreat, the training progresses through stages of purgation and sorrow over sin to the “Contemplation to Obtain Love” in the fourth week where the retreatant sees all of creation as God’s expression of love to his creatures. With a profound sense of giftedness and acceptance of a God-given liberty or free will, that person is encouraged to return the gift

to the giver through cultivating an attitude of magnanimity toward God which is dedicated to serving him. Most distinctive of Ignatius' teaching on discernment are the two sets of so-called "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits," appended to his *Spiritual Exercises*, in particular the suggestions made there concerning the felt alternation between states of "consolation" and "desolation." These are technical terms in Ignatius' vocabulary, referring to the raw material that people must judge through if they are to make an appropriate choice. He describes "consolation" as "that which occurs when some interior motion is caused within the soul through which it comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord." It includes "tears of grief for one's own sins," and "every increase in hope, faith, and charity, and every interior joy which calls and attracts one toward heavenly things." "Desolation," by contrast, Ignatius calls "everything which is contrary [to consolation]; for example, darkness of soul, turmoil within it, an impulsive motion toward low and earthly things. . . These move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love. . ." Discernment, then, is a process of keen observation of these affective states that leads to deep familiarity with both their energy for integrative authenticity and their potential for disintegrative deception. Most important, for Ignatius, discernment enables individuals to recognize and avert the beclouding influence of inordinate desires (*afeciones desordenadas*).

Islam

Discernment is a central concept in Islamic tradition, although the term does not appear in English dictionaries and encyclopedias of Qur'anic terms and concepts. The word *furqan*, usually translated as "criterion" or "distinction," conveys the notion of one thing as set apart from another. Both the Hebrew *Torah* and the *Qur'an* are referred to as *furqan* (the former in *Qur'an* 2: 53 and 21: 48; the latter in 3: 4 and 25: 1) because each book was revealed in order to assist human beings in their judgment of the difference between truth and falsehood. Muslims believe that, at the last time, there will be a decisive victory after which truth will reign in a manifest and uncompromised form. In Islam, the concept of discernment is also conveyed by the notions of "guidance" (*huda*) and "misguidance" (*dalal*). God is the only source of guidance (2: 120; 7: 178) in that God shows the human being both the right and wrong paths, leaving him or her free to choose between them (76: 3). Guidance comes in three forms: *instinctual*, where God has given the human being

an instinctual sense of "its evil and its good." (91: 8); *rational*, where God-given reason enables one to consider rationally one's place in the universe; and *revelatory*, an infallible guidance bodied forth in both the *Torah* and the *Qur'an*, although the latter is understood to provide the best guidance (17: 9). "Misguidance" also takes place at God's behest, but God only misguides those individuals who already have chosen evil. In a sense, they have asked for misguidance, and God obliges them by misguiding them in order to punish them for their sins (7: 155) (Mir, 1987).

Sufi tradition especially emphasizes a process of discernment. Here human beings are viewed as microcosms of the cosmos so that there is a correspondence between them and all the levels of existence, including the Divine Reality beyond the cosmos. Muhammad said, "There are seventy thousand veils of light and darkness that separate us from God, and they constitute the universe," and "The person who knows himself/herself knows his/her Lord." Thus, the "goal of the spiritual life is to be able to lift up the veil of outwardness so as to behold the inward and subsequently come to know the outward in light of the inward" (Nasr, 2007: 49). This is a process of ever-deepening interiorization, for the veils only will become transparent to the reality beyond them after a person has penetrated to his or her own center and lifted the veils within. The inner vision, which results from God's guidance and one's faithfulness to devotional practice, ultimately will be able to distinguish the real from the counterfeit at every level of the cosmos.

Psychological critique. Psychologically, discernment denotes an intentional process that seeks to render unconscious material available to consciousness for the sake of making healthful and appropriate decisions. For example, it is possible to pose a series of questions about an issue to be discerned, or about a dream, to see what "comes up," thus becoming more self-aware and capable of making choices that suit who one really is, rather than what others expect one to be (Wolff, 1993; Gendlin, 1986). The result can be that energy is released, healing made possible, and integration facilitated. However, such a discernment process is never easy: one's conscious attitude dominates every effort to interpret anything. The unconscious always remains unconscious, and the capacity for self-deception is infinite. Therefore, most people interested in discernment these days speak of the need for well-seasoned spiritual directors, and communal discernment is preferred to a process undertaken in isolation. Moreover, increasingly, there are applications of classical discernment practices and traditions to political and corporate situations (Brackley, 2004; Libanio, 1982; McClain, 1988; Urena, 1979; Delbecq, 2002).

Various schools of psychology offer ways to evaluate what is going on in discernment. For example, the attempt has been made to correlate the Ignatian *Rules for Discernment* with stages of ego development, with highly suggestive results (Liebert, 1992). Jung's notion of the progression and regression of psychic energy assists our understanding of consolation and desolation, the former signaling the uprush of energy and heightened awareness following successful appropriation of a previously unrecognized psychic content, and the latter indicating the loss of psychic energy that occurs when there is a retreat into the unconscious in order to discover or retrieve hidden psychic potential. Desolation may be equivalent to psychological deflation when it provides a corrective to inauthentic consolation (i.e., inflation). Thus consolation and desolation operate in contrary or compensatory relationship, and in this way impel forward the process of individuation or spiritual development (Sweeney, 1983). Cognitive psychology's labeling of cognitive distortions, such as "all-or-nothing thinking," "overgeneralization," "mental filters," and "disqualifying the positive," etc., Burns (1980) has parallels with ancient and medieval descriptions of the effects of evil spirits, or thoughts, and its method of talking back to these and proposing alternatives has much in common with ancient practices (Ponticus, 1981) and Ignatius Loyola's method depicted in his *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Exercises*. Self-psychology can make a very special contribution to understanding what is necessary for authentic discernment, especially in its insistence on full, conscious mourning for what has been lost in life as a prerequisite for "analytic access" to the dynamics of the unconscious and, hence, for a self-knowledge that approaches accuracy (Homans, 1989). Finally, systems theory, with its insistence on grasping how the role one has been assigned by one's family of origin, conditions one's perception of all reality; its distinction between the "thinking process" and the "feeling process"; and its strategies for encouraging differentiation; all offer clarification for undertaking a psychologically well-informed process of discernment (Kerr, 1988).

See also: [Christianity](#) [Islam](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Self Psychology](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Dismemberment

Alice Mills

Definition

Dismemberment means the taking apart of a body and the removal of one or more body parts. At one end of the scale is the tearing apart of a whole body, resulting in death, as in stories of the early Christians being fed to the lions and Greek myths about the tearing apart of Dionysus by the Titans. The other end of the scale is harder to determine. Forcible removal of eyes, as in St. Lucia's decision to take out her eyes to discourage her pagan suitor, probably counts, but does either castration, as in Origen's self-castration "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matthew 19.12) or circumcision, as enjoined on the Jews in the Old Testament? Bodily injuries such as the piercings and flagellation wounds of penitents and the scarification of Australian aborigines undergoing initiation do not involve the removal of a body part and hence should not qualify as dismemberment; nor should such phenomena as stigmata manifesting on the palms and feet of some saints.

Bodily Wholeness

With the obvious exception of the loss of body parts that occurs accidentally, or for medical reasons, or in secular hostilities, dismemberment of the living is generally understood in a religious context as indicating the presence of a deity or dedication to the service of a god or a ritual of initiation. Opposing this tendency, however, is the

emphasis on whole bodies without blemish where service to a deity is concerned. In the Bible, for instance, the book of Numbers abounds with instructions that animals chosen for sacrifice must be "without blemish," and in Leviticus the same requirement is made for priests:

- ▶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
- ▶ Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever *he be* of thy seed in their generations that hath *any* blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.
- ▶ For whatsoever man *he be* that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,
- ▶ Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,
- ▶ Or crookedbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken (Leviticus 21. 17–20).

Christianity

For Christians, the wholeness of the body has been important not only in the case of priests but also for each human being after death, as the body awaits its resurrection and the Last Judgment; hence the Catholic church's centuries-long ban on cremation. As Michael Bryson points out, the Biblically based Christian understanding of Jesus as head of the Church, which is the body, reiterates the great importance of wholeness. Schism and heresy function as the dismemberment of the body spiritual.

In this context, the fate of Christian saints both before and after death is paradoxical. After death, some saints' bodies have been dismembered to provide relics for as many altars as possible – sometimes, many more substantial body parts than any human body could possibly provide. Before death, violent acts of dismemberment have become emblematic of sanctity for those saints who were also martyrs, as with St. Oliver Plunkett (whose head can be viewed in Drogheda), or St. Bartholemew, who was flayed. The bodily sufferings of the martyrs are considered an *imitatio Christi*, willingly undergone with Jesus' sufferings and death as their model. These sufferings of Jesus before and during crucifixion, including flagellation and the piercing of his side, do not constitute dismemberment. It is, however, theologically debatable whether, for those branches of Christianity that believe in transubstantiation, the breaking and eating of the host constitutes a form of dismemberment.

Ancient Egypt

While Jesus' status as a dismembered god is disputable, there are abundant examples in other near-Eastern and classical religions. The most prominent of these deities is the Egyptian Osiris, whose body was taken apart by his jealous brother Set and pieced together by his devoted wife Isis (his penis was irrecoverably lost). The dismembered and re-membered god of fertility and civilization then became lord of the dead, and the mysteries of Isis promised their initiates a similar resurrection to eternal life. The practice of mummification in ancient Egypt was performed to ensure eternal life by keeping the physical body as intact as possible. While some mummified bodies appear to have been dismembered, interpretation of this procedure is much debated: were the spirits of the dead being urged to depart, was the mummification done poorly or was this deliberate dismemberment in honor of Osiris' fate?

Shamanism

The experience of being dismembered, though not its literal enactment, is a well-attested part of the Siberian shaman's initiation into spiritual power as he gains access to the worlds above and below. To become a shaman is to experience, while still a living human being, the dismemberment and resurrection of a god.

Punishment

Dismemberment before death, for a human body, is thus in a religious context usually a mark of closeness to the divine. Such closeness is not always a mark of divine favor, however. In Greek myth, offending a god can result in being torn apart by the god's possessed followers, as in *The Bacchae*, or falling and being dragged behind a hurtling chariot to one's death, as in *The Hippolytus*. Dismemberment after death is an indication of the deities' disfavor. For the ancient Egyptians, the sun-boat carried the dead to the hall of judgment, but along the way the wicked would be taken, torn apart and eaten by monsters. The carefully gradated horrors of Dante's Christian hell include the splitting apart of bodies that then grow back together, only to be resplit, and the incessant devouring of the skull's contents. Buddhist hells are similarly stratified with punishments such as having one's eyes gouged out or being disemboweled.

Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychologically, dismemberment of the body, whether of oneself or another human being, or the urge towards dismemberment, is considered a symptom of serious mental illness. There is no scope for the interpretation of dismemberment as part of a spiritual ascent or as penitential self-sacrifice in current psychological models of the world. Psychoanalytic theory is more hospitable to the concept of dismemberment. For Melanie Klein, the infant splits the mother into "partial objects," representations that must be combined for the child's psyche to become whole. For Lacan, human beings' sense of their own identity is founded on a false equation in the mirror phase which entails that ego consciousness is always unauthentic. Psychic integration is thus impossible and early ego development includes fantasies of castration and dismemberment. While Klein and Lacan postulate a sense of the body as split in the young child's psyche, in *Totem and Taboo* Freud postulates the long-ago dismemberment of an actual body as the origin of human civilization. He asserts as literal fact the story of the primal horde in which the sons, eager to gain access to their father's women, slew him and ate the flesh they had torn apart. It is guilt at this primal murder and cannibal feast that still powers human civilization, according to Freud. The dismemberment that for many devout Christians and initiates into the mystery religions has borne a joyful message of resurrection to eternal bliss, is for these psychoanalytic theorists in their different ways an uncanny substratum to all human beings' understandings of who we are and can be in this world.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#)

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Dissociation

Jessica Mitchell

Introduction

Dissociation is a normal part of the psyche’s defensive process, severing connection between categories of mental events that are normally integrated. Streams of thought or consciousness are kept apart and communication between them is restricted, resulting in a discernable alteration in thoughts, feelings, or actions.

Dissociation is an unforeseen partial or total disruption of the normal integration of conscious functioning, a means by which typically integrated streams of thought or consciousness are segregated and resulting communication restricted. This default defense can take place as a consequence of repeated or overwhelming trauma. The ability to dissociate can begin with self-hypnotic declarations such as, “I am not here; nothing is happening to me. I am not in this body.” This deceit then becomes a structuring dynamic within the personality (Mollon, 2002).

Historically, dissociative states have been associated with psychological and physical trauma, healing practices, and religious experience in nearly every culture. Dissociative states have knowingly been reached by hypnosis, meditation practice, prayer and shamanic practice. Ritualistic behavior during worship or meditative practice can allow the individual to enter into both overt and implicit dissociative states. Those held hostage or in captivity develop trance capabilities and become adept in the practice of dissociation during isolation and confinement (Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, MacFarlane and Weisaeth, 1996).

For more than a century the effects of pathological dissociation have intrigued clinicians. The emergence of distinctive dissociative disorder diagnoses is closely intertwined with the development of contemporary psychiatry. More than a century ago, Janet (1889) is credited

as first to identify this essential pathology: alternation in consciousness, as “dissociation.” Breuer and Freud (1895/1955) followed by defining these same altered states as “double consciousness.” Both Janet and Freud concluded that unbearable emotional reactions to traumatic events produced an altered state of consciousness, which in turn induced hysterical symptoms. Both recognized the essential similarity of altered states of consciousness induced by psychological trauma and those induced by hypnosis (Herman, 1992).

Janet asserted that memory is an act of creative integration by which we encoded and characterize experience into preexisting cognitive schemata. When an event in the life of an individual is too overwhelming to fit into these already existing schemata, he believed that it was split off from consciousness into separate systems of subconscious “fixed ideas,” untouched by the rest of individual experience. Individuals with hysteria were those who had lost the ability to integrate the memory of overwhelming experience (Daves and Frawley, 1994; Herman, 1992; Janet, 1889).

From an etymological perspective, the word dissociation is derived from “dis” which means split two ways, or “in twain” and is comparable to the Greek “dia” as in “diabolic”— the opposite of “sym-bolic.” There is moreover an implication of negation or “reverse,” undo a spoil as in discount, disown, or disable and the notion of “to strip off” or “expel from” as in disbar, disenfranchise, disempower. In Latin compounds, “dis” was commonly the reverse of “com” or “con” as in concord versus discord. Another meaning is to render a whole into parts, therefore the sense of apart, away, asunder, as in disperse, dissident, distance, dispossessed. Association is derived from – link, organization, connection, relationship, bond (Kalsched, 1996, 2005: 31).

Dissociation is the defensive process that typically results in the loss of interrelationship between various groups of mental processes with an ensuing, nearly independent, functioning of the one group that has been separated from the rest. Dissociative discontinuities can comprise a wide range of phenomena frequently found in both the immediate and long-term response to trauma. Primary phenomena include: depersonalization, derealization, identity confusion, and identity alteration. Individuals may experience bodily detachment, numbing, distorted time perception, fragmentation of the coherence of sensory experience, tonic immobility, forms of extreme passivity, disruption of memory and amnesic states. Finally, in the case of severe trauma, all connection can be severed between an actual occurrence and permanent symbolic, verbal and mental representation

(Daves and Frawley, 1994; Mollon, 2002; van der Kolk, MacFarlane and Weisaeth, 1996).

Dissociation exists on a continuum including normal biological forgetting, daydreaming, abnormal biological amnesia following a concussion, to abnormal psychosocial dissociation that coexists with trauma including multiple personality disorder (Putnam, 1989; Ross, 1989). While this segregation of mental processes from the rest of the psychic apparatus is most often subtle and transpires unnoticed, other more dramatic manifestations of dissociation can occur among child and adult parts of the personality, between true and false self structures, sane and psychotic parts of the mind, and different phases of life. Dissociation as a defensive strategy can obstruct emergence of coherent meaning in correspondence to the concept of “attacks on linking,” (Bion, 1959) Learned dissociation can be considered an internal flight response when external flight is not possible (Mollon, 2002; van der Kolk, MacFarlane and Weisaeth, 1996).

In direct contrast to repression, a horizontal division into conscious and unconscious mental contents, dissociative experience involves a vertical splitting of the ego that can be organized and independently functioning. Under dissimilar internal and external circumstances, two or more ego states alternate in consciousness. These dissociated states remain unavailable to the rest of the personality and, as such, cannot be subject to psychic elaboration (Daves and Frawley, 1994: 31). However, dissociative states allow external life to go on but at a great internal cost. Psychological sequelae continue to haunt the inner world, making their presence felt in dreams and waking consciousness by way of recurring intrusive images with violent or symbolic content, enactments, flashbacks, enigmatic somatic sensations, recurrent nightmares, anxiety reactions, mental images split from affect and somatic conditions. Memory has holes; a full narrative history cannot be told by an individual whose life has been disrupted by trauma (Kalsched, 1996).

See also: [Affect](#) [Complex](#) [Trauma](#)

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Divination

Paul Larson

Divination is the act of using contact between the supernatural world and the mundane world for the purpose of guiding human action. It is commonly thought of as an act of foretelling the future, or even dismissively termed “fortune telling,” but this view is simplistic and ignores the social context of divination. In all situations where divination is practiced there is a person, a “querant,” who has a need for guidance about what course of action to take with regard to a particular situation. The occasion of the divination generally comes at a specific time for a specific reason. When proffered as an amusement, as in a boardwalk fortune teller, it may be done with little commitment to using the outcome. But the skill of the diviner lies in finding something that the querant can take away from the encounter that makes them feel value was given for the experience.

The nature of divination is a spiritual process of obtaining some contact between the two basic orders of reality, the spiritual realm and the mundane one. There is an implicit assumption of some sort of “realm beyond” that speaks in the moment and reveals information not otherwise available to the querant. Usually, the medium is the messenger. That is, the person of the oracle uses a state of trance possession to contact a spiritual power or entity and convey a message to the querant. The classic example of that is the pythia, the oracle of Apollo at Delphi who spoke as the voice of the deity while in a trance. The oracle

can also read portents in random events (e.g. clouds) or use specific devices (e.g. tarot cards, runes, etc.). A modern psychological explanation would typically involve some reference to unconscious processes accessing archetypal images relevant to the question posed by the querant.

It is simplistic to think that people view the pronouncements of the oracle as predicting the future in a mechanistic way. People vary in the degree to which they view events as beyond their control, but implicit in the social relationship between the diviner and the querant is the proffering of advice for a course of action in the face of the problem for which the divination is sought. There is nearly always a gap in time between the pronouncement and the ultimate outcome; time enough for the person to act upon the advice. If the feared outcome doesn't happen, the advice was helpful; if it comes about anyway, the person failed to heed the oracle's warning. The critical feature is not whether the degree of certainty about the final outcome, but to what extent counsel is taken and plans or actions initiated, changed, or aborted. Divination is action oriented advice giving.

There are a variety of physical media of divination. Among the most popular in the west are the Tarot cards, the reading of lines on the palm, or the pattern of tea leaves in a cup. The Chinese oracle book the *I Ching* is also widely used. In previous eras animals were sacrificed for the occasion of the oracle and the patterns in their entrails was interpreted. Among the oldest artifacts from Mesopotamia is a ceramic figure in the shape of a sheep's liver with different areas marked out for their interpretive significance. There was probably an oral teaching or a cuneiform tablet now lost which catalogued the various meanings.

The interpretation of dreams is also a form of divination. The "incubation" of a dream by the god Asklepios was a major part of the ritual healing process in the ancient Greek world. The deity would come to the sufferer during a special sleep inside the inner sanctum of the temple, or abaton. The priests would interpret the dream the next day and prescribe the mode of healing to be undertaken. Both Artemidorus and the Sophist Antiphon are reputed to have authored a book of dream interpretation, with the title *Oneirocritica*. When Freud wrote about the value of dream interpretation, he was reviving an ancient tradition, albeit with a different theory of hermeneutics or interpretation.

In a more contemporary vein, divination is the old term for the act of diagnosis. In all clinical contexts one of the most important functions of the therapist is to provide an explanation for the troubles the client brings to therapy. We may use modern psychometric instruments,

further dialog or some combination of the above plus outside collateral information, but at some critical point early in the relationship the professional presents the client with a summary view of the nature of their problems and the implications for course of treatment.

See also: [Dreams](#) [I Ching](#) [Oracles](#)

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Divine Child

David A. Leeming

The myth of the divine child is ubiquitous in religious traditions. The child is a potential savior for a society in need. He or she represents radical change, the possibility of a new beginning. As such, he is a threat to the status quo, and the representatives of the status quo – wicked kings, demonic monsters – therefore fight the child.

To represent the idea that the child is associated with divine intentions, his father is often divine. To emphasize that he is also of this world, he must be born of a human female. But the conception of the child is often miraculous – out of the ordinary – to signify his divine nature and to suggest that he belongs to the whole society rather than to any one family.

In ancient Egypt the so-called Delta cycle of the Osiris myth contains the story of Isis conceiving a son, Horus, by her dead husband, the god-king, Osiris. Isis flees the usurper king, Seth, the brother and killer of Osiris, and gives birth to Horus in the hidden swamps of the Delta. One day, while Isis is away in search of food for her child, Seth comes in the form of a serpent and attacks the child. But the divine child, stomps on the serpent, thus surviving to continue his father's struggle against the forces of evil.

In a later tradition Gautama, the future Buddha is conceived by a white elephant in a dream experienced by his mother, Queen Maya. The Buddha's potential as a savior is challenged in his boyhood by his father, the king,

who shelters the child to keep him from the harsh realities of life. And later, the youthful Buddha is unsuccessfully challenged by Mara the Fiend, who tempts him with the vanities of the world.

Moses, the Hebrew divine child and future savior is threatened at birth with the other Hebrew children by the Egyptian Pharaoh and is hidden in bull rushes. He is saved and lives to lead his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

Jesus, the future savior, is miraculously conceived by God through the Holy Spirit which enters the Virgin Mary's womb. Soon after his birth in a hidden place the child is threatened with other Jewish children by King Herod and has to be carried off into Egypt.

The Hindu man-god Krishna, the most important avatar of the god Vishnu, who contains the universe and the possibility of salvation within himself, is miraculously conceived through Vishnu, with the help of Maya ("Divine Illusion") in Devaki. But when the wicked king Kamsa learns that a child of Devaki will one day kill him he orders that any child of Devaki be killed at birth. To prevent this tragedy, Maya removes the embryo of the divine child from Devaki's womb and places it in the womb of Rohini.

These are only a few of the many stories of the divine child. Others examples can be found in the biographies of such figures as Herakles, Dionysos, Theseus, Zoroaster, Quetzalcoatl, and Cuchulainn.

The theological purpose of the divine child as future savior or embodiment of divinity on earth is clear enough. But the archetype resonates psychologically as well. For Carl Jung, the divine child – as opposed to the regressive puer aeternus – represents the urge within us all for individuation. This drive can be confronted from birth by what to it can be negative forces – parents, school, religion, the status quo and its expectations. And the drive for individuation is confronted within the unconscious itself. The divine child in the womb is the pre-conscious hero – the Self – waiting to be realized. Once born, he is the individual who enters the quest for individual wholeness.

See also: [Avatar](#) [Gardens, Groves, and Hidden Places](#) [Hero](#) [Monomyth](#) [Puer Aeternus](#) [Self](#) [Virgin Birth](#)

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Doubt

Ingeborg del Rosario

The experience of doubt can be understood relative to faith and to belief. Doubt is commonly perceived to be inimical and opposed to, even erosive of one's faith, as an absence or significant lack of affective confidence and trust in God, in the divine-human relationship, and in divine nature and power. The one who doubts is seen to be weak in faith. Relative to beliefs, doubt can be defined as an absence or significant lack of assurance and certitude, even an active dissent and questioning of religious doctrines and practices that traditionally provide structure and meaning to the faith experience. The one who doubts is seen as an unbeliever, unwilling or unable to acknowledge, assent to and embrace the truth of religious tenets and teachings.

Religious beliefs provide a way of articulating, conceptualizing and providing meaning to the faith experience, that is, to the individual's experience of God and their relationship. Beliefs are about putting the faith experience into words. While beliefs support and facilitate a deepening engagement in the faith experience, they do not constitute it. The faith experience is not primarily about beliefs, but about a vital relationship: trusting and believing *in*, relying *upon*, entrusting *to* an Other. Being relational, the faith experience is not static but ever unfolding and developing, in need of an evolving process of understanding, interpreting and speaking about this experience. Unfortunately, many religious communities and churches resist the maturational development of beliefs. Dissent and doubt of beliefs are often equated to a lack of trust and confidence in God: one who questions beliefs is perceived to be without faith.

The book of Job in the Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures is a classic scriptural illustration of how a

believer is often perceived to be lacking in faith because of the doubt and questioning of traditional religious beliefs. Conventional Israelite wisdom upheld the doctrine of divine retribution: the one who does right prospers while the one who does evil is punished. A person who is afflicted must have sinned and so, suffers. The character of Job as a man who was upright and blameless, who did not sin yet suffered grievously, called this moral teaching into question. While Job's friends defended religious tradition as sacrosanct in their dialogues with him, Job vigorously resisted and challenged this inviolability. While the friends chided Job for his lack of trust and confidence in God's power and the divine will, Job confronted the paradoxical nature God. In Job's experience, God was both enemy and friend, oppressor and redeemer, adversary and judge. Following the God's speech out of the whirlwind that addresses Job, the book ends with Job acknowledging that he has "uttered what (he) did not understand, things too wonderful for (him), which (he) did not know" (Job 42:3), and God upholding Job for he had spoken about God what is right (Job 42:8).

This story provides an apt paradigm for reflecting upon the experience of doubt in relation to faith and belief. Religious beliefs function to provide order and structure, purpose and meaning to life and relationships. As did Job, individuals often begin to call into question these deeply ingrained and cherished normative beliefs following an experience of trauma, grievous loss, life-threatening illness, unrelenting crisis or some wanton encounter with violence and evil. In the face of tragedy, the faith-questions of believers often revolve around a need to understand and make sense of the event ("What did I do to deserve this?" "Why did this happen?"); the presence, will and agency of God in this event ("Where is God?" How could God allow this to happen?"); and the consequent dissonance between one's God-image and the occurrence of this seemingly senseless reality ("How can a loving God allow this suffering?" "What kind of God would let this to happen?") Certitude collapses and doubt ensues when beliefs about God's nature and power cannot contain and support, provide order and structure, nor give sense and meaning to the believer in the midst of tragedy's ensuing chaos and disorder, instability and disorientation. Uncertainty and questioning of long-held beliefs might also occur in the face of less devastating personal experiences, with maturational challenges inherent in life-stage processes such as adolescence and midlife, as well as in times of critical social developments.

The place and function of doubt in one's life, faith maturity and personal development is more easily

appreciated with the understanding of how representations of God are formulated and internalized. Core metaphors and images of God are the foundation upon which religious beliefs are constructed. Religious traditions, creeds and beliefs are built around God images and representations which originate primarily from parental sources or the impact of experiences with primary caregivers, as well as from influences of social groups, peers, formal and informal religious education and cultural conditions. The pioneering work of psychoanalyst Ana-Maria Rizzuto illustrates how representational traits attributed to God and the divine nature are shaped by childhood engagements, specifically by early parent-child relations and self-experiences. Images and metaphors of God as critical father, punishing judge, distant deity, or of God as loving and merciful, gentle and understanding, compassionate and protective evolve for the child by way of transference as a function of projective identification, from idealized wishes and fantasies that stem from significant parental interactions, as well as from the consequent introjection and self-mirroring images reflected by these experiences. With a growing self-image and individual maturation, increasingly expanding and intricate interpersonal and social engagements, challenges and demands of life experiences, the deepening of self-awareness and broadening of relational consciousness can come a corresponding evolution and refashioning of early God representations from childhood.

For many individuals, however, these God images formed from early on remain essentially static, rigid and unchanged. Much psychic pain and emotional distress ensue when adult religious patients confront the complexities of crisis and tragedy with undeveloped childhood God representations and with religious beliefs and practices that are built upon these unexplored and unrefined divine images and metaphors. Doubt and questioning of religious beliefs founded on archaic God representations that are a result of early unprocessed transference parent-child experiences can thus be healthy and growth-provoking, purifying and transformative. Religious patients may be invited to inquire into how a particular belief or early God image had functioned for them and explore how it has promoted wellness or contributed to a lack of well-being. Similarly, the religious patient might look into fantasized consequences of doubting traditional beliefs or questioning deeply ingrained God-images while the therapist might explore how inquiry and exploration, doubt and questioning can also function to enable wellness as well as maturity in the life of faith.

The de-idealization of early God representations and working through of parental transferences onto the divine

image in the therapeutic process, while difficult, painful and grief-filled, also enables a reflective challenging of religious conformity and compliance that are part of the false self and facilitates movement into greater spontaneity, freedom of self-expression and creativity of exploratory play which constitute a release of and reconnection to the true self. As the sense of authentic self grows, expands and deepens, so can the sense of God. The experience of God is released from restrictive and static constructs, freed from becoming a container of transference and projection material, idealized wishes and desires. While creeds, traditions and practices might remain unchanged, new and deeper levels of meanings may evolve. The adult believer becomes more open to the myriad possibilities of divine mystery and of encountering God as God, found in, yet always beyond, all form and image, concept and representation. The adult believer is more able to hold and contain the awe-full prospect of a God who cannot be held and contained, nor grasped with absolute knowledge and understanding.

As with Job, the mature believer is left with the terrifying yet liberating realization that, about God, one can only utter what cannot be understood, speak of things too wonderful that cannot be fully known. Profound confidence and trust in the divine-human connection, life-giving faith and right speech about God imply the continuing need for doubt of limited, limiting divine representations and questioning of static, archaic beliefs that cannot acknowledge the limitless breadth of the divine experience; the ensuing recognition of the vulnerability of words and language to articulate the creativity and mystery of divine-human relatedness; the contemplative entry into reverent silence and reflective exploration of the God engagement which, like the true self, cannot be contained or confined by efforts to capture the radically free, ever-gratuitous process of unfolding and becoming towards a fullness of being.

See also: [God Image](#) [Job](#) [Transference](#)

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Dragon Slaying

Ronald Madden

While dragons are imaginary beasts to be found in the mythology of cultures throughout the world, the concept of *dragon slaying* is unique to the myths of the West. From St. Michael in the book of Revelation in the Christian New Testament, to Beowulf in the eighth century Anglo-Saxon epic poem of the same name, to Sigurd in Norse mythology (or Siegfried in Richard Wagner's retelling of the story), to Bard the Bowman in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, dragon slayers engage in a heroic fight to the death with a large and powerful beast that threatens a community, or the very balance of spiritual forces in the cosmos. These heroes become honoured in the myths and legends of their culture and are symbolic of the victory of good over evil.

The word dragon comes from the Greek δράκων or *drakon*. Dragons appear throughout mythology as magical creatures with great physical and/or spiritual powers. Depending upon the culture, the dragon may be airborne – a great reptile with wings – or more worm- or serpent-like. In general, dragons of the East are powerful but benign creatures that are wise and revered by the people. In cultures of the West, dragons are often depicted as evil guardians of a treasure or horde which has been stolen from the people. The theft of this treasure has led to their decline and the return thereof will re-establish their vitality and/or the spiritual balance of the cosmos.

It is perhaps not unsurprising, then, that the concept of dragon slaying is a singularly Western phenomenon and is to be found in that most enduring and powerful sacred scripture of Western culture: the Christian *Bible*. The following excerpt poses the dragon as the embodiment of Satan and St. Michael as the conquering hero in the name of Christ.

- ▶ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night (KJV, Revelation 12:7–10).

With St. Michael as a prototypical hero, numerous Christian saints from the early church have been depicted in legend as slayers of dragons (*inter alia*, St. Mercurialis, St. Margaret of Antioch, St. Clement of Metz, and St. Martha). St. George, probably the most heralded, killed a dragon who was terrorizing a city in ancient Libya. The people had been feeding sheep to the dragon to appease it, but when the sheep no longer satisfied the hunger of the dragon, they began to feed it their children. The victims were chosen by lottery and, one day, the daughter of the King was chosen. St. George happened by the lake where the dragon dwelled just as the daughter was being offered to the dragon and gravely wounded him with his lance. St. George and the princess led the dragon into the city and promised to slay him if the people were baptized into Christianity. Twenty thousand were promptly baptized and the dragon was slain (de Voragine, 1993: 238–240).

In the eighth century Anglo-Saxon epic poem of the same name, Beowulf traveled to help an aging king rid his kingdom of a terrorizing troll named Grendel and his avenging mother. Beowulf then returned to his people and reigned as king for fifty years until a dragon threatened to destroy his kingdom. The dragon guarded a rich treasure that was kept in a burial mound, but was angered when a single drinking cup was stolen from the hoard. Beowulf and a young chieftan attacked and killed the dragon as it sought to lay waste to the kingdom. Beowulf was mortally wounded in the fight, but, before dying, he bequeathed the dragon's hoard to his protégé, Wiglaf (Willis, 2006: 205).

A prime example of the restoration of a treasure that had been stolen and guarded by a dragon can be seen in Richard Wagner's nineteenth century retelling of the ancient Norse legend of the hero Siegfried (Sigurd) and the dragon Fafner (Fafnir). The story is of a magical ring, forged of twice-stolen gold, all of which ends up as a hoard in the lair of the dragon and is eventually returned to its keepers, from whom it was originally stolen, after dragon is slain by Siegfried. This retrieval of the ring and the gold and its return to the rightful owners – the central plotline of Wagner's grand operatic tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* – takes the audience on a journey which restores the disrupted spiritual balance of the cosmos while at the same time destroying those who have stolen these precious and magical items, only to use them in a quest for their own greed and power.

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, the main antagonist is the dragon Smaug who destroyed the town of Dale and captured the mountain Erebor with all its treasure. Smaug's belly was encrusted with the hoard's "gems

and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed" (Tolkien, 1984: 199), rendering him practically invulnerable to attack. When Bilbo Baggins, the main protagonist of *The Hobbit*, encounters Smaug sleeping in his lair, Tolkien (with a nod to *Beowulf*) causes him to steal a "great two-handled cup" from the hoard. One place on his left breast was left unprotected, allowing Bard the Bowman to slay Smaug with a black arrow when he came to destroy the lake-town of Esgaroth. The hero, Bard, was elevated to the first king of Dale, restored after its destruction by the dragon, Smaug.

In Western mythology dragon slaying represents the act of the questing and conquering hero to destroy an evil creature that guards a hoard or threatens a people with its powers. Dragon slaying refers, then, to the act of killing this creature, or subduing its power, so that life may go on. In a psychological sense, dragon slaying can be thought of as the subduing or integration of powerful internal forces of opposition which can tend to overwhelm the ego and destroy psychological and spiritual equilibrium, the repair of which is necessary to achieve individuation or wholeness.

In the realm of psychology, the dragon in need of "slaying" may be a constellation of unconscious, shadowy energies that have been rejected by the ego. Even though cast off, these energies may control the conscious life or may be projected outwardly onto others who then hold both our rejected parts and our rejection of them. This inner dragon "guards," or keeps from us, a treasure of wholeness which can only be realized by neutralizing its power. As C.G. Jung writes, "[t]he treasure which the hero fetches from the dark cavern is *life*: it is himself, new-born from the dark maternal cave of the unconscious. . . ." (Jung, 1990: 374).

Slaying of this dragon constitutes making the unconscious parts of the ego conscious. Jung continues, "[t]he hero who clings to the mother is the dragon, and when he is reborn from the mother he becomes the conqueror of the dragon. . . [he] represents the positive, favorable action of the unconscious, while the dragon is its negative and unfavorable action—not birth, but a devouring; not a beneficial and constructive deed, but greedy retention and destruction" (Jung, 1990: 374–375).

The process of individuation, or achieving psychological wholeness, is not unlike the hero's journey. As Joseph Campbell describes in *The hero with a thousand faces*:

- ▶ the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth. Prometheus ascended to the

heavens, stole fire from the gods, and descended. Jason sailed through the Clashing Rocks into a sea of marvels, circumvented the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece, and returned with the fleece and the power to wrest his rightful throne from a usurper (Campbell, 2008: 23).

This formula is observed in myths and legends of the ancient past. It is seen in more contemporary retellings of hero journeys, such as *The Hobbit*, in which Bilbo Baggins descends into the dragon Smaug's lair and retrieves a treasured drinking cup. J.R.R. Tolkien subtitled his contemporary myth, *There and Back Again* (Tolkien, 1984). Dr. Franz Winkler writes, each of us "has a dragon in his subconscious mind, which he must overcome lest he fall victim to the forces of darkness within" (Winkler, 1974: 44). The inner voyage taken in depth psychology or spiritual direction, a descent away from a "false, exterior self," leading to the discovery of a "true, interior self," can be a treacherous night sea journey or *nekiya* wherein one or more dragons are confronted and conquered before coming "back again." As Jean Shinoda Bolen states:

- ▶ The dragon fight can be with an addiction, regression, depression, or aggression, or any destructive complex in the psyche that keeps a person from growing. The dragon fight can also be enacted with real people who are in intimidating, devouring, or abusive. . .Some inner dragons must be fought because we are already in their grip, some stand in our way and prevent us from growing, and others lash out through us at others. Even when the dragon seems to be a real person or a chemical addiction, it is the susceptibility to be overcome by this kind of person or substance that makes it dangerous (Bolen, 1999: 115).

See also: [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Culture Heroes](#) [▶ Daimonic](#) [▶ Demons](#) [▶ Descent to the Underworld](#) [▶ Devil](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Dreams

Louis Hagood

Up until the time of Aristotle, dreams were divine – messengers from the Gods or spirit world with the power of prophecy or healing. Priests or shamans were the intermediaries for these messengers, and in ancient Greece a network of temples, dedicated to the half God Aesculapius were popular sites for dream healing. Aristotle declared that dreams were not from the Gods and were not prophetic but leftover sensory impressions from waking life.

At the beginning of the twentieth century dreams were not only mortal but crazy as well. Freud published his *Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 not only to distance dreams from the divine, but also to rescue them from insanity. Dreams had meaning, and he demonstrated how the meaning was disguised. Freud was a product of classical science with its reductionism and determinism, and his dream work follows that tradition, one that had no place for the mystical or the divine. His was a one-person model with forces both outside and inside creating dreams. As the twentieth century progressed, classical science was challenged by new physics and its theories of relativity and quantum mechanics, which challenged the old.

Jung analyzed the dreams of the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, and found the new physics more compatible with his mystical inclinations. His theory that dreams were a compensation for an unbalanced conscious position coming from the collective unconscious was like the quantum concept of a particle emerging from the sea of infinite potential. The collective made Freud's one-person dream model into a group phenomenon.

The group phenomenon has been utilized by Montague Ullman in dream sharing. In a group the dream is not interpreted as in Freudian or Jungian therapy, but responded to as if it were the dream of each respondent.

Thus the dream is truly no longer a one-person experience, but communal.

See also: [▶ Divination](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Dreams in the Old Testament

Erel Shalit

All in all there are about a dozen dreams in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament (of the dreams in the New Testament, five, in Matthew, pertain to divine guidance of the Holy Family; in Acts 2:17, Peter quotes Joel 3:1, and in Matt. 27:19 Pilate's wife shares with her husband a frightening dream, and tells him to spare Jesus). However, what exactly constitutes a dream may be hard to tell. The distinction between dream and vision is not always apparent.

Besides Jacob's well-known dream of the ladder, we find the main elaboration on dreams in the book of Daniel, with Nebuchadnezzar's two dreams, and particularly in Genesis, with Joseph's dreams and interpretations.

The attitude towards dreams in the Bible is ambiguous. While Daniel and Joseph are celebrated dream interpreters, in other instances warnings are voiced against the deceit and falsehood of dreams. In Jeremiah, God ridicules and warns, "I have heard what the prophets said, who prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed," (Jeremiah 23:25) a warning repeated in other instances as well, for example in Zechariah, "For the family idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and the dreams have told falsehoods; they give empty comfort" (Zechariah 10: 2).

In spite of the relatively few dreams in the Bible, and the warning against dreams as possibly deceitful, their absence may be a bad omen. This is the case with Saul,

the first of the Hebrew Kings, who in despair before the battle in which his three sons are killed and he commits suicide, cries out, "God has departed from me, and answers me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams" (1 Sam. 28: 15). Saul had expelled the sorcerers from the country, and was now cut off from the mediums, the channels of unconscious and transcendent communication with him.

Two kinds of dreams can be distinguished in the Bible; those which sound a command, message or guidance of the Divine Voice, as with Abram and Abimelech, and the more symbolic dream, as we find with Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar.

Abram's Vision

In Genesis 15: 1 Abram, prior to God's changing his name to Abraham, has a nightly vision, which opens in a rather typical way for divine messages to prophets; "the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision." Abram is bewildered, but God tells him, "Fear not, I am your shield, and your reward will be great." God then brings Abram out in the night, tells him to look toward heaven and count the stars, promising a large offspring.

While in the Bible this is called a vision, some authors believe it to be a dream theophany, i.e., the visible, embodied appearance of God in a dream (Bar, 2001: 148f.). After the sun has set, Abram makes a sacrifice and falls into a deep sleep. God then makes his first covenant with him. This is the first Biblical instance of dream incubation.

The Dream of Abimelech

The first reference in the Bible of a dream concerns King Abimelech. Abraham and Sarah had journeyed to the Negev, and Abimelech, king of Gerar had sent for Sara and "taken her," believing her to be Abraham's sister. "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, you are but a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife" (Gen. 20: 3). The king declared his innocence, not having been aware that Sara was Abraham's wife and, furthermore, he did not sleep with her. While still in the dream, God answers Abimelech, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; for I also kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her" (Gen. 20: 6).

Abimelech listened carefully to what he was told in the dream, and sent Sarah back to her (half-) brother

and husband, inviting them to live in the land. He was consequently rewarded with the renewal of life; the wombs of his house that previously had been closed up were now opened, and his wife and maidservants became pregnant.

Jacob's Ladder

The Bible's perhaps most well-known dream is Jacob's dream of the ladder (Gen. 28: 12). Jacob had set out on a journey to his maternal uncle Laban in Padan Aram. When night arrived he lay down to sleep and dreamed of angels ascending and descending a ladder that reached to heaven. Above the ladder stood God, promising to protect Jacob and to bring him back safely. When he woke up, he decided to call the place Beth-El, the House of God.

The dream ladder may be a metaphor for the connection between heaven and earth, divine and human, or, within man's psyche, the connection between the personal ego on firm ground and the sense of divine presence in man's soul, the god-image, or the Self. The angels, as messengers and intermediaries, wander this vertical axis. In fact, ladder (*sulam*) is a *hapax legomenon*, appearing only once in the Bible, possibly originating in the Accadian word *simmiltu*, stairway, believed to be used by the gods to travel between different realms; at the top of the stairway was the entrance gate to the dwelling of the gods.

Jung referred to the theme of the ladder as pointing to "the process of psychic transformation, with all its ups and downs" (Jung, CW 12, 1968, para. 80). Later, Jacob has another dream, in which he is told by an angel to return to his native Canaan.

Solomon's Dream of Wisdom

When inheriting the throne, King Solomon sets off to the sanctuary at Gibeon, north-west of Jerusalem. He presented burnt offerings, and went to sleep to incubate at the sacred precinct, whereupon he dreamed a dream in which God appeared to him (1 Kings 3: 5ff.). With Abram's vision, this is the Bible's most prominent case of dream incubation. In his dream, Solomon asked God to give him "an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad." It is worthwhile to notice that the Hebrew says "a hearing heart;" the root of the word "hearing" [sh-m-a], is also the root of the word "meaning." That is, he asked for wisdom, and the wisdom of judgment, which he was granted.

Immediately upon his return from Gibeon to Jerusalem, Solomon is asked to decide who of the two harlots is the mother of the living child, and whose is the child that has died. He judged wisely that the one willing to forfeit the child rather than have it slain by the king's sword, is the mother.

Nebuchadnezzar's Troubled Dreams

Four centuries after Solomon built the Temple, the one hand of Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the city and the civilization of Babylon, while with his other hand he destroyed the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem. He told his magicians, "I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is troubled," and demanded they interpret his dream, without even telling it to them. Unable to do so, Daniel was called upon, and in a vision of the night God revealed the mystery of the dream to him. Daniel explicated the king's dream, in which he saw,

- ▶ A bright, awesome statue, head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet of iron and of clay. And then, a stone was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue and the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces and became like the worthless straw on a threshing floor in summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the stone that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2: 31ff.).

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom, his power, his strength and his glory came from God. "You are the head of gold," he said. Then there will arise a kingdom of silver, inferior to yours, and yet another one of bronze, which will rule over all the earth, Daniel tells the king. A fourth kingdom, as strong as iron – strong, oppressive, crushing and shattering, however "partly clay and partly iron, it will be divided" – powerful, yet frail, would then arise. At the end, the eternal, indestructible kingdom of heaven will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, Daniel tells the king.

Daniel interpreted the four metals of the statue as four successive kingdoms. Nonpsychological interpreters have seen it as a dream that links the history of worldly empires, and it has thus been perceived as a prediction of the historical succession from the kingdom of Babylon to Medo-Persia and Greece, and on to Rome, from where the Kingdom of God would rise again.

Other scholars have compared the dream to Hesiod's stages in the moral decline of mankind. Psychologically, it may reflect the relentless process of increasing

functionality, an increasingly strong ego, until the ego swells and is overcome by the transcendent, as represented by the stone “cut not by human hands.”

However, Nebuchadnezzar remains arrogant, a “classic case of megalomania,” writes Jung (CW 8, para. 163). His second dream, in which the tree in the midst of the earth, reaching to heaven, is cut down, and the king turned into a mad beast for seven years, may be considered as compensatory to this inflated condition.

Joseph, the Dream Interpreter

The dreams of Joseph, the butler and the baker, and then Pharaoh, constitute the Bible’s most prominent dream series. There are three sets of two dreams each. Joseph’s second dream essentially repeats his first, and Pharaoh’s dreams are identical to each other.

The doubling of dreams indicates the vital meaning ascribed to them, “that the matter is established by God” (Gen. 41: 32). While the dreams of the butler and the baker are similar and dreamed the same night, they are interpreted by Joseph as predicting their opposing destinies.

Joseph told his brothers that in his dream, their sheaves gathered around his and bowed down to it, and in his second dream, the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. He thus further aggravated his already angry brothers. From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, these dreams have been considered as a narcissistic manifestation of Joseph. Standing in the center of the earth’s harvest and of heavenly counsel may then be understood as compensatory to his feeling of being rejected by his brothers.

The second set of dreams is those of his fellow prisoners in Egypt, Pharaoh’s butler and baker. The butler dreamed that he gives Pharaoh to drink from the grapes that he pressed from a three-branched vine. Joseph told him this means he will be restored within three days to his former rank. From the position of Pharaoh, which means “the great house” and has been referred to as a metaphor for the ego, whose spirit we are told is troubled (Gen. 41: 8), it may indicate a renewal of the flow of wine, a necessary rejuvenation of spirit and consciousness. The positive interpretation of the dream makes the baker come forth, as well, to ask Joseph to interpret his dream as well.

In the baker’s dream, the food for Pharaoh in the uppermost of the three baskets on his head is eaten by the birds. This time Joseph’s interpretation is less agreeable, “The three baskets are three days; And within three days shall Pharaoh lift up your head off you, and shall hang you on a tree; and the birds shall eat your flesh off

you” (Gen. 40: 18f). That is, in contrast to the flow of wine and the symbolism thereof, the produce of the earth will not reach the great house of Pharaoh.

Then, the meeting of the two protagonists – the Egyptian King who does not yet realize his kingdom is threatened by famine, and the Canaanite hero whose rise into royalty came to be followed by his people’s fall into slavery – becomes the lysis of the dramatic series of dreams.

In his dream, Pharaoh saw seven thin and ugly cows come out of the river and consume the fat ones, without getting fatter, and seven thin and damaged ears spring up and replace the seven good ones. Prosperity is replaced by famine, like autonomous complexes may drain the ego of its resources (cf. Shalit, 2002: 68ff.). However, a conscious attitude may enable taking necessary precautions, as suggested by Joseph, who is appointed viceroy to prepare the land for the years of famine. Psychologically, an ego that attends to the manifestations of the soul by listening to dreams, can apply conscious means of coping.

The name Joseph means “the added one.” Besides interpreting Pharaoh’s prospective dream, he added wise counsel. Pharaoh renamed him *Zaphnath-Paaneah*, understood to mean “through him the Living God speaks,” or, psychologically through him the voice of the self speaks. Literally, the name means the one, who “deciphers the encrypted message,” thus acknowledging Joseph’s gift of dream interpretation.

In summary, dreams are sometimes considered false and misleading (e.g., Jeremiah and Zechariah) in the Hebrew Scriptures, at other times they describe the vertical axis between man and divinity (or ego and self; Jacob’s ladder, or the statue and the tree of Nebuchadnezzar); sometimes Biblical dreams are divine visions, and sometimes they predict a person’s fate or serve as spiritual guidance.

See also: [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ God Image in Dreams](#) [▶ Myth and Dreams](#) [▶ Theophany](#) [▶ Visions](#) [▶ Wisdom](#)

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Drewermann, Eugen

Matthias Beier

The primary function of religion is to be therapeutic. This thesis lies at the heart of the influential work of German psychoanalyst, theologian, and philosopher Eugen Drewermann. Widely read around the globe since the 1980s, he aims to free religion from its anxiety- and violence-producing projections and to interpret the rich symbolism of religions in ways that promote healing and wholeness for individuals and communities. Author of more than eighty volumes revamping theology in particular and religious studies in general in light of psychological, neurological, ethological, socio-cultural, and natural science research, Drewermann radically challenges the implicit and explicit use of traditional conceptions of God by religious, political, and economic authorities to justify psychospiritual suffering and socio-cultural forms of violence. He argues that religion needs psychological mediation to free it from literalistic rigidity and objectifying coercion, and that psychology, in turn, needs religion in order to safeguard the human person against behavioral, socio-cultural, genetic, economic and other forms of reductionism, dissolution, and exploitation.

Four basic interrelated ideas of Drewermann's work will be highlighted in this article: first, that the purpose of religion is to calm uniquely human forms of anxiety and that the measure of healthy religion depends on whether it increases or calms human anxiety; second, that a hermeneutics of religious texts and experiences is needed which pays equal attention to the evolutionary roots of religious symbols and to the vicissitudes of the subjective, historical human experience of self-reflection; third, that healthy religion is essential to a resolution of the human propensity to inflict psychological and physical violence; fourth, an exploration of the emergence of the notion of God as a person and its relation to the emergence of the human experience of personhood.

Born June 20, 1940, in Bergkamen, then a mining town in the Ruhr area of Germany, to a nominally Lutheran father working as a mining official and a devout Roman-Catholic mother working as a homemaker, Drewermann was the youngest of three siblings and exposed to lasting impressions of Allied air strikes that destroyed most of his hometown in the final years of World War II. Ordained as a Catholic priest in 1966, he soon found himself confronted as a diocesan priest in a German spa town with congregants suffering from psychosomatic illnesses and ethical

dilemmas for which seminary training had ill-prepared him. Thus motivated to enter psychoanalytic training at the Göttingen Psychoanalytic Institute, Drewermann's psychotherapeutic work confirmed the inadequacy of what he called a superego-oriented form of religion (1989) and argued for a religion oriented around the person-based experience of the I (*Ich*) or self. Simultaneously he began doctoral studies in theology at the University of Paderborn and philosophy at the University of Münster, earning a doctorate in systematic theology in 1976 with a dense three volume interdisciplinary study of Gen. 2–11 (1977–1978). Upon *habilitation*, Drewermann taught as *Privatdozent* for systematic theology at the Catholic Seminary of the University of Paderborn while continuing to work as a priest.

Integrating exegetical, psychoanalytic, cultural-anthropological, ethological, philosophical and systematic-theological methods, the multivolume works *Strukturen des Bösen* (1977–1978) and *Tiefenpsychologie und Exegese* (1984–1985) provide the methodological foundation for Drewermann's prodigious output of commentaries and interpretations of biblical texts and pieces of world literature: more than two dozen volumes of depth psychological commentaries on biblical texts, including each of the four gospels (1987–1988, 1992–1995, 2003, 2008–2009), the Luke infancy stories (1986, Engl.: 1994a), texts for Advent and Christmas (1990, Engl.: 1991c) and Lent and Easter (1991a, Engl.: 1994b), and most books of the Hebrew Scriptures (1994c, 1998c, 1999b, 1999c, 2000b); popular depth psychological interpretations of two dozen of Grimm's fairy tales (1981–2007), Anderson's "Little Mermaid" (1997), the Indian myth Milomaki (1991b); a historical novel on Giordano Bruno (1992), the Renaissance philosopher burned at the stake by the Inquisition; and interpretations of pieces of world literature such as Saint Exupery's *The Little Prince* (1984, Engl.: 1993b), Hermann Hesse's writings (1995), Dostoevsky's writings (1998a), Goethe's *Fairy Tale* (2000a), and Melville's *Moby Dick* (2004). His most recent series of volumes on the question of God in light of neurological (2006, 2007), anthropological (1998b), biological (1999a), and cosmological (2002) research have made him a public focal point of the science and religion debate in Europe. A prolific author gifted with the memory of a genius and the oratory skills of a Cicero, Drewermann is frequently featured on German speaking TV and radio talk shows and presents some hundred lectures annually while continuing his clinical practice.

Turning to the first basic idea, Drewermann's synthesis of psychology and religion centers around the function of religion to calm uniquely human forms of anxiety.

He distinguishes broadly three basic dimensions of human anxiety: the biological fear of death, the psychological/social fear of separation and insignificance, and the existential fear of non-being. In the face of the inevitability of death, existential anxiety raises biological and psychological/social anxieties through the self-reflective capacity of the mind to uniquely human absolute levels, as described by existential philosophers or psychologists from Kierkegaard and Sartre to Boss, Laing, May or Becker. The human capacity for self-reflection consciously or unconsciously opens the abyss of nothingness to the personal ego, stirring absolute levels of anxiety the ego forever seeks to calm. Such anxiety often remains unconscious and may then manifest itself in character structures as petrified anxiety which, on the outside, seem socially adaptive to the group, e.g., the routinely obedient fulfillment of the duty of a soldier in World War II moving prisoners to concentration camps or of another soldier to engage in carpet bombing while calmly drinking a cup of coffee in the cockpit of his bomber plane. Since the abyss of nothingness is absolute and, Drewermann maintains in contrast to other existential writers such as Sartre, Camus, or Becker, can never be bridged by anything less than absolute, all attempts to bridge it with anything less than absolute, such as temporal achievement, relative cultural symbols, allegiance to institutions or leaders including religious ones, or clinging to self and others, inevitably fail to calm and, often, inadvertently increase absolute anxiety. Based on this analysis, Drewermann argues that interpretations of religious texts, doctrines, and experiences need to be guided by attention to the basic interpersonal alternative between anxiety and trust. In this context, he developed diagnostic formulations of key theological dynamics in the experience of depression, hysteria, obsessive compulsion, and schizophrenia (1982–1984, 1993a).

Drewermann's work is best-known for his analysis of unhealthy forms of religion which led to his being officially silenced by the Roman-Catholic church at the behest of then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, who wrote with alarm in a 1986 letter to the local archbishop that Drewermann's work had caused "grave concern" in the Vatican and instructed the bishop to take all "necessary measures" (Beier, 2004: 17). Informed psychologically by Freud, Jung, Reik, Fromm, Kohut, Klein, Boss, Laing, Stern, and others, Drewermann expounds through interdisciplinary analysis dynamics that turn religious doctrines, beliefs, and institutions into the opposite of their original function: from calming anxiety and sublimating aggression to being the source of anxiety and violence, thus paradoxically blocking the

way to a solution of both (1989, 1993a). "A reactive atheism due to disappointment" (2007: 425; 1999a: 737) is the inevitable and even necessary response to this poisoning of religion by fear. When Drewermann added to his depth psychological hermeneutic of religious texts an analysis of the Vatican's clergy ideal as practically requiring the sacrifice of the clergy's own personhood through complete identification with the office and called for radical therapeutic reforms of clergy training in his most controversial book, *Kleriker* (1989), he was, despite massive protests throughout Europe reminiscent of the Küng affair, stripped in 1991 of his license to teach Catholic theology and suspended in 1992 from his priestly duties. In the wake of a reunified Germany, Drewermann emerged as a cultural icon for a democratic and non-dogmatic form of religion and has since been regarded in the public's eye as a "new Martin Luther" (*Time International*, August 24, 1992). Drewermann left the Roman-Catholic Church on the day of his sixty-fifth birthday in June 2005.

The second aspect of Drewermann's work addresses the nature of religious symbolism and its relation to historical reality and truth claims. Historical criticism, comparative religious studies, psychoanalytic theory, and recent brain research provide insurmountable evidence that stories collected in sacred texts, for the most part, do not report objective "external" historical facts but rather poetic and narrative retellings of significant "internal" subjective experiences which, Drewermann, attempting to address the imageless Protestant vacuum created by the demythologization of the Bultmann school and dialectical theology, argues, are by no means less historical than physical events but rather more so because they transmit what a powerful experience meant to the people who experienced it or who were touched by it. The story of the virgin birth of Jesus, for instance, aims not to declare Jesus' mother Mary to be biologically a virgin but rather uses a motif resembling Egyptian mythology, where Pharaoh is declared as eternally being born of a virgin and son of God only from the day of his enthronement, to convey that the people who encountered Jesus experienced him as someone whose authority as a person was not born from humans but from God. As such, the symbol of the virgin birth became a democratic symbol expressing the belief that every person receives a place and right to exist in the world directly from God, thus relativizing all oppressive human authority, both internally and socio-culturally. In the course of Christian history, however, this mythic symbol turned into the exact opposite when historicized and metaphysicized by Christian institutions as a "belief" to be accepted about the external

historical state of Mary's sexuality and thus used to control the private lives of people.

While Drewermann's analysis focuses primarily on Christian symbols and dogmas, it always takes place within the comparative study of religions (2000c). Such study shows that the *content* of key symbols of Christianity, such as virgin birth, cross, resurrection, ascension into heaven, walking on water, or transfiguration is not unique to Christianity but is shared among the world's religions. The uniqueness of Christianity must be sought not in the content of its symbols but in the *way* those symbols function(ed) to express the process of calming unique human anxiety through an encounter with the person of Jesus who, as evidenced by the signature phrase "Do not be afraid," portrayed God ultimately as the one who can be absolutely trusted and need not be feared. The Christian use of what Freud, Jung, and their varied followers recognized as universal images or archetypes of the psyche, and what ethology terms "innate release mechanisms" is decisively therapeutic. The universality of psychic imagery, albeit in socio-cultural variations, allows stories from the past to be read as personal stories in the present. Central to Drewermann's thought is that the message of Jesus aimed to heal religion itself from the ambivalent projections into the God image and from the violence so often done in the name of God intrapsychically, interpersonally, and between groups.

This leads to the third key aspect of Drewermann's work: his analysis of the violence of religion and of religious motivations involved in waging war. Following a scathing eco-theological critique of the exploitation of outer and inner nature due to the anthropocentrism of the Judeo-Christian world view (1981) and a radical critique of Christian ideas which inadvertently promote a culture of war (1982, 1991d), Drewermann emerged during the first Gulf War as the most outspoken German anti-war activist. He received the 2007 Erich-Fromm Prize for his tireless efforts to fight war and anti-Semitism and to promote peace and social justice. He calls war a disease and sees it as an attempt to solve by material means conflicts that can only be solved by addressing the absolute fears around needs of recognition, existence, and shame that fuel wars and lead to compensatory cultural God-like claims to absolute moral superiority, truth, and power. In war, an abstraction from feelings of empathy takes place and reason goes mad with fear while creating rationalizations for a supposed necessity to inflict violence in order to fight violence. In addition to the analysis of economic, historical, socio-cultural, and political reasons for wars, an analysis of what is spiritually at stake in violent conflicts is essential. Efforts at peace and social justice so

often fail because they are guided by moralistic splitting of the world into absolute good and evil in which the "good" feel justified to use all means possible and thus inevitably come to perpetuate the cycle of violence by trying to solve it through further self-righteous violence. Jesus' message of peace as well as Ghandi's and Martin Luther King's non-violent calls for civil disobedience guide Drewermann's own vision for an active and psychologically convincing form of conflict resolution (1996).

In a postmodern world leaving behind the early Christian councils' Greco-Roman speculations about the divine cast within a type of thinking in terms of metaphysical being or substance as well as the Thomistic theological pseudo-rationalism, Drewermann argues in light of neurological, biological, and cosmological research that popular conceptions of the soul or spirit as a kind of substance or energy and of Christ as a being or substance ruling from above are no longer tenable (2006, 2007). Similarly, tempting as it may be, God can no longer be thought of in natural philosophical terms of a principle of explanation for first causes nor for why the world is as it is. Modern sciences, as atheists like Dawkins or Dennett have argued convincingly, do not need the God hypothesis in order to explain anything in the universe. Religion, and specifically belief in God, does not *explain* the world, but rather emerged anthropologically and is needed existentially philosophically to *interpret* the world so that humans do not go mad in the face of the cruelty, indifference and senseless suffering in nature. Discussing the alternative approach of Buddhism on how to deal with suffering and nothingness, Drewermann argues based on neurological research on consciousness and self-awareness and on modern infant research conducted by Daniel Stern and others that the conception of the divine as a person is indispensable in a therapeutic form of religion. While Drewermann agrees with the analysis of existential philosophers and psychologists on the radical nature of anxiety, he argues that "ontological insecurity" (Laing) requires a genuinely religious answer in which religious symbols become catalysts for a calming of existential anxiety in an unconditionally accepting encounter with an absolute person, called God in religions. This experience occurs through the interpersonal human experience of love and then extends to our encounter with the non-human world in form of compassion. It need not necessarily involve God-language to occur. Without an absolutely accepting person in the background of the world, all religious symbols remain open to ambivalent uses for purposes of oppression. The idea that God must be imagined as a person is not meant to make an objective statement that can be abstracted from personal, subjective experience.

Applying the notion of therapeutic transference developed by Freud and his school (rather than Girard's notion of mimesis), Drewermann holds that for humans any calming of personal anxiety at the deepest level inevitably occurs by means of the psychic language of the personal dimension. To humans, God becomes most personal in form of a person. In this sense the religious is always personal and the personal is always religious. It is religion's function as a remedy for anxiety that requires humans to conceive of the absolute as an absolutely trustworthy person, God. Only in this context can the Cross, so often interpreted in sadomasochistic ways when conceived projectively as something God did to Jesus or as Jesus sacrificing himself to God for humans, become a symbol for working through human aggression by placing it where the cycle of violence can be broken: onto God who is conceived of as being able to suffer the aggression without feeding the cycle of retaliation and counter-violence. Though God, Drewermann argues with Kant, can never be proven to exist objectively as a person apart from subjective human experience of the divine but is in a way always bound to the projective mechanisms of the human mind and thus remains a postulate, the subjectivity of this experience does not exclude an objective reality corresponding to it, just as all of our experience is by definition subjective in the sense that we are the experiencing subject of it and yet can at the same time correspond to an objective reality beyond our senses. Religion only becomes mere projection in the sense of the Feuerbachian critique when it is used by external religious or quasi-religious secular institutions to alienate humans from themselves rather than enabling them to truly unfold freely as unique persons in relation to each other. Experience of God, for Drewermann, is by definition poetic and the attempt to explain the existence of God by objective means would be equal to confusing explanations about hormones with the ecstatic experience of love or explanations about syntax with the rapture experienced at the reading of a poem.

See also: [Anxiety](#) [Christianity](#) [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Death Anxiety](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Fall, The](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [God Image](#) [God Image and Therapy](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Myth](#) [Original Sin](#) [Personal God](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Self](#) [Symbol](#) [Vatican](#) [Violence and Religion](#) [Virgin Birth](#)

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Drives

Stefanie Teitelbaum

Introduction

Drive (*Trieb* in German) is a cornerstone of Freudian theory of human nature, combining the components of biological instinct and psychically determined patterns of behavior.

Freud used the words instinct (*Instinkt* in German) and drive (*Trieb*), often interchangeably. Dualism is a core component of Freud's thoughts about instinct, in both the nature of the instinct itself and in the mind body problem, wherein the instincts are the province of the body and the drives, psychically determined are the province of the mind. In a monadic or religious view, the distinction between instinct and drive is one of semantics.

Drive, as used in Freudian psychoanalysis, does not have a distinct role in religious literature. Religious texts, addressing the motivational forces of the Divine in human nature, refer primarily to instincts.

Psychoanalysis

Freud grappled with psychical agencies whose task was to tame, alter, neutralize and renounce the pressure of the

instincts which were threatening to the preservation of the species, individuals and civilizations. These agencies, however, are also instinctually motivated. Included are the Reality Principle (1911b), the internalization of the Primal Father (1913/1962), the Ego Ideal (1914/1962) and the Super Ego (1923b/1962). The Death of the Totem Father was specifically positioned as the innate mechanism enforcing the taboo against incest. The Super Ego and Ego Ideal however, contain implications of conscience which may be viewed as significantly different than the innocent, amoral vicissitudes of the instincts, (1915/1962). Thus forces creating Super Ego and Ego Ideal Super Ego and Ego Ideal might be considered to be motivated by a psychical drive rather than a biological instinct. Yet, the Oedipus Complex and the prohibition against incest may also be viewed as an instinctual protection of the species.

Commentary

Seminal texts on Freudian psychoanalysis often translate the German *Trieb* as instinct. Kernberg (1992) summarized the differences of the terms concluding that instinct represents a biological pressure and drive represents a psychically determined force of human nature. The differences exist in a mind/body dualistic schema. The instincts are proactive and reactive to the demands of the life and death of the body. The drives appear to take on a life of their own, related to the demands of psychical life and death. LaPlanche and Pontalis, (1967/1973), used instinct as their preferred term, with drive secondary, consistently translating *Trieb* as instinct in their major classifications. Rappaport (1961/1996) spoke of instinctual drive. Psychoanalysis speaks of drive derivatives, those aspects of a human personality which retain their instinctual character and have not been adequately altered by various psychical civilizing agencies.

The distinction between instinct and drive appears to be of interest to psychoanalytic theorists, and even in those circles, an arcane interest. This psychoanalytic concept of drive does not appear in significant religious texts: that which analysts refer to as drive is seen as the force of the Divine or the Devil. The Talmudic concept of the *Yetzer Tov* and the *Yetzer Hara*, the inclination towards good and evil are implanted by God and their interplay form the basis of human nature. The internal voice of the *Yetzer Tov* is thought of as the voice of God and of conscience. The Christian virtues Virtues and Deadly Sins might well be viewed as children of the *Yetzers Tov* and *Hara*. These motivational forces are uniquely human and value laden, which might put them in the category of a drives if one uses the term as in the psychoanalytic concept.

See also: [Ego](#) [Instinct](#) [Super-Ego](#)

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Dualism

Hillary S. Webb

Dualism Across the Domains

“Dualism” (from the Latin *dualis*, meaning “containing two”) refers to a philosophical system or set of beliefs in which existence is believed to consist of two equally real and essential substances (such as mind and matter) and/or categories (such as being and nonbeing, good and bad, subject and object). Dualism contrasts with *monism*, the theory that existence ultimately consists of only one thing or essence, and also with *pluralism*, the belief that existence is made up of many things or essences (Ajaya, 1983; Gordon, 2005).

Although the term can be applied to much earlier philosophical and religious traditions, “dualism” as an ontological designation was first used in 1700 by the

philosopher Thomas Hyde as a means of describing religious systems that conceive of God and the Devil as co-eternal (and therefore equal) principles. The term was later introduced into philosophical discourse by the German Idealist Christian Wolff as a way of categorizing philosophical systems that conceive of mind and matter as distinct and irreducible substances. Rene Descartes further separated mind and body within what came to be known as “Cartesian Dualism.” After this, the term “dualism” as a philosophical concept became most frequently applied to issues surrounding the “mind-body problem” – a philosophical conundrum that considers how the seemingly distinct substances of the immaterial mind and the material body causally interact (Gordon, 2005; Stoyanov, 2000).

While in Western philosophical dualism the fundamental debate centers on the primacy of mind versus body, when applied to the field of religious studies, “dualism” is most widely used in regard to belief systems that either conceive of two supreme and opposing principles such as “God” and “Devil” or those that create a sharp distinction between the “profane” (the world of day-to-day physical existence) and the “sacred” (an intangible, transcendent, and – in some cases – more “true” or “essential” reality). The Western world’s study of the human psyche has likewise created various splits or dualisms, including (but not limited to) the relationship between society and the individual, nature and nurture, and mind and body. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Wolff divided the study of the soul into “rational psychology,” which examined the human soul and argued for its immortality, and “empirical psychology,” which aimed to identify psychological principles on the basis of the soul’s worldly experiences. Later on came the division of psychological disorders into “organic” (biologically-based) and “functional” (mental-emotional) pathologies, with the former orientation emphasizing the explanation, prediction, and control of behavior or cognition, with the latter focusing on the subjective experience of the individual as a means to understand and treat psychological distress (Teo, 2007).

A Preoccupation with Polarity

It has been argued (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1989a; Needham, 1973) that all cultures across time and space identify and make meaning of the world through “binary oppositions” – dyads of complementary or opposed elements such as male-female, good-evil, spirit-flesh, and so on. Some (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1979, 1989a, 1989b; Needham, 1973)

believe binary opposition to be the most fundamental category through which the human mind organizes itself, and that the frequency with which this form of classification arises within and across cultures is evidence that “bipartization,” or the impulse to conceive of the world as split into a duality is hardwired into the human psyche. Given this “preoccupation with polarity” (Maybury-Lewis, 1989a: 6) it has been suggested that much of human consciousness is devoted to trying to understand and mediate the relationship of the opposites.

The way in which a culture envisions the relationship between the polarities is one of the most significant and distinctive features in any ontological model. Within religious traditions exhibiting an *antithetical dualism*, one side of the pair is often seen as being responsible for the creation and preservation of the cosmos with its opposite being the “negative” or “evil” aspect that seeks to unmake creation. Stoyanov (2000) split religious systems of this type into several categories based upon the extent to which (and the ways in which) this opposition manifests. For example, he noted that within systems that exemplify an *absolute dualism*, the antithetical relationship of the opposites is, as the term implies, absolute, in that the opposing forces representing good and evil are believed to have originated from two independent, co-eternal principles that always have been and always will be separate. Classic examples of *absolute dualism* are the “dualist monotheisms” of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, two early religious systems that made the antagonistic struggle between good and evil the fundamental principle of their religion. However despite both being forms of absolute dualism, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism show significant differences in how this antithetical struggle is played out. For example, in Zoroastrianism it is believed that the physical world, including the human body, is an expression of the positive aspects of the “good” principle. This belief is referred to as *cosmic dualism*. Manichaeism, on the other hand, as an example of *anti-cosmic dualism*, equates the profane world and its manifestations with the principle of evil (Stoyanov, 2000).

In contrast, other systems exhibiting an *antithetical dualism* subscribe to a kind of *moderate dualism* in which one of the two opposites – typically the “evil” side of the equation – is considered to be a secondary principle; one that has its origins in the primary and more supreme principle. Some of the classic Gnostic movements are included in the category. Despite these ontological differences, philosophies of *absolute dualism* and *moderate dualism* both share the fundamental belief that the aspect considered to be “negative” or “evil” should be rejected and/or destroyed. It has been noted (Ajaya, 1983) that

within this context, the human experience is perceived to be an unending struggle to distinguish that which is the “good,” “creative,” or “real” aspect and that which is “evil,” “destructive,” or “illusory.”

While a philosophical model based on an *antithetical dualism* accentuates the struggle and antagonism between the opposites, other systems of thought perceive the polarities as being ultimately *complementary* in nature. Within a dualism of complementary terms, the underlying ontological belief is that everything has a counterpart without which it cannot exist. Philosophical and religious systems based upon forms of complementary dualism (for example, Taoism and many indigenous, “shamanic” belief systems) maintain that existence is dependent upon the tension and balanced interchange between the polarities. Because they are interdependent and mutually supportive, resolutions or disturbances occurring in one side of the equation evoke a sympathetic response in the other. Therefore, if one side is destroyed or denied, the other will suffer to an equal degree (Hertz, 1973; Maybury-Lewis, 1979, 1989a; Needham, 1973; Tuzin, 1989; Watts, 1969).

While certainly acknowledging the tension created by the opposites, philosophical models based on a complementary dualism are marked by their dedication to maintaining an equilibrium and harmony between them. Maybury-Lewis (1989a) stated that, “[Complementary] dualistic theories insist that these antitheses do not tear the world apart, and humankind with it, because they are part of a cosmic scheme in which they are harmonized” (p. 14). Within these cultures, “complementarity” becomes the major organizing principle within all aspects of community life, from the social to the spiritual.

Dualism in the Psyche

It has been noted (Jung, 1953/1956; Myerhoff, 1974; Tarnas, 1991; Watts, 1969) that Western philosophical and religious systems have historically tended towards a dualism of antithetical terms, with a corresponding belief that the tension created by the polarities can be resolved only through an elimination of the undesirable aspect of the pair. Myerhoff (1974) reflected, “Unfortunately, we westerners have come to feel that enduring this sort of tension is not really necessary, but somehow it is possible to allow one pole to exist and prevail without its opposite. We see good without evil, pleasure without pain, God without the devil, and love without hate” (p. 102). Likewise, Watts (1969) noted that, “By and large Western culture is a celebration of the illusion that good may exist without evil, light without darkness, and pleasure without

pain, and this is true of both its Christian and secular, technological phases” (p. 48).

The Western world’s devotion to what Jung (1953/1956) referred to as “neurotic one-sidedness” (p. 42) is evident in a certain intolerance of the complexity of the psyche, one that often results in a compulsion to eliminate all paradoxes and seeming contradictions of the human condition. A 2007 *Time* magazine article, entitled “What Makes Us Moral?” gives an example of this. The article begins with the following sentiment:

“If the entire human species were a single individual that person would long ago have been declared mad. The insanity would not lie in the anger and darkness of the human mind – though it can be a black and raging place indeed. And certainly it wouldn’t lie in the transcendent goodness of that mind – one so sublime, we fold it into a larger ‘soul.’ The madness would lie instead in the fact that both of those qualities, the savage and the splendid, can exist in one creature, one person, often in one instant” (Kluger, 2007: 54).

According to this article, it doesn’t matter which we choose – either the “splendid” or the “savage” – as long as we align ourselves thoroughly and completely with that one side without deviation. Only then can we be considered healthy and sane. While over the years there have been a number of Western thinkers who have argued for the necessity of balancing the opposing forces within the psyche (Jung and Watts most notable among them) the dominant Western psychological perspective tends to be that the individual must choose between the opposites – either the splendid or the savage – and align oneself thoroughly and completely with it without deviation.

See also: [Creation](#) [Cultural Psychology](#) [Devil](#) [Evil](#) [God](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Nonduality](#) [Shamans and Shamanism](#) [Taoism](#) [Watts, Alan Wilson](#) [Zoroastrianism](#)

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Duende and Psychoanalysis

Claudia Bader

Duende is a term used to describe artistry empowered by the awareness of death. It has similarities to the idea of “soul,” in art and life, but although both share the sense of tragedy or pain moving the creative energies, duende is libidinally charged, having more fire and drama in it.

The term duende comes from popular Spanish culture, created from the phrase – Duen de Casa – Master of

the House. This refers to a poltergeist-like trickster figure that makes a general irritation of its self by hiding things, breaking china, and making noise. However there was another usage of the term that comes from Andalusia, where great artists are said to have duende, inferring they are in contact with this force. Great bullfighters, singers, and dancers are graced with this description. Duende becomes a personification of, and resonates to, daimons, muses, and/or demons; it is an energy that moves through the body and soul. It is described as a possession as much as a talent. In this guise duende takes on a chthonic quality, pulling inspiration from the depths and bursting through the artist to the audience.

Awareness of death is an intrinsic aspect of duende. Destructive and creative energies are very close to each other when the duende is invoked. The whisper of death suffuses their art, and this awareness of it drives life. Thus, Manuel Torre, who was a great flamenco singer, can make the statement that “all that has black sounds has duende” (Torre, quoted by Lorca, p. 49, 1933). The thrill and terror of contact with death, the ultimate mystery and realm of the unknown, is what brings depth of expression and allows the performer and the audience to soar.

The person responsible for bringing the concept of duende out of Spain onto the international stage was the Spanish poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca (1898–1936).

A charismatic figure, Lorca was deeply involved in the intellectual and creative life of the time. He had close relationships with Bunuel and Dali, and was an influence on Pablo Neruda. Lorca was obsessed with his death, and would even stage mock funerals for himself with his friends.

The idea of duende as an artistic force was integral to his thinking from at least 1922 when he gave a lecture, “Deep Song,” at a music festival for the for musical genre called Cante Jondo – deep song.

His ideas about deep song became the foundation for his poetics.

The time in between 1922 and 1933 he was in New York writing “a Poet in New York,” listening to jazz, blues, African–American spirituals and studying English at Columbia.

In his contact with professional singers (cantaores) and dancers (bailaores) of Spanish music Garcia Lorca came to appreciate the difference between a good and bad performer.

The difference was simple. . . he said that good performers have duende, bad ones never, ever, achieve it. The good singers sing with their whole body, the sound moving from the chest, not the throat. Good dancers pull the energy up from the earth. These performers with duende have “black sounds.”

Black and its various symbolic variants are crucial for duende, and this relationship to the dark and its gifts and trials is crucial for psychoanalysis as well.

The source of the symbolism related to black is rooted in the fact that we are diurnal animals. We humans are most dependent upon our sense of sight. If we go back in time to our experience in nature before artificial light, night is the most dangerous time for us. We are at our most vulnerable in the night, for without light we can't see. When we sleep, things go dark, and we are helpless at that time. We are unconscious and enter another reality. Additionally, the association of death with black comes naturally since in death we are unconscious permanently. As with all symbols, individual associations to black evolve dependent upon a combination of archetypal factors and a person's individual psychic structure and experiences.

Duende's relationship to death resonates with psychoanalytic concepts. Freud coined the term death instinct. He wrote about this in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). The death instinct is more commonly called thanatos.

Freud was always close to an organic orientation, and when he formulated the idea of the repetition compulsion and its stubborn adherence to early patterns, to NOT changing, Freud came to the conclusion that the fundamental aim of all instincts is to revert to an earlier state, a regression.

He came to see a battle in the psyche that he felt was based in biology, of the life, libidinal, forces pitted against the drive to death and entropy. They evolve into more of a drive quality when Melanie Klein developed the theory.

Melanie Klein was deeply influenced by the idea of the death instinct and saw it as an active, intense force in the psyche in contrast to Freud who saw it working in the background. In Klein's work with children she observed intense destructive levels of aggression in their play that outbalanced the loving, joyous, positive libidinal aspects of play. She elaborated on the power of the death instinct by describing “envy,” an early state in which aggression directed against the life of the subject is directed against anything that supports or is a source of life.

It is difficult to observe thanatos in its pure form in reality, but art can create images where we might actually get some sense of what the pure form might look like. Mythological monsters and demons, crazed villains in movies and plays open us to the raw expression of the darkness.

A common thread in these villainous character is their grandiosity and narcissism. They strive to annihilate all difference, because the only thing allowed to exist is

themselves. Drenched in Klein's envy, they want to destroy life. This kind of character resonates to the myth of Saturn/Kronos, who, upon hearing a prophecy that one of his children would overthrow him, ate his children.

In this kind of world, there cannot be an other; without an other, no relatedness and no object relations. When there is no relatedness, death can result. Spitz discussed this in relation to "hospitalism." He reported that infants did not thrive, and some died that were not cuddled, held, and related to, even if they were fed and changed.

The body is important in duende; Lorca quotes an unnamed virtuosic guitarist describing duende as climbing up from the soles of the feet. Resonating in the body, the singing comes from the chest and belly, not the throat. Duende's black sounds emerge from deep feelings. Mourning, rage, love, the forces of destruction and creation, are closely connected. An artist with great duende contains and expresses these.

In psychoanalysis, appropriate mourning and grief are crucial in healing. Psychoanalytic work demands great presence in the face of extreme affect states. The analyst needs to create the container in the rhythm of time and contact in order to help negotiate and midwife real mourning.

Christopher Maurer describes four crucial elements identified as Lorca's vision of duende: irrationality, earthiness, a heightened awareness of death, and a connection to the diabolical.

In these four elements, more aspects of working psychoanalytically come up:

1. *Irrationality*: working with feelings and impulses
2. *Earthiness*: as a recognition of mortality, that we are in a body that dies; then, the channel of expression through the body. The cantaor (singer) with duende sang from his chest and not his throat
3. *The Awareness of Death*: the death instinct, and the contrast of the drive for life. The importance of mourning in the process of healing
4. *Connection to the Diabolical*: allows for aggression, sadism, all the thanatos-driven feeling states

Duende and Projective Identification

Another aspect of duende resonates with the psychoanalytic concept of projective identification, the condition where the patient, unable to tolerate their own feelings, cuts them off and projects them into the psychoanalyst. In this case, the psychoanalyst feels the feelings of the patient.

Duende, in its guise as a daimon/muse/demon, is described as seizing both the performer and the audience.

It is a right brain experience, beyond intellect. This seizing is an excellent description of what projective identification feels like. However, in this case, the resonant effect is a result of the presence of duende, and the performer is not cut off from feeling.

Duende and the Alchemical Mercury Archetype

Duende can be understood as an aspect of a larger archetype, mercury. As in all alchemical imagery, the symbols start with the actual chemical substances and processes used in alchemy. Mercury has a special place in these, for mercury is described as both the alchemical process as well as the goal of the process. Both duende and mercury are paradoxical: a "who," and a "what;" destruction and creation.

In descriptions of mercury in alchemical texts, mercury is seen as a combination of substances, having many different qualities which all refer back to the properties of quicksilver. This is called "common mercury." Chemically speaking, this comes from the fact that quicksilver served as a universal solvent.

However, mercury is often called "Our Mercury;" In this manifestation mercury gains a capital "M," and takes on a different character. "Our Mercury" is substance, source, and process all at once. "Our Mercury" is transformation its self, intrinsic, coming from the matter that is undergoing the change. In the transformation it devours its self and then recreates its self. The name, "Mercury," is given to all stages of this death/rebirth cycle.

The juxtaposition of destructive and creative process fits duende. Duende is referred to as both a presence, the duende, in its guise as daimon/muse/demonic earth spirit, and a process, what is being expressed emotionally and spiritually in performance or in creative process. This slippery quality that encompasses both process and presence is also a way of conceptualizing psychoanalysis. As psychoanalysts hold the space for patients with their therapeutic presence, and they also facilitate process occurring. So there is both stillness and movement in the same space. This combination of process and presence resonates with themes from the alchemical mercury archetype as well as duende.

See also: [Daimonic](#) [Demons](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Dunbar, Helen Flanders

Curtis W. Hart

Dunbar's Life

Helen Flanders Dunbar was a medieval scholar, a seminary graduate, and a practicing psychiatrist with an abiding interest in psychosomatic medicine. She was born into a well-to-do family in Chicago in May of 1902 and suffered from a variety of illnesses of unclear origin as a child. She was raised primarily by three strong women who invested a great deal in her. They were her mother, her aunt, and her grandmother all of whom anticipated great accomplishments in her future. She graduated from the Brearley School in New York and went on to attend college at Bryn Mawr where she majored in both mathematics and psychology with an interest in psychology of religion in particular. Dunbar then undertook graduate studies in Comparative Literature at Columbia and attended Union Theological Seminary at the same time. At Union, she met Anton Boisen who engaged her interests in the clinical training program for clergy and seminarians that he was starting at Worcester (Massachusetts) State Hospital. Dunbar went to Worcester in the summer of 1925 where she worked tirelessly in the department of social work studying symbols and symbolization in schizophrenia. Her interest in the clinical training she received with Boisen and others at Worcester combined

with her curious and idealistic nature, led her to become the first Medical Director of what was then called the Council for Clinical Training for clergy, even as she went on to complete her medical studies at Yale.

A practicing Episcopalian, Dunbar retained a connection to both the church and the medical establishment. As a physician, she showed herself to be an adept institutional politician and an outstanding theorist in the area of psychosomatics. She had a central role in and became the founding editor of the highly esteemed professional medical journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*. She completed a major study *Emotions and Bodily Changes* (1935) that went through several subsequent editions. She held several prestigious positions in the dialogue between religion and medicine and maintained an ongoing interest in furthering the formal, scientific study of the relationship between faith and health. Never one to avoid controversy, Dunbar became involved in confrontations and controversies with male colleagues in both medicine and religion over issues of gender, power, and authority as much as they had to do with theory and professional practice. Dunbar was not actively involved with the clinical pastoral movement and Anton Boisen in particular much after the late 1930s but her commitment became rekindled just prior to her untimely death in 1959 from drowning in a swimming pool following a heart attack at her home in South Kent, Connecticut in 1959.

Dunbar's Legacy

Dunbar's legacy is complex in both medicine and religion. Her writing displays an erudite and sophisticated appreciation for the interplay of mind and body, psyche and soma. She was greatly interested and expended considerable effort investigating the role of symbols in explaining and understanding illness. Her own study of medieval literature, and Dante in particular, informed her therapeutic approach. The book she wrote arising out of her doctoral thesis at Columbia, *Symbolization in Medieval Thought and Its Consummation in the Divine Comedy*, was first published in 1927 and was republished at the time of her death in 1959 and remains a classic in its field.

It was out of her thinking and writing in theology and medieval studies that she came to understand the depth and power of symbols as they relate to medical and psychiatric symptoms. Symbols potentially provide structures for meaning about the relation of body, mind, and spirit. For Dunbar, symbols call attention to the whole that is always greater than the sum of its parts – a person with a family and a history or life narrative that develops

or displays signs of dysfunction at a specific time in life and is under the influence of both inherent predispositions and immediate life stressors. Dunbar's views in these matters reflect a thoroughgoing sense of organic and holistic thinking, where for her the parts or dimensions of a person are not separate or discreet entities but interdependent and dynamically related components affecting one another. Her views on these matters anticipated by a generation in medical education and practice what is known as the "biopsychosocial model." Her understanding of healing in medicine and psychiatry was informed by what is often thought of as the property of a medieval world view known as the "organic functional ideal." Dunbar's views are at the same time a reflection of the powerful influences upon her of both John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead. Dunbar was a challenge to the medical world as well as to those she encountered in the ministry and the religious establishment both because of her gender as well as for her highly original perspectives. She could persuade, charm, and confront others. She was known to be a gifted and much sought after therapist. Her ideas were informed as much by her theological and medieval and literary studies as by her medical and scientific endeavors. Helen Flanders Dunbar thus remains a prophetic and intriguing figure in the dialogue between medicine and religion.

See also: [Boisen, Anton](#)

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Dying and Rising Gods

Lee W. Bailey

An ancient text says, as James Frazer worded it: "Heracles on his journey to Libya had been slain by Typhon and brought to life again by Iolaus, who held a quail under his

nose: the dead god snuffed at the bird and revived". (Frazer, 1922: section 224).

This is a short version of the many accounts of gods and semi-gods who were said to have died and been resurrected, well-documented in the eastern Mediterranean region. This one is associated with the migration of quails who descend in hordes on Palestine/Israel in spring to breed.

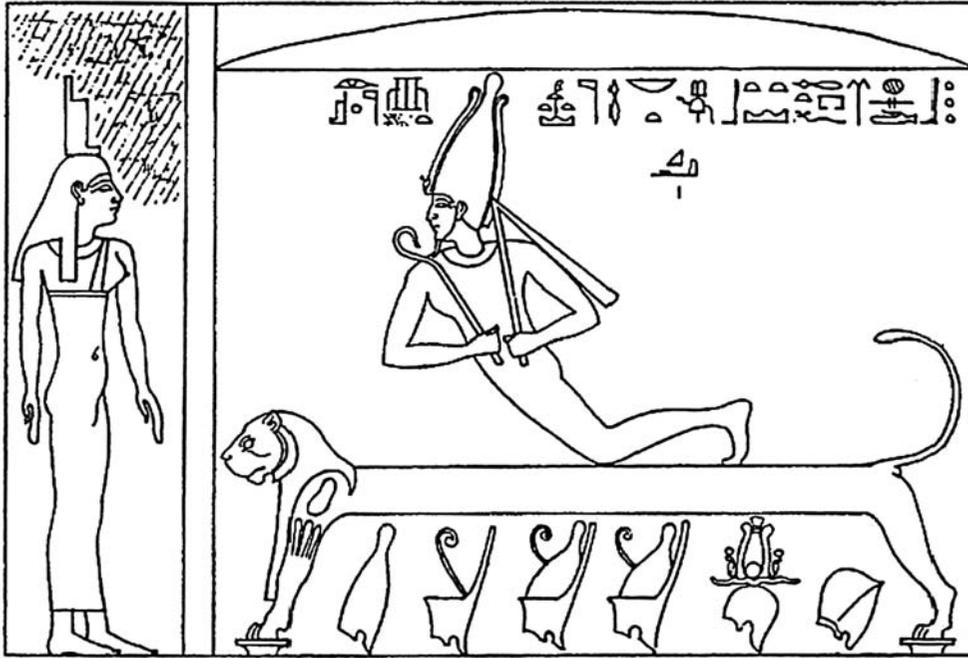
James Frazer

The classicist James Frazer (Cambridge University), in his 1890–1915 encyclopedic *The Golden Bough*, collected a mass of reports of ancient authors and nineteenth-century travelers about archaic rituals, myths, and traditions. It is a classic compendium of fascinating material, highlighting the dying and rising god theme, but he organized it according to lax, speculative nineteenth century standards.

Frazer's overall thesis was that archaic magic gave way to religion, which has now given way to science. This theme was soon proven wrong when twentieth-century religion continued to flourish alongside science. He also practiced the risky speculation of armchair scholars, by hypothesizing grand organizing themes without adequate study of the details of each culture (he traveled only to Italy and Greece). This conflict between those exploring large universalist themes and those restricting research to culturally unique specifics has continued, and is active in the discussion of the "Dying and Rising Gods," which was the most controversial schema that Frazer proposed.

Frazer reviewed the ancient texts and recent studies of eastern Mediterranean gods and demi-gods such as Tammuz, Adonis, Dido, Hercules, Melquarth, Attis, Marsyas, Hyacinth, Osiris, Dionysus, Demeter and Persephone. He interpreted their deaths and resurrections primarily as primitive magic carried over into religions of deities, having the purpose of assuring the fertility of the earth's reproductive systems. Not understanding the natural processes of growth, he proposed, these ancients believed that they had to magically help fertility happen by imitating the seasonal process, thereby facilitating it. So the death (or descent into the underworld) of a god or goddess was symbolized in part by a ritual of planting seeds, and the resurrection was an image of plants sprouting and animals being born.

Many variations developed, including bloody sacrifices, such as the initiates into the cult of Cybele imitating her beloved Attis by castrating themselves and throwing their blood (life-fluid) and testicles onto a statue of the goddess, apparently to assure her impregnation and



Dying and Rising Gods. **Figure 1** Osiris rising from his bed in a floating position. His wife Isis standing on the left. From the Osiris temple at Dendara; see Mettinger (2001:173). Published originally in Mariette, A. (1870). Denderon. Vol. 4. Paris.

subsequent fertility in the plant and animal world. Attis was said to be born of the virgin Nana, and initiates were said to be baptized with the blood of a bull (the *taurobolium*) (Frazer, 1922:403–413). Frazer interpreted this all as promoting fertility among hungry people groping with agricultural practices in a world they saw as filled with spirits. The ancient high death rate may have also been in the background. Women were reported to grieve the death of Adonis, plant gardens of Adonis, and celebrate when the seeds sent up shoots (Frazer, 1922: 376–403). He notes an Egyptian inscription that shows the dead Osiris lying prostrate, rising up and standing with Isis (Frazer, 1922: 436; drawings in Mettinger, 2001: 171–174). He also argues that in addition to vegetation magic (naturist), some resurrections were intended to be social, assuring the continuation of the life force of the king (euhemerist), and that some myths (e.g., Osiris) were intended to assure eternal life.

Now all this is fascinating, but Frazer has been accused of excessive speculation, especially in the category of the Dying and Rising Gods as symbols of vegetative growth. Several scholars have rejected his broad universalist category and stressed the particular differences among the accounts of the gods, semi-gods, or humans and textual

difficulties, although some scholars support the Dying and Rising Gods theme (Mettinger, 2001: 215).

Jonathan Z. Smith

The critical particularist reaction by Jonathan Z. Smith (University of Chicago) in 1987 (2nd ed, 2005), in Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religion*, swept aside this Dying and Rising Gods typology as “largely a misnomer based on imaginative reconstructions and exceeding late or highly ambiguous texts” (Smith, 2005: 2535). Smith holds the data to strict standards of empirical historical research, and finds it lacking. He argues that some of these gods or semi-gods are said to disappear, not die. His typology is that some deities return but have not died, and that other gods died but do not return. His thesis is that “There is no unambiguous instance in the history of religions of a dying and rising deity” (Smith, 2005: 2535).

In one text about the Syrian/ Babylonian/ Greek god/ hero Adonis, for example, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Adonis is killed by a boar, but does not rise from death [except as the anemone flower – Book 10: line 737]. Apollodorus' *Library* (III. xiv. 4) describes Adonis' alternation between

the upperworld and the underworld, but, Smith interprets, this offers no explicit suggestion of death and rebirth (Smith, 2005: 2535–2536). Smith (like some Christians) suggests that late post-Christian myths of Dying and Rising Gods were likely influenced by Jesus' resurrection. Attis, for example, in a late text, is said to be resurrected, but Smith says he is not here a dying and rising deity, nor is he a deity at all, but a human (Smith, 2005: 2536). Other myths of resurrection, Smith argues, fail to fit his strict category, such as Baal and Marduk. He says that the text “so-called” *Death and Resurrection of Bel-Marduk* is most likely an Assyrian political parody (Smith, 2005: 2537). Osiris, he argues, cannot be said to be risen, “in the sense required by the dying and rising pattern,” since his resurrection after dismemberment sent him to be the Lord of the underworld land of the dead, imparting a new permanent life to the deceased (Smith, 2005: 2538). Thus he defines resurrection as literally returning to mortal earthly life, excluding continuation as plants or in an immortal state, and rejects the motif of going to the underworld and returning as symbolic of death and resurrection.

Smith is right in pointing out many discontinuities among the supposedly dying and rising gods. The vegetation gods, such as Adonis, differ from the royal kingship gods and the gods of immortality after life, such as Osiris, who combines all three types. Smith's particular readings are rooted in his empirical hermeneutic and logically astute analyses, inspired by empiricism's distaste for speculation. But Smith's readings are selectively speculative and too literalist for such symbolic literature. This contrasts with a symbolic, more phenomenological hermeneutic, which would read important images differently. For example, the underworld is clearly the ancient abode of the dead, and Adonis is relegated by Zeus to spend half his year there with Persephone (goddess of death), and half above ground with Aphrodite (goddess of love) (Apollodorus III, xiv, 4). This seems clearly to symbolize a dying and rising god able to appear on earth, yet partake in immortal forces that overcome ordinary death (*athanatoi*), thus being able to be resurrected, although perhaps not in a literal earthly body.

Smith focuses on the male dying and rising gods, and neglects the importance of the goddesses. For example, an Inanna text that clearly states that *she* is a dying and rising goddess: “My father. . . He gave me descent into the underworld. He gave me ascent from the underworld” (Wolkstein-Kramer, 1983: 16). Inanna/Ishtar is clearly the dying and rising goddess (c.f. Persephone) in this Sumerian/Akkadian tradition, and seeking evidence for only the male figures distracts from the feminine traditions.

While she descended into the underworld, life above stopped (“Since Ishtar has gone down to the Land of no Return, The bull springs not upon the cow, the ass impregnates no the jenny. . .” lines 6–7), and when she returned, it began again with resurrection (“May the dead rise and smell the incense” last line, Pritchard, 1958: 80–85).

Smith is not only un-feminist here, but he seems loathe to accept the idea that return from the underworld to be sufficient to mean rising from the dead. But in ancient myth the underworld is commonly the abode of the dead, and rising from it commonly symbolizes return to life on earth or the place of immortality. “Rising” from death need not mean an empirical return to normal bodily life, but could easily mean a more poetic, mystical passage of the spirit of the ancestors into the upper world, which was a common theme in ancient Egyptian and many other religions. Smith focuses on Ishtar's lover Tammuz, and, with a reading claiming a mis-translation, says that “in the Akkadian version, Tammuz is dead and remains so” (Smith, 2005: 2539). Yet the complete reference at the end of the Sumerian and Akkadian texts gives a different picture. When Ishtar returns to the upper world from the land of the dead, she says:

- ▶ As for Tammuz, the lover of her youth,
Wash him with pure water, anoint him with sweet oil;
Clothe him with a red garment, let him *play* on a flute of lapis,
Let courtesans *turn* [his] mood. . .
On the day when Tammuz comes up to me,
When with him the lapis flute (and) the carnelian ring come up to me,
When with him the wailing men and the wailing women come up to me,
May the dead rise and smell the incense (Pritchard, 1958: 85).

On the surface, Ishtar/Inanna's successful battle with Erishkigal, Queen of the Dead, and return to the upper world with her deceased lover Tammuz/Dumuzi is the symbolic cause of the conquest of death resulting in resurrection. To focus on the death of Tammuz, saying that here he is only being “treated as a corpse” and to highlight the ritual wailing about his loss, is to ignore this clear reference to his subsequent return to life, as in the reawakening the erotic instinct of reproduction (“Let courtesans turn his mood.”) Smith simply refuses to read numerous symbols of resurrection as meaningful. To privilege an earlier or later text over another version does not necessarily grant it more authority. Nor does it make sense to claim that Dumuzi/Tammuz cannot return to life, without sending a replacement to the land of the dead, refute the deity's rising to life for half the year; it simply denies the importance of

the “rising” in the life half of the cycle of the deity’s tradition (Smith, 2005: 3190).

Smith’s readings of the Dying and Rising gods texts is a useful re-examination, but finally a one-sided, narrowly speculative hermeneutic, curiously suppressing the symbolic and poetic sensibility basic to religions. “Rising” may be read as a poetic expression of some form of overcoming death, not just the literal return to a human body. The return of a god from the land of the dead to a spiritual realm associated with the resurrection of the human dead need not be discarded as irrelevant in contrast to a demand that the definition of a rising god include returning to an empirical human body on earth. Smith does this with Osiris, who returns from death to become not a human, but the Lord of immortal souls, with the repeated ritual formula clearly indicating resurrection: “Rise up, you have not died” (Smith, 2005: 2538).

Tryggve Mettinger

A recent study by the Swedish Hebrew Bible scholar Tryggve Mettinger (University of Lund), *The Riddle of Resurrection: Dying and Rising Gods in the Middle East* (2001), does not accept Smith’s conclusions. In a careful textual and linguistic analysis, he accepts more images showing the validity of a variety of dying and rising gods. He does not want to hypostatize a specific type of deity, but stresses the different types of gods with similar patterns (Mettinger, p. 218). He concludes, for example, as pictured in the Egyptian Dendara Temple of Osiris inscriptions, that Osiris “both died and rose . . . he rose to continued life in the Netherworld. . .” (Mettinger, 2001: 175). In response to the idea that some ancient texts may have been read through a Christian lens as implying resurrection, he reminds us that several gods are said to die and return long before the Christian era: Dumuzi, Baal, Melquarth, Adonis, and Osiris.

Christianity

The major question whether early Christians borrowed the theme of the dying and rising god in interpreting their experiences of Jesus is obviously the critical issue. Frazer puts the question in his boldly speculative way:

- ▶ When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon

a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis. . . (Frazer, 1922: section 217).

Now it is true that Christianity, like many other religions, did borrow many themes from other religions, such as baptism and virgin birth. But many religions commonly borrow themes from earlier faiths. The Hebrew term for “my Lord” *Adonai*, is very similar to the name of the ancient Phoenician/ Syrian/ Greek divinity, Adonis, having the same linguistic root. Mettinger says that dying and rising deities were well-known in Israel in New Testament times. Adonis was known in the Hebrew Bible to be “beloved by women” (Bible, Daniel 11:37). The earlier resurrection of Melquarth-Heracles was celebrated in Tyre (where Jesus visited – Bible, Mark 7:24–30).

But looking at particulars, there are some differences with Jesus. The earlier figures were legendary ancient divinities, whereas Jesus was a living human. For the disciples and Paul, Jesus’ resurrection was a one-time historical event, not an annual, mythic ritual tied to fertility or kingship. And Jesus was more an ethical prophet than the ancient vegetation or royalty deities. There is no evidence of the ancient dying and rising gods suffering to forgive sins, as was said of Jesus. There also is no specific evidence that Jesus’ resurrection account drew on ancient traditions (Mettinger, p. 221). Do such particulars negate the overlapping cross-cultural themes?

Symbolism

Psychologically, resurrection is highly symbolic. It incorporates themes needed by many to deal with the terrors of death, as Carl Jung says, describing the [divine] hero who conquers death and brings back the promise of eternal life. Like Osiris, he/she psychologically becomes the “greater personality in every individual (like the Johannine Christ), viz. His *teleios anthropos*, the complete (or perfect) man, the self” (Jung, *CW* 18: para. 1567). In Jesus’ time the ancient gods had lost their power to the superficial, concretized state religion of Rome that divinized the Caesar for political reasons. A similar situation exists today, Jung says. The authority of traditional religions has been weakened by empirical science and power politics, and there is a need for a spiritual counterbalance to awaken the divine self in each person, a force that takes the soul beyond the vicissitudes of the life-death struggles of time and space. The Dying and Rising Gods theme must be read with such a psychological, poetic eye.

See also: [▶ Golden Bough](#), [The ▶ Jesus ▶ Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#)

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Dying God

▶ Hanging and Hanging God



E

Earth Goddess

▶ Dark Mother ▶ Great Mother ▶ Mother

Earth Mother

▶ Great Mother ▶ Mother

Eclipses

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Pliny the Elder (23 CE–79 CE) in his *Natural History* refers to the eclipse (Greek, *ekleipsis*, “abandonment, failing of power”) of the moon and the sun as “the most marvelous and indeed portentous occurrence in the whole of our observation of nature” (1944, II.VI.46). He notes how the sun and moon “retaliate on one another” as they cross paths, the rays of the sun being taken away by moon and earth (1944, II.VI.47). Pliny says that for a long time people in the ancient world have dreaded an eclipse as a portent of crime or death, and how the dying of the moon meant that “she was poisoned” (1944, II.viii.54). In his *Tetrabiblos*, the Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus (ca. 100 CE–ca. 178 CE) refers to the eclipse as the first and most potent cause of the general conditions of countries or cities (Ptolmey, 1940: ii, 75). He interprets the meanings of the colors of eclipses or formations such as light rays (*rabdōn*) and halos. Black colors “signify the effects” (*phanenta sēmantika*) of the cooling, drying influences of

Saturn. White colors indicate the temperate powers of Jupiter, and red colors have a hot, burning influence. Color and illumination are predictive of events and earth-conditions to occur in particular geographical locations (1940: II, 90), and the position of the eclipse on the horizon tell when and with kind of intensity an event will occur (1940: II, 77). In the Hindu myth of the primordial battle between the Titans and the gods the eclipse represents Rahu’s inability to drink the elixir. Although he is able to steal a sip of the substance, the cup passes easily through his mouth and out again through his throat. The eclipse is also seen to represent apocalyptic events. In the Gospel of Mark Jesus predicts that the sun will be darkened (*skotisthēsetai*) and moon will not give its radiance (*phēggos*) as a sign of the time of world tribulation (Mark 13.24; cf. Matt. 24.29–31; Luke 21.25–28; Isa. 13.10; Joel 2.10; 3.4; 4.15). In the Gospel of Luke the sun “dies out” (*eklipontos*) at the death of Jesus on the cross (Luke 23.45), in this way marking the death of Jesus as someone who is significant and important. In his sermon at Pentecost Peter speaks of the sun which will be changed into darkness (*metasraphēsetai eis skotos*) and the moon into blood on the day of the Lord (Acts 2.20). The sixteenth century alchemical text “*Consilium coniugii*” speaks of the changing and thus corruptive nature of the moon and its pernicious relation to the sun. The text refers to the poisonous quality of the moisture of the moon in its eclipse of the sun “when she [moon] receives his light and slays the sun” (Jung, 1963: 28). At death the two parents [sun and moon] “yield their souls to the son, and die and pass away.” Symbolically this means that the moon as the feminine aspect receives the sun-masculine aspect through which dying and re-birth occur. Penetration into the unconscious world is both exhaustive and formative, and there is sacrifice involved to yield the New. The new creation – the birth of the son as hermaphrodite – resolves the conflict of the parents. According to the text, the son eats the parents who “are the food of the son” (c.f. the “god-eating of the Aztecs; the parent-eating soul of the Egyptian Pyramid text of Unas) (Jung, 1963: 30).

See also: ▶ Jesus ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy

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Ecstasy

Jo Nash

Definition

The word ecstasy is derived from the Greek “ekstasis” meaning “beyond or outside the self,” and has different meanings depending on whether it is used in a religious or psychological context. One definition that can be used to underscore these different ecstasies might be “an experience of blissful non-duality.” This involves an experience of dissolution of ontological boundaries between an internal sense of self and external otherness, leading to an intense affective experience of oneness or union of rapturous intensity, called *ecstatic*.

Religious Perspectives

Religious accounts of ecstatic experience are present in the mystical wings of most major world religions, including the Abrahamic, Dharmic and “indigenous” traditions, (also known as shamanic or pagan faiths). Accounts of ecstatic experience are common to charismatic and contemplative Christianity, the Sufis of Islam, the Kabbalists of Judaism, the Vajrayana practitioners of Buddhism, Tantric Hinduism, and the mystics of Sikhism. Ecstatic experience in a religious context derives from the devotional practices and contemplative disciplines used to dissolve the boundaries between one’s sense of an enclosed separate “self,” or “I” and the godhead (Yahweh, God, Allah, Brahman, Nam), omnipresent awakened mind (Buddha) or other divine source of being, such as the nature spirits of indigenous and shamanic traditions. Religious ecstasy may be evoked by the affective intensity of the

practitioners devotional fervor; expressed in chants, dance, song, poetry and other physical practices such as fasting, ritual and so on; or the cognitive space and stillness of contemplative discipline, comprised of meditation or prayer. In many cases a mixture of both active devotion and contemplative stillness is used to achieve the dissolution of dualistic perceptions and evoke the non-dual experience of ecstatic bliss. This experience would be deemed desirable by most religious practitioners and indicative of spiritual progress. However, the understanding of ecstasy from a psychological perspective is somewhat different.

Depth Psychology Perspectives

From an object relations psychoanalytic perspective, a loss of boundaries of this kind would imply the dissolution of the ego and a possible regression to a manic defense against separation (Klein, 1940), first deployed by the infant in denial of the absent breast, and so a kind of hallucination that defends against unbearable loss of original oneness with the mother’s body. Re-experienced in adulthood, an unmediated, boundariless state of bliss could indicate at best a defensive denial of depression, at worst a psychotic mood disorder of the manic or bi-polar kind. The one exception to this pathologising of ecstasy would be the bliss of orgasm experienced during sexual climax with another person, and the ensuing sense of intersubjective merging deemed necessary for a healthy intimate relationship.

From an archetypal psychology perspective the understanding of ecstatic experience is different again. Jungian psychologist Robert A Johnson’s book *Ecstasy: Understanding the psychology of joy* (1987) proposes that Western civilization has repressed an innate human ability to experience this “oneness,” due to guilt and alienation from our bodies at the heart of modern consumerist society, now harbored by the western collective unconscious. He calls for us to return to the days of Dionysian celebration of the pleasures of the body and the senses, and reclaim our birthright to a regular experience of cosmic bliss and ecstasy. This enables human beings to retain vitality, joy and a sense of being alive that is absent in the lives of so many Western adults. A loss of ritual celebration has occurred with secularization, causing a kind of exhaustion at the heart of a culture that prohibits this need for periodic Dionysian play and wildness, says Johnson. This exhaustion may be partly responsible for the pandemic of depression and anxiety plaguing secularized western societies.

Neuropsychology Perspectives

However, a neuropsychological analysis of ecstasy uses scientific studies of brain activity to explain the phenomenon of blissful, non-dual experience. Neuropsychologists Newberg and D'Aquili (2000) write,

- ▶ During certain types of meditation. . . We have proposed that as the hypertrophic state creates a state of oceanic bliss, the ergotropic eruption results in the experience of a sense of a tremendous release of energy. . . activity is so extreme that 'spillover' occurs. . . This may be associated with the experience of an orgasmic, rapturous or ecstatic rush, arising from a generalized sense of flow and resulting in a trance-like state (255–256).

This “spillover” is comprised of the co-activation of both hemispheres of the brain. Meditative techniques that deploy certain kinds of cognitive strategies alongside focused breathwork enable maximal simultaneous stimulation of the causal and holistic operators, that then evoke an existential experience of non-duality, selflessness, or “oneness” with all that is conventionally experienced as “other.” The result is ecstasy.

Psycho-Spiritual Explanations

The above accounts have implications for understanding both the psychology and spirituality of ecstasy as an aspect of an experiential ontology of nonself. Far from being a grandiose, elated sensibility associated with the delusory highs and hallucinations of manic psychoses, rather it may indicate that a sense of a bounded self has been lost or relinquished. This may have both positive and negative results psychologically and spiritually. It may well indicate a regression has taken place but it may also indicate that egocentric object relations have been surrendered, as reported by mystics describing the experience of union with the godhead of monotheisms, or merging with the deities or spirits of polytheisms. It may also indicate that the conceptual and ontological boundaries associated with doctrines of the self have been ruptured entirely, as occurs with progressively subtle realizations of “emptiness” experienced by advanced Buddhist practitioners. Outside the context of religious experience ecstasy may also be evoked by experience of pure immanence, a kind of blissful integration as depicted in non-theistic post-structural thought of Deleuze (1995/2001).

The key to assessing the function of ecstatic experience must be observation of the effects. Whether it indicates a psychotic regression or a form of spiritual integration, or

just a temporary “peak experience” (Maslow, 1964) will be revealed by the longer term effects on thought, affect and behavior.

See also: ▶ Erikson, Erik ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Psychoanalysis

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Ego

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

In classical psychoanalysis, the human personality contains three parts: id, ego, and superego. The id is defined in terms of the most primitive urges for gratification in the infant, urges dominated by the desire for pleasure. Ruled by no laws of logic, and unconstrained by the resistance of external reality, the id uses what Freud called the primary process, directly expressing somatically generated instincts. Through the inevitable experience of frustration, the infant learns to adapt itself to reality. The resulting secondary process leads to the growth of the ego, which follows what Freud called the reality principle, in contradistinction to the pleasure principle dominating the id. Here the need to delay gratification in the service of self-preservation is slowly learned in an effort to thwart the anxiety produced by unfulfilled desires. What Freud termed defense mechanisms are developed by the ego to deal with such conflicts. These mechanisms are a set of unconscious ego activities aimed at maintaining an internal equilibrium inside the personality. Repression is the most fundamental defense mechanism, but Freud also posited an entire repertoire of

others, including reaction formation, isolation, undoing, denial, displacement, and rationalization.

The ego is the central and the executive part of the personality. It is the only part which is in contact with reality, and one of its major tasks is reality testing. Moreover, it has to balance internal demands, coming from the id and the superego, with the demands of the outside world. The ego is the locus for our subjective consciousness and its operations. It thinks, speaks, sees, makes decisions, and controls our body. Through the ego, the personality deals with reality. But there is another level of unconscious processing, which really determines observable behavior on the part of the person. At the unconscious level, the ego copes with unconscious anxiety coming from within and caused by the id and the superego.

The imagination is a major area of the ego's activity. It creates the person's dreams, as well as art, science, and culture at every level. Religious beliefs are created by the ego's activity, prodded by internal anxiety and outside reality pressures. In psychoanalytic interpretations of religion, various defense mechanisms in the ego have been suggested as contributing to religion and to religious experiences, such as splitting, denial, projection, and repetition compulsion. The ego creates religion and then uses it for its own support and adaptation to reality.

See also: [▶ Freud](#), [Sigmund](#) [▶ Id](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#)
[▶ Super-Ego](#)

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Elan Vital

Ruth Williams

1. Term coined by French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941) to denote the essence of life, or life energy.
2. Charity promoting the work of Prem Rawat (1957–), otherwise known as Maharaji (previously known as

Guru Maharaji). Prem Rawat travels the world talking about inner peace and his method (known as Knowledge) whereby one may tap into the experience of which he speaks.

There is a period of learning involving listening to Prem Rawat's talks to gain an in-depth understanding of the process involved before one is taught the four techniques of Knowledge. This process is not of gaining a cerebral knowledge, but is more akin to an ancient period of incubation to steep oneself in the process, or a therapeutic process of immersion.

Prem Rawat took on the mantle of leader from his father at the age of 8, having given his first public address to an enormous audience at the age of 4. At 13 (in 1971) he traveled to the West to introduce his message to a wider public.

Elan Vital was previously known as Divine Light Mission and attracted considerable negative publicity during the 1970s and 1980s when it was thought to be a cult. It has subsequently adopted a less evangelical stance and dropped the trappings of its Hindu origins.

The teachings are non-denominational and appeal to people of all religious persuasions and none.

See also: [▶ Hinduism](#)

Eleusinian Mysteries

David A. Leeming

The mystery cult of Eleusis had roots in ancient initiation rituals of the divine child, in the person of the *pais ap'hestias* ("boy of the hearth"). In the myth of Demeter and Persephone, after Persephone is abducted by Hades, her mother, Demeter, allowed the earth to become infertile and barren as she searched everywhere for her lost daughter. In Eleusis she disguised herself as a nurse maid and cared for the child Demophon, son of the king there. When she attempted to give the child immortality by dipping him into fire she was discovered and had to reveal herself as Demeter. A temple was built for the goddess at Eleusis and in time the mystery cult evolved there. By sometime in the sixth century BCE the cult was taken over by the city state of Athens and involved secret initiation rites in an inner sanctum facing which was a magnificent hall. A priestess of Demeter lived in the sanctuary.

The rites began with a ritual bath and 3 days of fasting, followed by a procession to Eleusis led by a statue of the god Iacchos, a form of Dionysos. Rituals still essentially unknown then took place in the inner sanctum, rituals that in some sense signified or were meant to ensure fertility, in keeping with Demeter's role as the goddess of fertility. It seems that the initiate spent a night in total darkness and was finally awakened at daybreak by the light of a great fire.

Psychologically, the initiate is the divine child waiting to be released in each of us. Through the process of the dark Night of the Soul, the journey into unconscious, we can achieve the illumination represented by the light of the fire that awakens the initiate, itself representing the fire into which Demeter dipped the child in the myth. So immersion in fire becomes a baptismal rite of immortality or rebirth, full initiation into the clan of those who have experienced the mysteries.

See also: [▶ Dark Night of the Soul](#) [▶ Divine Child](#)

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Eliade, Mircea

Robert S. Ellwood

Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) was a Romanian-born historian of religion who did much to shape that discipline and make it an intellectual force in the twentieth century. Eliade graduated from the University of Bucharest in 1928, then in 1928–1931 studied Indian philosophy at the University of Calcutta and yoga at an ashram in Rishikesh. Returning to Romania, he earned his Ph. D. in 1933 with a dissertation on yoga which, after later revisions and translations, became his *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (1958). Eliade joined the faculty of the University of Bucharest in 1933, where he taught history of religion and Indian philosophy, as well as becoming a

widely-read author of fiction and journalistic commentary in the 1930s, somethings being spoken of as a major voice of the younger generation of Romanians.

In those troubled times for Romania and Europe, toward the end of the decade Eliade became involved in the rightist politics of the fascist Iron Guard movement; when the King, Carol II, turned against that body in 1938, the young professor was arrested. After his release, well-placed patrons helped him to escape his increasingly desperate homeland in 1940 by securing his appointment as cultural attache to the Romanian legation in London and, 1941–1945, in Lisbon, Portugal. After the Axis defeat Eliade, unable to return home because of the communist take-over of his country, became a professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, and then in 1957 at the University of Chicago, where he remained until his death. His prolific postwar work, containing little overt political content, has been largely devoted to understanding the history and meaning of religion.

Basic Ideas

Eliade's basic ideas are concisely expressed in *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959) and *Cosmos and History* (1954; also published as *The Myth of the Eternal Return*). In the former, the fundamental assertion is that, for *homo religiosus*, the traditionally religious person, reality is “non-homogeneous,” split-level, divided into sacred and profane spheres. “Sacred space,” the space of the shrine or temple, the pilgrim's goal or the site of a divine “hierophany” or manifestation such as Moses' burning bush or an apparition of Our Lady, has a distinct atmosphere or “feel” different from the ordinary, profane world. “Sacred time,” the hours of a festival or religious rite, likewise is set apart inwardly and outwardly from the profane. Both sacred space and time are likely to be demarcated by symbols. One attuned to it is instinctively aware of the Sacred, likely to speak in a hushed voice and tread with reverent step in its presence.

Sacred space and time, in Eliade's interpretation, are like recapitulations of *illud tempus*, “that time,” the primal time recited in the culture's myths of creation and salvation, when divine powers were strong. Temple and rite provide memory of *illud tempus* and a means of access back to it. (For example, the sacred time and space of the Eucharist offers the Christian *homo religiosus* a way once again to be with Jesus and present on the night and day of salvation; cf. also Passover, Chinese and Japanese New Year's, Wesak, etc.) Symbols of the *axis mundi* (pivot of the world), the sacred tree, pillar,

or mountain which connects heaven and earth (the cross, the Christmas tree, Mt. Meru) are especially important.

The Sacred can also be “interiorized,” found within, and so it is in shamanism, yoga, and authentic mystical and religious experience generally. One finds ways to access inner space and time, even an inner *axis mundi* (e.g., the spinal column in some schools of yoga), through appropriate techniques, and often after appropriate initiations. These are discussed in Eliade’s *Yoga* and in *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964), as well as elsewhere. In the latter work, the author presents a discussion, which has proved influential in psychology and literary criticism as well as history of religion, of the shamanic initiate’s passage through several stages of call, “initiatory psychopathology,” and interiorization of spirit guides before becoming a proficient.

Cosmos and History

In *Cosmos and History* Eliade proposes that traditional religious history presents two stages, cosmic religion and historical religion. The former, essentially that of archaic hunters and farmers (Paleolithic and Neolithic humanity), though with some continuities down to the present, has little sense of linear, historical time, but finds and expresses sacred meaning in aspects of nature – the turn of the seasons, sacred rocks or trees – and in human life in the social order and the life cycle of birth, maturation, and death. Its festivals are those of New Year’s, recapitulating the creation, and annual seedtime and harvest. An “Other World” of gods and spirits stands over against this world here and now; shamans are especially adept at contacting it.

Historical religions, such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, differ in that the *illud tempus*, the “strong time” on which the religion is based, was not so much the creation as a moment *within* the stream of linear, historical time: the time of the Buddha’s Enlightenment, of the Exodus, of Jesus (“the hopes and fears of all the years/are met in thee tonight”), of the revelation of the Holy Qur’an. While these faiths retain considerable admixtures of cosmic religion (Passover and Easter as Spring as well as historical-event festivals), the major focus is on religion and salvation as historically-conditioned, and this greatly affects the nature of religion.

Eliade did not conceal his own “nostalgia for the sacred” and for the sacred world of cosmic religion, when the Sacred infused nature and the world could be renewed every year. He spoke of the “terror of history” wrought by the discovery, religious and otherwise, that we humans live in irreversible historical time, not cosmic

“eternal return” time. Yet he was well aware that moderns cannot undo modernity; we can at best only complete our own humanity through awareness of that other human possibility which he hoped study of the history of religion could unveil; that was the import of the significant article, “The History of Religions and a New Humanism,” with which he inaugurated the journal he helped found, *History of Religions* (reprinted in *The Quest*, 1969).

Other important works of Eliade’s include *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1958), *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (1960), *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (1958), the three-volume *History of Religious Ideas* (1978–1985), and his editorship of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987). There are also several volumes of fiction and of interviews and autobiography.

Criticism

Eliade has been criticized for the selective use of data to support his models, for being an “essentialist” towards religion and the sacred (that is, holding it has an objective, unchanging nature), and as an anti-modernist. Some have associated the last with his youthful political views. In response, one could say that has often tried to make clear that his accounts of the sacred are intended to show how the world *seems* to *homo religiosus*; that he believed we need to understand and appreciate the religious past but not to live there; and that the universalism of his history of religions project would appear at odds with the fascist drive to sacralize just one nation and people.

In any case, there is much in Eliade that religious psychology can use: the “non-homogeneous” character of experience of the religious world; the importance of finding inner and outer ways to get in touch with sacred space and time, whether through places, music, sacraments, or meditation; and the significance of initiatory experience. He has aided many estranged moderns in grasping the inner significance of archaic spirituality.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Astrology and Alchemy](#) [▶ Axis Mundi](#) [▶ Religion](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Shamans and Shamanism](#) [▶ Symbol](#) [▶ Yoga](#)

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Elixir

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Elixir (Greek, *xērion*, “healing powder”) is a drug or substance which has life-prolonging properties. Throughout history the elixir has been sought as an antidote to illness and the human desire for *athasias*, “immortality.” There are a variety of texts and symbols having to do with the elixir. In the ancient alchemical text “Isis to Horus” the prophetess Isis procures what she calls the *pharmakon tēs chēras* (“drug of the widow”) (16). This is the secret revelation which she gives to her son for immortality. The secret revelation consists of the regenerative potency of nature, *physis*: “nature enjoys nature and nature conquers nature” (*hē physis tēn physin terpetai, kai hē physis tēn physin nika*) (7). In ancient mythology Isis herself is the arcane substance and elixir, glistening with the white of the moon, her crown bounded by serpents, and her cloak deep black and gleaming” (Apuleius, 1989 *The Golden Ass*, II.3). She is the “dew” and “water of life” (*aqua permanens*) which heals and unites the dismembered parts (Jung, 1959/1968: pars. 14). In the ancient Mithras Liturgy found in the Greek Magical Papyri the supplicant speaks of the juices of herbs and spices and of the mysteries handed down to gain immortality for an only

child (PGM IV.477). The sixteenth century physician and alchemist Paracelsus taught that all substance – mineral, vegetable, animal – contain *quinta-essentia*, or “virtue.” Even the smallest amount when extracted can be used for its life-giving, healing properties (Paracelsus, 1951: 164). The alchemical symbol of the “fish” as the arcane substance becomes understood to be the *lapis philosophorum* – the *elixir vitae*, something going back to early Arabic alchemy. Senior (Zadith ben Hamuel) the tenth century Islamic alchemist identifies Christ with the *homo philosophicus*, the Microcosm and One who does not die and brings life to anything dead” (1566: 71; Jung, 1953/1993: 392). The first century Christian martyr Ignatius of Antioch refers to the Eucharist as the *pharmakon athanasias* “the medicine of immortality,” something perhaps reaching back to *kipsu* offerings of bread and water in the Mesopotamian cult of the dead. According to Ignatius, the Eucharist is an antidote (*antidotes*) “that allows us not to die, but to live in Jesus Christ at all times” (Eph. 20). Compare also the life-enhancing forbidden fruit (Hebrew, *pry*) in Gen. 3.2. Mandala centers containing figures such as the Buddha Amitabha or Avalokiteshvara are thought to have elixir properties according to the Taoist text the *Golden Flower* (Jung, 1968: 98). A certain life force may also be perceived to have generative potency such as the *Yesod* of the ninth *sefirah* of the Kabbalah tree in Jewish mysticism. It is the flowing together of all cosmic energies. Compare the Astral Light in transcendental magic (Leví, 2001), and also *chee* as the vital spark of life in Taoism. With all of these texts and symbols the elixir is understood to result from unconscious processes being made conscious and involving the union of opposites which yields the regenerative New. The elixir as the quintessence of that processing is precious, valued and guarded. It may be both life-giving and life-taking, healing or poisonous depending upon how it is used.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Mandala](#)

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Emergentism

Joe Cambray

In contradistinction to psychoanalytic theories and methods that are essentially reductive in nature, Jung's approach attends to the whole person. The integration of the personality is the central feature of Jung's view of psychological health and maturation. His notion of individuation involves a lifelong dialectic process between conscious and unconscious dimensions of the personality. This goes beyond ego adaptation to reality as the goal of psychological development found in other schools of analysis, but requires on-going examination and even struggle with whatever aspects of one's personality are activated by inner and outer experiences in life. Over the long term this results in a decentering of the personality with regard to the ego together with the emergence of a new center, the self, which includes transpersonal dimensions. The self is envisioned by Jung to encompass the whole of the personality, conscious and unconscious, personal and collective; it is center and circumference. As such it does not lead towards perfectionism but in striving for conscious expression it necessarily remains unfinished; the approach is towards completeness, with its positive and negative features. It is the achievement of a lifetime. The vision here is radically holistic. What are the roots of this vision?

Mythic and Historic Background

Prior to the advent of modern science, holistic perspectives were an integral part of cultural life. As a part of the pre-scientific worldview, the entire world was seen as animated, and often so portrayed in mythologies. Within these traditional cultures tales of emergence are a usual feature of creation myths. Prime ancestors are typically

envisioned as emerging from earth or water, or of the world itself emerges from the waters of chaos. Stories of this sort are found throughout history and across cultures. Examples are plentiful, as from ancient Egyptian and Assyrian sources, in tales from Melanesia and the indigenous peoples of the Americas, as well as the better known Norse, Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian variants. Mythically emergence displays a transcultural or archetypal pattern, symbolic of birth or re-birth. This mythic strata forms a deep background for subsequent elaborations of emergence on a more conceptual level.

During the seventeenth century with the rise of the scientific paradigm, a new precision was brought to the concept of "emergence." The term began to appear in scientific language as when Newton described experiments in optics, e.g., referring to the refraction of light through a prism he notes "the incident refractions were...equal to the emergent" (Newton, 1676: 555). Perhaps most interesting of the new conceptual use of terms related to emergence was that by G. W. Leibniz (the co-discoverer of calculus along with Newton). Leibniz was the first person to employ the term "supervenience" in a way similar to its modern use by philosophers of mind. For Leibniz this indicated a synchronous, non-Cartesian relationship between bodies and minds, consistent with an emergentist perspective as has recently been discussed (Cambray, 2005). This view of the mind/body relationship, of a pre-established harmony, was the one Jung identified as the primary precursor for his idea of synchronicity.

Leibniz's insights into supervenience were so far ahead of his times that they languished in obscurity for almost 250 years before being revived by the emergentist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Philosophically descriptive emergentism was seeking to reestablish a view of science based on holistic principles. One of the most significant figures in this movement for the development of Jungian thought was Conway Lloyd Morgan. His 1896 book *Habit and Instinct*, with its entomological examples such as the leaf-cutting ant and the yucca moth, was a major source for Jung's formulation of archetypal theory (Hogenson, 2001). Morgan's 1922 Gifford lectures on "*Emergent Evolution*" included recognition of Leibniz's foundational role in this paradigm.

Due to the speculative, philosophical nature of this paradigm at the time (it lacked a more solid experimental base), it could not compete against the empirical data from the growing field of biochemistry and especially the finding arising from the advent of molecular biology in understanding biological systems. With the triumphal articulation of the structure of the molecular base of

genetics, in the form of the biopolymer DNA, revealed by crystallography in 1953, a more reductive, strictly deterministic philosophy came to dominate many of the biological sciences. There was a counter movement in general systems theory and cybernetics also developing during this era but applications were limited. Jung himself was interested in cybernetic principles and saw the human psyche as a self-regulating system.

Complex Systems

The study of systems has been greatly aided by the availability of high speed computers. Remarkable breakthroughs in modeling systems that could not be analyzed by conventional, reductive means due to their complexity began to draw attention starting with the study of “chaos theory.” This was first popularly applied to the investigation of weather patterns. More general exploration of systems made up of numbers of parts capable of interacting with one another showed that certain kinds of interactive systems could produce aggregate properties and behaviors which were not discernable or predictable from the known attributes of the parts. These high order, non-reducible traits are explored in the new science of “complexity.” Complex systems are non-linear, small variations, as in initial conditions can generate large changes (the well known butterfly effect).

A particularly important subset of these systems are those that open to the environment, under selection pressure, capable of dissipating energy and generating increased internal order – they have significant adaptive capacity and are referred to as complex adaptive systems marked by self-organizing properties. The higher order phenomena associated with the self-organizing features of these systems are termed emergent. There are a number of traits generally associated with emergence: novelty, irreducibility, non-linearity, unpredictability, and synergy; some researchers also include coherence and historicity.

Emergence in Analytical Psychology

Emergent phenomena have become a distinct area of study for systems scientists. They have been shown to most likely occur at the edge of order and chaos and are seen as the site for coming into being of life, the psyche and the mind, remarkably consistent with and affirming of the mythopoetic stories referred to earlier. Emergence has been found through out nature and the human world: from the organization within clusters of subatomic

particle all the way to the clustering of galaxies; in biological systems such as the behavior of social insects, the organization of and interactions within the body and brain from which mind emerges; to networks of human interactions producing economic and cultural behaviors. Emergence spans, transgresses and links the many disciplines studied by humans. In recent years the study complex systems and emergence has been effectively used to reconsider a variety of Jung’s ideas: archetypes, complexes, the self, synchronicity as well as his analytic methods (see Cambrey and Carter, 2004 together with the references therein). Other schools of psychology have also begun to adopt systemic thinking to their approaches. Within the psychoanalytic community the intersubjective and relational schools have been most active in developing applying these ideas to their analytic models.

Although during his lifetime Jung only had studies on self-regulation to draw upon (complexity theory had not yet been developed), he was able to intuit various principles of self-organization and emergence. In applying these ideas to psychological problems and their transcendence he comments:

- ▶ I had learned that all the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They must be so, for they express the necessary polarity inherent in every *self-regulating system*. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. I therefore asked myself whether this outgrowing, this possibility of further psychic development, was not the normal thing, and whether getting stuck in a conflict was pathological. Everyone must possess that *higher level*, at least in embryonic form, and must under favorable circumstances be able to develop this potentiality (Jung, 1967: para. 18, my ital.).

Similarly Jung’s theory of compensation with the importance it stresses on the emergence of a “third” position as a transcendent reality that allows overcoming difficulty without attempting direct solution of problems can be seen as based on an emergentist perspective. This view also allows a reformulation of psychopathology in terms of fears of, or resistance to emergence. For Jung then human suffering as well as its transcendence is embedded in a profoundly systemic worldview.

Because Jung’s model of the self has an interactive, transpersonal dimension to it, the emergentist aspect of this has been noted. Similarly there is an inherent holism in Jung’s self: “As an empirical concept, the self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of the personality as a whole” (1971: para. 789). The spiritual features of Jung archetypal model of the self have often been discussed; here it serves as part

of the linkage between psychology and religion that has entered some of the emergentist literature. Thus philosopher Philip Clayton's discussion of levels of emergence beyond mental causation associated with mind, derived from biological systems, seeks to make such bridges. In this, collective intelligences of various sorts are drawn upon to point towards phenomena of the spirit (Clayton, 2004, chapter 5: "Emergence and Transcendence"). The growing interest in emergentism in many fields of human endeavor will perhaps allow a deeper appreciation of Jung's psychological genius and a fuller reconsideration of his model of the psyche.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Synchronicity](#)

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Emotional Intelligence

Ryan LaMothe

Emotional intelligence is a relatively recent term that has significant implications for understanding religious experience and faith. Before defining emotional intelligence and explaining its relevance to religious faith it is important to first set the stage by offering a brief definition of the term emotion and an overview of how it

has been understood and used in philosophical and theological thought, as well as in the human sciences.

Defining Emotions

There is considerable debate among researchers, psychologists, and philosophers about what emotions are and how they differ from feelings, sentiments, and moods (see Frijda, 2000). "Some researchers," report Parrot and Spackman, "conceive of emotion in an undifferentiated manner, investigating the effects of overall arousal, excitement, agitation, or drive without any distinguishing among different types of emotional states. Others treat emotional states as varying along two or more continuous dimensions, such as arousal and valence. The third and most common approach to emotional states treats them as discrete categories" (Parrot and Spackman, 2000: 476). For our purposes, emotion comprises (1) complex mental processes that are innate or pre-organized, which may not be conscious or experienced as distinct feelings, and (2) discrete categories of feeling states such as anger, sadness, fear, hate, etc. Moods are different from feelings in that they are global and not necessarily directed toward an object or result from a particular object or event (Jacobson, 1957: 73–113).

Overview of Emotions in Philosophy and Science

The notion of emotion vis-à-vis reason, will, and religious faith has varied in meaning and significance in Western philosophy and theology (Solomon, 2000: 3–15). Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, recognized that emotions are necessary for rational appraisal and the good life (See Sorabji, 2000: 23–26). Rational appraisal for Aristotle includes a person's ability to assess accurately a social context and to act with the appropriate amount of emotion. After Aristotle, the Stoics offered a slightly different perspective on emotions. Sorabji noted that the Stoics identified four emotions, namely distress, pleasure, fear, and appetite (Sorabji, 2000). They claimed that every "emotion involves two distinct value judgments. One that there is a good or bad (benefit or harm) at hand, the other that it is appropriate to act" (2000: 29). Posidonius, a later Stoic philosopher, criticized the intellectualism of other Stoics, arguing, "that the examination of things good and evil, the examination of goals, and the examination of virtues depend on a correct examination of emotions" (p. 95). Posidonius also said that there are occasions when we

experience emotions that are not connected to value judgments (e.g., being moved by music), suggesting that there are irrational or unconscious processes at work; in modern day parlance, there are emotional experiences that are tenuously connected to the prefrontal cortex. Emotions, for the Stoics, also involve imagination and attention. That is, we can increase the intensity of emotion by way of our imagination.

Solomon argued that, as the Hellenistic philosophers gave way to Christian theologians, several significant changes occurred regarding how theologians conceptualized the relation between reason and emotion. In general, emotion was split between those that led to vices and those that led to virtues. Desire and passion were seen as distorting the will and reason, which gained expression in the seven deadly sins. The good emotions were love, hope, and faith and these were “often equated with reason” (Solomon, 2000: 6). Emotions linked to the passions and desires were suspect, needing to be eradicated or controlled through spiritual disciplines. The elevation of reason and suspicion of intense emotions were yoked to how theologians conceptualized gender and power. Men were viewed as having greater capacities for reason and women and children with less, making them more susceptible to emotions (passions).

Some modern philosophers have been critical of Cartesian and Christian philosophical traditions that elevate, if not glorify, reason and ignore or minimize emotions in reason and faith (Fuimara, 2001; Furtak, 2005). John Macmurray, who seemed to take one of his cues from Spinoza’s view that rationality and irrationality are qualities of emotions, was one of the first modern Western philosophers to argue forcefully that reason plays a role in emotional life and that reason is contingent upon emotion. “Any inquiry,” he wrote, “must have a motive or it could not be carried on at all, and all motives belong to our emotional life” (Macmurray, 1992: 3). Macmurray believed that we “can only begin to grow up into rationality when we begin to see our emotional life not as the center of things but as part of the development of humanity” (1992: 14) For Macmurray, a dynamic interdependence exists between reason and emotion. Thus, we must cultivate both.

While ancient and modern philosophers debated questions about the significance of emotions vis-à-vis knowledge and religious faith, scientists were interested in studying (1) emotions in humans and animals, (2) emotional expressions and meanings across cultures, and (3) emotion vis-à-vis the brain. In the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin studied emotions in human beings and animals (Darwin, 1972). In the United States,

philosopher-psychologist William James rooted emotions in human physiology, arguing that emotion is caused by physiological sensations (James, 1884). He later explored the relation between emotions and religious experience (James, 1958). His Viennese counterpart, Sigmund Freud, developed a complex theory of the mind and its relation to anxiety, a central emotion in human life (Roose and Glick, 1995). More recently, there has been an explosion of research regarding emotions and intelligence in relation to psycho-social development, psychopathology, and neuroanatomy (Ekman, 2003; Shore, 2003). This research demonstrates the (1) existence of a feedback loop between physical expressions of emotions and a person’s conscious experience of emotion, (2) centrality of emotions in perceptions and the organization of experience (the interconnection between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex), and (3) importance of parents’ recognition and appropriate responses vis-à-vis their child’s emotional assertions in his/her developing the capacities for emotional self-regulation, empathy, and social confidence.

Emotional Intelligence

This research has increased interest in moving away from measuring intelligence solely in terms of cognition. The ideas of interpersonal and emotional intelligence have been proposed, not to replace the intelligence quotient, but rather to deepen and expand our understanding of the complexity of intelligence in human life. Gardner argued that intelligence comprises interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence:

- ▶ Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they work, how to work cooperatively with them. Successful salespeople, politicians, teachers, clinicians, and religious leaders are likely to be individuals with high degrees of interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence. . . is a correlative ability, turned inward. It is a capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself and to use that model to operate effectively in life (Goleman, 1997: 39).

Both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, Gardner claimed, include the abilities to recognize, differentiate between, and appropriately respond to the desires, aims, emotions, and moods of other people. This requires persons’ ability to notice and respond appropriately to social-emotional cues, all of which may take place outside of awareness. Similarly, emotional intelligence, which has various definitions and emphases, refers to an array of cognitive-emotional capacities whereby a person

is able to recognize, monitor, and regulate his/her own feelings, as well as the feelings of others. This is accomplished through awareness and appraisal of one's own and others' tone of voice, facial expressions, body posture, and gestures, as well as an individual's and group's ability to think about or reflect on their emotions (see Taylor, Parker, and Bagby, 1999: 339–354).

Daniel Goleman has done much to popularize the term emotional intelligence. Citing and summarizing Salovey and Mayer's work, he identified five capabilities related to emotional intelligence, namely, (1) knowing one's emotions, (2) managing one's emotions, (3) recognizing emotions in others, (4) motivating oneself, and (5) handling relationships (Goleman, 1997: 43). In a later work, Goleman narrates the discussions between scientists and Tibetan religious leaders about destructive and constructive emotions (Goleman, 2004). In these conversations, scientists identify research that points to the effectiveness of religious meditation practices in increasing the capacities of emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence: Implications for Religion and Faith

Since Goleman's book, there has been a rise in the literature on emotional intelligence, ranging from scholarly articles to popular self-help books for parents, teachers, leaders, and business people. Some of this has spilled over into the area of religious faith, though the implications of the idea of emotional intelligence for understanding religious faith development are still being realized, in part, because researchers and clinicians continue to rely on cognitive and psychodynamic theories and models of development (see Lyon, 2004: 269–284). These psychological perspectives tend to relegate emotions to the background, suggesting that the primary focus of faith development is the regulation of emotions. Instead of relegating emotions to an adjunct position, we might wonder how the notion of emotional intelligence alters views on faith, faith development, and religious experience. How, in other words, does the idea of emotional intelligence inform our understanding of religious faith and experience? Does faith depend on cultivating emotions? If emotional intelligence is necessary for individual and social health, do religious practices and beliefs contribute in any way to the development of emotional intelligence? By contrast, what religious practices and beliefs obstruct emotional intelligence?

While there is growing interest in addressing these questions more directly (Reich, 2003: 1–32; Emmons,

2000: 3–26), Goleman and others note that religious practices and beliefs can contribute to the development of emotional intelligence. Goleman points to research that shows how Tibetan religious beliefs in loving kindness, gentleness, and compassion – coupled with the practice of meditation – contribute to emotional intelligence. Similarly, Christian beliefs such as loving one's neighbors, showing compassion for others, as well as religious practices that aim to embody these principles can lead to the development of emotional intelligence and a living faith. One may conclude that (1) the development of emotional intelligence is necessary for the development of a religious faith that embodies compassion, empathy, and loving kindness and (2) particular religious practices and beliefs can lead to the development of emotional intelligence. This said, faith researchers also recognize that human beings can be deliberately cruel and destructive. Traditionally, theological concepts such as idolatry, sin, and evil have been used to account for human destructiveness. The idea of emotional intelligence can be used to reinterpret theological concepts (e.g., sin and idolatry) and expand our understanding of maladies of faith or religious experience.

Research on emotions and the development of emotional intelligence adds to our understanding of human life. This offers theologians, researchers on religious experience and faith development, and ministers of all faiths opportunities to re-conceptualize and expand upon their theological anthropologies, their theories on faith development, and their practices of care.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [James, William](#)

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Enchantress

► Monomyth

Enlightenment

Wing-Shing Chan

Enlightenment generally refers to phenomena involving a significant change of consciousness regarding the self, others and the universe with accompanying physiological, perceptual and conceptual changes that result in significant spiritual or moral changes. It is commonly used in Chan (Zen) Buddhism to refer to the experience resulted from accomplishment in practice, meditation or insight that is synonymous as seeing the Buddha nature or self-nature, or discovering the true or original mind.

That the experience of enlightenment is a critical step of spiritual change toward Buddhahood instead of exercising ritual practice, performing philanthropy, observing ethical disciplines or merely cultivating calmness meditation, had been an emphasis of the Chan school beginning

from Bodhidharma. The emphasis on the practice and concept of sudden enlightenment began to gain ground and become the mainstream with the systematic and institutional propagation by the school following the Six Patriarch Huineng.

Definition and Critical Stages

Enlightenment is an experiential realization of the Buddhist philosophy of no-self and the liberation from inner vexation leakages. The sense of self versus others is broken through with the dissolution of the subject-object duality due to the cessation of the mind's uncontrollable discursive and illusive thoughts. It is sometimes being described as the experience of the “shedding of the body and mind” or “the falling off of the bottom of a paint pail.” Whether there is any experience of light or some specific exalted blissful feeling is not its primary concern.

The development of enlightenment may be most easily understood through the Ten Ox Herding Pictures (Sheng-Yen, 1988). They represent the successive stages from beginning practice to helping others after full enlightenment. The story describes the journey of an ox herder, a practitioner, looking for his lost ox, the enlightenment mind. Some milestones are (1) The third picture – Seeing the Ox: It refers to the first discovery of the true mind with no illusive thoughts. This can be regarded as the initial enlightenment experience, seeing Buddha nature or kenso. (2) The seventh picture – Ox vanishes man exists: Gross practice is no longer necessary to sustain the enlightened mind but mindful awareness as subjective consciousness still exists. (3) The eighth picture – Both vanishes: An empty circle is left without the ox and the man. Subject-object duality vanishes with the forsake of any minute effort of mindful awareness. This is usually regarded as great enlightenment. (4) The ninth picture – Return whence they came: Water is boundless; flowers are red. The objective world is perceived same as before, but the mind is unshaken by the world in evolving vexations. This can be regarded as full enlightenment.

Cultivation, Gradual Enlightenment and Sudden Enlightenment

Meditation can be distinguished as mere cultivation or enlightenment prone by whether it is just an exercise of concentration or whether it is a universal mindful awareness without a fixed concentration focus (Chan, 2004). Cultivation through concentration leads to calmness or

samadhi. The release of concentrated contemplation as being crucial for attaining enlightenment is emphasized by Chan schools such as sects of Ox Head or Caodong (Soto) that employ mainly the method of meditation for enlightenment.

Enlightenment can be classified as being gradual or sudden. Meditation works by concentration is not enlightenment prone and should be classified as being cultivation instead of the often misclassified gradual enlightenment. Gradual enlightenment practice should be capable of leading to enlightenment, although taking on a gradual unfolding path. The Ox Head and Caodong sects are examples of the gradual enlightenment schools. Sudden enlightenment schools, derived from the Huineng school, flourished with Master Mazu's masterful enlightenment initiation (see the chapter on Enlightenment Initiation in this volume) methods like twisting a disciple's nose or kicking down an enquiring disciple by the chest; emphasized the attainment of sudden enlightenment instead of extended meditation cultivation. Sudden enlightenment can be understood as a sudden glimpse of Buddha nature when the barriers of illusive thoughts are suddenly dispersed. Often it is only available to people who have adequate preparation of practice and more often than not people need to continue practice, such as daily mindful awareness, after sudden enlightenment. There can only be differences in the comprehensiveness and stage of enlightenment experience, but there is not a priori difference between enlightenment reached by gradual or sudden approaches (Chan, 2008).

Methods of Enlightenment

Enlightenment may be set off by some environmental stimulus, or purposely being initiated by act or speech of a Chan master when the person's mind is at a pre-enlightenment stage, often being still with little or no illusive thoughts due to practice or meditation. Systematic methods are employed for attaining enlightenment, like Silent Illumination or Shikantaza meditation and the practice of Huatou or gongan investigation. The meditation methods still the mind by universal mindful awareness without meditating at a fixed focus. The enlightened mind unfolds when the mind is emptied of all tiny dust of disturbance by illusive thoughts through mindful awareness meditation. The investigation methods use a phrase or episode of a former enlightenment case and the practitioner repeatedly brings up mentally the phrase or episode and attends to the part of the mind before the case is raised. Continued practice of attending

to the non-discursive part of the mind will lead to a conglomeration of the discursive thoughts to become what known as the "great doubt." When such great doubt bursts through, the enlightened mind clear of all illusive thoughts unfolds.

Intuitive insight is often enhanced in the enlightened mind that is unobstructed by discursive or illusive thoughts. However, conceptual and logical thinking are not in principle contradictory to the enlightened state. Only when enlightenment is being examined, as by Chan masters; direct and spontaneous response are more representative of a disciple's personal experience of enlightenment than prolonged conceptual investigation.

If attachments of the self and on the world can be regarded in Buddhist philosophy as the origins of suffering and evil, then enlightenment that involves a dissolution of the self and hence a lessening of attachments will lead to spiritual goodness and salvation of the person and the world.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Chan Buddhism](#) [▶ Enlightenment Initiation](#) [▶ Meditation](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Enlightenment Initiation

Wing-Shing Chan

Enlightenment initiation refers to the events, either natural or by human that directly lead to a person's enlightenment. The Buddha is reported to be greatly enlightened when he watched the appearance of a brilliant star while meditating. Throughout the history of Chan (or Zen) thousands of people were enlightened while

triggered by some natural events such as kicking a tile onto a bamboo strip or seeing one's reflection on water; or being initiated by their masters through being hit upon or reprimanded.

The mystery of these enlightenment initiation events can be understood if we understand what enlightenment is involved and the mechanism that may lead to enlightenment. Enlightenment can be analyzed to be the realization of our Buddha mind (nature) when the barrier of illusive and discursive thoughts in the mind is being removed. Enlightenment experience can occur when either the barrier of illusive thoughts in the mind is completely dissolved or when such barrier can be temporarily halted or bypassed. Sudden enlightenment as often represented in Chan consists of a temporary halting or bypassing of the illusive thought barrier of the mind. In some instances, enlightening experience can also occur when a significant part of a person's strong attachment of the self or of the world is being detached due to enlightenment initiation (Chan, 2008).

Enlightenment can be broadly classified into two types (Chan, 2004): (1) Initial enlightenment – initial enlightenment occurs when illusive or discursive thoughts are either stopped, halted or bypassed resulting in the revelation of the non-discursive mind. (2) Complete enlightenment – enlightened mind is sustained indefinitely without any application of concentration and illumination effort.

Common Techniques for Enlightenment Initiation

Common enlightenment initiation techniques are described in the following ways (cf. Suzuki, 1949):

1. *A verbal or behavioral shock that bursts open a concentrated mind.*

Meditation or practice generally leads to a concentrated mind devoid of discursiveness. Enlightenment takes a step further by dispersing the internal effort of concentration to become a self-sustained enlightenment mind of no discursiveness. A verbal or behavioral shock or a natural occurring stimulus applied at the appropriate moment can burst open a concentrated mind and reveal the enlightenment mind. Many gongan (koan) examples include Master Dahui initiated enlightenment in his students through shouting or hitting and Master Mazu enlightening Baizhang through twisting the latter's nose with pain.

2. *Entanglement or short-circuiting of the illusive mind.*

Some of the illogical or incomprehensible verbal statements spoken by Chan masters to their students are not to be interpreted by either Buddhist or common knowledge; they are just meant to be a way of entangling or short-circuiting the conceptual or logical habitual thoughts that are often dominated by activities of the illusive thoughts. Enlightened mind can sometimes reveal when the illusive thoughts are being entangled to a halt.

It was asked: "Does a cypress tree have Buddha nature or not?" The master (Zhaozhou) replied: "Yes." "When will it become a Buddha?" The master said: "When emptiness falls onto the ground." "When does emptiness fall onto the ground?" The master replied: "When the cypress tree becomes a Buddha."

3. *Bypassing the illusive thought barrier by forcing the illusive mind with no way to turn.*

Chan masters are commonly known to hit their students for thirty sticks for a yes answer and yet gain thirty sticks for a no answer to a question. By creating impossible positions on either side, Chan master forces the student to forsake the conceptual mind already defiled by illusive thoughts and passes into the non-illusive mind, which is the enlightened mind. Master Guishan once was given a test, his master Baizhang pointed to a cleaning vase and asked, "Do not call it a cleaning vase, what would you call it as?" Guishan kicked off the cleaning vase and went out. He received the confirmation.

4. *An apparent irrelevant or illogical answer that helps stop the illusive mind.*

Chan gongans (koans) are known to be full of irrelevant or illogical statements. The function of many such absurdity or non-sense is to make the illusive mind impossible to carry out its thought process and being forced to stop, which gives a chance for the non-discursive enlightenment mind to reveal.

A student asked, "What is Buddha?" Master (Zhaozhou): "That inside the sanctuary." "Isn't that inside the sanctuary a clay statue?" Master said, "Yes." Student: "What is Buddha?" Master said, "That inside the sanctuary."

Eventually the querying of such puzzle had itself developed into a method of practice known as "cangongan" (querying a public enlightenment case) or "canhautou" (querying a phrase of an enlightenment case). A very popular method of gongan or hautou derives from the following gongan of Zhaozhou. It developed into the popular gongan method of querying "Why does dog have no Buddha nature?"

A student asked, "Does dog has Buddha nature or not?" Master said, "No."

5. *Directing the mind from conceptual reasoning to non-conceptual insight.*

Ordinary people's conceptual thinking is defiled by illusive and discursive thoughts. It is not useful as a direct means to approach the non-illusive enlightened mind. Thus non-conceptual insight is often adopted by Chan masters to help bypass the illusive thoughts into the non-illusive enlightened mind.

Accordingly masters had adopted methods that are speechless but requires insight such as turning into complete silence, raising or lowering the master's stick, walking from east to west or vice versa, presenting a symbol of a circle, raising the eyebrow or blinking the eyes, calling the name of the student, etc. When these symbolisms are used in a suitable context, they may elicit insight from the student that resonates with the nature of enlightenment. An example:

Yunyan came to seek advice, Master (Guizhong) showed the gesture of drawing a bow. Yan was motionless for a while, and acted the gesture of drawing a sword. Master said, "It happened all too late."

6. *Pointing out the misapplication of the student's mind while seeking enlightenment.*

Chan masters often point out the wrong direction or assumptions of the student's application of their mind in seeking enlightenment. When the student stops looking or going into the wrong direction, they may have a chance to encounter directly enlightenment in the appropriate application of the mind.

For example a monk asked Master Yuanmen: "Not giving rise to one thought, is there still any fault or not?" The master said: "Mount Xumi!"

Mount Xumi, an extremely enormous legendary mountain in Buddhist literature, here refers to the extremely wrong position of equating enlightenment with complete dispense of thoughts, logic or conceptual thinking. Enlightenment is the purification of the mind from illusive or discursive thoughts, not to arrive at a mind that cannot think.

A monk asked, "How is the state of quiescence with no reliance?" Master Xuefeng Yicun: "It is sickness still." "What becomes of after turning?" Master: "A ship down Yangzhou."

The state of quiescence with no reliance seems to be the meditative state with no discursiveness or concentration effort. This initial enlightenment experience is still sickness compared to great enlightenment, when enlightenment is completely self-sustained with completely no meditation or contemplation effort; and when the mind can be vigorously functioning

with no fixation and simultaneously without any discursiveness, likened to the ship that flows freely down toward the city of Yangzhou.

7. *Direct symbolic representation of the enlightenment realm.*

Chan gongans are filled with symbolic representations of the enlightenment realm spoken by various Chan Masters. Because enlightenment cognition contains simultaneously unification and differentiation, it is often not describable clearly in ordinary dualistically opposed logic or conceptualization. Symbolic representations are often used to express (1) the internal state of the enlightenment mind with regard to no illusive thoughts, (2) the enlightenment cognition of simultaneously unification and differentiation; which can be used to stimulate and induce insight from the students.

When the states of mind of the Chan students are close to the said symbolic representations, a resonance can occur that reveals the enlightenment mind and that becomes an enlightenment experience.

Example of representation (1) is "A sunny sky without a cloud in ten thousand miles"; and (2) is like "Holding a plough with empty hand, riding an ox while walking; Man walks across the bridge, the bridge flows without water flowing."

8. *Display of speech and action in congruence with Buddhadharma truth, e.g., Middle Way or non-attachment.*

Chan masters display Buddhadharma truth, such as Middle Way position or non-attachment, through their speech or actions. Middle Way position refers to the non-attachment of either the form or emptiness of things. Such speech and action coming from an enlightened mind can sometimes resonate and awaken another near-enlightened mind if that is about ripe. Examples of the Middle Way and non-attachment positions are listed as follow:

There is a gongan about an old practitioner believed to be a transformation of a fairy wild fox, came to Master Baizhang to receive instruction about the question of whether a great practitioner would fall into cause and effect or not. Baizhang replied, "Obscure not cause and effect!" By this the wild fox appeared and was transmigrated and liberated.

Patriarch Huineng was asked who could get the rope and bowl from Bodhidharma. Huineng replied, "Who he knows Buddhadharma can get it." And the question followed, "Do you know Buddhadharma or not?" Huineng said, "I don't know Buddhadharma."

9. *De-attachment of Buddhism and the Chan Master.*

The vital theme declared by Buddha for liberation of suffering is de-attachment. The religion of Buddhism requires not only the de-attachment to the

worldly cravings, but also to the religion of Buddhism and the religious master in order to gain ultimate liberation. Thus in Chan there are often themes about renouncing the Buddhist principles and the upsetting of the master by the student. A popular Chan saying says, “With seeing self-nature the Buddha remains not; in great enlightenment the Master exists not.” There are cases about burning a wooden Buddha statue to keep warm and the hitting back to his master by Linji. Chan master can also purposely create a situation for de-attaching the student’s residual attachments to Buddhism and the master so that the student can attain ultimate liberation.

For example, when his student Lingxun was about to graduate, Master Guizhong asked him to come to receive the teaching of the supreme Buddhadharma. Guizhong told Lingxun to come closer and he went closer. Guizhong said, “Season’s cold, take good care of your journey.” When Lingxun heard upon this, he forgot at once his previous (intellectual) understanding.

See also: [▶ Amita Buddha](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Chan Buddhism](#) [▶ Enlightenment](#) [▶ Meditation](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Epiphany

Kelly Murphy Mason

Epiphany is the ecclesiastical feast that falls 12 days after Christmas. It marks the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem to behold the Christ child; it also marks the end of Christmastide. The weeks following it that lead up to Lent are called Epiphany Season, which has a variable length in the liturgical calendar. Etymologically, epiphany is derived from the Greek term for “manifestation.” The holiday was originally celebrated by the Eastern Church,

to commemorate the angelic announcement of the good news of Christ’s birth, but later focused more on Christ’s baptism. The Nativity came to be understood as one instance of Theophany, a showing forth of God. Accounts vary between the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the only two gospels to include Jesus’ birth narrative, but in each, people are immediately led to understand the momentous import of the birth: “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth and God’s favor to men” (Lk 2.14). Much later, epiphany was used generically to describe instantaneous insight; it was a frequent literary device in modern English literature, where it usually featured as a formative experience in a character’s development. For the purposes of psychology, an epiphany signals a breakthrough that allows a person to apprehend something more fully than before. It has an almost mystical quality to it, an intuitive veracity.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#)

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Erikson, Erik

Lynn Somerstein

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) was a developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst whose theory presaged Ego Psychology and Interpersonal theories of psychology as well. Erikson emphasized the interaction between the individual and society, placing great importance on the positive influence that religious and cultural values exert on individual development. Religion and its associated rituals provide a pattern, goal and ideal for the individual life cycle. In his view, a religious life is part of the successful, healthy development of the individual, and begins during the stage of Basic Trust, when faith has its start. Erikson writes, in *Young Man Luther*, “One basic task of all religions is to reaffirm that first relationship” (1958: 118–119).

His early life was difficult. He was born out of wedlock and raised by his mother as a single parent until she married

his pediatrician, Dr. Theodore Homburger. It is believed that Erikson's real father was a Gentile, but Dr. Homburger and Erik's mother, Karla Abrahamsen, were Jewish, and led an active religious life together with their family. Although Dr. Homburger eventually adopted Erik, he was not able to convey his total emotional acceptance to Erik as his son.

Identity was an important personal question for Erikson. He never learned who his real father was, but he believed that he looked like him. Erikson was tall and blond. He was criticized for looking like a gentile when he was in Synagogue and for being a Jew when he was in school, so he effectively did not fit in anywhere. He solved some of his identity conflict when he became a Christian after his marriage to Joan Serson, whose father was a minister. His confusion about who he was and where he had come from may lie at the bottom of his belief that the "identity crisis" is a normal event.

He is also famous for his Epigenetic Theory, which uses the stages of fetal development as a template for personality development. Successful passage through the early Stages of his Epigenetic Theory yields later success, but problems that begin early ineluctably affect later development. The stages and their associated tasks are as follows:

- Stage One:* Oral-Sensory: from birth to one, trust vs. mistrust, feeding;
- Stage Two:* Muscular-Anal: 1–3 years, autonomy vs. doubt, toilet training;
- Stage Three:* Locomotor: 3–6 years, initiative vs. inadequacy, independence;
- Stage Four:* Latency: 6–12 years, industry vs. inferiority, school;
- Stage Five:* Adolescence: 12–18 years, identity vs. confusion, peer relationships;
- Stage Six:* Young Adulthood: 18–40 years, intimacy vs. isolation, love relationships;
- Stage Seven:* Middle Adulthood: 40–65 years, generativity vs. stagnation, parenting;
- Stage Eight:* Maturity: 65 years until death, integrity vs. despair, acceptance of one's life.

His most important published works are:

- Childhood and Society 1950
- Young Man Luther 1958
- Insight and Responsibility 1964
- Identity: Youth and Crisis 1968
- Gandhi's Truth 1969
- Dimensions of a New Identity 1974
- Life History and the Historical Moment 1975
- The Life Cycle Completed 1987, with J. M. Erikson

See also: [Ego](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Psychospiritual](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Eros

Kathryn Madden

Eros [Latin *Erōs*; Greek *ἔρως érōs*], refers to passionate love, sensual desire and longing. In the personified form of Greek mythology c. 1386, Eros was the god of love, related to desire of an unknown origin. In the early creation myth, the *Theogony* of Hesiod (700 BC), Eros was a primal god, son of Chaos, the original primeval emptiness of the universe. Eros emerged from the primordial groundlessness of Chaos together with Gaia, the Earth, matter, and nature, and Tartaris the underworld, creating a dichotomy of being. Some legends attribute Eros as the

scintilla of desire that united Uranus (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth) from whose union the entire material world came into being. In early legends, he was the firstborn Light that was responsible for the fertile and creative coming into being and ordering of all things in the cosmos.

Later tradition depicted him as the son and attendant of Aphrodite, goddess of sexual love. Together, as gods, they harnessed the primordial force of love and directed it into human beings. In Greek poetry, Eros was often portrayed as a willful, playful, charismatic and often impish god. In later Greek thought, Eros as a primeval deity transformed into the one who embodied the compelling energies of erotic love as well as the urgent force of ever-flowing nature.

His Roman mythological counterpart was Cupid (Latin *cupido*), or Amor, meaning desire, or love. In Roman literature and art he became increasingly more youthful, eventually represented as the son and companion of Venus. Eros was portrayed as a handsome winged youth prepared to shoot into the heart of an unsuspecting victim with his bow and arrow. He carried two kinds of arrows: one was golden with dove feathers that caused instant love; the other was leaden with owl feathers and was purported to cause indifference in those it pierced.

In the early Greek and Roman civilizations, the phenomenon of love was commonly understood as a kind of madness from the gods that involved the sometimes reckless and careless aim of Eros' love's arrows. His arrows were thought to not only pierce and wound the person's heart, overwhelming the individual with love at first sight, but often to promote the antithesis: pleasure accompanied by pain. The notion of passionate love at first sight was commonly believed to lead to unrequited love, impelling the lover into depression, pining, and sorrow.

Eros in Psychology

Eros was initially defined in Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) as a life instinct, sexual drive and unifying force. Eros referred further to the urge for self-preservation, and the desire to create life and productive work. Freud conceptualized that all human beings undergo an instinctual dualism with Eros and Thanatos. Thanatos is the destructive force of the death instinct, the psychological polarity that can lead to the disintegration, dissolution, and negation of all that exists. The underlying force beneath both energies is libido.

Analogous to Hesiod's notion of Eros emerging from the nothingness of Chaos, Freud posits that Eros is present in incarnation of matter out of inorganic material (Freud, 1920: 61). Freud does not reference the work

of Hesiod but demonstrates familiarity with the doctrine of the Greek physician and philosopher Empedocles of Agrigento (c. 490–430 BCE), for whom the production of all things results from the interaction between two primary instincts: attraction and repulsion, love and conflict. Eros represents an increase in tension. With Thanatos, we find an eradication of all tensions. For Freud, the domination of libidinal Thanatos can result in neurosis, the propensity toward masochism, and suicidal tendencies. The domination of Eros fuels our sexuality and promotes creativity. Ideally, we strive toward a psychological balance between the interplay of these two energies.

Freud revised his drive theory over his years of psychoanalytic practice. Eros became a fundamental concept referring to the life instincts of narcissism. The immature ego is relegated to isolated self-love. The libido of the mature ego is directed toward object relations, connection, and relationship. Eros is rooted and has "aim" that takes psychological work to get at. As we become more aware of the aim, we experience something moving toward us and we may feel this something pulling us toward it. At first, the aim may appear as a desire for food, sex, a professional position, a published book, finding a partner, becoming pregnant, becoming closer to God. Eros leads us beyond ourselves to connect with the aim or goal that is trying to become conscious. At the level of society, Eros leads toward kinship between individuals, groups, and nations.

Freud's theory of mature love implied "the all-inclusive and all-preserving Eros of Plato's *Symposium*" (Freud, 1925: 218). Plato's concept of Eros included initial desires toward a person but also an aesthetic and reflective appreciation of the beauty within that person.

Eros and Carl Jung

Analytical psychologist, Carl Jung, understands eros quite differently than Freud. Jung views libido as vital psychic energy that includes the body, sex, aggression and also divine pneuma (spirit). More than our bodily desires, eros has to do with our subjective being in a body and with something we must do before we die. Eros is full of sighs: sighs of relief, sighs of what we long to achieve, whom we wish to unite with or be closer to, as well as sighs of mourning.

Jung used the term *eros* to represent his primary theory of feminine psychology, specifically the psychology of the anima, or feminine soul. The anima (or animus as masculine soul) is the center of the archetype, a dominant image in the unconscious mind that varies for each of us.

The anima or animus is a figure opposite to one's ego gender and position. Jung tells us it is an entry point to the deeper unconscious. The anima/mus is the mediator between the ego the Self, the Self being the central archetype of the objective psyche. The Self is process and content, originator and goal of our psychological life. The experience of the Self for Jung is numinous and feels like a river flowing toward its source.

In contrast to eros, Jung spoke of *logos* as the decisive principal ascribed to men. In modern culture, we could think of *eros* as psychic relatedness, and *logos* as objective interest (1959, CW X: 123, 255). In Jung's writings, he specifies gender in relation to these concepts, and yet, the feminine principle is relevant to men as well as women in terms of sexual identity. In fact the notion of Eros of antiquity was revered by the name *Erotes*, the plural of Eros which pertained to all attractions that induced love and desire, whether heterosexual or homosexual attractions. More often for the Greeks, Eros was the benefactor of masculine enticements.

Drawing upon the legend of Eros and Psyche, (cf. Cupid and Psyche), Jung applied these two opposites to his theory of the anima/animus syzygy, or conjunction, of male and female psyches. Jungian theory claims that men possess the anima in their unconscious (images of the feminine soul, breathe, inspiration). These are qualities and representations of the feminine *eros*. Personal individuation, or the journey of integrative wholeness, requires male consciousness to confront their anima on many levels by accepting *eros* not only at the projected ego level (i.e., the merely sexual and visceral object), but also by assimilating more mature layers of the feminine principle into conscious being.

Jungian analyst Eric Neumann explains the developmental integration of the anima in the legend of Cupid (Eros) and Psyche. The relationship of desire between Psyche and Eros begins in an uroboric state, as self-containment in which there is not yet individual unconsciousness. Psyche initiates an encounter with Eros and intentionally brings him into the light. Her act represents the undertaking of making the unconscious conscious. In this act, the unconscious bond between them is dissolved, transforming mere objective attraction to genuine love and promoting individuation – the ongoing incorporation of unconscious contents that occurs both in the development of the collective and the individual human being (Neumann, 1956: 90).

Making the unconscious conscious has risks; yet, we need to bring our desires into consciousness. Eros wants to step over into visible life to be expressed. If eros is not

allowed to become visible and to incarnate, its energies will fasten onto any of a range of addictions, or to a social cause that lacks the fullness of en fleshed foundations. Eros needs the body to express itself: through dance, art, music, writing, creative activity and the love of children. Without such expression, we can fall into illness, somatization or, on the religious side, fundamentalism or shallow and projective social justice righteousness.

Psychologically, eros can lead us toward what is hiding in the lost parts of our selves that wants to be found, that wishes to act out, to become incarnate. In psychological practice, we track these lost parts of the self, regardless of school of thought, by paying attention to the desire inherent to eros and not necessarily to its object. We study desire and where desire leads, observing what it ruthlessly seeks, acknowledging what object it is projected upon or images that it is linked with. If we follow the red thread of eros, we also may discover what object desires us.

At this juncture, we cross into the territory of religion or spirituality. Eros can be defined as desire in relation to spirit. Our personal desires and wishes collect around an obvious theme. If we pay attention to its movement and its images – its feeling tone, its colors – we take on a motif, a gathering together of something principle, a coloring. We begin to question who or what is pulling us toward this need for combining our energies, our self, our bodies, our ideas, with another person, activity, or relationship.

Unfortunately, in the history of the Judeo-Christian tradition, biblical literature leaves the feminine presence of Sophia behind – a personified presence in the late Hebrew literature – and we find an increasingly exponential split between spirit and eros. Instead, we find a predominantly male, rationalized emphasis upon the notion that somehow spirit is superior to desire when, in fact, prospective desire leads to spirit and spirit attracts desire. Inherent to an anagogical reading of scripture is the lavishing of the “first thing,” about God. Eros, then, is about having a passionate, all out loving. In the biblical book of Hebrews, such loving is described as “fire.” Eros also flows into the biblical second commandment in that it underlies the efficacy of how social justice works. Otherwise, we just try to fix the world.

In the analytical arena, eros as passion grows bigger because it comes into a fuller reality as it meets its opposite. What becomes evident and necessary for passionate love to break through is the prerequisite of a weak spot, a vulnerability in us. Something happens that shakes us loose from settled attitudes and creates a response that transforms vague longing into intense passion. The recognition may be so profound as to be ineffable and experienced as a gap,

or a void. Passion is the thrust that leaps across this abyss. Passionate love becomes so concentrated at the particular point where it strains against unknowing that it can break the defended barriers, ushering us into a new sphere of experience in which love is given and received. Received, it is returned in response, equaling an exchange. Such passion does not require knowledge and intellect, only willingness. This process is one of self-giving, across a gap of unknowing toward an intensely desired wholeness (Haughton, 1981: 18–46, 58–61).

Wholeness links us with spirit and brings the body into the spirit. This fact is what distinguishes C. G. Jung's analytical psychology: we need desire and eros to find God. God incarnates in the flesh of the psyche. We are innately possessed with the capacity to be conscious of the deity. When eros aligns with the right object, this connection can link us to a life of relatedness. From Jung's view, depth psychology intends to point us toward religion as a container for the life of the unconscious.

The syzygy of anima and animus is an important factor in an individual's faith tradition because the images and affect that these images carry participate directly in the actual process of the transformation of the God-image (Jaffe, 1999: 25). Out of this inner marriage that Jung speaks of come images of the Self. Self material is shared, it's not personal. There is a social aspect: if we do not share it, we lose it. Eros can breed a rich sense of interdependence in our work and in our communities, as if we are all connected. Eros, as it bridges soul to spirit inevitably includes other people and constellates a "body" evoking us to ask: Is there a God? What is it that we love and that we are living for? What are we really summoned to? Are we living as a carbon-copy of someone or something else, or are striving toward being an original? In order to answer these questions, we need to listen in the desert-place, the place of the still, small voice. We have to internally address any conflicting desires we find inside and to really grind down on the marrow to find what is addressing us.

In both psychology and religion, our goal is to pay close attention to this inner movement. How is Eros manifest? In our relationships, our groups, our communities, our creative projects? What does it ask of us? What eros asks of us in relation to spirit often has to do with what the entirety of our mature lives will be about. First, however, we must find soul in relation to spirit. Jungian psychology offers a map for religion to follow in light of this transformation. We take what images we find under the authority of the psyche seriously, follow the thread of eros, and eventually find the meaning and intention of

our individual lives. Then our desires lead us to the body and to the spirit and through the spirit to the body.

Eros, approached, amplified, and understood from the literal to the symbolic, without the negation of the bodily and the real can lead to the secret of transformation and renewal. From the perspective of religion, eros has to do with the first commandment, putting the first things first and offering these things up to God. In our faith traditions and rituals, the giving of our desire and eros is the giving of the most precious thing that identifies us as individuals. Transformation and wholeness requires of us that we sacrifice that which is most dear to us, offer it, give it up, disidentify from *it*. We are yielding our ego-claims to the "beyond ego." Jung would say this is initiated by the Self. Something comes into our ego-neighborhood. We feel impelled by internal reasons.

As we offer up our desire, all the bits of ourselves begin to be collected and come into a more cohesive image. The Self too is changed, freed from unconscious projection into conscious focus. The Self sacrifices itself in the abstract to the ego. The unconscious Self becomes humanized just as the ego is spiritualized. Hence the God image is transformed and changed, and we too are transformed by being taken into the center, the Self where we can live from. We can live from this center and the unconscious does not control us. In essence, if we pay attention to eros, we arrive at where we belong.

See also: [▶ Anima and Animus](#) [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Logos](#) [▶ Love](#) [▶ Sophia](#)

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Eschatology

Emily Stetler

The etymology of “eschatology” is ambiguous; the Greek root may be either *eschaton*, “end time,” or *eschata*, “final things.” Eschatology is more commonly described using the former understanding, and thus defined as “the study of the end time.” In practice, though, eschatology encompasses the latter sense, as well. Particularly in Catholic theology, eschatology has traditionally been defined as being concerned with the so-called “four last things”: death, judgment, Heaven, and Hell. (To these four are sometimes added purgatory and the resurrection of the body.)

Beyond this, though, eschatology also provides the venue for religions to speak of their *hope* both for the afterlife and for the here-and-now. Increasingly, eschatology also has come to imply a theology of history, as well.

As a theological field, eschatology covers a wide array of topics; for it is concerned with the ultimate fate of the cosmos and of humankind. The unfolding of this drama varies widely, however, across and even within faith traditions. In general, though, two basic understandings of the eschaton exist: in one, the world comes to a culmination inherent in nature; in other, the world ends violently, under assault by seemingly external or supernatural forces. The first is immanent, *within* history; the latter is an *escape* from history. This latter interpretation of eschatology is labeled *apocalyptic*. These distinctions are related, but not identical, to the further distinction between *realized* and *futuristic* eschatology. Futuristic eschatology looks toward fulfillment in some transformation – though not necessarily an apocalyptic one – at the end of time, whereas realized eschatology emphasizes that the present life has already been transformed through the sanctification of history.

A single faith can have both immanent and apocalyptic elements in its eschatology. For example, in Zoroastrianism, creation is oriented toward the *frashokereti*, the refreshment or renewal of the world, in which all is perfected; and devotees of the creator-god Ahura Mazda can precipitate this renewal through their actions. The prophet Zarathustra’s emphasis on personal responsibility underscores that, through their own righteous behavior, individuals participate in the vanquishing of evil and restoration of the world to its right state. Ultimately, though, the final restoration must be accomplished by the divine himself; Ahura Mazda must enter into his

creation from outside of it and direct the final battle against evil, a cosmic liturgy in which the evil principle Ahriman is banished to hell.

Indeed, violence, war, and disturbance of the natural world often characterize apocalyptic eschatology, as both Jewish and Christian apocalyptic narratives demonstrate. Yahweh tells the prophet Ezekiel that he will manipulate Gog, king of Magog, to invade Israel. God, in his anger, will rain down destructive fury: the earth will quake; mountains will crumble; the sky will rain fire and brimstone. The war and tumult will culminate in the destruction of God’s enemies and the exaltation of Israel (Ezekiel 38:1–39:29).

In the New Testament, Jesus informs that, at the end times, there will be wars and natural disasters, and the persecution of Jesus’ followers; the Temple at Jerusalem will be desecrated. Following these things, the Son of Man – a title found in the prophets, as well – will return, accompanied by cosmic disturbances: the darkening of the sun and moon, falling stars. The angels will gather the peoples, and the Son of Man will sit in judgment (Matthew 24:4–25:46, Mark 13:5–37). John’s vision, as recorded in the book of Revelation, also includes wars and heavenly signs, but the battle is much more explicitly one between good and evil, at the end of which Satan is ultimately consigned to a lake of burning fire, while Christ, his martyrs, saints, and church (portrayed as his bride) rejoice in heaven for all eternity.

Apocalyptic accounts also typically feature a heroic figure that marks the penultimate stage of the conflict between good and evil. In Zoroastrianism, it is the final *saoshyant* who restores peace before Ahura Mazda returns. In Islam, Jesus (Isa) returns to vanquish Dajjal, the anti-christ. In Shi’a Islam, he is accompanied by the Madhi, the twelfth Imam, who went into occultation as a child to return at the end times. In Hinduism, Kalki the tenth and final avatar of Vishnu, eradicates the impiety that has infected the world in the Kali yuga (the dark age) in order to prepare for a repetition of the first age, the age of righteousness (the Satya yuga).

Eschatology, however, does not concern only narratives of the end times; it also describes the objects of a religion’s hope. Jewish eschatology, thus, relates fundamentally to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel and the Davidic dynasty (Jeremiah 33:14–18). This doctrine develops chiefly in the prophetic books of the Bible, attributed to the period leading up to and during the fall and exile of Israel and Judah. The prophets foretell a time when the Lord will lead the people back from exile; and Yahweh’s anointed servant, the messiah, will reestablish the Davidic line and usher in an era of everlasting peace

(Isaiah 11:1–16, Isaiah 2:1–2, Jeremiah 23:1–8). The holy city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and true worship at the Temple will be restored (Jeremiah 31:38–40, Ezekiel 40:1–44:31).

Since Christianity assumes that Jesus is the Messiah, it looks, therefore, toward the Messiah's *second* coming and believes that, when he returns, Jesus will bring a spiritual rather than a political restoration. Christians look toward Christ's return – the *parousia* – as the time when the dead will be raised and they, along with the living, will be judged by him. Those deemed righteous will enter into eternal life in Heaven, and those found unjust will be relegated to eternal damnation. Likewise, Muslims hold Heaven, Jannah, as the object of their hope. Jannah is a place where the righteous both enjoy sensual delights – flowing rivers (Sūra 2:25), virgins – and participate in glorifying God (Sūra 10:9–10).

Since Buddhism does not conceive of a permanent enduring self, its eschatology takes a different form. The individual concern is not the attainment of heaven, but rather release from suffering. The Buddhist hopes to extinguish desire and the passions and thus end suffering, ultimately breaking free from the cycle of *samsāra* – birth, death, and reincarnation, in the attainment of *nirvana*. Pure Land Buddhism differs, however; here, the person desires to be reborn in the Land of Bliss, a heavenly land created by the Amitābha Buddha.

To be sure, disagreement over eschatological details has resulted in doctrinal division within religious traditions. To take an example from Christianity, Revelation 1:1–10 tells of a thousand year period during which Satan will be chained in the abyss and the martyrs will reign. After these thousand years, Satan will be released and will once again lead people of all nations astray before his final defeat and his eternal torment in the lake of fire begins. Whereas Catholic and most main line Protestant churches deny a literal millennium, other Christians affirm it. Within this latter camp, there is a division between those who believe that Christ's second coming will precede the thousand years (premillennialists) and those who believe the millennium will occur before his return (postmillennialists). In general, those subscribing to millennialist eschatologies have a strong belief that Christians must, during the reign of Christ, work to establish his kingdom on earth. Nonetheless, Christians are united in their belief in an afterlife, although even in this realm, there are debates. The Catholic Church holds that only saints go immediately to Heaven; others must be cleansed in Purgatory before going to Heaven. Protestants deny the doctrine of Purgatory, claiming that it is unbiblical and that it mitigates the salvific work of Christ.

Commentary

Perhaps more than any other doctrinal category, eschatology has reflected the historical and scientific concerns of the time and, likewise, has absorbed its anxieties. Thus in late antiquity, we see Christian theologians pondering the resurrection of the body, with their primary concern being *how*, precisely, God will reconstruct, at the resurrection, a body that has decomposed, or even been eaten by another creature. While this particular question may strike us as naïve, it is certain that religious traditions that espouse belief in a bodily resurrection must wrestle with what the ramifications are for treatment of the human body, living and dead, and for the precise relationship of body and soul; for a religion's eschatology reflects, in many aspects, crucial aspects of its theological anthropology.

Following World War I, philosophers and theologians confronted a loss of optimism about history and its developments; World War II and the Shoah heightened this sense. In the wake of this pessimism, eschatology emphasized new themes as theologians attempted to reinvest history with meaning. For some, including the Protestant Jürgen Moltmann and the Catholic Johann-Baptist Metz, both German, this meant infusing eschatology with a call for praxis. Both Moltmann and Metz were influenced by the revisionary Marxist Ernst Bloch and demanded concrete engagement with history in its actuality, rather than merely through theory. Moltmann has focused on the necessity of hope in the face of suffering. Metz has presented an extremely intersubjective eschatology; all persons must become subjects, he asserts. Yet one person's achievement of subjectivity does not compete with another's; rather, each person's subjectivity *depends upon* the actualization of every other person's subjectivity. Without explicitly engaging it, Metz theologically parallels social psychology's understanding of the self as at least partially socially constructed.

Rudolf Bultmann, on the other hand, developed his eschatology out of an engagement with existentialism. For Bultmann, humanity's orientation toward the future demands that the person resist the idolatry of security and instead embrace the freedom and risk of the present.

Beginning in the latter twentieth century, eschatology has increasingly entered into dialogue with science. This conversation has led, on the one hand, to a renewed emphasis on the significance of the environment in the eschatological process. Additionally, the introduction of brain science into the eschatological discussion has raised the question of what, precisely, *is* the soul that endures beyond death and how much of it is reducible to the brain.

Additionally, in the latter twentieth century, psychologist Robert Jay Lifton has engaged depth psychology to suggest that the human search for immortality need not imply an actual life beyond death. Instead, Lifton suggests, immortality can also be achieved biologically (living through one's descendents) or through the production of enduring creative works.

See also: [▶ Apocalypse](#) [▶ Existentialism](#) [▶ Fundamentalism](#) [▶ Heaven and Hell](#) [▶ Nirvana](#) [▶ Purgatory](#) [▶ Resurrection](#) [▶ Zoroastrianism](#)

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Esoteric Buddhism

Paul Larson

Esoteric Buddhism is better known as Vajrayana Buddhism, from the Sanskrit meaning “Diamond way.” This is the major form of Buddhism in Tibet, Mongolia, in the Russian states of Buryatia and Kalmykia. It is also a minority group within Buddhists in Japan (Shingon school). This is generally considered a third “yana,” or

“vehicle” in Buddhism. The other two are the Hinayana (“lesser vehicle”) and the Mahayana (“greater vehicle”). The classical schools of the Hinayana tradition ceased to exist and also the somewhat pejorative implication of lesser versus greater have resulted in the current preferred use of the term “Theravada” for that branch of Buddhism. All of the varieties of esoteric Buddhism share much doctrine with the other two schools, especially the Mahayana schools, and to that add influences from the Pan-Indian spiritual movement known as Tantrism.

Tantrism was a development in Indian spirituality that came in reaction to the asceticism and restraint of typical Hindu or Buddhist practice. It is sometimes known as the left-hand path, for its use of activities or symbolic activities that are normally prohibited, especially sexuality. Snellgrove (1987) discusses how early and literal enactment for forbidden dietary practices, intoxication and sexual activity was used as a way of breaking out of the dialectic of moral categories and using pure experience as a vehicle for direct gnosis. Over time, the degree of actual enactment diminished and was replaced by symbolic enactment. Westerners have been particularly attracted to the sexual aspects of Tantrism in either actual practice or imagery work. Numerous popular redactions of Tantric practices in the West tend to pitch it as a way of heightening one's sexual pleasure through withholding orgasm, among other techniques.

It can be said, however, that Tantrism is one of the few places where the sexual act itself is sacralized and used as a vehicle for spiritual development. In most religious contexts, sexuality is seen as a rampant desire that needs to be controlled in order for spiritual development to proceed. This stems from a root philosophy common to both East and West, that the body and the material plane of existence is inferior to the mental, psychic, and spiritual planes, which being non-material are therefore higher in the spiritual nature. This idea is not inherently anti-sexual, though it lends itself to that emphasis. There are examples within both Indian and classical pagan spirituality of positive views of sexuality in moderation and restraint, while still recognized the superiority of the spiritual realm.

Be that as it may, sexual imagery is a foundational aspect of Tantric practice. The divine is typically portrayed in physical forms of both male and female, and often in sexual union. If one chooses not to use a physical partner, Tantric practice involves generating imagery, identifying oneself with one aspect of the deity and visualizing various manipulations of spiritual energy in that form. At the conclusion of the practice, the image is dissolved and one sits in meditation. In Buddhist forms of Tantrism this is linked to the basic Mahayana doctrine of emptiness (Skt. “*shunyata*”).

At its heart, Tantric practice is the working of high magic. There is a great deal of similarity between techniques used by Tantric adepts and those who are initiates in Western occult or magical traditions. That is, the basic spiritual practice involves generating spiritual energy and in a disciplined manner going through several transformational rituals that manipulate that energy and put it to one or more usage. Thus meditation practices in esoteric Buddhism make extensive use of multi-sensory phenomena in trance work. Visual imagery, use of physical gestures (Skt. “*mudras*”), chanting either aloud or silently, mantras, or verbal formulas, repetition of a variety of prayers, and the invocation of divine presence (similar to “drawing down the moon” in Western occultism) are all found in the various “*sadhannas*” or sequence of events that are made part of daily spiritual practice.

The ability to draw down the divine force into direct embodiment goes back to the earliest shamanic practices before the evolution of larger world religions and spiritual movements. In this sense, Tantric practice makes connection to the earliest layer of human spirituality while filtering it through a more evolved theology. Magical practices continued even as civilizations resulted in the bureaucratization of religion and the development of theologies with elaborate logical and explanatory structures.

Because of the intense nature of the imagery and or actual practices, as well as in keeping with the elaborate formalism of ritual, a direct connection between a student and a practitioner is emphasized. The “guru” and “chela” relationship found in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions is deepened by the requirement of secrecy of teachings, and the rite of initiation into a set of mysteries and practices through a gradual and sequential curriculum. The instruction in correct practice of the meditational and ritual practices is a key element. The many texts of Tantric practice were originally kept secret, but now one can find most of them published in both the academic and popular press. Initiates are still generally instructed to keep things like mantras and detailed instructions private; to not disclose to those not initiated in the tradition. To support this privacy there are often admonitions about the hazards of unauthorized practice.

In Tibetan Buddhism, these initiations are termed “empowerments.” Each of the many deities has their own particular “*sadhanna*,” or practice. A qualified lama will generally give empowerments as well as less ritualized and more public talks about Buddha Dharma (Buddhist teachings and practice). Disciples accumulate several or even many empowerments over the course of their involvement in the spiritual community. Each empowerment comes with its own commitments to develop the practice and integrate it into one’s daily spiritual work,

though the more one takes on, the less it is possible to pursue any one in depth.

Esoteric Buddhism emerged in the first millennium of the Common Era. It was heavily influenced by teachers from Nalanda, the greatest Buddhist monastic and scholarly community. This was the principal school for Buddhism from the seventh through twelfth centuries in India. Its destruction in 1193 presaged the disappearance of Buddhism from its native soil until the late nineteenth century, when a Buddhist revival began and the twentieth century when the Tibetan diaspora fed the growth of Buddhism in India. Among the most influential teachers was Nagarjuna (150–250 CE). He expanded on the doctrine of emptiness as found in the Perfection of Wisdom sutra (Skt. “*prajnaparamita*”), one of the earliest Mahayana sutras. That doctrine is a healthy counterpoint to the heady mixture of imagery and concentration which is part of any ritual based practice; realizing that, in the end, one has to come back from the “high” of the energy at its peak to the same dispassionate awareness of momentary experience, including suffering which is part of mindfulness practice common to all forms of Buddhist meditation.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Tantrism](#)

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Ethics and Ethical Behavior

Claudia Nagel

Introduction

Human beings are constantly judging their own actions and those of others. God and evil, moral and amoral, or

conscienceless are the respective judgments whereby we implicitly assume that “one” knows the basic difference between good and evil. Moral conduct is thus always attributed to an individual, who is regarded as being responsible for his actions and held accountable for these, i.e., he has to answer to himself, his own conscience or an external authority or institution. Moral behavior therefore presupposes the concept of voluntariness and freedom. Conscience, freedom and responsibility are central concepts of moral behavior and ethics as the philosophical doctrine of morally relevant behavior (Moral Philosophy).

Ethics as a philosophical discipline dates back to Aristotle, who also pursued earlier approaches, as those of Plato and Socrates. The term ethics is derived from the Ancient Greek “ethikos”: custom, habit, or tradition. Although the adjectival or adverbial forms of moral and ethical are frequently used synonymously, here the following differentiation – outlined by Anzenbacher (1992a) based on Kant’s definition – is made: an action is moral if it is judged in dependence on the individual conscience of the agent, while ethical also means according to convention and is thus placed in a social context. It is therefore open for discussion, on the basis of which norms an action is ethical.

Guided by the idea of a meaningful human life, i.e., a morally good and just life, philosophical ethics attempts to make universally valid statements about good and just behavior in a methodical manner – without reference to political and religious authorities, or the well-tryed. It is primarily concerned with an answer to the questions “What shall I do? Who do I want to be, how do I want to live? What is a successful, succeeding, and happy existence?” complemented by questions like: “In what kind of social and political environment do we want to and shall we live?” (Höffe, 1999).

Major Contents and Methodological Positions of Ethics

The Ethics of Morality was first defined by Aristotle. It describes the respective historically and socially relevant norms and values as the basis for virtuous moral conduct, these shall be realized sagaciously.

The autonomous Ethics of Reason is subject to a rigorous principle of morals and posited primarily by Kant. Norms have to be verifiable with the aid of a procedure which claims universal and categorical validity. The categorical imperative is of the highest order and demands with consideration of our respective subjective maxims (life principles) to: ‘Act only according to that

maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a principle of general law.’ The decisive factor is alone the individual’s good will guided by reason. This approach has therefore also been discussed as an Ethics of Conviction. Kant asks for the conditions of the possibility for moral action.

Utilitarian Ethics, an approach posited by J. Bentham and J. St. Mill is concerned with ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number,’ and serves as a guideline for weighing the utility of an action and its consequences. As a result of the utility principle the wellbeing of the individual comes after that of society as a whole, and a rational examination of the action is performed against the background of its concrete, foreseeable results (Lang, 1992).

In Scherer’s phenomenological approach to Value Ethics a hierarchy of tangible values which possess an objective quality (pleasure/pain; approve/disapprove; love/hate) is developed, where an action is described as moral when the respective highest ranked value is realized (Pieper, 2007).

In contemporary philosophy the *Discourse Ethics of Habermas and Apel* (developed as Ethics of Reason) plays an important role. They attempt to determine a rational foundation of reason by asking what we need to presuppose to conduct meaningful argumentation. The starting point is the discourse, the argumentation in speech. Everyone who argues has always implicitly committed himself to uphold four validity claims: understandability, truth, rightness, and truthfulness/frankness. These commitments are moral in a two-fold sense: In the sense of an ethics of truthful communication they commit the subject to reason and represent a criterion for the negotiation and evaluation of moral norms. All norms upon which an agreement is reached by common consent in a discourse without constraints are morally binding (Lang, 1992).

Alternative contemporary approaches to Discourse Ethics are anti-universalistic and relativistic as, e.g., the *Usualistic Ethics of Odo Marquard* (1981, 2007). His position is characterized by a skeptical stance and the renunciation of an ultimate moral standard, and is oriented towards the concrete moral horizon of the “usual.” He thus arranges himself in a skeptical position between absolute knowledge and absolute ignorance in the sense of the Aristotelian doctrine of mesotes (extremes are to be avoided) (Lang, 1992).

In addition to the described differences in terms of content, systematic differentiations also have an important role regarding the question as to the content of ethics. Differentiations are made between Descriptive Ethics, which is concerned primarily with the examination, description and explanation of the phenomena of morals

and conventions; Normative Ethics, whose principal concern is the critical analysis of prevailing morals and the reasons for forms and principles of right and good actions; and Meta-ethics, which attempts the critical analysis of linguistic elements in moral statements.

Based on the Ethics of Responsibility the individual considers all possible consequences of a specific action in the evaluation of his decision to perform this action, while Ethics of Conviction is oriented alone towards the good intention, the good will.

The differentiation between Formal and Material Ethics, which is related to the differentiation between Deontological (obligation oriented) Ethics and Teleological (goal oriented) Ethics is indebted to Kant. Formal Ethics (Ethics of Reason) is based on the universal idea of duty and moral laws. These have the character of unconditional, universally valid claims based on the transcendental view of obligation “from the universal concept of the reasoning being as such.” Exclusively applied are the precepts of rationality and the respective test procedures. It is the self-willing and determining reason which constitutes morality. Material ethics bases the concept of morality on the understanding, willing and pursuit of good purposes or values (e.g., Virtue Ethics, Value Ethics). Material ethics is frequently viewed as a complement to Formal Ethics in as far as it holds the criteria which serve to examine the moral value of goals and contents (Höffe, 2002).

Central Questions of Ethics

Despite the different approaches and groupings, ethics is essentially concerned with three different topics, which are also significant from a psychological perspective, because they are of basic relevance to all human experience:

1. Happiness
2. Good and evil
3. Freedom (Pieper, 2007).

It is in the nature of most humans to strive for happiness. Ethics expounds on this natural striving of man for happiness and asks if and how this can be morally justified. While one school of moral philosophers claims that happiness represents the highest normative principle (Hedonist, Utilitarian, Eudemonistic, Egoistical Ethics), another puts the principle of duty before happiness; the striving for virtue, morality and reason are given priority (Plato, Spinoza, Kant). It is, however, crucial that happiness cannot be achieved directly, but only through concrete goals, whose attainment holds the promise of satisfaction and thus of happiness. Furthermore,

happiness does not simply occur, but needs to be actively pursued in a practice, which contributes to a meaningful life when successfully accomplished.

The Good in itself is one of the central principles of ethics. In Greek philosophy and metaphysics the Good is the essence of all being, the goal toward which all striving is directed, and through which man becomes wholly himself (Plato, Aristotle). Something is morally good, which is good in itself and not with regard to something else or, for something else. Kant states: “Nothing can be thought anywhere in this world, or even outside the same, which can unreservedly be regarded as good, except the good will alone . . . The good will is not good through that which it effects or accomplishes, nor through its usefulness in achieving a certain purpose, but it is good through the willing only, good in itself” (Kant, 1995b – *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*: 180f).

Joined in the concept of the highest Good, in which consummate personhood is reflected, are the three topics of ethics: happiness, freedom, the Good (Pieper, 2007). “It is a priori (morally) required to achieve the highest Good through the freedom of will, . . . In the highest for us practicable – i.e., realizable through our will – Good, virtue and happiness have to be thought as necessary and connected” (Kant, 1995b: 173).

The term freedom has repeatedly occurred above and is, in fact, of even greater importance to ethics, because it implies both precondition and goal. Today the question arises based on recent findings from neurobiology, attachment research and psychoanalysis how free the human being is in his actions. Were behavior – as it is understood by some behaviorists and neurobiologists – completely predetermined, there would no longer be a need for a science of morals.

While freedom was seen as self-evident in antiquity, it has assumed great importance in the reflections of modern ethics since Kant. As a “natural being” man is other-directed as a result of his sensuality, i.e., his drives, instincts, feelings, passions, needs and interests (heteronomy). Even if he can not invalidate the laws of nature, he can decide what he can want, shall want or not want, i.e., he can act self-determinedly (autonomy). Because he can free himself from the constraints of nature and determine autonomously what he can want, he uses his moral freedom. In contrast to unconstrained freedom, arbitrariness, moral freedom refers to the freedom of others and acknowledges this as a principle. The contradiction between unconstrained, absolute freedom and freedom which delimits itself with consideration of the freedom of others characterizes moral freedom. Moral freedom is

the basis for freedom of action. Freedom of action, which means not merely to want the Good, but to do it, is always limited by the prevailing circumstances.

Inherent in the concept of freedom is also one of the limits of ethics. As a theory it cannot be its own practice, because the realization of freedom lies outside itself. The individual is moral through will; it is not ethics that renders him moral. In addition, because freedom is one of its presuppositions, ethics cannot develop a material catalog of norms. It can, however, substantiate formal norms whose critical application functions as a standard for material norms. The critical evaluation and application is ultimately left to the acting individual (Pieper, 2007).

The goals of ethics, which are of importance to humans from a psychological standpoint, may be summarized as the reflective enlightenment of the acting individual in regard to the moral conditions of his actions. With comprehension of freedom as an essential element for the human being, the critical power of judgment of moral actions, i.e., the critical differentiation between good and evil before the background of freedom as an unconditional principle, has to be practiced. A third crucial element represents the acquisition of moral competence and social responsibility (Pieper, 2007).

The Psychic Development of Moral Competence as the Basis for Moral Conduct

Two significant directions can be identified regarding the development of moral competence: the psychoanalytical view of Freud, complemented by several aspects from Jung, and the theories of developmental psychology ranging from Mead to Piaget and Kohlberg to Gilligan.

Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984) is based on both Piaget's stages of cognitive development and his division of moral development into a pre-moral, a heteronomous, and an autonomous stage analyzing the child's changing awareness of rules. Founded on the results of his empirical research, Kohlberg added three additional stages to those of Piaget and summarized these in three levels (Table 1).

These described stages of moral development may also serve as an indication of current social and historical development where moral conscience increasingly appears to be moving towards the discourse today (Lang, 1992).

Kohlberg's stages of moral development are based on the conception of a moral of justice as proposed by Carol

Ethics and Ethical Behavior. Table 1 Stages of moral development

Level	Stage	Moral orientation
I. Pre-conventional level	1	Obedience and punishment orientation
	2	Self-interest orientation
II. Conventional level	3	Interpersonal accord and conformity
	4	Authority and social order maintaining orientation
III. Post-conventional level	5	Social contract orientation
	6	Universal ethical principles orientation

From Garz (2006: 102)

Gilligan (1982). She has elaborated Kohlberg's theory of moral development by introducing the concept of moral of caring, starting from the premise that both attitudes to morality are in a dialectical relationship. This approach is of particular interest because it complements the so-called "male" abstract moral with a "female" moral of human-caring (Garz, 2006: 117).

Freedom and Psychoanalysis

Prior to Kant, psychology was a branch of Special Metaphysics. In contrast to General Metaphysics, i.e., ontology (science of the nature of being), psychology was regarded as Special Metaphysics concerning itself, as the "science of the soul," with questions of self-knowledge, identity and oneness of consciousness. The focus of psychology has since then been on concrete psychic experience (Pieper, 2007).

In addition to the development of moral competence, the question as to where the conscience or morality can be located in the human psyche is of interest from a psychoanalytical perspective. In his theory of psychic structure Freud names the superego as the judge or censor of the ego. The superego's functions comprise the conscience, self-observation, and ideal formation. This term therefore designates the presence of internalized values, commands, and prohibitions. The superego develops in the child after an extended period of need for support with the Oedipus complex and as a result of the fear of loss of paternal love. From a philosophical viewpoint this would be expressed as follows: "The demand of the conscience (superego) may thus be seen as the advice to act wisely: Act in

conformity with your conscience or you will lose the goodwill of the one whose protection and help you need” (Anzenbacher, 1992: 207). Freud (1999) views morality as a strategy, in which culture, indirectly also serving the pleasure principle, attempts to defend itself against the destructiveness of aggression. Culture virtually installs the superego in the individual to serve as his conscience which constrains the ego; this leads to the development of a sense of guilt and the need for punishment and thus to the diminishment of aggression.

Freud considers the quest for the highest Good, the purpose in life, as emerging from the pleasure principle, which takes priority over everything else. This would, however, completely instrumentalize reason and cannot become practical as pure reason in the sense of Kant. This, in turn, would from the first result in the leveling of an independent meaning of morality (Anzenbacher, 1992).

Jung (1995, § 825–857) asserts that ethics and moral are innate, because without the ability of the psyche to experience guilt there can be no sense of guilt. Furthermore, the omnipresent opposites are thereby raised to conscious awareness. Ethos is thus understood by Jung as a “special case of the transcendent function” which connects the unconscious with the conscious. Only in the conscious, reflective examination of one’s own actions can what appears to be moral conduct be changed into ethical conduct. From a religious standpoint he defines this as the establishment of a connection between reason and grace.

In relation to the principles of ethics, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis as applied psychology also have an important role. Psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic methods essentially consist of the dialogical working-through of the patient’s emotional history. It is the aim of the therapy to free the individual from psychic constraints through the bringing to consciousness, emotionally working through and processing of complex and conflict charged events that prevent him from living life as a truly human being liberated on to himself. This is a moral aim in a two-fold sense, as it also requires the analyst to be conscious of his own responsibility. However, in contrast to ethics, psychology does not aim to reflect on the conditions of moral conduct, but wants to enable the human being to act morally. Through cognitive insight and emotional experiences, i.e., through self-knowledge, the individual shall recognize and integrate the constraining factors to achieve the capability of interaction. The discourse ethicist Habermas connects morality and psychoanalysis as follows: “Since the analysis imposes the experience of self-reflection on the patient, it calls for a ‘moral responsibility for the content’ of the disorder.

Because insight as the aim of analysis is only this, namely that the *ego* of the patient is to recognize itself in the other represented by the disorder as his alienated *self* and identify with it. As in Hegel’s dialectic of morality, the offender recognizes his own destroyed being in his victim, an act of self-reflection through which the abstractly separated entities perceive the devastated moral totality as their common ground *and through this* are able to return to it. Analytic knowledge is, at the same time, moral knowledge” (Habermas, 1968: 288).

In contrast to Habermas, Drewermann (1982) who as a moral theologian, church critic and psychoanalyst attempts to establish a connection between religion and the unconscious, describes psychoanalysis as inherently amoral. Psychoanalysis is essentially concerned with the confrontation with never questioned, internalized contents of the superego and so to decide against prevailing norms. “Every psychotherapy renders a bit more conscienceless, egomaniac, unscrupulous. Every psychotherapy is therefore a kind of seduction, a lesson in immorality” (Drewermann, 1982: 83). While he views this in one respect as positive in that it implies an increase in individual freedom, it is also from a Hegelian perspective a risk, because self-consciousness can be achieved only in a life and death struggle. At stake in this struggle are the concepts of free or not free, self-determined or other-directed, but not of good or evil. In the course of the struggle the Old has to be cast off and combated, the subjectively accomplished acknowledgment of morality, i.e., the awareness of morality through a process of becoming conscious gained against the background of personal freedom can be reintegrated only in a second step according to Hegel. The New is then frequently identical with the cast off Old, although now it is chosen self-determinedly and consciously. In the sense of Hegel, the moral dilemma would then be resolved. It remains, however, open to question if in the phase of self-discovery of the analysis the second step is actually taken, i.e., if the reconnection to the prevailing morality is achieved or should even be achieved. This, in the sense of the goal of freedom, shall not be the aim of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. If ethics were “repealed” and humans in their being good or being active would no longer find a justification for being or developing, there would nevertheless need to be another reason for the justification of being. Drewermann’s stance is that this can be found in man’s being held in the grace of God. For him it is God who is the ultimate reason for man’s being, while the Moral is not the definitive measure of humanness. The aim of psychotherapy would then be the – humble – acknowledgment of one’s own being and the assumption of responsibility for

one's own life as a gift of God. His position is thus contrary to the basic principles of ethics, to find determinants for moral conduct outside of (religious) authorities.

Acknowledgement

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See also: [Drewermann, Eugen](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Plato and Religion](#) [Plato on the Soul](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Ethics of the Fathers

Lynn Somerstein

“Ethics of the Fathers,” called, in Hebrew, Pirkei Avot, and more properly translated as “Chapters of the Fathers,” is known as “Ethics of the Fathers” because of its content – a collection of laws, aphorisms and guides to ethical behavior – wisdom literature that is over two thousand years old. It asks and tries to explain what makes a good person, and how to get along with family members, teachers, the neighbors. Pirkei Avot is concerned with down to earth, hands on, practical living – like an early self-help book.

The emphasis is on doing, embodying the religious life even in every day actions. This accessibility makes it very popular, so it is included in many prayer books. Some famous teaching examples are:

- Shammai: “Say little and do much” (Shapiro, 2006: 15).
- Hillel: “Don’t judge your fellowman until you are in his place” (Shapiro, 2006: 21).
- Ben Zoma: “Who is wise? He who learns from every man. . . . Who is a hero? He who controls his passions” (Pirkei, Ch 4, Minsha 1).
- Hillel: “If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” (Shapiro, 2006: 15).

Hillel’s question, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” (Shapiro, 2006: 15) underlies individual human development – the search for the self, and understanding who the self is in relation to others. Psychotherapeutic interaction concerns itself with searching deep within to find what is true for the individual, and then finding ways for the individual to make contact with others, a process leading from a narcissistic engagement with the world to a fuller, open, mature being, whose everyday life embodies a full engagement with God and the world.

See also: [▶ Ethics and Ethical Behavior](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Etiological Myth

Alice Mills

Etiological myths are those myths that explain origins and causes. Creation myths are etiological, explaining how the universe or the world or life in the world came into being. Etiological myth does not have to situate itself at the beginning of all things, it can account for the creation of a new entity or activity within the established order of creation, just as much as for the creation of an ordered world out of primal chaos.

Religion

Religions can be set along a spectrum from those primarily focussed on beginnings, on events within an established universe and on endings. Although “aetiological” is a term derived from classical Greek (*aition* meaning cause), the belief systems of classical Greece were oriented more to the after-life, and most of their etiological myths concerned particular places and rituals. The Roman poet, Ovid, collected a large number of etiological myths of transformation in his long poem, *The Metamorphoses*. Such myths as Daphne’s transformation into the laurel were popular material for medieval and Renaissance writers and artists to interpret allegorically as intimating Christian truths. The Bible stories span the whole spectrum from creation to last things. The first part of the Bible, *The Book of Genesis*, offers etiological explanations for the creation of the world and its inhabitants, the origin of death, fear and hatred of snakes and the pangs of childbirth, and the Noah story explains the origin of the first rainbow. An example of a religion tilted almost totally towards etiology is the Australian Aboriginal people’s Dreamtime, whose stories provide explanations for the origins of features of the landscape, its inhabitants and their behaviours. While

Dreamtime stories speak of a time outside chronological time, those who still hold them sacred believe that the beings of which they speak still inhabit the land. Dreamtime etiological belief is taken into serious consideration by contemporary Australian Governments in legislating for commercial and recreational use of the land.

Science

While the origins of the universe are currently not fully explicable in scientific terms (and perhaps never will be), such phenomena as the rainbow, geological features of the earth and lunar eclipses have been well understood scientifically, so much so that scientific explanations have long been used as weapons to discredit myth in general via its etiological function. Romantic poets such as Keats and Wordsworth bewailed this triumph of the rational mind over what the poets saw as the truths of the imagination and soul. In the nineteenth century, believers in the literal truth of the Bible struggled with the challenges offered by science. The battle between proponents of the Darwinian theory of evolution and the creation story in Genesis still rages.

Psychology

Psychologists who claim that their discipline belongs among the sciences have no interest in exploring etiological questions about the psyche, preferring close observational and experimental scrutiny of the ways in which children develop. Most psychoanalytic theorists also focus on the development of the individual psyche rather than its mysterious prehistoric origins. Post-Jungians tend to ignore Jung’s own speculations about the prehistoric development of human consciousness. With the exception of Julia Kristeva, who terms this part of his work the “Freudian fable,” post-Freudians say as little as possible about Freud’s own etiological mythmaking in *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*, where (with some proviso about the difficulty of exactitude) he offers as literal truth a tale about the primal horde, the first slaughter of a father by his sons and the guilt-ridden origins of sacrifice. Freud regards all later religions as attempting to resolve the filial sense of guilt. His primal horde tale offers an etiology not only for world religions but also for all human civilisations and the neuroses that afflict the human psyche.

See also: [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Kristeva, Julia](#)

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Evangelical

Elisa Bernal Corley

The term evangelical is a derivative of the Greek work *euangelion*, which literally means “good news” or “gospel.” It is used to identify the four books of the New Testament that narrates the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The earliest usage of the term “evangelical” seems to be from Tertullian’s writings (c.155–222), where he referred to the “evangelical and apostolic writings” as authoritative for the life and practice of the church.

Historically, the term evangelical was first used to refer to those who were part of the reforming parties in Europe before 1529. In the 1520s, it became popular in the polemical writings of early Reformers. During the Reformation period, an evangelical is one who believes that the Catholic Church should return to the beliefs and practices supported by New Testament Christianity. An evangelical emphasizes piety and righteous living, expressed in strict ethical codes, instead of adherence to external legal rules enforced by the Church.

Contemporary evangelicals share basic convictions inherited from their Reformation family, including the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures, the necessity of salvation in Jesus Christ because of human sinfulness, the doctrine of the Trinity, belief in the resurrection and divine judgment, and the urgency of evangelism.

While the face of Christianity is rapidly changing, with the center of evangelical Christianity moving towards Asia, Africa, and Latin America, perhaps the strongest expression of modern-day evangelicalism is found in the United States. Because of the swift transplantation of evangelical

beliefs and practices to the colonies, in Anglo-American history, the term evangelical now refers to a wide variety of groups, ranging from the major Protestant denominations like the Baptists and Presbyterians, to Roman Catholics, and to evangelical associations like the Billy Graham Association. In many parts of Europe, Asia, and Latin America, the word is often used synonymously with Protestant groups as distinguished from Roman Catholics.

Commentary

While present-day evangelicals share basic beliefs, interpretations may vary depending on where they locate themselves along the evangelical spectrum. When nineteenth century science began to challenge the authenticity of the Bible and the credibility of Christian teachings, evangelicals found themselves divided. In response to what was perceived as a scientific onslaught on the Christian faith, traditionalists separated themselves from those who adopted a critical approach to the study of the Bible. Those who tried to adapt to the larger and more pluralistic culture, believing that there is no quarrel between the truth of religion and the discoveries of science, were considered liberals and modernists.

Each group adopts a distinct approach to answering the question of how one enters into and remains within the Christian life and communion. Although they share the belief that entrance into the Christian life is through faith in Jesus Christ, within the conservative branch, especially among the self-described “born-again Christians,” a conversion experience is the definitive moment of entrance into the Christian life and the Kingdom of God. Conversion happens through repentance of one’s sins and the acceptance of the forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

A definitive conversion experience meant that a person’s identity is changed by God’s grace. It is reshaped and transformed from the “old” into the “new.” With the new identity comes the adoption of new ideals and practices, which are often expressed in strict moral lifestyle, immersion in the life of the community, and fealty to religious teachings. Furthermore, this transformation of identity is accomplished through continuous participation in the ritualized practices of the local community like prayer, bible studies, small-group fellowships, and corporate worship.

Even though conservative evangelicals are found to hold disparate, nuanced, and diverse views on political and social issue, in general, they view the teachings of the Bible as sufficient to answer life’s problems and questions. The believer recognizes and submits to the authority of

the Bible and the ordained leaders of the church. Because biblical teachings are authoritative for Christian life and practice, and because of the belief that the Holy Spirit guides the believer into obedient faith, conservative evangelicals are distrustful of any naturalistic explanation of human experiences. If human psychology could explain and improve human behavior without the need for spiritual intervention, then belief in the power of God to influence human life becomes expendable.

The authoritative and supernatural place of the Bible and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the community also serve as inoculation against outside criticism. Since there is an external source of authority to which members defer, the believer tends to have a diminished sense of personal autonomy and power. Questioning a belief or doctrine using other intellectual tools may also produce guilt. Finally, even though there is evidence that active participation in church life and commitment to religious tradition promotes a believer's psychological well-being, adherence to the prescribed moral code of the community could make it difficult for a believer to adapt to situations or subcultures that do not share her beliefs.

Meanwhile, evangelicals who had been influenced by the American civil rights and antiwar movements, as well as the advances in higher education, had come to adopt liberal views on political issues. Evangelical scholars who are interested in engaging the human sciences can also be found in some evangelical colleges. Many of these modern-day evangelicals have assimilated several central features of the dominant American culture, especially those pertaining to individual autonomy and tolerance of diversity. With a more positive view of cultural and other human disciplines, they are therefore more comfortable with engaging the broader culture while at the same time maintaining close communion with their religious communities.

Within this multi-vocal evangelical community, there are those who welcome the use of cultural and scientific approaches in the examination of their faith. In exploring the Christian life, evangelicals with liberal leanings accept the complexities of human personality and development. Although the Bible remains authoritative, they do not expect it to provide the solutions to all of the unique challenges of modern living. They feel free to evaluate life-choices using other tools for analysis and moral reasoning that extend beyond obedience to religious authority or tradition. They welcome the help of clinical therapists, for instance, with difficult issues like abortion, marriage, sexuality, work, and various psychological illnesses. Attempts toward the integration of theology and psychology reflect the openness of modern evangelicals to a progressive approach to the study of human development. Examples of

such undertakings are expressed in publications like the *Journal of Theology and Psychology* and the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*.

See also: [Bible](#) [Christianity](#) [Conversion](#) [Fundamentalism](#) [Grace](#) [Predestination](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Religious Identity](#) [Resurrection](#)

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Evil

Lorna Lees-Grossmann

There are two commonly accepted types of evil: first the cosmic or natural evils such as fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane or epidemic, the sort discussed in the Biblical *Book of Job*. Secondly there is interpersonal evil, man's inhumanity to man, on an individual or a large scale, murder or genocide. The first sort has a metaphysical cause and blame cannot be ascribed: these things happen and one must accept them. The second has connotations of innate malignancy and is bound up with theology and psychology, and is the one under discussion.

Evil has an archetypal quality: theistic religions have an inherent dichotomy between good and evil. Loki's malice

brought down the Norse gods; Lucifer's hubris brought about his expulsion from heaven and man's expulsion from Eden. What characterizes the religious explanation of evil is that the agent chooses the course of action that leads to whatever undesirable result awaits. Evil requires deliberate choice and action, whereas accidents are caused by an unwitting, non-deliberate agent. We can see this echoed in legal circles today in the distinction between murder and manslaughter and the relative leniency of sentencing for the latter.

Relativism

The modern convention is that evil is relative. As Hamlet says, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2). The question is whether evil is a necessary or a contingent attribute. Is it the person, or the action, which is evil? The social construction of evil permits anyone to perform an evil act, but whether that action renders that person irredeemably evil is open to debate. From social experiments like Milgram's experiment and the Stanford Prison experiment we can see that ordinary people have the capacity to perpetuate evil acts, and that the likelihood that they will do so is increased if they are given implied or articulated assurance that they will not bear responsibility. Authority may be diffused so that the giver of the order takes sole responsibility and thus absolves the actual agent of blame, or the target group may be de-individuated ("the prisoners") or de-humanized, as with Rwanda's "cockroaches," as the Tutsis were labeled during the genocide. On the macro scale, genocide can be perpetuated through the socialization of the next generation to hate the target group and the dissemination of propaganda to ensure that hatred is continuous.

Necessary Evil

M. Scott Peck articulates this non-equation of evil actions with necessary evil. He defines evil not by the committing of evil actions – because if this were the case, he argues, we would all be evil – or by the magnitude of evil committed. What makes a person inherently evil is self-deception and a lack of self-control; in psychiatric terms pathological or malignant narcissism – evil is a form of mental illness. It is doubtful whether evil can be so neatly pigeonholed, and there is an obvious case for labeling all psychopathology as entailing evil because it also entails deliberate and serious human suffering. The other problem with this interpretation is that it does not allow for the possibility

that a person who performs repeated and deliberate acts of evil may also be capable of performing repeated and deliberate acts of good.

A more humanistic interpretation can be found in Rollo May, who offers a construction of evil in terms of agency. There are contributory factors such as war and interpersonal relationships or pressure at play, and there may indeed be an inherent evilness in each human – Jung's "shadow" or the daimonic – but what is key is the role the individual takes in choosing to perform the act. While psychopathology might entail evil as a necessary feature, human psychology allows for contingent, temporary evil.

See also: [Job](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Existential Psychotherapy

Stephen A. Diamond

Existential psychotherapy is based upon the principles of both humanistic and existential psychology, the latter being a movement with roots in the existential philosophy and writings of Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Ortega y Gasset, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Camus, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Tillich, Buber, and others. Otto Rank, Medard Boss, Ludwig Binswanger, Karl Jaspers, Eugene Minkowski, Ronald Kuhn, V. E. von Gebattel, J. H. Van Den Berg, H. J. Buytendijk and G. Bally were among the first to apply existential principles to the practice of psychotherapy (calling it *Daseinsanalyse* or existential analysis) in

Europe, followed prominently by Viktor Frankl (Vienna), R. D. Laing (London), and Rollo May, J. F. T. Bugental, Thomas Szasz, Frederick “Fritz” Perls and Irvin Yalom in the United States. It was psychoanalyst Rollo May along with psychiatrist Henri Ellenberger who, in 1958, introduced the European existential analysts to American clinicians in their groundbreaking book, *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*.

Existential therapy is often misperceived as some morbid, arcane, pessimistic, cerebral, esoteric orientation to treatment. But in fact, it is an exceedingly practical, concrete, positive and flexible approach. On any given day, an existential therapist might deal with mundane matters such as the patient’s financial crisis, marital problems, health issues, addictive behavior or psychopharmacological needs, while at other times working with dream material, archetypal motifs, spirituality, grief, anger or the patient’s creative process – all depending on the practitioner and what is most existentially pressing in the moment. Existential psychotherapy, despite its popularity in the decades after importation to the United States, declined toward the close of the twentieth century, a victim of the psychopharmacological, cognitive, and managed care revolution in mental health. But as consumers are increasingly confronted with the very real limitations of what managed mental health care, psychopharmacology and cognitive-behavioral treatment can provide, existential psychotherapy is enjoying a recent renaissance.

While existential psychotherapy is commonly seen as synonymous with the brooding, dark, despairing, nihilistic, atheistic intonations of European existentialism, it is crucial to differentiate the two: Existentialism is a philosophical movement, whereas existential psychotherapy is a psychological treatment. Existential psychotherapy was never intended to be a specific school unto itself, but rather a pragmatic, humanistic, holistic, corrective orientation to psychotherapy in general. “Existentialism,” explains Rollo May (1986), “is not a comprehensive philosophy or way of life, but an endeavor to grasp reality” (p. 59). The existential movement in psychiatry and psychology arose as a reaction against the reductionism, determinism, dogmatism and hyperrationalism of both psychoanalysis and behaviorism. As May (1986) indicates, whenever you perceive a person merely as a particular diagnostic disorder, biochemical imbalance, genetic predisposition or “as a composite of drives and deterministic forces, you have defined for study everything *except the one to whom these experiences happen*, everything except the existing person himself” (p. 25).

The objective and subjective revelation of one’s own existence, the “I am” experience or sense of self, is an integral part of the process of existential psychotherapy.

While the techniques of existential psychotherapy can include Freudian, Jungian, Gestalt, cognitive, behavioral or other methods, the fundamental technique shared by all existential therapists is *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is based predominantly on the philosophical work of Husserl and Heidegger, and refers to the setting aside or bracketing off of preconceptions, interpretations, expectations, bias and rote intervention in an effort to discover the patient’s actual, unadulterated subjective experience, his or her being-in-the-world, existence or *Dasein* (being there). It is through this phenomenological refraining from forcing the patient onto a Procrustean bed of preordained theory or methodology that the true experience of the patient at any given moment can be understood and appropriately responded to by the therapist. In its purest form, “the existential-phenomenological view does not construct any explanatory models but tries to understand situations by exploring the immediate experience [of the patient]” (Cohn, 1999: 43). Dogmatism and doctrine are excluded as much as possible, and the focus of treatment is primarily on the present, the here-and-now, the current circumstance, rather than on past traumatic or other formative influences, as in Freud’s psychoanalysis.

Choice, personal responsibility, integrity of the personality, and authentically facing rather than habitually avoiding existential or ontological anxiety and guilt (which results in what Sartre termed *mauvaise foi* or “bad faith” with oneself) are central features of existential psychotherapy. The existential therapist is not limited to the passive and interpretive role of the psychoanalyst, though such a stance may be taken when called for. But the *courage* and *commitment* to truly and genuinely *encounter* each unique patient is required by the therapist, who must not defensively avoid his or her own anxiety by hiding behind a rigid professional *persona* or distancing screen of therapeutic technique. Carl Jung, who was quite existential in his own approach, acknowledged the inherent mutuality and crucial role of the therapeutic relationship, recognizing that “in effective therapy a change occurs in *both* the therapist and the patient; unless the therapist is open to change the patient will not be either” (cited in May: 22). In existential therapy, the human relationship between patient and therapist takes precedence over technical tricks, and, as now confirmed by research, is the primary healing factor in any psychotherapy.

Existential Depth Psychology

Over the years, there has been a gradual theoretical trifurcation in the evolution of existential psychotherapy.

Existential and humanistic psychology (sometimes so closely affiliated they become conjoined as “existential-humanistic”) developed simultaneously in America, under the influence of Maslow, Rogers, and May among others. Both humanistic and existential psychology object to the dehumanizing application of the psychiatric medical model in the diagnosis and treatment of so-called mental disorders, proposing a less mechanistic, biological and deterministic, more positive, humanistic paradigm for personal growth and psychotherapy. But Rollo May’s own philosophical world-view and depth-psychologically informed psychotherapy differed fundamentally from the anti-psychoanalytic, overly optimistic, perhaps even *pseudoinnocent* or naïve “human potential” crusade embodied by Carl Rogers, and, as an extension of European “existential analysis” and Sartre’s *Existential Psychoanalysis*, is best described as an *existential depth psychology*.

Otto Rank, a close disciple of Freud and one of the seminal figures in the development of existential depth psychology, “accepted the categories of Freud, Jung, and Adler – mechanisms, patterns, and types – but found them useful only up to a point, after which they impeded therapy and even theory” (Lieberman, cited in Diamond, 1987: 10). “Depth psychology” (*Tiefenpsychologie*) addresses the phenomenology of the “unconscious,” the “not known” contents of the psyche. Existential and depth psychology seem antithetical and incompatible to some (especially certain members of the Society for Existential Analysis in London, a third tributary led by Emmy van Deurzen-Smith, Ernesto Spinelli, and the late Hans Cohn, who practice a purist version of “philosophical counseling” or “clinical philosophy”), but are reconciled as complementary in existential depth psychology. The Freudian notion of the unconscious is eschewed and rejected outright by many existentialists as a fragmenting, reified doctrine that diminishes integrity of the personality, free will and personal responsibility inimical to existential therapy. However, while fully aware of these theoretical and practical difficulties, existential depth psychology appreciates the necessity of acknowledging the phenomena of repression and unconsciousness. Therefore, the phenomenological fact of the unconscious is retained in modified form by American practitioners of existential depth psychology such as May, Bugental, Yalom, Perls, Schneider, and Diamond.

For Rollo May, the unconscious is existentially redefined as “those potentialities for knowing and experiencing which the individual cannot or will not actualize” (1983: 18). Moreover, May, unlike Rogers and others in the humanistic movement, held that “constructiveness and destructiveness have the same source in human personality. The source is simply *human potential*”

(in Diamond, 1996: xxi). This conception of human potentiality as a double-edged sword informs May’s controversial theory of the *daimonic*: his phenomenological modification of the unconscious, similar though not identical to Freud’s “id” (see *id*) or Jung’s “shadow,” and eminently useful for comprehending the human potentiality for psychopathology, destructiveness, spirituality and creativity (see Diamond, 1996). The daimonic, as May (1969) defines it, “is *any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person*. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 65). In existential depth psychology, the daimonic is an existential reality, the dynamic ground of existence, the indivisible source of vital, psychobiological energy or power. When chronically repressed, the daimonic becomes pathological, but when properly related to, can contain valuable positive potentialities. Existential depth psychology embraces May’s model of the daimonic, encouraging its constructive integration into consciousness, *but never to the point of dogmatism*, and is not “defined by duration of treatment, technique or frequency of sessions *but rather by the degree to which it directly addresses the daimonic and the various other existential elements of life*” (Diamond, 1996: 219).

As May, who was a Protestant pastor prior to becoming a psychologist explains, “I do not believe in toning down the daimonic. This gives a sense of false comfort. The real comfort can come only in the relationship of the therapist and the client or patient” (in Diamond, 1996: xxii). Indeed, “it is only by moving through this suffering consciously, willingly, and developing a more philosophical or spiritual stance toward it, that patients approximate anything close to a ‘cure’ in psychotherapy” (Diamond in Hoffman et al., 2005: 197).

Nihilism, Anxiety and Spirituality

Spirituality entails the capacity to see life as it is – wholly, including the existential realities of evil, suffering, anxiety, and the daimonic – and to love life nonetheless. This *amor fati*, as Friedrich Nietzsche phrased it, is a spiritual achievement of the highest magnitude” (Diamond in Hoffman et al., 2005: 197). It is in this regard, and in some of the striking parallels between phenomenology, Taoism, Hinduism and Zen Buddhism, that existential depth psychology can be correctly called a secular spiritual treatment for the postmodern *condition humaine*. While not inherently a religious approach, and indeed in some ways anti-religious, existential psychotherapy addresses many of the basic questions and problems that concern

traditional religions of all kinds: death, meaninglessness, loneliness, loss, suffering, imperfection, finitude, insecurity, anxiety, guilt, freedom, responsibility, evil, etc. These are the bare existential facts of life, what existential theologian Paul Tillich called “ultimate concerns.” *Nihilism* – the rejection of religion, spirituality, meaning, purpose and value in life due in part to the presumed negating finality of death – is often associated with existentialism. Yet, nihilism is clearly neither the goal nor intended consequence of existential psychotherapy, but on the contrary, its starting point.

Equally important to the practice of existential therapy in general is the phenomenon of anxiety, in both its normal or ontological and neurotic or pathological aspects. Kierkegaard (1844) called anxiety “the dizziness of freedom” that inevitably accompanies recognizing our human potentiality and responsibility. Following Kierkegaard and Tillich, May defines anxiety as the “*experience of Being affirming itself against Nonbeing*” (1977: xxi), positing that when we chronically avoid existential anxiety it only becomes more neurotic, destructive and debilitating. In existential psychotherapy, neurotic anxiety is a pathological product of normal anxiety, and both are utilized in the therapeutic process rather than merely suppressed psychopharmacologically or otherwise. To a significant extent, existential psychotherapy is the psycho-philosophical treatment of postmodern nihilism, anxiety and existential crisis, manifesting as depression, stress, addiction, anger, rage, and other all-too-ubiquitous symptomatology. Viktor Frankl’s idea of neurosis resulting from an “existential vacuum” which human nature abhors due to a deeply rooted “will to meaning” is extremely relevant here. Fulfilling the will to meaning is one way of counteracting nihilism: “Meaning – given, found or created – enables one to love life and live it. We create meaning because we cannot exist without it” (Lieberman, cited in Diamond, 1987: 2). Thus, the stress on the sense of *meaning* and *purpose* in existential therapy.

Creativity, Courage and Acceptance

Creativity can be another antidote to the toxicity of nihilism, and provides a constructive channeling of anxiety. Hence, the purposeful focus in existential psychotherapy on creativity and the creative process: the creation of meaning, the creation of art, and the creation of self. The existential spotlight on “will” as central to the creation of self and a constructive, meaningful life was pre-figured by Rank, who held in his notion of the *artiste manqué*, that “the individual creates his own personality by creative willing, and that neurosis is due precisely to the fact that the patient cannot will constructively”

(May, cited in Diamond, 1987: 2). And, whether or not one agrees with Yalom’s (1980: 482) premise that “meaning, like pleasure, must be pursued obliquely,” his strong accent on *engagement*, encouraging the patient’s commitment to and investment in life, is well taken: “Engagement is the therapeutic answer to meaninglessness regardless of the latter’s source” (1980: 482).

Finally, existential therapy encourages the patient’s heroic acceptance of life’s inevitable anxiety, suffering, and death’s inexorable reality. “Courage,” writes Paul Tillich, “is the power of life to affirm itself in spite of. . . [its daimonic] ambiguity, while the negation of life because of its negativity is an expression of cowardice” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 309). Freud’s own existential (but not formally religious) attitude can be seen in his misunderstood, seemingly cynical, pessimistic comment that the goal of psychoanalysis is to transform neurotic misery into common unhappiness: like death, some suffering in life is existential, ontological and inescapable. “Nowhere in religious. . . [symbolism] is this spiritual principle of accepting life’s suffering and acceding to one’s divine destiny more dramatically, movingly and elegantly illustrated than in the Crucifixion” (Diamond in Hoffman et al., 2005: 199). But, with or without religious faith, one can still freely choose the attitude taken toward such stark existential facts, a “willing affirmation of the must” to employ Rank’s felicitous phrase, which is itself a type of spiritual transcendence. “It is,” says Tillich (1952), “the happiness of a soul. . . ‘lifted above every circumstance’” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 292). Paradoxically, along with the courageous affirmation of existence and its vicissitudes, including anxiety, alienation, insecurity, suffering, finitude, meaninglessness and the mystery of death, comes a deeper appreciation of life, a fuller capacity to care, feel and love, and a heightened sensitivity to joy and beauty.

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See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Anxiety](#) [Daimonic](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Existentialism](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Id](#) [Persona](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#) [Rank, Otto](#) [Repression](#) [Rogers, Carl](#) [Shadow](#) [Unconscious](#)

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earlier to Sumerian mythology, Judaic Wisdom literature, and early Greek philosophy. Existentialism arose and continues to address and challenge dualisms, abstract and mechanical ways of addressing human concerns, as it focuses on agency, accountability, and the discovery and/or creation of meaning. Although many histories have been written about existentialism, in this essay I will focus on the religiosity inherent in the tradition that extends beyond the typical differentiation between theistic and atheistic existentialism. I argue that even within atheistic existentialism lies the religious question as disclosed in the dance of nihilism and meaning.

Søren Kierkegaard proposed the rallying flag for existentialism with his pronouncement and commentary on truth as what is experienced, not systematically thought out, when living subjectively in the world. Addressing the experience distant abstraction of Hegelian systemics, as well as the institution of the church, Kierkegaard called for more authentic accountability for one's beliefs and comportment in everyday existence. What matters, for Kierkegaard, is the lived experience of individuals in their lived situations, rather than any presumptions about life discerned through abstract objectivity, particularly those of rationalism, empiricism, and/or speculative metaphysics.

These themes were furthered by existentialists too numerous to cover completely. One of the difficulties presented to any researcher in this field is that existentialism is notoriously slippery when one tries to define it as a movement. Walter Kaufmann, perhaps the most well-known commentator on existentialism, aptly noted that by definition existentialist resist collapsing or subsuming uniqueness into generic systems of creeds and other cannons of civility (Kaufmann, 1975).

Kierkegaard (1813–1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and others warned against the fade into an undefined existence, co-opted by the crowd, the “herd,” or the “They.” One escapes to the crowd to avoid facing the call of existence to define oneself, to “stand out” in Heidegger's language. Standing out in existence includes face to face encounters with dread, boredom alienation, the absurd, nothingness, as well as freedom and commitment. Through such encounters one comes to understand the significance of one's life, not an easy task, and either accepts or rejects calls to more meaningful and fulfilling relationships and projects in life. Life is meaningful as we live it out. We do not first find meaning and then decide to live out our lives. Our “essence” is discerned only in our “existence,” as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) noted (1943/2003).

Existentialists are divided among themselves as to the authenticity and legitimacy of belief in God, as well as to

Existentialism

Todd DuBose

Early Foundations

Existentialism began in the early nineteenth century with the writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), though forerunners of existential themes can be traced centuries

what one means by the term, “God.” Theistic existentialists highlight the inevitability of our inherent tendency toward Otherness and understanding of ourselves in our situations in life in light of those encounters. Atheistic existentialists argue that displacement of one’s responsibility onto an external entity in hopes for deliverance from the complexities of contingent existence is a manifestation of moral cowardess.

Existential Approaches to Psychology and Religion

Existential approaches to the field of psychology and religion have attempted various ways of resolving what they see as an unnecessary antagonism between atheism and theism. Paul Tillich (1886–1965), known primarily as a theologian, wrote extensively on the existential condition as well as on the psychotherapeutic care within those conditions (1952; 1957; 1966). Most particularly, Tillich called for our “courage to be” in spite of anxiety or our impending non-Being and call to freedom. Erich Fromm (1900–1980) and Rollo May (1909–1994) furthered these concerns, albeit in different ways (Fromm, 1941; May, 1972). Viktor Frankl (1905–1997) established Logotherapy as a result of his own lived experience within a concentration camp in which he saw how the power of the will to live if there were a reason or person for whom to live. Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) wrote of “boundary situations,” “the Encompassing” and communication almost in a sacramental way. R.D. Laing (1927–1989) brought the insights of existential-phenomenology to humanize modes of psychiatry’s more instrumental qualities. Contemporary existential psychotherapist, Emmy van Deurzen (1998), has written of the *Überwelt*, or the spiritual and encompassing world in which we discern our meaning. One could say that each one of these individuals above addressed the notion of “God” in less than orthodox ways, they all nonetheless saw the centrality of spirituality as essential to a meaningful life, albeit a spirituality that found within existence, rather than as an escape from it.

Commentary

One of the misconceptions to clarify about existentialism is the claim that it is too individualistic. No doubt schizoid ways of being-in-the-world have bolted onto the existential tradition, which is understandable given a central theme of inherent loneliness. When existential thinkers refer to such concepts as subjectivity, loneliness,

“standing out,” and so forth, one must understand these concepts as calls to distinctiveness and ownership of one’s lived, conditioned existence and comportment in the world rather than as statements about physically measured isolation. Subjectivity does not mean an isolated privation of existence, but a committed risk of being “all in” a particular situatedness, exercising agency amid and released by inherent limitations. What truly matters is experienced when taking this stance in relation to others. A true and authentic encounter comes from shared “all-in-ness,” that is nonetheless respective of the incomparable stances taken by communal participants. A call to living a distinctive, differentiated, and accountable life is not an opposition to living a relational life. The existential position is not opposed to the sociology of others, but warns against a qualitative erasure of unique “callings to be” amidst the counter pull to forfeit one’s incommensurability. In fact, we are ontologically relational. Our existence is foremost and forever a “being-with-ness.”

Another issue meriting commentary is the apparent antagonistic relationship between existentialism and religion. The relationship between existentialism and religion is more integrated than one may presume. Certainly the Nietzschean hammer against slave morality, as he saw reinforced by Christian morality, and even the theist Kierkegaard’s attach on Christendom, have led to suspicion of the institutionalization of the spirit.

Theistic or not, however, freedom, transcendence, and meaning are cornerstones of this tradition. In spite of theistic existentialists throughout the history of this philosophical position, this approach to human meaning and significance is seen by some readers of this tradition as carrying an inauthentic and irreconcilable oxymoron. One can point to the broad strand of atheism or emphasis on the human person’s responsibility to create his or her own meaning, so often expressed in existential literature, as cases in point. Yet, theistic and atheistic existentialists would agree that transcendence is not an escape from existence and impossible to accomplish anyway. The project of doing so discloses a “bad faith” (Sartre, 1943/2003), “inauthenticity” (Heidegger, 1962), and foreclosure on accountability for the burden of one’s existence. Nevertheless, the counter challenge has its legitimacy as well: movement into the mystery of otherness, even if paranormal, may be the most challenging Kierkegaardian leap of faith. Not being open to what is beyond our comprehension and control is another form of retreating into anonymity or herding.

I suggest an existential understanding of psychology and spirituality holds possibilities for the field’s deepest foundation and most promising future. As human beings

we are *homo religiosus*, or inherently religious, in which life is transcendence, meaning, purpose, and significance. Doctrinal and creedal statements of belief and ritual practices found in religious traditions are expressions of, or creations of, such experiences of meaning (Gilkey, 1976). The absence of propositional assent to God as an entity need not nullify atheistic intentionality and “aboutness” that motivates movement through situations in one’s daily existence—a secular faith. Moreover, an existential-phenomenological understanding of Otherness is nonetheless still an existential *human* experience. This point grounds an understanding of existentialism as religious. This is an experience that is neither otherworldly nor merely created by the “thrown” person in the situation; we find ourselves in situations partly due to our agency and mostly a convergence of an infinite number of decisions and compartments beyond our control (van den Berg). Furthermore, emphasizing otherness as the context of meaning, and relationship as the necessity of self-understanding incarnates Otherness within existence. An existential-phenomenological understanding of religious experience as encounters with Otherness from situated stances testifies to the radical immanence of transcendence (Driver, 1985). Transcendence, then, occurs with each possibility of transformation within the graced limitations of our co-existence.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Faith](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Heidegger, Martin](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [Laing, Ronald David](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#) [Transcendence](#)

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Exodus

Ingeborg del Rosario

The Exodus is the second book of the Jewish Torah and of the Old Testament of Christian Scriptures. From the Greek word *exodo*, which means “a road out,” the Exodus refers to the journey of the Israelites who were led out of Egypt by Moses after many years of oppression and slavery. While rooted in historical events, the Exodus story is primarily a foundational faith experience, the core memory upon which the spiritual identity of the people of God is formed. Crucial to this testament of faith are the experience of a living, liberating God who hears and answers the cry of the poor, enslaved and oppressed, and the faith commitment of a people who live in remembrance of the divine redemptive activity.

The story of Exodus as a journey of moving away from enslavement and oppression into greater freedom and fullness of life also provides a template and guiding narrative for the individual in the continuing process of a search for identity and authenticity of self, wholeness and integrity, healing and transformation. The beginning of the journey is marked by the recognition of the magnitude of suffering, the coming to consciousness of the intolerability of the anguish and agony of enslavement,

the deep longing for an end to its ruthlessness and devastation. In the *Book of Exodus*, the story of divine activity begins with the cry of the Israelites, who “groaned under their slavery and cried out” (Exodus 2:23) and of the divine response, God who “remembered . . . looked upon . . . and took notice of the Israelites” (2:25). The experience of enslavement can be external in nature, of an economic, political, social or cultural dimension. Enslavement can also be internal, intra-psychic and relational in nature. Depression and anxiety can enslave. Inadequate developmental environments and neglectful or erratic attachment dynamics in childhood can create psychological impoverishment and hardship in adult life and relationships. Trauma and abuse can grossly impede freedom of self-attunement and quality of engagement with others. Individuals can live many years without a conscious awareness of their being constricted by significant formative experiences in the past. They are unfree, estranged and alienated from a sense of their true self, reacting from the protective defenses of the false self, relating consistently from a place of pain, an internal space of emotional vulnerability, psychic distress and spiritual emptiness. The process of beginning the exodus journey of self-transformation involves the emergence of this pain and distress into consciousness, the “groaning and crying out” that expresses an overwhelming longing to be freed from this enslavement, thus signaling the genesis of a commitment to the process of inner change and liberation.

The process of moving towards freedom, authenticity and transformation will naturally meet internal resistance, especially after years of having lived with restrictive yet familiar dynamics and behavior patterns. The Israelites, after leaving Egypt and wandering through the wilderness, expressed this longing for the familiar ways of enslavement. When faced with fear and anxiety that accompanied the unknown, they complained to Moses: “What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (14:11–12). Relational ways are long-standing, habitual and familiar. Even if they have become maladaptive and self-damaging, they had provided a sense of security and comfort. New ways of perceiving, feeling and doing involve venturing into a space of uncertainty. While health sustaining and life nurturing, these ways may paradoxically feel frightening and disorienting, seemingly overwhelming and out of control. The desire for newness and freedom can meet repeatedly with the yearning for the old and familiar. The pull to authenticity and health can

oscillate with the wish to return to what is accustomed and habitual.

While the process towards freedom and wholeness involves ongoing inner work and effort towards engaging newness, it also presumes the need for active waiting that allows healing to happen. The words of Moses to the Israelites respond to their fear and anxiety around the demands of the exodus journey: “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still” (14:14). The exodus journey calls for determined movement and committed effort towards greater freedom and authenticity of self. At the same time, the exodus journey necessitates the capacity for steadfast and quiet presence, the strength of reflective stillness that enables insight to be internalized, change to be metabolized, and self-transformation to take root. The process of healing from inner enslavement and oppression to authentic freedom and liberation of self happens with both movement and stillness, the dual dynamic of active and passive strength that both enables change and trusts the healing process to evolve, allowing transformation to happen in oneself.

The Exodus story teaches that the journey out of enslavement into freedom does not happen with immediacy. Traumatic wounding is multi-dimensional and extensive. The movement from psychic oppression and constriction takes the gentle respectfulness of time and patient hopefulness in the promise and imminence of newness and liberation. This process of healing from brokenness towards living from a space of authenticity and coming to a firmer sense of self-identity and fulfillment unfolds over one’s years. The Israelites, freed from slavery in Egypt travelled for forty years, wandering in the wilderness and sojourning to the land promised them. Their evolution of spiritual and communitarian identity as a people began with the liberation from slavery. Its shaping, consolidation and development continued over time.

As the myriad challenges of journeying with hope towards wholeness and freedom are faced, the role of remembrance is essential. The story of Exodus began with the Israelites crying out to God who remembered the covenant and heard their cry. With their liberation from Egypt, their spiritual identity as God’s people is grounded in their remembrance of this saving act. The commandment and laws of the covenant have their wellspring in this redeeming memory: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me” (20:1–2). The act of forgetting, of denying this

foundational experience, creates internal fragmentation and spiritual disconnection from the space of self-authenticity and identity. When the Israelites did not remember their redemptive experience and their liberation by God from slavery in Egypt, they fashioned a golden calf (Exodus 32). Remembering the experience of redemption keeps alive hope and enduring trust that one's cry will not go unheard, that the suffering from one's past will not eradicate the promise of change and newness in the future. Forgetting brings a loss of trust in and connection to one's self and the consequent despair when journeying through the demands and challenges of life. Remaining connected to the integrity of the true self and holding on to the belief that healing into life and authentic relationship are possible, in spite of the bondage of internal oppression and psychic enslavement, is the contemporary psychological echo of the redemptive memory that is the heart of the Exodus story, the pulse and energy that fuels the human journey to freedom of life.

See also: [🔗 Trauma](#)

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Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP)

C. Harry Hui

Extra-sensory perception refers to the alleged processes of precognition, telepathy, and clairvoyance that take place via channels other than the sensory system that biologists and psychologists have been researching with scientific means. Precognition is knowledge of future events obtained not through logical reasoning but through dreams or other psychical awareness. Telepathy is the sending and receiving of message over a distance, through

nonphysical means. Clairvoyance is the perception of an object that is out of normal sight. Some records exist of people who have such experience of anomalous information transfer. Goulding and Parker (2001) claim that 25–45% of the western population may report some form of ESP or other paranormal experiences.

Some clinical psychologists regard such experiences as delusion, and therefore associate them with mental disorder, while the more new-age oriented psychologists do not agree with this correlation (Targ, Schlitz, and Irwin, 2000). Besides the psychopathological explanation, some cognitively-oriented experimental psychologists attribute the experience to the experient's cognitive bias or defective probabilistic reasoning. Biological psychologists, on the other hand, search for brain dysfunctions. Needless to say, the ESP experience can also be veridical.

Besides anecdotal evidence reported in the popular press, empirical evidence of the phenomenon are being gathered in more rigorously controlled conditions (Bem and Honorton, 1994). Using the “ganzfeld procedure,” the researchers shielded participants from visual and auditory stimuli. They then asked some to “send” to others one of four images, which was correctly received about one-third of the times. Bem and Honorton (1994) regarded this as better than chance, which is 25%. However, a more recent meta-analysis that included additional studies suggests that the effects are small or statistically nonsignificant (Milton and Wiseman, 1999).

Déjà vu experience is sometimes included in the class of ESP. This strange sense of familiarity with a place or event apparently new to a person (“been there before”) is regarded by some as evidence that people have previous lives before the present one (an idea that originated from eastern religious beliefs in reincarnation). According to some psychologists, this phenomenon can be explained naturalistically. Brown (2004) listed at least 34 psychological explanations that are rested on neither parapsychological nor psychodynamic presuppositions. These explanations include subliminal exposure (in which a person had actually been there before, but was never made aware of that) and differential neural transmission (in which there is a slight separation between two messages of the event received through two channels).

Besides investigating ESP in its own right, some researchers are interested in measuring people's belief in ESP. Paper-and-pencil instruments have been developed (see, e.g., Goulding and Parker, 2001; Tobacyk and Milford, 1983). We do not, however, know much about how belief in ESP might correlate with other psychological constructs. Future research may examine Myers' (2006) suggestion that the belief in ESP despite the lack

of evidence could be due to flawed processing of information and a hunger for wonderment.

See also: [Delusion](#)

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Extraversion

Adele Tyler

A psychological term formulated by Carl Jung in his book *Psychological Types* to describe the flow of psychic energy

toward the outer world of people and things or “object.” The word extraversion comes from the Latin words *extra* and *vertere*, meaning to turn outward. Jung theorized extraversion and its’ opposite, introversion, as two fundamental, innate, and equally valid attitudes of people toward the outer world. Extraversion and introversion describe theoretical polarities on a continuum, with all persons using some degree of both attitudes in reality. Jung defined extraversion as a movement of psychic energy, or libido, outward from the subject to the object, with one’s energy and interest being drawn as if by magnetic force from oneself to the outside world. People with a preference for extraversion both use and renew their energy by focusing outward and can feel drained by too much time alone or in reflection. Some general characteristics of an extraverted attitude include talkativeness; speaking quickly and with confidence; being demonstrative, expressive, and gregarious; and a tendency toward boredom and distraction. Extraverted forms of religious expression seek God in communion with other people through practices of group worship, oral teaching and study of the spoken word, discussion of religious concepts, and acts of service. Extraversion, like introversion, offers both gifts and challenges, and self-awareness of one’s preferred attitude can enable a person to function more in accordance with his nature and better achieve his potential.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychological Types](#)

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F

Faith

Philip Browning Helsel

Faith, *fides* in Latin and *pistis* in Greek, can be understood within a spectrum ranging from the content of a particular set of beliefs to the act of trust, usually in a particular community, doctrine, or deity. In fundamentalist religions, the understanding of faith leans toward an emphasis on the content of belief, especially one's assent to a certain set of *beliefs*. In these contexts, faith has a noetic quality and is fixed within boundaries to define what is inside or outside its scope. To assent to the appropriate propositions of religion means to have faith, and to be outside these limits is to be unfaithful (or an "infidel," a term which derives from the Latin root of *fides*).

On the other side of the spectrum, faith is simply characterized as synonymous with trust, an attitude of believing, and thus refers more to the act of trusting than to the specific content of one's beliefs. Within this pragmatic emphasis, the psychological effects of comfort and release from anxiety and insecurity seem to be highlighted, even to the extreme of a marked absence of noetic content.

Most expressions of faith seem to exist in the middle, including an act of trust, with the corollary of the promise of hope, and some particular content in which one's trust is placed (i.e., Deity, religious community, and sacred text). For both religion and spirituality, faith seems to have some particular, specific content that is reflected in the trust of believers. In Buddhism, the believer takes the "refuges", stating that "I take refuge in the Buddha, the *dharma* (Buddhist teaching), and the *sangha* (the community of monastics)." This tri-fold affirmation of faith points to the importance of the divine figure, the doctrine, and the community as the component location of spiritual strength and protection. In this affirmation, the individual/community dichotomy is addressed, in that the individual makes the affirmation of faith, placing trust in that tradition, in the midst of the tradition and in continuity with it.

Commentary

Freud explained belief in a Deity as meeting the needs for a projected father-figure, in service to cultural ideals of control and manipulation (Freud, 1928/1961: 21–22; Freud, 1957). Freud was critical of the potential for faith to be used as denial, and suggested that the more mature person would face fate (which he personified as the Greek goddess *Ananke*) without recourse to divine escapism (Rizzuto, 1998: 170). Jung more positively identified with faith, but without an emphasis on its social or doctrinal aspects. He understood it primarily in terms of *gnosis* (literally "knowledge"), as directly apprehended spiritual knowledge which the individual encounters and which brings about psychic healing through reconciliation of the opposite poles of one's experience (Melanson, 2002: 168). Object relations theorists modified Freud's theories about projection and understood faith as arising from the liminal space between the mother and child in which the child creates and is grasped by transitional objects.

Perhaps no one used Freud's theories with a more sympathetic eye to faith than Erik H. Erikson, whose developmental theories, formulated from his work with children and based upon a revised Freudian schedule of child development, led him to conclude that basic trust was the result of a positive resolution of the first childhood developmental struggle, between trust and mistrust. He concluded that an adult who had developed basic trust in this first stage would be more likely to have faith than one who did not. Therefore, the early experience of a child set the stage for a positive experience of religious faith in adult life.

Understood as a transformative experiential encounter of the individual, faith had strong significance in William James' influential *Varieties of Religious Experience*. He suggested that persons who were divided, or troubled by psychic conflict, were more likely to experience surrender of oneself to an outside "something MORE" (James, 1902/2007: 441). Faith can be seen, in Jamesian terms, as a resolution of a divided self through self-surrender, and thus a source of contentment and joy.

However, faith often occurs alongside doubt, and it could be suggested that the two belong in a dialectical tension. If these are seen in fruitful tension, faith can often be an expansive, life-giving experience. However, faith can also include a great deal of anxiety, about the potential for continuing in the faith and about being outside the limits of faithfulness. The Protestant Reformation can be seen as a way that this anxiety was addressed historically, with profound cultural and religious implications.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Erikson, Erik](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ James, William](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#)

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Faith Development Theory

Curtis W. Hart

Faith Development Theory: An Overview

Faith Development Theory is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the evolutionary process of the development of religious/spiritual values and behavior in the human life cycle. The articulation of faith development theory began in the 1980's with the work of James Fowler and colleagues and it has found a significant place in theological discourse and in some cases cultural studies as well. Its genesis took place when Fowler was involved in his doctoral studies and was immersed in the work of theologian and ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr. Niebuhr's prototype of a faith development paradigm had in turn

been stimulated by his contact with a portion of the work of Alfred North Whitehead. Fowler's theory is typically taught to theological students and is shared with practicing clergy and interested laypersons as a means of providing a process based understanding of the way that faith changes and transforms in the lives of individuals. Feminists and others have criticized Fowler's theory for its perceived patriarchal bias and its dependence of on an exclusive Christian framework and anthropology. Application of faith development theory arose originally in the analysis of important historical figures and the life narratives of individuals who undertook to describe how their own religious/spiritual perspectives, values, ideals, and ethics had evolved over the course of time. Faith development theory has also been the subject of cross cultural study investigation and comparison as well. It has been of considerable value to religious educators and pastoral supervisors for seminarians both of whom are engaged in offering guidance and promoting insight in matters pertaining to spiritual formation.

Framework of the Theory

The framework of faith development theory is organized along developmental lines and phases. It actively employs Erik Erikson's epigenetic principle, Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and Piaget's theoretical observations regarding cognitive function and development. Briefly stated, the process of faith development must be understood both theoretically and functionally as different form "belief" as that term denotes assent to propositions, traditions, rituals, ways of thinking, and hermeneutical approaches to sacred texts of a more or less consistent and often sectarian character. Faith, according to Fowler and colleagues, is a process that may or may not draw on a number of resources within and outside a tradition. It may have a traditional theistic focus or it may not. Faith development theory may be understood as a highly naturalized concept of revelation that attempts to describe how a person moves through a series of psychospiritual conflicts and challenges needing to be engaged, if not resolved, and sometimes revisited. It is best understood as fluid and organic as it evolves over time in the direction of a non static, though coherent, whole. While not teleological in a formal sense, faith development theory retains a retrospective epistemological methodology that may sometimes uncover patterns and intentions that are at once illuminating and may also be viewed as ontologically significant.

It is important to note that Fowler's theoretical framework has been modified over the years and yet has maintained its essential character. The theory begins with what Fowler calls "undifferentiated faith" that occurs in infancy. It is felt to be a pre-stage in that it is pre-conceptual and largely pre-linguistic. Fowler here relies on Ana Maria Rizzuto's description of the way self knowing first experienced in infancy shapes the information of consciousness and awareness of the other. Its conceptual value lies in its locating the basis of mutuality, strength, autonomy, and hope or their opposites that underline or undermine what takes place later on in the life cycle. It mirrors Erikson's understanding of *basic trust* and Winnicott's notion of *transitional space*. Stage 1 in the faith development paradigm is called Intuitive-Projective faith (ages 3–7) and is a fantasy-filled period whose emergent strength has to do with imagination. Stage 2, Mythic Literal Faith, is identified with childhood until adolescence and is the occasion for the enhancement of the child's imagination through story telling. It often demonstrates a tendency toward literalism and a moral sense that sharply divides "good" from "bad." Stage 3 is called Synthetic-Conventional faith and is identified with growth into adolescence. In fact, some individuals may not progress much beyond this point. Here persons form an individual "myth" in self understanding in relation to both self and world. It is understood as a "conformist" phase where a person becomes more or less comfortable and avoids looking critically at their motivations, attitudes, values, and religious/spiritual commitments. Stage 4, Individuative-Reflective faith, describes the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood. Here relationships to others and commitment to vocation become central and there may be a necessary re-evaluation of values and attitudes rooted in the thinking and behavior of adolescence. Perspectives of other traditions on matters of spiritual and ethical significance may likewise become important. Conjunctive faith (stage 5) represents the potentially transitional experience of mid to late adulthood where one reviews, reworks, and rediscovers one's past. There may emerge, according to Fowler, what the philosopher Paul Ricoeur calls a "second naivete" which requires a fresh look at symbols and stories formed during earlier periods of life. It is highlighted by an opening to the voices of a deeper self. This review and reworking of symbolic meanings and commitments resembles some of what William James meant by one's becoming "twice born." It results in a willingness to expend oneself in actions and relationships that embody the ethical norm of "respect for persons" and in an overarching responsibility in the caring for others. The last phase is what

Fowler calls "universalizing faith" (stage 6) and it is extremely rare. Persons who reach this stage become "universalizers" of ideas and movements that come to have lives of their own. "Universalizers" become persons endowed with a "special grace" that makes them even more revered once they have died or passed from the world scene. And they often die or are eliminated by those they most wish to save or help. Their number might include such persons as Malcolm X, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Martin Luther King.

Conclusion

Even though faith development theory is transparently psychological, it remains possible to connect Fowler's stages to religious/spiritual terms, ideas, symbols, texts, and historical figures outside the boundaries of its Protestant and Christian origins. The challenge to faith development theory is to help persons from a wide variety of backgrounds and traditions make these connections. The theory is both pragmatic as a tool or "map" though the life cycle even as much as it is a methodological and theoretical challenge to more traditional and academic theological anthropologies.

See also: [Erikson, Erik](#) [Faith](#) [James, William](#) [Revelation](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Fall, The

Jill L. McNish

Orthodox View

The term given to the mythical event described in Genesis 3:1–24 in which God cast Adam and Eve out of the paradisaical Garden of Eden because they had disobeyed God in eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In casting Adam and Eve out, God said that

in so eating the forbidden fruit, humankind had become “like one of us, knowing good and evil.” Although God had told the primal couple that if they ate the forbidden fruit they would die, instead God banished them from the Garden of Eden declaring that thenceforth Adam would have to work hard to produce food from the earth and Eve would be subservient to her husband and undergo great pain in producing offspring. The orthodox Augustinian interpretation of this event is that Adam and Eve’s condition in the Garden of Eden was one of paradisaic perfection but that their rebellion against God led to a separation from God and hence a “fall” into sin, pain, and death. This theology understands the present reality of sin, evil, suffering and death as flowing from this first dramatic rebellion – the exercise of the first humans’ God-given “free will” in disobedience of God. In a related line of thought, Augustine also developed the theology of Original Sin, contending that sin was transmitted from generation to generation through the act of procreation, beginning with Adam and Eve. It is often contended that Paul’s writings (Romans, 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians, 15:21–22) lend scriptural support to Augustine’s understanding of the fall of humankind.

Feminist Reframing

Because Eve was first tempted by a serpent to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with Adam eating the fruit only after Eve had already done so and offered it to him, ancient Christian fathers blamed Eve – the first woman – for original sin and hence all evil, sin, suffering and death since the Fall. This reading of Genesis 3:1–24 has been zealously contested by contemporary feminist theologians who contend that this is a misogynist reading of the story of the primal couple. Rosemary Ruether lambasts Augustinian theology of the Fall and Original Sin as “patriarchal anthropology” (Ruether, 1993: 94–99). Reframing the story of Adam and Eve has sometimes led to an understanding of Eve’s action in eating the fruit as being a sign of creativity, curiosity, and initiative and the beginning of culture (see generally Susan Niditch, 1992: 14 or Mary Daly, 1973: 44–68).

Other Views

Although the orthodox theology of the Fall and original sin have descended from Augustine through Aquinas to Catholicism and into Protestant orthodoxy, there have

been many other detractors and alternate lines of thought. For example, Irenaeus, the second century Bishop of Lyons (c. 130–202) saw Adam and Eve not as perfect beings who “fell” into sin, but rather as imperfect, immature creatures who were at the very beginning stages of a long process of moral development which would eventually be brought to perfection by God. This approach was later developed by the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher who believed in a progressive development of God-consciousness in humankind from a mere potentiality to a reality in the future. A prominent contemporary proponent of this line of thinking is John Hick (1977), who contends that humankind, “created as a personal being in the image of God, is only the raw material for a further and more difficult stage of God’s creative work. . . . God’s purpose for [humankind] is to lead [it] from human *Bios*, or the biological life of [humankind], to that quality of *Zoe*, or the personal life of eternal worth, which we see in Christ. . . .” (pp. 256–257).

Paul Tillich saw the mythical eating of the fruit by the primal couple as the end of “dreaming innocence.” Prior to the Fall, he contended, “freedom and destiny are in harmony, but neither of them is actualized” (Tillich, 1957: 35).

Psychological Perspectives

Harold Ellens points to the array of Freudian symbols in the story of the Fall: “the serpent, virgin, flaming sword, nakedness, anxiety, shame, the phallic deity, and the initially nonphallic humans.” However, Ellens’ primary interest is in the use of developmental models of Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson and Fowler to understand the story of the Fall as paradigmatic of “human growth from the childlikeness of Eden to mature kingdom building and cultural responsibility. In that growth process, the story plays the role that has equivalents in the human growth process of birth and adolescent disengagement from parents, both inherently healthy processes, and the subsequent independent adulthood” (Ellens, 2004: 32).

Another line of thinking regarding the mythical significance of the Fall is that the mythic episode of Genesis 3:14–24 represents the developing human animal’s first experience of the *shame* affect which, through the process of evolution, became part of humankind’s hardware script (McNish, 2004).

See also: [Adam and Eve](#) [Augustine](#) [Erikson](#), [Erik](#) [Evil](#) [Freud](#), [Sigmund](#) [Myth](#) [Original Sin](#) [Shame and Guilt](#)

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Fate

Todd DuBose

The concept of fate is as old as there is recorded literature about human interactions with the gods, crossing multi-disciplinary boundaries. Whether natural phenomenon is anthropomorphized as shapers of life directions, or belief in supernatural providence as an explanation for wonders and woes, the experience of how one's life unfolds and of who or what (if anyone or anything) orchestrates it must certainly rank as the most primary of questions for human beings across history and culture. Embedded in any account of fate, Homeric, Shakespearean, sacred literature, or otherwise, is an accompanying declaration or puzzlement about fate's relationship to choice, agency, and freedom (Anonymous, 2150 BCE/1960; Eliade, 1959; Homer, 600 BCE/1999; Shakespeare, 1623/1937). Moreover, fate is usually discussed with a melancholic intonation signifying the limitations of averting tragedy, perhaps a hasty conclusion that could overlook liberating factors that ease the burden of existence when fated in the world.

Fate was originally understood as the pronouncements of the gods about how one's existence was to proceed. Along with this preordination of task and vocation came a melancholic resignation believing that fate equaled doom. Fate was either discerned through premonition, such as in dreams, or was an interpretation of one's life offered retrospectively, the latter process, of course, establishing a frame of reference for understanding future projections of existence.

There are several important points to explore about fate that are central to the field of psychology and religion. Some of these points of discussion include the place of freedom in fate, the possibilities of alternative views of fate other than despair over impending doom, and the relationship of ancient understandings of fate to more contemporary expressions of fate. The latter issue necessitates addressing whether or not existence is fated by macrosystemic, biochemical, or genetic determinants: our postmodern pantheon of gods.

An original pondering on whether or not we have freedom in the face of fate is what the ancient world considered as the "idle argument" in relation to illness and remedy. One can seek the care of a physician by choice, but if one recovers or not, the seeking of the physician is irrelevant. Recovery or illness is fated, no matter what one does in response to it. The same conundrum can be found in various theological positions related to predestination and providence, and in how one views developmental theory. Are events the result of random chance or are they predetermined? Are they *absolutely* determined, even if one's development includes tragedy and suffering, and, if so, what would this imply about the gods? Is development, and the place of divine – read as Otherness in various ways – intervention in that development a compromise between moderate determinism and free will?

These are ancient questions. Wisdom literature, Homeric literature, the Muslim will of Allah, Shiva's dance or Vishnu's Maya, ever present and directing God, and the will of God the Father are only a small list of fateful descriptions that include wrestling with what seems to be fated. Struggling with what seems to be fated presupposes, as disclosed by the struggle itself, that one can argue with God, disobey the gods, or accept one's fate. The latter advice is what came to be known as *amor fati*, or the admonition to love one's fate. Acceptance, though, is a choice, even if the aftermath of one's choice is inevitable or not. Fate, though, need not be explained as the effects of historical causality, and, instead, can be described as the factual givens of our "throwness" in any given situation, to use Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) language (1962). Our existential givens as human beings situate us in each moment of our lives.

One may think that since the rise of scientism and logical positivism, and thus, the jettisoning of imaginal worlds populated by the gods as dictators of our daily happenings, we must be rid of external controls of freedom. On the contrary, causal displacement continues in full force. We are who we are as a result of: our neurochemistry, our familial upbringing, our social

construction, our unconscious, among other unmoved movers and newer gods in our present situation. Moreover, there are fated aspects of choice itself. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) speaks of the condemnation to choose and the inescapability of deciding (1943/2003). Martin Heidegger (1962) wrote of the omnipresence of the call of conscience and the necessity of response, even if the response is an inauthentic privation of our projected being-in-the-world. Most importantly, for Heidegger, we are fated to die, which paradoxically invites a choice to live more fully. Life becomes full in our embrace of our situatedness.

It is paradoxical indeed when that which is given brings forth one's ownmost possibilities. Hence, despair need not be the only attunement to one's limitations and doom need not be the only outcome. Situatedness relieves us of our aspirations to be as the gods, which may be where most of the frustration lays for those whose like in kind projects are frustrated by fate. Even the gods fated to be as gods struggled with wishes for "more than" what was available to their situation. The irony, then, is that perhaps the most fated aspect of our lives is the inescapability of our freedom.

Resoluteness, for Heidegger (1962), is a comportment of agency within fated throwness. Yet, fate, from this perspective, is not a causally driven phenomenon. It is created in my very resoluteness. I commit with openness, thus authentically embracing my historicity. We are fated by our thrown situations in history, but we are also "fating" in our decisive and authentic commitments to and Sartre allegiances with our given existentials as human beings. This kind of *fait accompli* is not merely an acknowledgment of where I find myself as a recipient of throwness, but also as one called to respond, and thus, historicize ones accomplishments. To be fated is to be historical, and to be fating is to be free and able to own our ownmost possibilities amidst our limitations as well as to co-create our situatedness through our resoluteness.

Commentary

The central aspect of discussions about fate related to the field of psychology and religion rests on the ancient understanding and critical redaction of how fate is a quality of relationship between the gods and humankind. Misunderstanding the meaning of being in this mythology and reducing these interactions to bicameral mindedness, as Julian Jaynes (1920–1997) (1976/2000) saw it, has not ceased politics with the gods – now understood as any external force that is presumed to determine one's destiny:

neurology and macro-systemic influences being the two most prominent gods today. We now know of the plasticity of the brain and that its dendritic branching re-wires itself throughout our lives, particularly in dialogue with how we make sense of situations. As much as we find ourselves fated by existential givens, we can also create fate that is not there, as when we disown accountability for our moment to moment decisions in co-construction of our various situations. Liberation from oppression would not occur at all without the capacity to descend, overthrown, or cease participation in hegemonic patterning.

Therapeutic responses to fatalism need not find themselves pinned between the false dilemma of free will versus determinism. Theologically, those in therapy speak of providential intervention in their lives, and most often not explicitly using that word. Instead, we hear statements signifying varying degrees of providential influence with comments such as, "there is a reason for everything," or "why did it have to happen this way, and why me?," or "this is simply not fair," and finally, "It's all my fault." We are still talking with the gods. When all is said and done, however, we are recipients of fate as much as we shape it. One could say that fate is surely co-constructed, even in each novel occasion's invitation to create life as Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) would put it (1929/1979). Moreover, there are more available responses to us regarding our situatedness and historicity than hopeless resignation to impending tragedy, an interpretation made by our ancient predecessors to retrospectively make sense of traumatic experience. Even in the worst of traumatic experiences we still have the burden or beauty to respond, and in doing so we find ourselves phenomenologically – though paradoxically – fated with freedom.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Father

Philip Browning Helsel

Ancient Significance

Symbols of male and female parentage have been connected with the structure of the universe in religious and mythical imagination. In the understanding of many ancient cosmologies, the sky is seen as the father and the earth the mother, corresponding to the impregnation of the ground with rain, and the earth's generative capacities in producing plants (Jackson, 1983: 88). In other ancient mythologies, the sun represents the male figure, while the moon represents the female (Jung and Kerényi, 1949: 130). This identification of the terrestrial and heavenly forces with parental figures shows the importance of the original imprint of the parent upon the psyche of the culture.

However, the influence of the father has also come under close scrutiny. In discussions of pre-historical understandings of parenting, the debate has centered on questions about the father's role in procreation. On the one hand, some scholars suggest that the father had no understanding of his role in the conception of children, and women were seen as having mythical powers which sustained humanity, and that "man's part in this process was not as yet recognized" (Stone, 1976: 11). Such a perspective is reflected in the Christian narrative about the birth of Jesus, in which the ostensible human father plays no procreative role. On the other hand, some scholars insist that the lack of understanding about biology in

ancient times lent itself to the interpretation that men were the sole progenitors of children, women being simply receptacles for the man's creative powers (Morton, 1985: 35–36). This interpretation is reflected in Zeus' conception of Athena from out of his head, or the birth of Aphrodite from a severed phallus. As speculative as these debates have been, they reflect the ambivalence surrounding the relationship of the male parent to his progeny.

The Changing Images of Fathering

In modern times, the father's role in the family has been equally uncertain. Moving away from a unified idea of masculinity, the current period is experiencing flux as traditional patriarchal societies around the world come under challenge (Morgan, 2002: 280–281). The significance of the father has changed with the shifting involvement of fathers with their families and the cultural conditions in which the father interacts with a particular family. Psychology and culture are interrelated, as repeated patterns of fathering have psychological effects that produce sons who father in similar ways (Chodorow, 1978: 36). Nevertheless, significant shifts have also occurred over the last several centuries in how men in the United States father their children (Lamb, 2000: 338).

In the early history of the United States, the father's primary responsibility was "moral oversight and moral teaching," namely, the cultivation of education for the purpose of studying of Scripture (Lamb, 2000: 338). Many Asian cultures continue to retain the image of father as moral guide and authority, with strong meanings associated with fatherhood and obedience (Zhao, 2007: 72, 128). In the United States, this vision of fatherhood changed as industrialization moved fathers out of the home with their primary role becoming that of providing financial support. As many Black American men had to travel long distances to work in northern cities, this created a "father absence" for the sake of this breadwinning role (Lamb, 2000: 338). The 1940s brought a new understanding of fathering which depicted the necessity for fathers to be a "sex-role model, especially for [their] sons" (Lamb, 2000: 338). This interpretation, and the literature which it spawned, highlighted the "presumed or declared inadequacy of many fathers" (Lamb, 2000: 338). Finally, as a result of the feminist movement, there has been a stronger emphasis on the nurturant roles of fatherhood. This has corresponded with more actual involvement of fathers in the lives of their children, especially when both parents work outside of the home (Lamb, 2000: 338–339).

All four of these images of fatherhood continue to play significant and often interchanging roles in the actual practices of fathering. Fathers often feel pressure both from within themselves and from the wider culture to exhibit aspects of these fathering styles that are consistent with cultural expectations of fatherhood.

Psychological Views of Father and Religion

Freud believed “God” reflected the projection of a wished-for father figure, so that “the longing for the father was the root of the need for religion” (Freud, 1927/1961: 28). Freud calls God a “father substitute. . . a copy of the father as he is seen and experienced in childhood,” before one’s ideal image of one’s father is challenged (Freud, 1923/2001: 46). This need for a father-substitute came with a great deal of ambivalence, as can be seen in the mythology that Freud proposes. He suggests that in ancient times the “primal horde” of brothers conspired together and killed the father, and that his power entered a totem animal that was sacrificed and shared so that his power could be distributed to all participants (Freud, 1927/1961: 28–29). In a similar vein, Freud suggested that Moses, as the father figure of the Jewish faith, was actually murdered by the Israelites, and that his invention of monotheism was the great act of religious genius through which the image of the “repressed” primal father who had been killed could again be returned to consciousness (Rizzuto, 1979: 20). This theory was a direct reflection of the oedipal drama, a “competitive sexual and aggressive conflict” in which the boy desires to take the place of the father in the family constellation (Mitchell and Black, 1995: 47). The ambivalence which attended the psychic representation of God the Father required that the “Devil” appear to absorb those qualities of envy and fear which were not adequately addressed in worship of a single God (Rizzuto, 1979: 20).

Freud’s original hypothesis has been revised in a variety of directions by subsequent psychoanalytic thinkers. Most agree that the father becomes represented in the psyche in an important manner which is reflected in the person’s image of the Divine. In one case, David Bakan highlighted the father’s ambivalence about his children, including his fear of being rejected by them, suggesting a hidden theme of infanticide in the book of Job (Bakan, 1968: 110, 116). Ana-Marie Rizzuto claimed that Freud’s religious ideas were based upon the projection of his own disillusionment with his father, and described how the God representation should be able to transform beyond

the image left by a particular parent (Rizzuto, 1979: 46–47; Rizzuto, 1998: 51–52). In a quite different approach, Jung saw the male element and female element as universal oppositional principles within the personality that needed to be reconciled (Jung and Kerényi, 1949: 130). For Erik Erikson, the absence of a father to idealize led to his emphasis upon identity and the challenges that interfere with its formation, a theoretical agenda which found its fullest expression in his treatment of Martin Luther’s father complex (Capps, 1997: 210; Erikson, 1958: 70).

With the advent of ego psychology and object relations theory in the middle of the twentieth century, the emphasis within psychoanalytic psychology shifted from the oedipal phase to the pre-oedipal, and increasing significance came to be placed upon the mother (Mitchell and Black, 1995: 47). The significance of the shift cannot be separated from the sociocultural factors of the postwar period, in which the enshrinement of ‘motherhood’ was connected with an effort to preserve the stability of the nuclear family within society (Chodorow, 1978: 5). One result of this was that fathers were seen to have little place in actual caregiving, but were a ‘third’ element, which introduced the child to the outside world, establishing the gender identity of sameness with the boy child (Mitchell and Black, 1995: 257). Recent psychological discoveries have shown that fathers may have a more important role in the development of children, even in the pre-oedipal period (Phares, 1999: 26; Lamb, 2000: 340).

Implications of Changing Views of Father

The Judeo-Christian religions have traditionally portrayed God as a male father-figure, but the hegemony of this imagery is breaking up. Accordingly, fathers are in the midst of a shifting position, both in terms of their gender roles and self-definitions. As cultural trends continue to move toward equality between genders, fathers are increasingly providing care for children (Lamb, 2000: 339).

The historical legacy of fatherhood has emphasized competence and power outside the home, but immaturity, weakness, and volatility at home. Fathers are frequently portrayed as incompetent in their fathering by the media, and they often seem to struggle with an internalization of this image (Mackey, 1985: 126). Fathers also contend with issues of rage and abuse, as the cyclical patterns of violence are handed down disproportionately by men (Cooper-White, 1995: 165).

With all of these indictments admitted, not enough attention has been paid, especially in depth psychology, to the significance of the father’s expanding caregiving

role in the lives of his children or the manner in which this caregiving becomes a part of the father's identity (Lamb, 2000: 339). Positive psychological outcomes are associated with high involvement of fathers in caregiving practices (Lamb, 2000: 340). With the increase of caregiving behavior among men in our society, along with a refashioning of traditionally patriarchal religions through an encounter with feminist thought, it remains to be seen whether the personal influence of fathers in the home will lead to a transformation of both psychoanalytic theory and the forms and symbols of religion.

See also: [Erikson, Erik](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Feeling

John Ryan Haule

The conscious registration of an emotion or affect. Emotion is a physiological state of arousal governed by the brain's limbic system that places the body in an attitude of fear, rage, lust, disgust, etc. Emotions are automatic responses that occur before an individual has a chance to think about what is going on. Feeling occurs as the conscious recognition that an emotional state is already in effect.

In Jungian psychology, feeling is – along with thinking, sensation, and intuition – one of the four “psychic functions” for apprehending the two worlds, inner and outer. While “sensation” (the five senses) determines that something is there before me and “thinking” determines what it is, feeling *evaluates* the people, situations, and objects that I meet. Feeling establishes that something is attractive or disgusting, benign or threatening, gratifying or enraging, etc.; and it does so on a hierarchical basis, determining which object is more lovable or inspiring than another. Because it sets the world in order, Jung calls feeling a “rational” function, along with thinking. Sensation and intuition are “irrational” in that they only register the psychic facts that come before one, establishing no order among them.

In using the rational, ordering capability of feeling, an individual may remain self-possessed and take charge of the circumstances that present themselves in the moment. By contrast, emotion occurs as a psychological “shock” that lowers the level of mental functioning and narrows the field of awareness. Adequate everyday living, therefore, requires a capacity to use one's feeling in order to survey in detail the full world-picture unfolding before one without the distortion of an overwhelming emotion. A differentiated and dependable “feeling function” is essential for satisfying and nuanced interpersonal relations and for social behavior, in general.

All schools of mysticism devote significant attention to training their students in differentiating the “introverted” aspect of the feeling function – that is, in applying the feeling function to make accurate assessments of one's own states of consciousness. Eastern schools take prominent note of the fact that an unmitigated emotional response always involves an attachment to a certain outcome or favored states of affairs. In training for detachment and the cultivation of equanimity, they make the differentiation of the feeling function possible. Meanwhile, most

Western mystical traditions place “discernment” among the most valuable tools for advancement. For example, St. Ignatius of Loyola’s “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits,” employs a detached feeling-evaluation of one’s own recent mental states – whether they are relatively “consoling” or “desolating” – to assist one in removing obstacles to advancement and in determining “the will of God” for one in the present moment.

Feeling is arguably the most important psychic function for every religion, from the decisive experiences of its founders to everyday decisions in the lives of its adherents. Longing for succor and transcendence; awe, fascination, and trembling before that which is Wholly Other; bliss in union; abasement in shame, guilt and unworthiness – at bottom, it is feelings like these that characterize religious attitudes and inspire mythic narratives, theological constructs, and ethical codes.

See also: [▶ Ignatius of Loyola](#) [▶ Introversion](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#)

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Female God Images

Annette Peterson

Female God images can serve to balance the predominantly male God images of Western monotheism. Women who have not been equally supported to see themselves in personal relationship with the divine may need to express anger at the dominant religious paradigm and explore alternative images that express their sense of connection to the divine as female.

The lack of feminine God images in contemporary Western society is a common stumbling block for women’s spiritual development. Religious historians wonder why God is so commonly depicted as male when feminine God images are as prevalent throughout history and may actually precede masculine ones (Baring and Cashford, 1991; Leeming and Page, 1994; Billington and Green, 1996). Those who seek images of the feminine divine discover an abundance of goddesses and female archetypes in the historical record. Ancient images of the divine are frequently primitive art celebrating generativity and birth. Archaeologists have uncovered pottery and cave art of the round fecund female figure, earthy and full of life. In countless early paintings, a pregnant female body gives birth to the family tree. Finds like these substantiate the claim that the divine feminine was worshipped prior to a shift towards masculine images of God (Edinger, 1996).

In Eastern religious traditions, goddess images are still abundant. In Hinduism, there is Devi, Shakti, and Kali. In Buddhism, the goddess Tara has a variety of faces and traits. In the ancient West, the Egyptian goddess Isis and Sophia, the Gnostic goddess of wisdom enjoyed popular appeal. In the modern West, female God images have dwindled. As the West coalesced into the major monotheisms, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, God became a unified male figurehead.

The lack of female God images in the Judeo-Christian West dates back to Biblical times. Female references to God in the Bible never occur as names or titles for God. They occur only in the form of similes (Isaiah 66:13), metaphors (Numbers 11:12; Deuteronomy 32:18), analogies (Isaiah 49:15), or personifications (Proverbs 8).

It appears that although the goddess Sophia had a rich lore surrounding her, Jesus and the male Logos later supplanted her identity and role. In *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah*, historian Peter Schafer (2002) asserts that both Jewish and Christian traditions have wrestled with the question of God’s feminine nature from the time of the Scriptures throughout the Middle Ages. Schafer argues that Jewish mystical conceptions of wisdom and God’s femininity share attributes with Gnostic Christian writings, and even reveals cross-pollination of ideas between the religions. He identifies similarities between the Christian cult of Mary and the Jewish Bahir, which stresses the feminine nature of *Shekhinah*, God’s earthly presence.

Female God images tend to focus on the maternal role, rather than other sexual/personality gender differences. Propagation and nurture are emphasized. For example, Virgin Mary is preserved as a maternal rather than a sexual female figure. Erich Neumann (1955/1963), a

Jungian analyst, believed that there were two major characteristics intrinsic in the archetype of the Great Mother: the elementary (belly/womb) and the transformative (breast). These images call to mind the fertility icons of ancient civilizations and do little to bring sources of feminine identification outside the traditional role. Women have been traditionally linked with the body and the earth, thus representing humans' lower functions. Because of this, women have often been associated with the dark, irrational or corruptible aspects of our personalities, such as the Genesis story depicting Eve's role in the Fall of Man. Yet it seems appropriate and natural to link feminine images to the earth and to God's indwelling presence in the world. Fecund and sensual, women and earth share generative capabilities in acts of creation and renewal, giving birth and bearing fruit.

Although feminine God images have likely existed for as long as religion itself, in Western culture they represent an undercurrent rather than the mainstream. Cults of the Goddess thrive in pagan or nature religions. Goddess imagery is willing to acknowledge the sexual power of women and the sex that leads to motherhood.

Feminist authors have provided resources for the exploration of the divine feminine in books such as *The Feminine Face of God* (Anderson and Hopkins, 1991), and *A God Who Looks Like Me* (Reilly, 1995). These authors challenge our indoctrination into a masculine theology. Reilly proposes that the masculine God image, culturally dominant for centuries, leaves a damaging legacy for women. That legacy is a learned belief in the exclusion, inferiority and dependency of their gender. Girls imprint these cultural mores at an early age: Boys can be like God; girls cannot. Girls can be part of mankind, but not the part that is mentioned. Without available identification with God, girls can grow up feeling second-rate. This legacy of male religious privilege enjoys mutual reinforcement with patriarchal political and familial power dynamics, perpetuating a culture of gender inequality.

For example, in the Catholic Church, where exclusively male priests preside over the Mass, girls and women are deemed unfit for the Church's highest calling. Traditions of male leadership serve to reinforce the maleness of Jesus and God the Father, who together are the ultimate creator, authority and redeemer. In contrast, the female Catholic icon, Virgin Mary, is in a comparatively peripheral support role, valued mostly for her maternal function. Since both the Father and Son of the Holy Trinity are male, girls may learn to believe that females need men to save them. When these girls become women, they may chafe under these gender dictums and seek the balancing, corrective experience of female God images.

Many find that female God images offer a warm acceptance that sets them at ease, feeling cosmically protected and cared for. Good mothering makes children feel nurtured and accepted, and as adults, we can derive a sense of safety and security from a protecting maternal God. Some people have replaced the doctrinal male God with a warmer, more maternal personal God. Perhaps surprisingly, this shift often occurs without leaving the community offered by their organized religion; instead, a quiet internal knowledge of the feminine nature of God is carried within. This occurs either consciously, for women who are tired of bearing an indirect image of God, or unconsciously, as men and women call upon God for maternal comforting and understanding.

Commentary

When a person cannot feel a sense of identification with her God image, her sense of self is weakened. Many women have been raised with a masculine God image that may have felt patriarchal, distancing and demeaning. A God image with characteristics of both genders is part of a healthy, balanced spirituality. The preeminence of masculine God images can be dangerous and destructive to religious culture as well as our larger society.

While a man can relate to a male God by identifying with an idealized God image, a woman's relation to the deity is more indirect and even implicitly sexualized. There is a once-removed complexity to being a woman in relation to God when God is a gendered male, requiring a mother, daughter, or lover relationship instead of a simple identification. In the Gospels' Jesus narratives, women such as Mary Magdalene are hailed for their support roles, but not for their leadership. These traditional examples are offensive to many contemporary women for the way they influence current and future gender roles.

It is interesting to examine the roots of this gender inequality. In *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image*, author Leonard Shlain (1998) proposes that the written word is essentially a masculine enterprise, based on its "linear, sequential, reductionistic and abstract" characteristics, thus all "writing subliminally fosters a patriarchal outlook." In contrast, our mental images are perceived wholly all-at-once, as a synthetic gestalt, which Shlain identifies as essentially feminine. Evidently, our methods of perceptions and communication is as influential as its content.

Do writing and the alphabet cause or reflect the masculine skew of the collective psyche? Shlain argues that his

causal theory is the most plausible explanation for the correlations he reveals between alphabetic writing and patriarchy. Although it would be extreme to suggest that language is a tool of the patriarchy, Western language patterns reflect a clear masculine skew that affect all people's psychological constructs.

In therapy, if gender issues are behind a woman's negative relation to her God image, it is helpful to examine the sources of this alienation on the larger culture. The therapist can then point out some alternative images, examples of the divine feminine that are present in the culture of the individual experience of the client.

Culture and religion, whether consciously or unconsciously, are engaged in mutually reinforcing gender bias. Influences of the ambient culture shape the individual's religious expression. This helps us understand why many Christians unconcernedly attribute feminine traits to the male-gendered God images, subsumed under a masculine Godhead. A common example is the tendency to credit a masculine God for acts of creation and generativity, ignoring the feminine nature of these important roles. Rather than subsuming feminine traits within the masculine identity of God, it is psychologically healthier to acknowledge and celebrate the presence and contribution of both the male and female aspects of the divine.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Femininity](#) [God Image and Therapy](#) [God Image](#) [Great Mother](#) [Male God Images](#) [Mary](#) [Sophia](#) [Tara](#)

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Femininity

Elizabeth Welsh

Introduction

Femininity or womanliness refers to the physical and behavioral qualities characteristic of and considered appropriate for women. In recent years, these attributes have fallen under the label of socially-constructed "gender" and as such have been distinguished from the biologically-determined features of the female sex. This view has attempted to argue for an androgynous psychosocial quality of human nature and to relocate masculine and feminine functions in all human persons. However, in Western cultures femininity and masculinity have been treated as the two opposite ends of the spectrum of human personality and furthermore that the former resides in females while the latter resides in males.

Current Views on Femininity

In general, the popular understanding of femininity is made up of an amalgam of factors. In the biological category, femininity or femaleness consists of genitalia, high voice, less body/facial hair, less muscle mass and more fat (though thinness has become a new desired characteristic), and more estrogen than testosterone. In the category of parenting roles, femininity is associated with mothering which consists of providing nurturance, warmth, and care. In the social sphere, femininity is associated with the public role of worker (as opposed to boss) and the private role of wife and mother. Finally, in the personality category, feminine behavior has been associated with emotional expressiveness, feminine attributes have been generally classified as soft, tender, and vulnerable, and feminine attitudes have been characterized by more subjectivity than objectivity. While these comparative differences between femininity and masculinity are relative, Western cultures have generally reinforced conformity to these dichotomous norms.

The fact that some of the above characteristics of femininity are purely biological, while others have clearly been socially designated has had a confounding effect on colloquial designation of what is female (or male). Thus, beginning in the 1970s, the term "gender" has been used in psychological and sociological research to refer to the non-biological traits, norms, and stereotypes that are

considered typical and desirable for those who are designated as female or male. Since then, the academic literature has made efforts to clearly separate the terms “gender” and “sex” although colloquially they frequently continue to be used synonymously. While it may not be possible to fully separate the biological aspects of human identity and experience from the social, cultural, and psychological ones, many attempts have been made to discriminate between them so as to understand the relationships between them and to correct the misrepresentations of women and men that have been at the root of much of history of oppression and violence towards women.

While some of the representations of femininity can vary from culture to culture, such as the specific physical features as well as behaviors that are considered desirable, certain common themes, such as beauty, gentleness, and nurturance appear to underlie its diverse expressions. In recent years, the concept of femininity has come under the close scrutiny of feminists who have pointed out that the cultural prescriptions for ideal feminine qualities have been carefully scripted to serve the perpetuation of the patriarchal order. As such, the complex aspects of the feminine gender which appear to be mysterious and threatening to the established male order are split off and rejected and replaced with seemingly benign ideals of feminine docility, domesticity, and conformity. However, such restrictions have in fact been violently suppressive and have engendered oppressive attitudes towards women as well as men who do not conform to the traditionally patriarchal stereotype of masculinity. More recently, feminists have sought to challenge any universal definitions of femininity since no matter how empowering they may seem to be, they can always be turned into oppressive labels and scripted roles that ultimately restrict women’s freedom.

The Role of Religions in Shaping Femininity

Since religious beliefs and rituals have always played a crucial part in the formation and transformation of culture, their influence on sex and gender roles cannot be overstated. In the ancient polytheistic world, goddess worship was widely practiced. Some scholars have argued that goddess worship began much earlier, during the prehistoric era when matriarchal social systems are also believed by some to have existed. However, while there is not any clear evidence of a single “Great Goddess,” in cultures outside the Judeo-Christian traditions, the Feminine Divine was an intuitive and prevalent concept and some cultures have maintained it to this day under different names and shapes (Schaup, 1997).

A cult of a prominent goddess as well as her loving union with a male god was present in all ancient Oriental religions. In ancient Egypt, the Goddess Isis was the creator of the world and her sacred wedding with the male god, Osiris, was believed to hold the secrets of life and death. In the southern Mesopotamian civilization of Sumer, the goddess Innana was worshipped and her union with Son-Lover Dumuzi, and later the Assyrian-Babylonian Ishtar and Tammuz. The goddess Kybele was revered in Asia Minor and in Rome under the name of Magna Mater, the Great Mother. The main goddess of the Phoenicians, Philistines, and Moabites was Astarte or Asherah whom some of the Israelites worshipped as well. The Greeks had the powerful goddess of fertility and transformation, Demeter, as well as the Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Pallas Athene, and the jealous and vengeful goddess of marriage, Hera.

The goddesses worshipped represented a myriad of associations which indicates that the ideas about femininity in the ancient world were quite diverse. One goddess alone could serve a variety of functions. For example, in Egypt, the goddess Isis was the goddess who gave birth to the heaven and earth, the source of pharaoh’s power, patron of nature as well as magic, the goddess of orphans, slaves, and the downtrodden, as well as the goddess of simplicity. Corresponding to these powerful and influential goddesses, women appeared to have the opportunities to hold positions of honor such as in ancient Egypt where women could be traders, craftswomen, priestesses, and queens.

The semblance of a goddess appears in the Old Testament as the concept of Wisdom – Chokhma (Hebrew) – Sophia (Greek), an autonomous female figure which emerges in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, as well as the apocryphal books depicting the Wisdom of Solomon. The Wisdom tradition featuring this female figure developed after the Babylonian captivity which seems to support the view that she was an adaptation of the foreign customs of the cult of the Goddess practiced in Babylon. This Divine Wisdom is depicted in the biblical text as authoritative, gracious, lovely, powerful-in-action, a beloved of God and of mankind. At times she is portrayed as a divine person in her own right (Proverbs 8, Wisdom of Solomon, 7–8), but at other times she represents instruction, admonition, and fear of the Lord (Proverbs 2). Although the Old Testament authors could not conceive of a distinct Feminine Divine as in the old religions, they did however apprehend of a certain feminine Divine Wisdom which was close to God, sat besides God’s throne and would decide for him what to do, was implicated in creation, loved human beings, and bestowed bountiful gifts on them. Overall, one may observe that this feminine figure wavers

between a godlike figure endowed with attributes of regal power and loftiness and the image of a homely housewife, virtuous and industrious, a model faithful fulfillment of the law. Some have pointed out that a split took place; on one hand the idea of Great Goddess of the ancient religions, the source of all life and wisdom, continued to exist in the biblical figure of Wisdom, but on the other hand she was modified and reduced by Old Testament authors to narrow morality, submission, and prudence. Furthermore, in an implicit fashion, on one hand the feminine idea depicted in the Wisdom literature has divine qualities, but on the other she is depicted as rotten, the beginning of all sin (the “foreign woman,” the harlot, the idolatress, the temple prostitute, and other derogatory terms that were used for the priestesses and other female worshippers in the temples of the pagan goddesses).

The case of Lilith is a possible illustration of this split. Lilith, Adam’s first wife, was the woman who rejected her position of sexual and social subjection to man. While originally she represented female strength and autonomy, over time, Lilith incorporated a myriad of dreadful qualities and thus became the shadow of the Feminine which Israel was no longer able to integrate because it had split off and rejected along with the entire cult of the great pagan goddesses. Lilith became the antithesis of Eve, the submissive helpmate of Adam and positive model of a Jewish wife. From an interpretive standpoint, for the Jewish men in captivity, Lilith raised potency fears and threatened to endanger the physical survival of the nation in exile. She was henceforth transformed from a figure of female autonomy to one of purely evil qualities so as to make her abhorrent to women (one who murdered children and pregnant women) as well as men (the woman who withholds herself and causes semen to be spilled). The myth of Lilith entered many cultures under various forms from witch to a beautiful seductress.

The split between an ideal virtuous femininity and a sexual, desiring, mysterious, and powerful woman was perpetuated in Christianity through the veneration of the Virgin Mary. As various feminists have pointed out, the image of the desexualized, suffering, and silently loving Virgin Mother who is lifted into heaven continued to pose problems for ordinary women since it constituted an ideal that alienated women from their real selves and from the realities of the misogynistic cultures in which they lived. The mild, gracious, and ethereal Madonna could only offer women redemption and access to heaven through suffering motherhood, suppression of all negative emotions, and complete disembodiment of sexuality.

Commentary

From a psychological standpoint, the patriarchal disparagement of the feminine figure in all of her complexity reveals a deep-seated male fear of the mysterious and uncertain aspects of female sexuality and personality. The archetype of the “evil anima” as well as the subdued “Mater dolorosa” (suffering Mother) reflects the disturbed relationship between man and woman. This alienation and hatred is explained in part by the historical suppression of the pagan goddess through monotheism as well as by the cultural subjection of women through the establishment of patriarchy. The evil anima archetype is an expression of man’s fear of the feminine revenge, a fear that may be rightly justified, while the altruistic, asexual mother poses as the benign ideal of femininity that provides for the emotional needs of men but has no life of her own, and as such poses no threat to the established patriarchal order.

For contemporary women, the psychological implications of the culturally-inherited constructions of femininity have led to the dilemma between their desire for societal competence and their fulfillment of the feminine roles expected of them in their personal lives but devalued in society. Those who attempt to juggle the demands of both competence and sex-role identity are met with the burdens of physical and psychological burnout that accompany the efforts to embody the colloquial “Superwoman.” Feminists have argued that women need a redefinition of femininity (some have proposed a plurality of meanings, of “femininities” and “sexualities,” rather than any one universal definition) as well as of cultural expectations for competence which will necessarily have ramifications for definitions of masculinity and societal expectations of male competence. Finally, since cultural concept of God has been shown to form the underlying connection between patriarchal religion and a society of violence, many have argued that no social, scientific, or ecological paradigm shift can take place unless the theological shift occurs which moves away from exclusively patriarchal images of God and includes the feminine aspects of the divine.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [Great Mother](#) [Mary](#) [Sophia](#)

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Femme Fatale

Monomyth

Folk Magic

David Waldron

Common to most, if not all pre-industrial cultures, is a vibrant tradition of folk magic and ritual tradition closely linked to established mythology, folklore and archetypal associations. These traditions vary enormously and are closely linked to a variety of social, historical, cultural, political and economic factors. The many and complex networked structures of belief, ritual and mythology that coalesce in magical traditions have long been studied and documented by anthropologists and folklorists.

From an analytical psychological perspective, one of the key ingredients of folk magical practices and rituals is that they serve as *prima facie* expressions of emotion. Malinowski, in his analysis of folk magic in Melanesia, argues that magical ritual is invariably constructed in patterns that evoke emotion and resonate symbolically within a culture. In this sense, emotion, and thus psychology, is at the heart of magical ritual (Malinowski, 1948). The ritual serves as a symbolic representation of the desired ends and the emotions that led to it are rendered symbolically through powerful and pervasive archetypes in that culture and thus directly relate to the social, cultural and political issues that led to the rituals perceived necessity. Subsequently, each type and form of folk magic is derived from its own network of social formations and cultural forms and is fundamentally

integrated with localized politics, social structures, conflicts and economic uncertainties. This localized experience also serves to distinguish folk magic from ceremonial magic in that it is not born of an attempt to create abstract structures granting access to divine power, in a philosophical manner, but is an organic socially derived network of practices and beliefs relating to deeply felt anxieties (Jung, 1964).

However, while there are a vast array of bewildering forms, rituals and beliefs surrounding folk magic practices, it is generally accepted that there are certain universal features and commonalities between varying magical traditions. One key issue identified by Frazer is that folk magic practices are often *sympathetic* in nature. That is to say, the items and rituals used in magic typically either symbolically resemble the target of the magical practice (*law of similarity*) or have come into contact with them and become ritually polluted with their essence (*Law of Contagion*) (Frazer, 1922). From a Jungian perspective, these forms also relate closely to symbolic archetypes, whereby the symbols, the target of the magic and its ritual practice are linked through archetypal association in the collective unconscious. Subsequently, these magical rituals also serve as a means to grapple with complex psychological issues and serve as an avenue into the unconscious (Jung, 1938).

In this sense, folk magic is both derived from the heritage of past traditions and mythology and is also a living tradition which creates its own body of myth and folklore. Thus folk magic is an intrinsically organic construct that both shapes and constructs its own mythology and folklore, yet is profoundly influenced and shaped by its contextual mythological base, politics and culture. Consequently, the rituals, symbols and cultural artifacts of folk magic serve as a powerful avenue into the complex interconnections of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche as manifested in lived experience within the social, cultural and physical worlds.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Forgiveness

Everett L. Worthington, Jr. · Jennifer S. Ripley ·
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Every major religion endorses forgiveness as a virtue. The religious perspectives have brought forth numerous practical and theoretical understandings of forgiveness for centuries. In the last 20 years, the field of psychology has pursued the scientific study of forgiveness (Worthington, 2005). Can this study add to what millennia of religious thought and practice has taught humankind?

Science as a New Tool

Peter Galison (2003) has put forth an understanding of scientific revolutions that attributes the seeds of change to the development of new tools. The invention of the telescope paved the way for observing phenomena that were not observable in Newtonian physics. The new data eventually created problems for the old paradigm. According to Galison, a revolution in a scientific field is due more to applying new tools to a phenomenon than simply to providing a re-conceptualization of the phenomenon.

The study of forgiveness has brought a new tool to its study and practice – the method of careful, analytical science. Science forces us to define variables precisely, and then subject the understanding of relationships among variables to empirical testing. Whereas theology and philosophy are likewise careful at defining concepts and test their definitions against logical criteria, authoritative texts, and teachings, science relies on a different source of authority – empirical observation.

Basic Definitions

The results of the scientific study of forgiveness have been astounding. From 58 empirical studies identified in a review of the literature in 1998 (McCullough et al., 1998), the studies have grown to over 900 by 2005 and continue to proliferate (Scherer et al., 2005). Our understanding of forgiveness has become more precise as science has focused on it. Transgressions (i.e., violations of psychological or physical boundaries) are appraised as to the amount of injustice inflicted – called the injustice gap. The injustice gap (Worthington, 2006) is the difference between the way a person would like to see a transgression

resolved (i.e., “I’d like to see her come crawling on her knees begging my forgiveness”) relative to the way the situation is perceived to be currently (i.e., “She’s so cold. She seems to have no remorse at all, and I’m afraid she’ll betray me again”). Bigger injustice gaps are harder for the person to resolve and are related to more unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is a complex combination of negative emotions, like resentment, bitterness, hostility, hatred, anger, and fear, rolled into an emotional experience interpreted by a person’s working memory as feeling unforgiving.

A person can reduce the injustice gap (and hence reduce unforgiveness) in many ways that do not include forgiveness (for a summary, see Worthington, 2006). The person might inflict vengeance (i.e., a kind of vigilante justice), see justice done societally, observe a person getting her just desserts, or see an authority like the courts administer justice. Or the person may reduce the injustice gap through passive acceptance. For example, the person might also simply accept that “stuff happens” and move on with his or her life. The person might forbear, suppressing negative emotions, or turn the matter over to Divine justice or simply relinquish the matter into God’s hands.

Forgiveness is one way of reducing the injustice gap and unforgiveness. Forgiveness involves internal changes that recognize the offense but choose not to hold it against the offender and (perhaps) to seek more positive feelings and motivations toward the offender (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). There may be related interpersonal experiences around forgiveness, such as the offender asking for forgiveness, the victim communicating forgiveness to the offender, or either party telling others of the forgiveness. Thus, the context of transgressions is intrapersonal, but forgiveness is intrapersonal. Forgiveness is often confused with reconciliation, but forgiveness occurs within the skin of a person, while reconciliation is the restoration of trust between two people, through trustworthy behavior by the parties.

Forgiveness is of two types (Worthington, 2006). *Decisional forgiveness* involves making a decision to change behavior intentions from negative to positive. It is not motivation, for the person can be motivated for revenge but still adhere to behavioral intentions to treat the person positively. Likewise, decisional forgiveness is not actual behavior, for a person could forgive a dead parent, but no longer has the option to act directly with benevolence or conciliation toward the parent. *Emotional forgiveness* involves the experience of replacing negative unforgiving emotions with positive other-oriented emotions toward the offender. The replacement emotions most commonly discussed among forgiveness researchers are empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love. The

replacement emotions begin by neutralizing unforgiveness, gradually reducing it. Usually, that is where people stop trying to forgive – especially in unilateral forgiveness, which is forgiveness where the transgressor is either dead or no relationship continues. However, when a relationship is expected to be ongoing (i.e., interpersonal context), then people often continue to seek to experience more positive emotions in the relationship in order to make it “stronger in the broken places.” Decisional and emotional forgiveness may occur independently, but generally they affect each other. Thus, it is possible to forgive decisionally but not experience full emotional forgiveness, and to forgive emotionally but never to have made a conscious decision to forgive. However, usually the two are psychologically linked.

Full forgiveness is usually better talked about as full decisional forgiveness, which usually occurs at a moment of decision. The person might ponder, for minutes or years, whether to make a decision to forgive, but usually the decision is dichotomous, like switching on a light. Or a person might experience full emotional forgiveness, which might involve merely getting to a place of neutral feeling toward the offender (in unilateral emotional forgiveness) or getting to a net positive experience toward the offender (often in interpersonal forgiveness). In contrast to decisional forgiveness, emotional forgiveness happens piecemeal, or more herky-jerky, as emotions are gradually replaced and influenced by the ebb and flow of any ongoing interactions with the offender. There is a time course within which most emotional forgiveness occurs. Usually, much forgiveness occurs early after a person begins to try to forgive, and then the rate of emotional forgiveness tapers off.

Self-Forgiveness

When concepts of forgiveness are applied to the self, self-forgiveness often does not parallel forgiveness of others (Fisher and Exline, 2006; Hall and Fincham, 2005). When one transgresses and experiences shame, guilt, and self-condemnation, typically, one sees oneself more as an offender than as a victim. Namely, before dealing with self-condemnation, people should seek to make things right with the Sacred (as one understands the Sacred). Then, one needs to try to make restitution with those harmed. Then, the person might forgive himself or herself for the wrongdoing. However, forgiveness might still not take care of the self-condemnation because self-condemnation might be due more to a failure to accept oneself as a flawed person than to guilt for a specific

wrongdoing. For example, if a person steals money from the coffee room at work, the person might confess the crime to God, make restoration to the coffee fund, and forgive the self. However, even though self-forgiveness is complete, the person might still be self-condemning because before committing the theft, the person was not a thief. Now, the person is. Accepting a new self-definition might lead to self-condemnation even though the person has forgiven himself or herself for the actual theft.

Religions and Forgiveness

The various religions treat forgiving differently. These cultural differences affect how forgiveness is understood and practiced.

In Judaism, forgiveness is usually seen within the context of *tsevah*, or repentance of the offender (Rye et al., 2000). If an offender demonstrates true repentance – usually undergoing a series of demonstrations of sincerity of change and return to the path of God – then a victim is obligated to forgive. One tenet of Judaism is that victims must grant forgiveness, and forgiveness cannot be granted on behalf of the victim. Thus, logically, one who has murdered will never obtain forgiveness from the victim.

In Christianity, forgiveness is the centerpiece of the religion. Jesus’ crucifixion is said to have paid the full demands of justice for the injustices against God, and God compassionately and lovingly forgives a person who accepts that forgiveness (Rye et al., 2000). This is usually termed as Divine forgiveness, and it refers to the adoption of a person as a child of God. Jesus tied Divine forgiveness of individual sins to a person’s forgiveness – probably what we now think of as decisional forgiveness – of the transgressions experienced at the hands of others. In Christianity, God requires decisional forgiveness, and desires emotional forgiveness.

In Islam, God is seen as the all-forgiving God, and forgiveness figures prominently in the Qu’ran (Rye et al., 2000). However, generally justice is seen as one’s due, and forgiveness is seen as virtuous. It is reward-worthy if one wishes to forgive instead of exacting the justice that is one’s due from a transgression.

In Buddhism, there is no explicit word for the concept of forgiveness in original Buddhist texts (Rye et al., 2000). Nevertheless, the notion of forgiveness is inherent in compassionate responses to wrongdoing or mindful responses to wrongdoing. Forgiveness is also a concept that is employed in order to help promote loving-kindness during meditation.

In Hinduism, forgiveness is valued (Rye et al., 2000). While there are a variety of understandings of forgiveness,

it is generally seen as in line with dharma, the path of right living. It is often associated as a means to drive away sin and transgression.

Thus far, we have focused mostly on forgiveness within the bounds of organized religions, briefly alluding to the largest religions. Many people, however, consider themselves as spiritual and not religious (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Spirituality can be rooted in an elevated view of humanity or attunement with nature. Thus, transgressions against oneself or perpetrated by oneself can disrupt the person's sense of harmony. This disrupted sense of harmony can motivate a drive for forgiveness or seeking forgiveness to restore a sense of positive spirituality.

A curious finding has been uncovered in the relationship of religion and forgiveness. People who are more religious, as a group, report themselves to be more forgiving than do people who do not endorse religion. However, when asked to recall a transgression, they often are not much better at granting decisional forgiveness or experiencing emotional forgiveness than are people who do not endorse religion (McCullough and Worthington, 1999). There are methodological reasons that such a finding occurs. Generally, people are asked to recall a hurt and they most easily recall one that is still an open transgression. It has been shown, however, that if people are asked to recall several hurts and the amount of forgiveness is aggregated over the variety of hurts, then the more religious a person is, the more likely he or she is to forgive individual hurts deeply and quickly (Tsang et al., 2005).

Promotion of Forgiveness

Applied psychological science has shown that people who struggle to forgive can be helped to forgive faster and more deeply by participating in individual forgiveness therapy, couple therapy to promote forgiveness, or psychoeducational groups to promote forgiveness (Malcolm et al., 2005; Wade et al., 2005). Most interventions have been aimed at experiencing empathy and greater understanding of the offender's perspective. The more deeply empathy is experienced, the more deeply emotional forgiveness is experienced. Effortful thinking about forgiveness is generally needed to forgive, which puts some due stress on the self. In examining over 40 groups that sought to promote forgiveness, there was a strong dose-response relationship between the mere amount of time trying to forgive and the amount of emotional forgiveness a person actually felt (Wade et al., 2005).

Forgiveness is truly a concept that now can be claimed by both religions and psychology. The tool of psychological science has provided more nuanced understandings of forgiveness than was available a quarter of a century ago.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Confession](#) [Forgiveness and the Brain](#) [Islam](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Psychology](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Religious Coping](#)

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Forgiveness and the Brain

James G. Emerson

The decade of the brain in the United States – 1990–2000 unleashed remarkable work on the dynamic of brain activity. It has remained for those in England to focus on the implications of brain studies for the dynamic of forgiveness. A major center for this work is the Sheffield Medical Center in Sheffield England. Key names in this work are those of Thomas Farrow, PhD and Peter Woodruff, PhD.

The development of brain studies moves at a pace that one can hardly keep up with it. Although one could reference books, the Internet appears to be the best resource for keeping in touch with the discussion.

Common to all these studies is first the discovery that the act of forgiving involves certain areas of the cerebral cortex – mostly in the left side of the brain. In what might be called the “executive” section of the brain, there is action that deals with feelings and dynamic activity in all of the brain – including healthy brains or brains afflicted with problems such as schizophrenia. The particular area where there appears to be the most activity when forgiveness becomes active is the left superior frontal gyrus, the orbitofrontal gyrus, and the precuneus.

Also common to all these studies is the discovery that the dynamic of forgiveness leads to certain degrees of health or improvement.

Across the world spectrum of religious or theological writings on the area of the brain and forgiveness, case after case has developed of the positive effect of the teachings of Jesus and Paul.

From a theological standpoint, two cautions, however, need to be noted in relation to these studies: the first is the fact that Paul seldom uses the word “forgiveness” and more often speaks of “freedom in Christ.” The second is that there are cultures in African and south Asian parts of the world that do not have the word “forgiveness.” Therefore, when talking about the experience of forgiveness, as Feldman of the University of California has observed about all neurological discussion, precision is required. For the purpose of discussion, this article recommends the view of Dr. Farrow that we follow the definition of the Oxford Dictionary “Forgiveness is ceasing to feel angry or resentful to another.” To this we also do well to add, “forgiveness of self means a ceasing of being angry with oneself.”

Today, some of the most profound work in relating brain studies and religious practice is that guided by the current Dalai Lama. In that work, guilt and forgiveness get little if any mention. Yet considerable attention is given to meditation and processes that contribute to our understanding of the use of forgiveness in such matters as forgiving oneself and accepting the forgiveness of others – including God.

See also: [Dalai Lama](#) [Forgiveness](#) [Jesus](#)

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Frankl, Viktor

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Viktor Emil Frankl, MD, PhD (1905–1997) is founder of *logotherapy* – meaning-centered psychotherapy. He is best known for his short book, *Man’s Search for Meaning (MSFM)*. It was released in 1946 by Deuticke, Freud’s Viennese publisher. It appeared in English in 1959 as *Death Camp to Existentialism*, and for more than half a century it has remained an international best seller, published in over 30 languages, numerous English editions, audiobooks, and Braille. In 1991 the United States Library of Congress/Book-of-the-Month Club survey of lifetime readers named it one of the 10 most influential books in America. Karl Jaspers labeled it “one of the great books of mankind”; Gordon Allport called it “a compelling introduction to the most significant psychological movement of our day.” Of Frankl’s 32 books, others have been translated into multiple languages, including English.

Frankl first visited the United States in 1954 at the invitation of Norman Vincent Peale. Frankl lectured at Marble Collegiate Church, New York, where Peale had arranged for Christian symbols to be covered with drapery out of respect for his Jewish guest. From that beginning, Frankl made 92 speaking tours to the United States

and lectured worldwide – at 209 universities and to large public audiences on all five continents.

Life and Context

Viktor Frankl was born March 26, 1905 at Czerningasse 7 in Leopoldstadt, the mainly Jewish quarter of Vienna. His parents were humble, pious Jews. At that time, the city was seat of a great empire and an international wellspring of music. The University of Vienna was a hub of creativity and at the forefront of medical science. But there was also a strong and longstanding current of anti-Semitism in the city.

In the year of Viktor's birth, 50-year-old Sigmund Freud was living near the University. Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was a founding-member of Freud's inner circle and was living and practicing medicine at Czerningasse 6, right across the street from the Frankl home. Today tablets on the two buildings note the famous former residents.

When Viktor Frankl was a little boy, an obscure Adolph Hitler – in his 20s – was living in a men's hostel in the next district. No one could have imagined the future for Jews in Vienna, certainly including the Frankls and the older Freuds. Both lost close kin and friends to the Holocaust.

Sigmund Freud, Gabriel Frankl (Viktor's father), Alfred Adler, and eventually Viktor himself all attended the same high school in Leopoldstadt. Viktor was captivated by Freud's theories and writings, even introducing his classmates to psychoanalysis. All four of these men, in turn, attended the University Medical School; only Gabriel could not afford to finish. Though Viktor met Freud only once, they did correspond with one another; and when Viktor sent one of his high school papers, Freud published it in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

While still a medical student, Frankl almost joined Freud's Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but already he was becoming disillusioned with psychoanalysis. Freud became intolerant of Adler's criticism and inventive ideas and had excluded him from the Society. The young Frankl joined Adler's new Society for Individual Psychology. But in the end, when Frankl expressed his own novel ideas, Adler expelled him. So Jung (who had parted with Freud in 1913), Adler, and Frankl started their own rival psychological movements. But of course the creative influence of Freud on them, on psychology and psychiatry, and on Western civilization was enormous.

By the time Hitler and National Socialism seized Austria and engulfed Europe, Frankl already had established his practice in neurology and psychiatry. But for the Frankls and for millions, life as they had known it came to an end.

In September 1942, Viktor and his wife Tilly, his father and mother, and mother-in-law were forcibly deported in one of the ongoing trainloads of Jews from Vienna. During 2 years in the Theresienstadt ghetto, Frankl's father died from illness. The rest of the family were transferred to Auschwitz in October 1944, where Viktor and Tilly were separated and where his mother Elsa was sent immediately to the gas chambers. Viktor's brother and other family and friends met their deaths in the camps. He did not know the fate of his mother or of Tilly, who died at Bergen-Belsen, and he held out hope that he would be reunited with them after the war.

Frankl spent three days at Auschwitz (in Poland), then seven months at Kaufering and Türkheim in Germany, where he nearly died of typhus. After two and a half years in the four camps, he was liberated from Türkheim by American forces in April 1945. On his return to Vienna, he learned that his loved ones had perished.

Now alone, Frankl threw himself into reconstructing his first book, *The Doctor and the Soul*, and wrote his second, *MSFM*. These tasks kept him going for a time. Then he married a young dental assistant, Elly Schwindt, at the Polyclinic where he had become chief of neurology. For more than 50 years, Viktor and Elly lived as spouses, parents, and colleagues in logotherapy, corresponding, writing, traveling the globe, and seeing the endless stream of visitors coming from around the world. Viktor died in Vienna following open-heart surgery in September 1997 at the age of 92.

Logotherapy and Existential Analysis in Context

Frankl's thought was shaped not only by the psychologists of Vienna, but by great philosophers – the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Marcel, Jaspers, Buber, etc. – and a number of the contemporaries he knew personally. What Frankl created, starting in the 1930s, is what he eventually called “logotherapy and existential analysis” (Frankl, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2004; Gould, 1993; Klingberg, 2001). “Existential analysis” in his scheme referred to its philosophical foundations in contrast to psychoanalysis, and “logotherapy” to its therapeutic methods. When the term existential analysis was adopted by others and used more widely, Frankl simply used logotherapy to identify his body of work.

The Greek *logos* connotes, among other things, *meaning* – hence, therapy through meaning. By 1948 Wolfgang Soucek had identified logotherapy as the third Viennese school of psychotherapy, a designation that

endures. The first school is Freud's psychoanalysis, marked by the "the will to pleasure" and by Freud's ingenious expedition into the unconscious and its sexual and aggressive forces – "depth psychology." The second is the individual psychology of Adler, distinguished by the "will to power" – striving to overcome feelings of inferiority in our relations with other people, to achieve success and status. While Frankl acknowledged the work of Freud and Adler as foundational to his own, he asserted that the unique and most significant human motivation is the *will to meaning* – "height psychology." Frankl was fond of quoting Nietzsche: "He who has a *why* to live can endure almost any *how*" (Frankl, 1992).

This cornerstone of logotherapy was tested in the crucible of the death camps. Frankl never claimed that simply having a reason to live could keep a prisoner alive against the odds. In *MSFM* he identifies many factors in his own survival in addition to his desire to see his loved ones again, to write his books and lecture again on logotherapy (Frankl, 1992; Klingberg, 2001). But he did insist that having a reason to live helped to keep up one's spirit, and finding meaning in suffering could help one to bear it. Meaning was necessary but not sufficient for survival and could – all other things being equal – make the difference between life and death.

Logotherapy aims to help by assisting people in finding meaning in their lives. Frankl identified three primary ways to discover personal meaning. First, by *doing a deed*. This may include creating art or music, nursing a child, baking a pie, accomplishing a task, loving another person. Second, by *experiencing life*. One can enjoy the art and music of others, witness a sunset, accept a kindness from someone, rest in the affection of a loved one.

The third path to meaning is an anchor point of logotherapy: *meaning through suffering*. To suffer for nothing, to suffer when there is no point to it is unbearable. But if one can find a meaning in unavoidable suffering, it becomes possible to bear it, even to rise above it (Bulka, 1998; Frankl, 1978, 1992; Klingberg, 2001). This helps to explain why so many people in life-threatening circumstances turn repeatedly to *MSFM* and give copies to others who are suffering. Logotherapy is complementary to other psychotherapies and fills a gap for people who no longer can take action to change their circumstances or who face an unavoidable fate.

Transcendence is a unique aspect of human nature, making it possible for us to rise above ourselves and our circumstances. Logotherapy has techniques that may apply to particular psychological disorders and mental illnesses (Frankl, 2004). But it directly addresses the despondency of living life without meaning, especially

amid setbacks and disappointments. The emptiness experienced by many in our time is what Frankl called "the existential vacuum." And he insisted that despondency over the meaninglessness of life is no mental disorder at all, but rather a sign that one is truly human, by nature summoned to tasks, causes, and relationships beyond self. This, then, is the opening for faith.

Logotherapy and Religion

Logotherapy has a distinctive affinity for religion and for people of faith. But Frankl steered away from the sectarian, striving to make logotherapy useful to all people, religious or not, since the quest for meaning characterizes human nature. Individuals find meaning for themselves in many ways, and faith in a Supreme Being or adherence to a particular religion may be paths to meaning. So psychotherapy should respect this, as well as other paths to what he called *ultimate meaning* (Bulka, 1979; Frankl, 1997; Tweedie, 1961). It never prescribes a particular meaning for another person, but rather assists and encourages each person to pursue and discover both ultimate meaning and the moment-by-moment meanings of life.

Early on, Frankl identified the characteristics of being human: spirituality, freedom, and responsibility. Frankl clearly intended that those who choose faith in God be affirmed and assisted in bringing religious resources to bear upon their lives and struggles. Frankl's own writings reflect his openness to religion, though he remained steadfastly private as a person of faith. (Only a few very close to him knew of his daily prayers – without fail – from the time of his liberation from the concentration camps to the day of his death.)

Regarding human nature, Frankl rejected the negativity of psychoanalysis. He also criticized the unbridled optimism and self-centeredness of the American "human potentials movement" inspired partly by Adler. Ever since the Holocaust, Frankl has been reproached as too forgiving of the perpetrators and for his repeated assertions that good people and bad people are found in *every* race, *every* nation. All individuals and all groups are capable of great good and great evil, and we must be on guard against all evils, holocausts and "ethnic cleansings."

Frankl stands out among European psychologists of religion for placing *transcendence* at the center of logotherapy. Erich Fromm (1950), himself a Marxist atheist, asserted that both Freud (1961) and Jung (1938) had missed the point on religion. For Freud, the unconscious is the worst that is in us; for Jung, the unconscious is the

best that is in us. For Fromm, the unconscious is simultaneously the best *and* worst in us, neither “a God whom we must worship nor a dragon we must slay” (Fromm, 1950). In contrast, Frankl’s insistence on transcendence leads away from unconscious processes toward the human ability to take a stand toward circumstances and to rise above them, as well as to address faith in transcendent terms. That is, the fact of transcendence in human nature points away from self and circumstances toward something or someone, some cause *other* than oneself, *beyond* oneself, and *greater* than oneself.

Thus, from Frankl’s perspective it can be said that Freud, Jung, as well as Fromm – and William James (2002) and others, for that matter – *all* miss the point. Frankl might characterize them as reducing religion to merely psychological phenomena – to experience, conscious or unconscious; and ignoring the transcendent nature of human spirit, which may address or apprehend – or be apprehended by – a transcendent God existing in reality beyond. Frankl insisted that to find meaning, a person *must* go beyond oneself to a purpose to fulfill, a cause to serve, a person to love, or a God to trust if they so choose. And in transcending ourselves we become fully human and find meaning in our lives that carries us even above suffering.

See also: [Buber, Martin](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Heidegger, Martin](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#)

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Freud, Sigmund

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) is most often mentioned today in relation to psychology and psychiatry, but he had little no training in these fields. In reality he was a well-respected neurologist who developed an approach to human behavior known as psychoanalysis. Freud was a man of enormous learning and huge capacities and talents. His writings, which fill up about 30 volumes, cover all aspects of human experience, culture, and history.

The creation of psychoanalysis offered at once a theory of the human psyche, a proposed treatment system for the relief of its ills, and a method for the interpretation of culture and society. Despite repeated criticisms and rejections of Freud’s work, its influence remained powerful well after his death, and in some fields far removed from psychology as it is narrowly defined.

Freud was trained as a physician and was drawn to neurology and psychiatry, but he was always more interested in theory than in practice. After starting his work with neurotic patients, he came to believe that many mental disorders are the product of unconscious conflicts. Freud suggested that humans are born with sexual and aggressive instincts, but starting early on in life, they must repress such desires, driving them away from conscious awareness. Some repressed desires do not disappear but unconsciously haunt our behavior and thoughts. Dreams, slips of the tongue, and neuroses are, Freud argued, distorted reflections of repressed desires that originate in childhood. Psychoanalytic practice aimed to uncover such hidden mental processes. Thus, dreams are the disguised expression of wish fulfillments. Like neurotic

symptoms, they are the effects of compromises in the psyche between desires and prohibitions in conflict with their realization. Slips of the tongue and similar everyday errors, Freud claimed, had symptomatic and thus interpretable importance. But unlike dreams they need not betray a repressed infantile wish yet can arise from more immediate hostile, jealous, or egoistic causes.

Another kind of everyday behavior Freud analyzed was humor. Seemingly innocent phenomena like puns are as open to interpretation as more obviously tendentious, obscene, or hostile jokes. The powerful and joyful response often produced by successful humor, Freud contended, owes its power to the release of unconscious impulses, aggressive as well as sexual.

Two assumptions were suggested by Freud to characterize his approach. The first states that all psychic processes are strictly determined (no accidents, chance events, or miracles can be referred to as explanations), the second that unconscious mental processes exist, and exert significant influences on behavior. These unconscious forces shape much of the individual's emotional and interpersonal experiences.

We all are ready to admit momentary, fleeting, childish, irrational thoughts, but we consider these experiences marginal. Psychoanalysis claims that they may be much more than trivial or marginal, and that unconscious processes are possibly the main determinants of observable behavior.

The emphasis on unconscious processes in personality can be summed up as follows:

1. Large parts of the personality are unconscious, and these are the more important ones.
2. Unconscious memory is the repository of significant early experience.
3. In an adult, unconscious ideas are projected, creating severe distortions of reality, especially interpersonal reality.

Freud did not invent the idea of the conscious versus unconscious mind, but he certainly was responsible for making it popular. The conscious mind is what you are aware of at any particular moment, your present perceptions, memories, thoughts, fantasies, and feelings. Working closely with the conscious mind is what Freud called the preconscious, what we might today call "available memory:" anything that can easily be made conscious, the memories you are not at the moment thinking about but can readily bring to mind. No one has a problem with these two layers of consciousness. But Freud suggested that these are the small and marginal. The largest part by far is unconscious. It includes all the things that are not

easily available to awareness, including many things that have their origins there, such as our drives or instincts, and things that are put there because we cannot bear to look at them, such as the memories and emotions associated with trauma.

According to Freud, the source of our motivations is unconscious, whether they be simple desires for food or sex, neurotic compulsions, or the motives of an artist or scientist. And yet, we are often driven to deny or resist becoming conscious of these motives, and they are often available to us only in disguised form.

Freud devoted much attention to the development of sexuality in the individual. He described how this development is prone to troubling maladjustments if its various early stages are unsuccessfully negotiated. Confusion about sexual aims or objects can occur at any particular moment, caused either by an actual trauma or the blockage of a powerful urge. If this fixation is allowed to express itself directly at a later age, the result is what was then generally called a perversion. If, however, some part of the psyche prohibits such overt expression, then, Freud contended, the repressed and censored impulse produce neurotic symptoms. Neurotics repeat the desired act in repressed form, without conscious memory of its origin or the ability to confront and work it through in the present.

One great insight we were led to by classical psychoanalysis is that the child is totally confused by the notion of parenthood and family relations. Learning that we have two parents and that father and mother are also man and wife is beyond the child's comprehension at first blush. This Oedipal confusion stays with all of us forever, processed, accepted, and sometimes denied. The denial of birth is no less important than the denial of death in the making of cultural fantasies. Both lead to much psychic tension, and sometimes to real violence.

Focusing on the prevalence of human guilt and the impossibility of achieving unalloyed happiness, Freud contended that no social solution of the discontents of mankind is possible. The best to be hoped for is a life in which the repressive burdens of society are in rough balance with the realization of instinctual gratification and the sublimated love for mankind. But reconciliation of nature and culture is impossible, for the price of any civilization is the guilt produced by the necessary thwarting of man's instinctual drives. Psychoanalytic ideas have been immensely influential in Western thought over the past one hundred years, since the inception of this intellectual movement by Sigmund Freud.

Psychoanalysis is a theory of struggle, conflict, and compromise, assuming the dynamic nature of human

behavior, always resulting from conflict and change. Additional assumptions reflect the idea of over-determination, and the multiple functions of behavior. The over-determination assumption states that any segment of behavior may have many preceding causes. This is tied to a developmental, or historical emphasis, leading us to seek first causes in any individual's personal history and unique experiences.

Psychoanalysis proposes a universal sequence of psychological development, which becomes a basic epistemological ordering of the world and of individual personality, culture, and humanity. The universal experience of the human infant includes a developing awareness of three realms, always in the following order: first, one's body and its experienced needs. Second, awareness of the existence of another human. Third, knowledge and emotional investment in relations between itself and other humans. All further experiences must be based on these early experiences, acquired in that order, and will be assimilated into that order. The existence of such a universal sequence cannot be challenged, and therein lies the attraction of psychoanalysis for those wanting to understand not only the human personality, but also human society and culture.

The problem of childhood is a central issue defining psychoanalysis. The infant's unrealistic drive for wish-fulfillment is supposed to be left behind by the adult, but childhood is always alive behind adulthood facade. The legacy of childhood is far from marginal, and it is co-existent with adult functioning. We can observe it on both the individual and the cultural levels.

Freud's ideas about development focus on what has come to be called psychosexual development, that is, the transformation, molding, and sometimes perversion of biologically determined erotic drives in early childhood. The focal point of psychosexual development is the Oedipus complex, woven around the child's attachment to its parents as love objects or identification models between the ages of 3 and 6. Early childhood experiences serve as historical precedents in every individual's life, and in the life of every human culture.

The psychoanalytic view of human motivation is often regarded as utterly pessimistic, but we have to admit that it is realistic. Judging by their conscious and unconscious drives, humans are undeniably nasty and brutish, aggressive, and infantile. However, beyond this bleak picture of immorality and perversity lies the capacity for sublimation, love and cultural creativity.

The psychoanalytic view of maladaptive behavior emphasizes its continuity with adaptive behavior, and leads to viewing pathology as a useful analogy of cultural structures. Moreover, maladaptive behavior is analyzed through the detailed recognition of defensive sequences,

that is, not only the final outcome – symptoms – but the internal sequences leading to it are carefully outlined.

The theory presents us with an ideal of flexibility and moderation which is presented, as opposed to rigidity which is pathological, but inevitable. Rigidity in the form of rituals and ritualized defenses become one the sources of analogies for religion. The analytic starting point of symptom and syndrome, and their unconscious background, serve as the model for looking at religion.

Psychoanalysis assumes the psychic unity of mankind, which is significant when we deal with cultural traditions. Universality is found at the most basic level of body, birth, sex, and death. This working assumption has a particular relevance to the phenomenon of religion. Universal themes in religious mythology, are the result and reflection of the psychic unity of mankind, which in turn is the consequence of common psychological structures and common early experiences shared by all mankind. The same basic psychological processes and complexes are expressed in individual products (dreams, stories, day-dreams), and in cultural products (art, literature, folklore, wit, religion, law, science), because these complexes are basic and central to human experience.

Freud's writings are among the most ambitious attempts in history to present a comprehensive interpretation of religion. The topics Freud dealt with include, first of all, a developmental theory of religion, for humanity as a whole and for each individual. Freud also attempted to explain the functions and consequences of religion, for both society and the individual.

Freud's theoretical explanation for the origin and existence of religion is based on certain presumed universal psychological experiences and processes: the universal experience of helplessness, the tendency for compensation through fantasy, and the experience of early relations with protective figures. Every individual is psychologically prepared by these universal experiences to accept religious ideas which are obviously culturally transmitted. The question about the world of spirits is: Does this world exist "out there" and if it does not where is it. The psychological answer given by psychoanalysis is that it exists within, in our own mental apparatus and our own mental abilities to fantasize and project. The world of spirits, the supernatural world unseen and somehow felt in religious experience, is a projection of the internal world. Psychoanalytic theory explains both the origin of supernaturalist ideas and their specific contents.

Freud's theory does not suggest that the individual creates his religion on his own, out of nothing, but that childhood experiences within the family prepare the individual for the cultural system of religion. Belief in omnipotent gods

is a psychic reproduction of the universal state of helplessness in infancy. Like an idealized father, God is the projection of childish wishes for an omnipotent protector. If children can outgrow their dependence, he concluded with cautious optimism, then humanity may also hope to leave behind its prevalent and immature fantasies.

Psychoanalysis has had more to say about religious actions than any of the various traditions in academic psychology. It is the one psychological approach to the understanding of religion which has had a major effect on both religion as an institution, and on the study of religion. Psychoanalytic approaches to the question of culture and religion, and to the question of individual integration in society, have affected all social science disciplines. The psychoanalytic study of religious beliefs and institutions has drawn considerable attention on the part of scholars in the fields of religion, history, sociology, and anthropology. Psychoanalysis is the only major psychological theory which offers an explanation of religion as part of a comprehensive theory of human behavior, in which religion is presented as an instance of general psychological forces in action.

In this area, as in many others, Sigmund Freud's writings offer a rich variety of hypotheses regarding various religious beliefs and practices. Some of the better-known hypotheses derived from psychoanalytic theory are the father-projection hypotheses, i.e., the idea that the images of the gods are derived from childhood experiences with paternal (and maternal) figures, and the super-ego projection hypothesis, i.e., the idea that the gods are a reflection and echo of the unconscious and severe conscience which all humans share.

Judging by their immense influence in all the academic fields which study religion, psychoanalytic ideas seem to be of truly enduring value for the psychological understanding of religion. We really have no other theory that matches the scope of psychoanalytic interpretations of culture and religion. Enlightening, that is the greatest compliment we can pay psychoanalytic ideas and that is exactly what psychoanalytic approaches wish to be. They represent the continuation of Enlightenment tradition in regard to human activities around ideas of spirituality and the sacred.

See also: [➤ Ego](#) [➤ Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [➤ Id](#) [➤ Primal Horde Theory](#) [➤ Psychoanalysis](#) [➤ Super-Ego](#) [➤ Transference](#) [➤ Unconscious](#)

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Freud, Sigmund, and Religion

Lorna Lees-Grossmann

Freud was notorious for his anti-religious stance. He seems to have gone out of his way to offend believers, referring to the “barbarous god of volcanoes and wildernesses whom I grew to dislike very much” (Freud, 1970: 102). Despite this, he accepts that in some cases the mild neurosis of religion was preferable to a more complex and distressing disorder, and argues the parallels between religion and psychoanalysis are striking.

Neurosis

Religion itself for Freud is a form of madness (Freud, 1995 SE XII: 269). He draws an analogy between the faith-based belief of the religious believer and that of the paranoid, who clings to his or her paranoid delusion in spite of any and all evidence to the contrary. He draws another between the ceremony and ritual associated with religious practice and the obsessive's need to engage in repetitive behavior. Religion can rescue people from an individual neurosis, although it does not cure them: it merely substitutes a universal neurosis for a personal one:

- ▶ In view of these similarities and analogies one might venture to regard obsessional neurosis as a pathological counterpart of the formation of religion and to describe

that neurosis as an individual religiosity and religion as a universal neurosis (Freud, 1995 SE XII: 11126–11127).

The distinction between religion and what is commonly accepted as neurosis is merely in the numbers of participants involved: the paranoiac indulges in a *folie à un(e)*, the religious in a *folie à tous*. The ritual inherent in religion makes it an obsessional neurosis: as a result of the unresolved Oedipus complex in the adult, the rituals of religion are aimed at propitiating the father and preventing his anger. Alternatively, religion can be seen as illusory: a wish-fulfilment through projection. A strong desire can be externalised and become a belief in the same way that, when we sleep, a strong wish-fulfilment is projected as a dream. In the case of Christianity, the prospect of eternal life is a fulfilment of the wish not to die.

Freud's assertion is that the Oedipus and Electra complexes are at the psychological core of all human beings. This sort of incestual tension necessarily has a negative effect on the family, and so the tension is neutralised through the transference of the desire for the parent onto a less divisive recipient.

In Christianity, God replaces the father figure, and Mary the Mother of Christ the mother. The desire to kill the parent and thus escape the threat of castration is also accounted for in Christianity, argues Freud, through the crucifixion of Christ as part of the Holy Trinity. Christianity also allows for the expiation of guilt through its transference onto Christ, the perpetual sacrificial lamb. Religion is a sign that the Oedipus complex has not been successfully overcome.

Transference

The key issue at hand here is that of transference: it is the mode of healing in both psychoanalysis and religion. Jung wrote of his first meeting with Freud: "Suddenly he asked me out of the blue, 'And what do you think about the transference?' I replied with the deepest conviction that it was the alpha and the omega of the analytic method, whereupon he said, 'Then you have grasped the main thing'" (Jung, 1954: 8).

In transference in psychoanalysis, the analyst takes on the role of the parent, which is the role taken on by God in religious belief. This parallel was not lost on Freud, who despite his avowed disdain for religion recognised its potential as a healing mechanism as well as a symptom of neurosis.

Freud's letters imply an uncertainty in his criticisms of religion that are not reflected in his work: he comments in a letter to Ferenczi that "I regard [*The Future of an*

Illusion] as weak analytically and inadequate as a self-confession" (Jones, 1962: 587). Also, when he found analogies to be insufficient proof against religion he searched for historical proofs, and delayed the publication of *Moses and Monotheism* because he was unable to find them and was therefore displeased with the work: "there is also the consideration that my contribution does not seem to me well founded enough nor does it please me much. So it is not the right occasion for a martyrdom. Finis for the time being" (Jones, 1962: 622).

Freud attempted to dismiss the historicity of religion *a priori* with no regard for any information he might have received suggesting alternative theories to his already-concluded conclusion. For Freud, the belief in God is understandable to an extent, although he considered the belief to be unworthy of modern human beings and "to be understood on the pattern of the individual neurotic symptoms familiar to us" (Freud, 1995 SE XXIII: 58):

- ▶ We understand how a primitive man is in need of a god as creator of the universe, as chief of his clan, as personal protector . . . A man of later days, of our own day, behaves in the same way. He, too, remains childish and in need of protection, even when he is grown up; he thinks he cannot do without support from his god (Freud, 1995 SE XXIII: 128).

What he found objectionable was not that these early and primitive people chose to accept the existence of a powerful God who would protect them, but that the character of that God was changed to suit their own changing purpose.

- ▶ [T]he Persian government of Egypt (of the fifth century BC) conveyed information to them of the new rules of worship issued from Jerusalem. Going back to earlier times, we may say that the god Yahweh certainly bore no resemblance to the Mosaic god. Aten had been a pacifist . . . No doubt Yahweh was better suited to a people who were starting out to occupy new homelands by force (Freud, 1995 SE XXIII: 63).

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Fundamentalism

Louis Hoffman · Erica Palmer

The term fundamentalism has been associated with a variety of meanings since its inception into the English language during the early twentieth century through Christianity. At the outset, it was intended to convey a belief in the need to return to *the fundamentals of faith*. Increasingly, fundamentalism has been associated with a narrow, rigid approach to religious belief across various world religions. Fundamentalism, once a Christian term, can now rightly be applied to Islamic, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, and other forms of fundamentalism. When used in popular culture today, it often is intended to have a pejorative connotation to it.

Fundamentalism as a Reaction to Modernism

Fundamentalism has often been understood as a response to modernity and the secularism that accompanied it. Several threats to religion accompanied modernity (Hoffman and Kurzenberger, 2008). First, religion was displaced from its privileged position. In premodern times, the church and religious authority retained the most influential positions of power in shaping the masses. As modernism emerged, scientists, academics, and politicians emerged as the new sources of influence. Fundamentalism, in part, can be understood as an attempt to reclaim an authoritative place for religion.

Second, religious ways of knowing, which were generally based in claims of revealed knowledge from God or an ultimate authority, were called into question. In premodern times, religion did not need to defend its ways of knowing; they were a given. Fundamentalism served as a way of clearly defining what should be a given, or a fundamental of faith, that does not need to defend itself against scientific scrutiny.

Third, religion was changed by modernity. In premodern times, faith was sufficient. However, in modern times

faith needed to be supported by science and rationalism. Systematic theology was replaced by apologetics. During modernity and into postmodernity, there was an increasing popularity in creationism and popular books, such as *The Case for Christ* by Strobel (1998), which claimed scientific evidence of the truth of religion. Although fundamentalism often incorporates selectively chosen scientific evidence to support its position, it also generally claims that there is no need for such evidence.

The September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks and Fundamentalism

Although fundamentalism had already begun accumulating many negative associations, the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center Towers in the United States on September 11, 2001 powerfully impacted the way fundamentalism was understood. The terrorists were labeled “Islamic fundamentalists” and “Islamic extremists” by many in the news media and academic community. Through this, extremism and fundamentalism united as synonymous terms. The number of individuals who would self-identify as fundamentalists since this time has decreased.

The contemporary usage of the term fundamentalism is often used to distinguish a particular way of being religious or type of religiosity. Psychological measures, such as Fundamentalism Scale-Revised and Religious Fundamentalism Scale, have been developed to identify fundamentalism (Hill and Hood, 1999). In these, fundamentalism is conceived as more absolutist and rigid. Fundamentalism is defined as being related to a less critical and more literal interpretation of sacred texts, more antagonistic and critical views of other religious groups, defensive of the correctness of a particular religious group or belief, and increased evangelistic fervor.

Research on Fundamentalism

Since September 11, 2001, psychological theory and research attempting to understand and explain fundamentalism has become prolific. Most of this research can be seen in two broad categories: social-psychological research and personality research. Common to both approaches is the assumption that fundamentalism is often personally and socially dangerous and that fundamentalism often is a product of social and psychological forces more than religious factors.

Social psychological research emphasizes the role of the group or culture (Rogers, Loewenthal, Lewis, Amlot,

Cinnirella, et al., 2007). Terror management theory, one social psychological approach, suggests that mortality salience (i.e., reminders of death) increase in-group identification; these in-groups are often conservative or fundamentalistic. Friedman (2008), for example, found an increase in fundamentalism associated with mortality salience. Self esteem, however, is conceived as an intervening variable. Low self-esteem increases the influence of mortality salience while high self-esteem serves as a buffer therefore lowering the impact. From the social psychology perspective, various personal factors such as psychopathology, tendencies toward conformity, and self esteem may interact with contextual factors, such as mortality salience, to increase the likelihood of one developing a fundamentalist perspective.

Hood, Hill, and Williamson (2005) represent one of the most thorough perspectives from the individual or personality side of fundamentalism. This is a more balanced perspective on fundamentalism, recognizing both the positive and negative sides of fundamentalism. From a more sympathetic viewpoint, fundamentalism often is part of a search for meaning and community. In general, however, fundamentalism has been associated with more negative concepts including authoritarianism, a rigid cognitive style, narrow-mindedness, and defensiveness against doubt (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003).

Empirical research has also associated fundamentalism with a number of outcomes. For instance, it is generally thought that fundamentalists have more oppressive patriarchal worldview, increased likelihood of prejudice, and domestic violence (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003). As has already been discussed, there is also a frequently hypothesized link between fundamentalism and terrorism.

Conclusion

A complete understanding of fundamentalism must take into consideration the personal, social/cultural, historical, and religious factors that contribute to the development of fundamentalism. From scholarly and ethical viewpoints, it is necessary to take into consideration both the positive aspects of fundamentalism as well as the potential dangers of fundamentalism when associated with more extremists and militant groups.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Faith](#)

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G

Gardens, Groves, and Hidden Places

David A. Leeming

Gardens, Groves, and other such “hidden” places are often sacred in religious stories. Gardens and Groves and other hidden places can represent an earthly paradise, as in the Garden of Eden of the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible. Like temples and walled cities, they are protective places, metaphors for cosmos, against ever-threatening chaos. They are places of birth or rebirth. Jesus is born in a humble stable; the Buddha is born in a grove. Muhammad receives revelation in a cave, the Buddha finds enlightenment under a tree in a grove, and Jesus prepares for his passion in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Psychologically, the sacred space in question may be said to represent the pre-conscious mind, the center of the world for the individual, the place where the ego resides and in which it achieves revelation or awakening to Self. It is also the place that can be threatened by outside forces such as those represented in the Abrahamic tradition by the Devil, who, in a sense, shares the garden – the psyche – with the individual.

See also: [Devil](#) [Jesus](#) [Self](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Gayatri

Fredrica R. Halligan

One of the most ancient of Hindu goddesses, known to have been worshipped as “the Mother of the Vedas.” She is extremely powerful and is depicted with five heads (for the five elements of creation: earth, water, fire, air and ether) and ten arms. In Hinduism goddesses are important because they represent the power (*shakti*) of their male counterparts.

The *mantra* (q.v.) dedicated to *Gayatri* is said to be the most potent of all *mantras*. It is 14-word prayer for enlightenment and is also spoken whenever a devotee is endangered. Because of its power, the *Gayatri mantra* should not be treated casually.

Psychologically, *Gayatri* and her *mantra* can be beneficial for twenty-first century spiritual feminists both as a feminine god-image and as a source for prayer and/or meditation.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [Femininity](#) [Mantra](#) [Shakti](#)

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Gender Roles

Philip Browning Helsel

Gender roles refer to the social roles with which a person identifies relating to their gender. As social roles, they are “shared expectations that apply to persons who occupy a certain social position or are members of a particular social category” (Eagly, 2000: 448). Gender roles exist at the intersection between subjective experience and cultural understandings of what it means to be a man or a woman, referring to a set of conditions that are broadly consensual within a culture. As such, gender roles are “injunctive norms” which depict how persons should behave, “[producing] social disapproval and efforts to induce compliance” if they are broken (Eagly, 2000: 449).

However, gender roles imply more than rational self-conscious participation in societal patterns. They also include “general mannerisms, deportment and demeanor; play preferences and recreational interests; spontaneous topics of talk in unprompted conversation and casual comment; content of dreams, daydreams, and fantasies; replies to oblique inquiries and projective tests; evidence of erotic practices, and finally, the person’s own reply to direct inquiry” (Rudacille, 2005: 105).

Gender roles have a close, but not equivalent relationship to gender identity. Gender roles fluctuate between the poles of identity and action, self-identification and the way one is defined by others. The concept of gender roles refers not strictly to whether one thinks of oneself as male or female, but the way this conviction is played out in the cultural arena, including “situational constraints” that can maintain behavior that “seems fitting” to men and women (Rudacille, 2005: 56). These cultural patterns tend to reinforce the needs of a particular society. Societies frequently cultivate “natural” explanations of gender which can be seen to shore up certain social practices. This tendency has been called the “sexual division of labor,” and has been linked to wider economics needs and interests (Chodorow, 1978: 3).

“Natural,” or essentialist, explanations of gender tend to describe men and women as possessing fixed qualities which inevitably lead to certain kinds of behaviors. In this “sex/gender scheme...[people] identify sexual difference with both biological/physiological dimensions (sex), and dispositional/psychological and social characteristics (gender)” (Jones, 2000: 27). The common epigram “anatomy is destiny” is a well-known distillation of this concept. The

primary challenge to this view has come from the feminist movement in Western societies at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning again in the 1960s (Rudacille, 2005: 43). The critique of gender has varied in degree, with some suggesting that the “raw material” of biological sex is the fundamental baseline which is then shaped by culture and circumstance. According to these theorists, the biological basis remains an “unalterable...given” that is fixed at a “chromosomal and genetic” level (Jones, 2000: 35). Others suggest that the cultural construction of gender is even more thoroughgoing than this, and that, on an epistemological level, culture determines everything we know about being man and woman. At this level, the self is seen as a “space through which cultural constructs move...are contested and changed” (Jones, 2000: 37).

Commentary

Psychoanalysis has placed a strong emphasis on the psychic impact of the memory traces of parents upon the development of the child. These memory traces are laid down through the activities of care for children and maintenance of the home, a province of activity that is adjudicated by gender roles (Bollas, 1987: 24). The traditional oedipal story, which involves a boy’s desire for his mother and rivalry with his father, has been expanded in a variety of directions as gender roles have become more flexible, with the understanding that this earlier model depended upon the father as the breadwinner and the mother as full-time homemaker (Mitchell and Black, 1995: 257). More recent psychoanalytic explorations of oedipal conflict and sexual orientation have suggested multiple permutations of this myth, based in part upon rapid changes in gender roles in Western societies (Chodorow, 1994: 42). Psychogenic explorations have demonstrated the manner in which gender roles are internalized through the “production” of men and women by the kind of parenting that they receive as children (Chodorow, 1978: 36).

The parents’ practical activities of childcare contribute directly to their child’s image of God. In Freud’s projection theory, the image of God arises out of our experience of and ongoing need for the idealized father of childhood. Freud calls God a “father substitute...a copy of the father as he is seen and experienced in childhood,” before one’s ideal image of one’s father is challenged (Freud, 1923/2001: 46). D. W. Winnicott shifted the psychic weight from father to mother, suggesting that religious belief was created in the same environment of care that transpired between the mother and child (Winnicott, 1953/

2005: 18). Ana-Marie Rizutto agreed that attachment to one's parents is reflected in one's images of God, but insisted that Freudian theory must leave room for religious images to develop as one's understanding of one's parents change (Rizzuto, 1979: 43). Scholars such as Diane Jonte-Pace and Margaret Hebblethwaite have contributed to the understanding of God that derives from the experience of motherhood, in direct contrast to Freud's emphasis on the Divine Father (Miller-McLemore, 2001: 453, 466).

It seems that further work must be done, following feminist thought, which would take into account the impact of shifting gender roles upon the psychological health and religious beliefs of modern persons. It has been demonstrated that mothers are spending more time away from the home, with fathers increasing their active care of children, even if not enough to compensate for the absence of the mother (Lamb, 2000: 339). If mothers are less involved in childcare and fathers somewhat more involved in both childcare and caring for the home, what might be the psychological and religious consequences for the development of children? Recent research points to the fact that children who are raised in more androgynous environments experience "increased cognitive competence, less sex-stereotyped beliefs, and a more internal locus of control" (Lamb, 2000: 340).

As guarantors of societal order, traditional religions have frequently reinforced gender roles through appeals to the authority of tradition and scriptures. In such mythology, men have been deemed as spiritual, while women seen as carnal, with bodies that need to be managed and controlled by religious authority (Hawthorne, 2007: 1255). Women have only begun to be allowed into leadership positions in these religions in the last half of the twentieth century (Hawthorne, 2007: 1254). In recent decades, "smaller religious bodies with more conservative convictions about the roles of women (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, some Reformed churches, Anabaptists, and Mormons) [have been] marked by the greatest inequality between men and women" (Christiano, 2000: 53). At the same time, in Mexico, religion has been an avenue for freedom from abuse and exploitation, as women have found an opportunity in religious communities to develop identities separate from their alcoholic or abusive husbands (Fortuny Loret De Mola, 2000: 365). Furthermore, women have frequently been involved from the inception in new religious movements, and invited to take quite active roles within them (Hawthorne, 2007: 1255).

Gender roles are changing in many societies around the world, with women experiencing more freedom and education, and men more involved in activities such as

childcare and the maintenance of the home. These changes lead to a sense of uncertainty, especially since gender roles reflect deep-seated beliefs about the nature of reality. It has been argued that for men and women, more gender flexibility means an increase in mental health and well-being, as well as a decrease in involvement in fundamentalist religion. At the same time, even in societies where women have increasing rights and responsibilities, they are often faced with "different expectations" than men even in the "same workplace role" (Eagly, 2000: 448). While fathers are becoming more involved in the care of children, they still often take less responsibility for children than mothers, and placing women in the difficult position of juggling responsibilities at work and home (Lamb, 2000: 339). It is still far from clear how these changes will be adjudicated in a rapidly shifting society.

See also: [▶ Father](#) [▶ Female God Images](#) [▶ Femininity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Shakti](#)

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Genesis

Ingeborg del Rosario

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Jewish Torah and Christian Scriptures. The word “genesis” is of Greek etymology, meaning origin or birth, and refers to the first verse of the book: “In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth. . .” (Genesis 1:1). *The book of Genesis* has 50 chapters, which are generally divided into two sections: primeval history (Genesis 1–11) and the narrative cycles of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 12–50). Genesis 1–11 contains the well-known accounts of the creation story (Genesis 1–2), the fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), the murder of Abel by his brother Cain (Genesis 4), the story of Noah and his ark, the great flood and the divine promise against destruction of every living creature symbolized in the rainbow (Genesis 6–9), and the confusion of languages around the building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

While authorship of the *book of Genesis* was popularly attributed to Moses, biblical scholars recognize it as a redaction from four different sources or traditions. Taken as a whole or a single work of literary unity, the *book of Genesis* encompasses universal themes of creation, the existence of envy and hatred, sin, and strife, violence and evil, wholeness and brokenness, intimacy and isolation, independence and reliance, work and rest, call and response, security and sojourn, conflict and resolution, faith and doubt, hope and despair, the sacrifice of life and the promise of life restored, the destruction and fecundity of generations, birth and death. The existence of the *book of Genesis* acknowledges the totality of universal experience, the breadth and depth of human reality. It embraces the presence of the Divine Who creates and sustains, accompanies and wrestles with, is angered by yet remains constant and faithful to humanity that is formed in godly image and likeness.

The recognition of origins and beginnings in the *book of Genesis*, of creation from chaos, of evil, sin and

destruction, and the divine promise of faithfulness, resonates with the depth understanding of human dynamics as shaped and rooted in early personal history and developmental origins. While some therapeutic interventions may focus on the here-and-now of current thoughts, feelings and behaviors, the psychoanalytic perspective recognizes the fundamental importance and value of encountering the genesis of the individual and attending to sources of childhood wounding and root experiences of trauma, noting how these contribute to the complexity of the dynamics of the individual’s life experience. The *book of Genesis* focuses primarily on the story of one lineage, recounting the history of first generations and their descendants. A psychodynamic orientation to treatment regards the historical dimension of self with comprehensiveness and depth, considering family of origin influences on the formation and development of the individual. It also acknowledges the reality of trans-generational and intergenerational transmission of trauma, addictions, psychological wounding and illness. The *book of Genesis* presents the Divine Being neither absent nor distant but present, at times in the space of silence and attuned rest yet always creatively emotionally and relationally engaged in the journey of the spiritual ancestors. The *book of Genesis* also recognizes the interweaving congruence and evolution of past, present and future. Movement and progression in psychoanalytic treatment involves often intense and complex processes of working through transference and counter-transference in the safety of the holding environment and consistency of frame of the therapeutic relationship. The space of silent yet attuned presence held by the analyst holds and receives communication that is verbal, at times non-verbal, with unsymbolized expressions often reenacted from unconscious or fragmented relational dynamics of the client’s past. Analytic listening is creative and engaged, relationally sensitive, aware of and wrestling with varied nuances and symbols, dreams, fantasy and imagery, the multiple layers of meaning and yet unformulated experiences, all the while attuned to the being of the client, past unfolding into present, and the limitless play and possibility of the self-becoming in the future.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Bible](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Transference](#) [Trauma](#)

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Genetics of Religiosity

Gilbert Todd Vance

The field of behavior genetics is concerned with identifying genetic and environmental effects, which are sources of individual differences in behaviors and traits. While it may at first appear that religiosity would not be influenced by genes, studies have shown that genetic effects contribute to individual differences in a wide array of traits and behaviors, including social attitudes, personality, vocational interests, IQ, and religiosity. The idea that religiosity is a heritable trait is not a new one. In his 1869 book *Hereditary Genius*, Sir Francis Galton wrote that “. . . a pious disposition is decidedly hereditary” (Galton, 1869/1978: 274).

Twin studies, which are one method of observing genetic and environmental effects, take advantage of the fact that monozygotic (MZ) twins share 100% of their genes, while dizygotic (DZ) twins share on average 50% of their segregating genes and are no more alike genetically than non-twin siblings. Therefore, differences in MZ twins provide evidence of environmental effects whereas differences in DZ twins can result from the effects of genes or the environment. A greater similarity in MZs than DZ twins is generally seen as evidence for a genetic contribution to the observed behavior or trait. In twin studies, the variance observed in a trait can be partitioned into the latent variables additive genetic effects, common environmental effects, and unique environmental effects. Common environmental effects are those environmental effects that make twins more similar (e.g., a shared upbringing in the same household) while unique environmental effects make twins different from one another (e.g., an experience had by one twin but not the other).

Behavior genetic studies have shown that nearly all psychological traits, including religiosity, are moderately to substantially heritable. A small number of twin studies

to date have shown that the degree of observed genetic influence on religiosity is affected by variables such as age, sex, and what aspect of religiosity is being measured. Specifically, at least one twin study has found less genetic influence on religiosity at younger ages and a larger genetic influence on the expression of religiosity in adults. Several twin studies have reported differences in the magnitude of genetic effects on religiosity in females compared to males. Unfortunately, there are not enough twin studies to make definitive conclusions about the relationships between additive genetic effects and age and sex on the expression of religiosity. The degree of genetic influence on the expression of religiosity also appears to be influenced by what specific aspect of religiosity is measured. Studies examining certain single-item measures of religiosity such as religious affiliation (i.e., whether one is Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) have found little or no evidence for genetic effects. On the other hand, studies that have used multiple items to more broadly measure the religiosity construct have typically found evidence for genetic effects.

These findings must be viewed within the context of the limitations of twin studies. First, very large sample sizes are typically needed to detect common environmental effects, that is, the effect of those experiences that make twins similar, also called the family environment. Most twin studies are underpowered to detect the influence of the family environment. Furthermore, two twins may experience the same environmental event but respond differently to the event. This event would be represented in a twin study as a unique environmental effect, although it was experienced by both twins in the same environment. Despite these limitations, a small number of studies to date suggest that certain aspects of religiosity are influenced by additive genetic effects.

See also: [Religiosity](#)

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Genitals and the Cult of Fertility

◆ Sex and Religion

Glossolalia

Kenneth L. Nolen

Glossolalia is derived from two New Testament Greek words: *glossai* meaning “tongues” or “languages” and *lalien*, “to speak.” Glossolalia or speaking in tongues has most often been identified with Pentecostal and

Charismatic faith traditions. Glossolalia is usually but not exclusively a religious phenomenon. Glossolalia consists of words and utterances made by an individual that resembles a language unknown to the person speaking. Individuals practice glossolalia in private or public worship settings in which the speaker may also be in an excited psychological state or may enter into a blissful and peaceful meditative or prayer like stance. Groups within Pentecostal and Charismatic movements agree that Glossolalia is a manifestation or gift of the Holy Spirit, but disagree as to whether or not it is the certifying initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals and Charismatics believe that through the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit they are speaking a spontaneous and unpremeditated heavenly language praising God or giving a prophetic word. They teach that glossolalia or speaking in tongues is a distinctive gift as a result of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. What they do not agreed upon is whether Glossolalia is the initial evidence proving baptism in the Holy Spirit or if it is a distinctive and desirable gift but that other manifestations may indicate that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Glossolalia and the doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit are based on events occurring on Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1–4. This event was predicted by Jesus to the assembled men and women in the Upper Room (Luke 24:49) and again just before he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:4–5; and Acts 1:8). When the day of Pentecost came, the disciples were meeting together when the foretold event occurred. The author of Acts states that, “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:2–4).

Glossolalia and the charismata, spiritual gifts, of the Holy Spirit were paramount in the birth and growth of the fledgling church during the first and second centuries. By the time of Origen in the third Century and Augustine in the late fourth and fifth, it is clear that Church leaders considered the charismata as attributes only for the early Church. Augustine established the belief held by many today that the charismata, including glossolalia, ended with the deaths of the original apostles.

Notwithstanding Augustine’s belief, there is evidence of the continuation of glossolalia and the charismata of the Holy Spirit throughout the more than 2000 years of Christian Church history. However, the start of the modern Pentecostal movement is generally credited to Charles

Fox Parham and the students of Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas in the early 1900s. From Topeka across the United States including the Azusa Street revival held by William Seymour, a new Pentecostal revival had begun.

The most significant tenet of faith derived from the revival at Topeka and reaffirmed at Azusa was the verbalization that glossolalia or speaking in tongues was the biblical initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism. This monumental doctrine offered an objective criterion for the seeker of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and others to determine whether that event had occurred or not. This doctrine shaped the modern Pentecostal movement as it spread across denominational lines, establishing new denominations and non-denominational faith groups until it is now the largest and fastest growing Christian religious movement worldwide.

Commentary

Glossolalia is not limited to Christianity or to religion. Ecstatic utterances similar to those used in the first century church at Corinth were also found at the oracle of Delphi, a shrine of the Greek god Apollo. Some consider the chants of voodoo witch doctors, African animists, and the Tibetan Buddhist Monks, the prayers of Hindu holy men, and the basic primeval sounds produced by others in their religious setting as glossolalia. Many of these worshipers make sounds and utterances that approximate purported languages found in the glossolalia of Pentecostal and Charismatic worship services. The difference is source and content. Pentecostals and Charismatics believe that any glossolalia not originating from the Holy Spirit and not worshipping God and Jesus to be a demonic counterfeit.

Glossolalia can occur in some known psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis or as the consequence of neurological disorders. Earlier psychological studies viewed glossolalia as a byproduct of an unhealthy mind or a personality disorder. Some researchers viewed glossolalia as hysteria, mass hypnosis, regression, an altered state of consciousness, or a learned behavior. Recent psychological studies have successfully challenged these views and have shown that glossolalia is a legitimate religious activity and not psychopathological. Generally, Pentecostals who speak in tongues have a healthy and normal personality and speaking in tongues may be conducive to good physical as well as mental health. Some practitioners claim that glossolalia may relieve psychopathology. However, a major study of religious glossolalia concluded that there is no consistent evidence supporting curative effects.

Linguists in recent years have made studies of glossolalia with some claiming that Pentecostal glossolalia are languages that can be understood by anyone who knows the language. Other linguists maintain that the sounds and utterances of glossolalia are actually unrelated syllables of the speakers own known language and are not a true language. Early Pentecostals believed that glossolalia was given to the Church for the purpose of world evangelism. Many of them left for foreign mission fields fully expecting the Holy Spirit supernaturally to give them the language of the native peoples. This initial expectation and the resulting experience was a bitter disappointment to aspiring missionaries who did not want to invest years in language study. Most Pentecostals have come to the realization that it is not God's divine purpose to bestow languages for missionary work and have had to reevaluate the biblical understanding of glossolalia. Glossolalia is not a human language and cannot be interpreted or studied as a human language. Glossolalia is a language of faith. The person speaking in tongues is speaking in an unknown language from the soul or spirit directly to God.

See also: [Baptism](#) [Christianity](#) [Holy Grail](#) [New Testament](#) [Possession](#) [Possession, Exorcism, and Psychotherapy](#) [Prayer](#) [Spirit Writing](#) [Violence and Religion](#)

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Gnosticism

Marta Green

Origin of Gnosticism

The word “Gnosticism” derives from the word *gnosis*, the Greek word for knowledge. Gnosticism has its roots in pre-Christian Jewish and Hellenistic pagan thought that emerged around the Mediterranean in the first centuries CE. Christian Gnosticism is based on the belief in secret knowledge as a means to salvation, not the death and resurrection of Jesus. This belief made Christian Gnostics heretical in the eyes of the early church.

When the Gnostics spoke of knowledge, it was specifically the knowledge of God to which they were referring. They refer not to an objective knowledge of God, but a profoundly subjective knowledge in which the knower is radically transformed both by God and by the very experience of knowing. German philosopher, Hans Jonas (1903–1993) wrote one of the first texts on Gnosticism: *The Gnostic Religion* (1958) written before he had access to the Nag Hammadi scrolls. He writes:

- ▶ “Knowledge” is not just theoretical information about certain things, but is itself, a modification of the human condition, charged with performing a function in the bringing about of salvation. . . the ultimate “object” of gnosis is God: its event in the soul transforms the knower himself by making him a partaker in the divine existence. Thus in the more radical systems like Valentinian the “knowledge” is not only an instrument of salvation but itself the very form in which is the goal of salvation, i.e., ultimate perfection, is possessed (Jonas, 2001: 35).

Theology of Gnosticism

The main theological tenet of Gnostic thought is the radical separation of the all-good, all-light transcendent God from the dark, evil world. The transcendent God did not create the world, nor intervene in it. The cosmos was instead made and governed by rulers or Archons who ruled humans, body and soul, entrapping them in natural passions so that they would never escape their power by returning to the Transcendent God. Archons were often named by the Hebrew names for God: Iao, Sabaoth, Adonai, Elohim, El Shaddai. The name of their leader

was the Demiurge, who was “often painted in the distorted features of the Old Testament God.” The name for the tyrannical world-rule is *heimarmene* (Jonas, 2001: 44–45).

Such a theology could not help but lead to a radical dualism. Though the Archons ruled humans body and soul, making them unconscious of their true nature, there was the chance that humans could be enlivened through a *pneuma* or spark from the Transcendent God. The spark could not leave the Transcendent God directly because this God does not intervene in human life, but the Gnostics believed there was a messenger able to leave the Transcendent and plant a spark in the human soul. This is a Being of knowledge and light, in existence even before the beginning of creation that is able to enter the world as a messenger, outwit the Archons and bring knowledge to slumbering humanity. We see references to this concept in the personification of “Sophia” (Proverbs 3:13–20) in the Hebrew Scriptures, the hymn of “The Word” in the prolog to the Gospel of John (John 1: 1–18) and, of course, the person of Jesus of Nazareth. When humanity receives this knowledge, then they are able at death to escape the powers of the Archons and to rise to the Transcendent God (Jonas, 2001: 44).

As Gnosticism was a theology of emphasizing how the evil gods governing this world separate humans from their true home with the Transcendent God, much of Gnostic literature was concerned with the question of how humans got separated from the Transcendent God in the first place. One of the best known pieces of Gnostic literature is the *Hymn of the Pearl* which describes the journey of the soul as a royal child’s journey from heaven to retrieve a pearl in the bottom of the sea. The pearl is round and thus whole, luminous and created by layering over an irritant; thus the perfect symbol of the self. When the child retrieves the pearl, he returns to his true home in the sky where he is lauded and given his rightful place.

The Gospel of Thomas

For centuries Gnostic literature was known mostly through early Christian polemics against it, but in 1945, 12 jars containing scrolls were found in a cave in Egypt. These texts have come to be called the *Nag Hammadi Library*, written about 350–400 CE and probably hidden in the cave at a time of persecution. The library contains a number of theological texts, alternative gospels

and poetry such as, “Thunder Perfect Mind.” The best known writing from the Library is the Gospel of Thomas, a Gospel purportedly written by Jesus’ twin brother. There is some debate if this is actually a Gnostic text, because it contains no cosmology, which dominates many Gnostic writing, but the Gospel of Thomas does proclaim salvation by knowledge and never mentions the passion and death of Jesus. The Gospel includes much material found in the synoptic Gospels, plus additional material, often about knowledge. For example: #5 “Jesus said, Know what is in front of your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed.” Probably the best known passage from the Gospel: #70 “Jesus said, ‘If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. If you do not have what is within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you’” (Robinson, 1990).

Gnosticism and Psychotherapy

Gnosticism is no longer an active religion, but the search for the secret knowledge that will transform informs studies in philosophy, theology and psychology. Gnosticism holds in common with psychotherapy the belief that meaning is internal, that words of themselves can alter the human condition, and that secret knowledge, be it spiritual or psychoanalytic, transforms. Both Gnosticism and psychotherapy undertake the inner journey to find the self.

See also: [Christianity](#) [God](#) [Self](#)

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God

David M. Moss III

The word “god” is an Anglo-Saxon term of Teutonic origin meaning “one who is greeted” as the object of religious worship. The conception named God is an analogical expression pointing directly toward incomprehensible mystery. That mystery is to be greeted as the inconceivable ultimate Being who ignites all life. God is the creative source of existence within and beyond time and space. God is self-sufficient, absolute spirit, eternally transcending and pervading every dimension of reality.

Philosophy

In western philosophy there are three classical arguments for the existence of God. (1) The Teleological Argument asserts that the universe exhibits both design and purpose. Objects, persons and events have an aim or goal. Their relationship is fashioned by God who guides and directs them toward the fulfillment of their natural directions. That is to say, God exists as the purposive cosmic designer of all that has been, is and will be. (2) The Cosmological Argument contends that the universe could not have come into existence by itself. There is a first cause of all existence, a cause that is uncaused. This primary cause must be God because nothing but God could exist without being caused. (3) The Ontological Argument insists that God is the most perfect being possible and, since that which is perfect but lacking existence is less than perfection that does exist, God exists. Barrels of medieval ink have saturated countless volumes on each of these arguments – many in refutation. In general, modern philosophy believes that the existence of God cannot be proven or rationally demonstrated.

Anthropology

The discipline of anthropology studies religion as belief in a supernatural or non-empirical force, and the action patterns related to that belief. God, as an object of religious worship, is evolutionary. Anthropology, with the support of archeology, suggests that the basic conception of God lies in the awareness of numinous which developed into primitive tribal animisms and sympathetic magic. These tribal beliefs and practices became more articulate as polytheisms developed. The Graeco-Roman

pantheon is a prime illustration of the view that there are many gods affecting human history. Henotheism is a species of polytheism exemplified by ancient Judaism. It is the belief in one God in the presence of many others. The worship of such a god is monolatry.

Monotheism developed as a reaction to polytheism. For instance, classical Jewish monotheism developed out of henotheism as did its derivatives, Christianity and Islam. The foundation of Islam is a conviction that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. Muhammad drew upon Jewish and Christian resources in the design of a monotheistic belief system for Arabia to spread worldwide. He differed radically from Jesus the Nazarene in that Muhammad never claimed to be God or expected that he would be resurrected by Allah. On the one hand, Islam claims Muhammad, though not divine himself, was divinely inspired more than anyone in human history. He was also the driving force of *jihad* (an internal effort of reform) and, most importantly, Allah's secretary for the Koran. On the other hand, Christianity claims that the God of the Jews was physically articulated in the historical Jesus whose resurrected personality or Holy Spirit became a Real Presence directing people toward the mindfulness of love, as well as the value of collective worship in the assembly called church – the metaphorical house of God. Conceptually, this monotheistic Trinity was strongly enabled by Greek philosophy which clarified “substance,” or *ousia*, so that a model of three persons of the same property or nature reveal God, like expressions or manifestations of water in liquid, ice and steam. This unity of Three-in-One and the One-in-Three is eternal and immutable. Christianity claims that Jesus' relationship with God and the Holy Spirit is a monotheism of metaphysical unity. God became a specific man who lived through and beyond death leaving his Holy Ghost or personality to guide disciples into the mindset of God's will or kingdom.

Psychology

Philosophy and anthropology are components of psychology, a science that concentrates on the mind and behavior of living beings. As a perspective and a discipline, psychology centers on the mental and behavioral effects of believing in God. In this instance, it is the conceptual reaction or belief that matters and not the reality or nonexistence of a deity. For Freud, the founder of modern psychology, belief in God could be explained via problematic relationships with father figures. His argument rests on an illusionary model of God growing out of the Oedipus Complex. Many depth-psychologists disagreed with this reductionism. In general,

psychiatry, psychoanalysis and psychology now agree that God concepts develop out of a matrix of intrapsychic and interpersonal components. As a result, most social sciences approach the subject of God with less anthropomorphism than ever before. This is most evident in the growth of spirituality as a dimension of strength and comfort embraced by modern Health Care services and contemporary pastoral theology.

Theology

The current emphasis on spirituality is not a unique insight of postmodernism. In many respects it is a consequence of God being the object of intractable religious customs and symbols. When religion attempts to define God literally, faith is subordinated to reason. Anthropomorphism and idolatry are common results, as well as descriptions of God that may or may not be logical. God, in such instances, is usually portrayed as a noun who sustains mankind in the face of threats and tragedies. This mindset commonly fails to recognize God as a verb revealed in ethical mindfulness and humane behavior.

Theology, as a discipline, seeks to articulate dynamics, properties, characteristics or attributes of God that personally involve human beings whether they know it or not. However, these divine traits are not definitive. To acknowledge God as the “creator,” “redeemer” and “sustainer” is a descriptive interpretation but not a definition in any complete sense, for God cannot be comprehended. Yet there are characteristics of God that are absolutely central to traditional theology.

For a theist, the three essential characteristics or properties of God are: (1) omnipotence, or God's infinite power to create, conserve and destroy anything, anywhere at any time; (2) omniscience or the knowledge of all that is possible to know; and (3) omnipresence or being everywhere without spatial necessity. These absolute properties, along with God's timelessness and perfect freedom, naturally raise questions around events of tragedy, illness and death. Such queries are the focus of theodicy, a dimension of Natural Theology that attempts to justify God's benevolence and justice in a world where misery and evil exist as constant challenges to human development and moral growth.

The fundamental component of theodicy is Providence, a belief system that confronts the tension between ideal good and the ever present reality of evil. God, in this sense, can be recognized as evil turned against itself. Such recognition offers faith that mankind is not a natural accident in a purposeless universe. For God is to be greeted as the essential vitality of all existence – physically, psychologically and spiritually.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Monotheism](#) [▶ Providence](#) [▶ Theodicy](#)

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God Image

Bernard Spilka

A basic, apparently innate, feature of our mental apparatus is the formation of images of reference objects wherever possible. In Western nations subscribing to the Judeo-Christian heritage, one is socialized when young to imagine God as an old bearded man sitting on a throne in Heaven which is located somewhere in the sky. God is invariably male and is pictured as overlooking our planet and its population in such a way that “he” knows everything about everyone. This statement mixes two idea patterns together, a descriptive set of images and certain cognitive and behavioral characteristics. Strictly speaking, God image refers to the former; the God concept is the latter. Concept also includes divine intentions and purposes. These generalizations have unclear limits, hence in specific work, they seriously overlap. Commonly, writers indiscriminately mix the two realms. Where relatively little research has been conducted on the images, a massive amount of study has been directed at God concepts for over a century. Certain widely employed terms seem to share both concept and image features. For example, God as male or God as Father bring to the fore physical and psychosocial traits. These also vary by age of the respondent (Harms, 1944). Overwhelmingly, this work has been conducted on children and adolescents. To adults, drawings of God usually are indistinguishable with regard to gender or parent, but these concepts are provided by the child depicors themselves.

Another conceptual avenue that ties image and concept together derives from Freud (1928) and his psychoanalytic successors. Even though these ideas are popular,

hypotheses about parental roots have not always eventuated in God-father association. This literature has also yielded God-mother and God-self imagery. Strong cultural influences obviously enter into and muddy this research.

A fine overview of research in the area up to 1977 is Pitts bibliography, *The God concept in the child*. More exacting, but still inclusive of both realms is the work of Ladd, McIntosh and Spilka (1998) which deals with the God image drawings of almost 1,000 children.

Though a few projective image analyses stressing personality have been attempted, exacting, reliable treatments of God drawings are largely yet to be reported. Piedmont and Muller (2006) have, however, opened that door conceptually and methodologically. They tie God image to Object-Relations psychodynamic theory and God concept to cognition. Though they appear to have derived many direct God image measures these are not discussed in relation to their indices of God concept. Still, indirectly, they claim a moderate relationship between the two. This, however, has not been detailed or clarified. Until their findings are fully reported and confirmed by others, the significance of distinguishing God image from God concept must be considered indeterminate.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ God Image and Therapy](#) [▶ God Image in Dreams](#)

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God Image and Therapy

Annette Peterson

The God image, rich in myth and symbolism, is a door to the unconscious, providing a wealth of material for

the psychotherapist. At face value, a client's God images reveal his or her relationship to transcendent reality, and is a factor in psychological stability. By examining God images in depth, a therapist can symbolically interpret a client's religious projections as expressive of psychological needs. As a diagnostic tool, God image can be useful for therapy. Therapy can also help a client's God image by disabling a limiting God image or regulating an imbalanced God image. The consideration of God image in therapy can help mental health professionals and their clients gain valuable insight into the client's inner psychological and relational world, and can lead to improved intrapsychic and interpersonal functioning.

God images are strongly influenced by early parental relationships. Therefore, they have vast therapeutic relevance and potential. God images can be explored for insight into a client's self image and early relational environment.

God images can have a positive or negative psychospiritual function. Psychotherapy can draw upon the strength of a beneficial relationship with God, or address negative, conflicting or one-sided God images in a variety of psychotherapeutic forums. It is important to work with the God image according to the client's particular relational matrix, developmental history, and level of psychic balance and integration.

Every person has internalized images of God that undergo developmental changes over the life course based on individual, cultural and spiritual influences. Our God images are mirrors of ourselves. Clinical studies reveal that a person's experiences of God and self are related and mutually influential (Benson and Spilka, 1973; Francis, Gibson, and Robbins, 2001; Greenway, Milne, and Clarke, 2003). Therefore, it makes sense to use the God image in the psychotherapeutic effort to understand and improve the self.

The God image occupies a transitional space between the internal self and the external other. In this transitional space, God is both found and made. Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (1970) recognizes the relational space between self and other as a spiritual place, where God exists in "the between" of relationships, and seems to be at once both self and other.

In *Playing and Reality* (1971) Donald W. Winnicott implied that God could be seen as a transitional object that changes with a person's needs and desires. Winnicott's theory of transitional objects has become a core component of the object relations theory of God image. Winnicott advises the therapist to "play" with the client by joining in exploration of the intermediate space between reality and fantasy. Similarly, Moshe Spero (1992) states

the importance of being able to find a way to buy into a client's God image, thus preserving the therapeutic alliance and allowing God image to be a part of the treatment process, and opening pathways to greater understanding of the God image and its psychic functioning.

Our relational expectations limit our experience of God and our ability to live full, balanced lives in harmony with our environment. By expanding our relational paradigms, therapy can alter God image without being an overt topic of treatment. The therapeutic relationship offers an affirming selfobject function that is paramount to the success of therapy, resulting in a realignment of the personality's deep relational structure. In the course of treatment, the client's interaction with the therapist affects the client's other relationships. Due to the strong interdependence between the client's relationships with therapist, God image, and self image, a successful treatment will improve all aspects of the client's relational matrix, including the God image, without direct focus on the God image.

Therapeutic methods that incorporate direct access and conscious exploration of God images can facilitate the process of psychospiritual insight and maturation. Interventions may seek to strengthen positive God images and improve or limit the damage done by negative God images. The current use of God image theory in psychotherapy is mostly focused on mitigating damage of negative God images, but it is also used in identifying and improving relational patterns – with others, self and God.

God images can first be evaluated during psychotherapeutic assessment. "[C]areful exploration of the subjective description of an individual's God representation and the vicissitudes of the relationship with God may reveal precious information about the type of psychic and interpersonal events that led to the particular characteristics attributed to God. In this sense the God representation has the potential of a projective test" (Rizzuto, 1991: 56).

Even if the relationship with God is not a presenting problem or an easily identifiable source of distress or impairment, ambivalent or conflicting God images exact a psychic toll on the whole person. Strongly negative God images exacerbate psychological problems and inhibit recovery, and therefore require clinical intervention. Healthy and helpful God images are a powerful source of psychological resilience and can be drawn upon to enhance coping and facilitate healing.

Psychotherapists can look for the source of God images in early parental relations, other significant relational experiences, religious history, and religious paradigms shared by the larger culture. God image, self-image

and world view are all developed in the context of our early relationships and continue to be mutually influential throughout the life course. The relationship between God image and the client's relational patterns can be explored in therapy for their mutual influence on a client's current relational functioning. Interpretive gains may be made "by concentrating on a person's felt bond with the sacred and conceptualizing that bond as a reflection of the inner object world and by listening through that bond for echoes of internalized affective patterns of relationship" (Jones, 1991: 110).

The work of therapy often brings the client's adult understanding to attend to the repressions of his or her inner wounded child. Similarly, when images of God are openly discussed, a current mature understanding can shed light on past and present relationship with the divine. Therapist and client may identify multiple or conflicting God images that cause enduring psychospiritual conflict and/or distress. Conscious beliefs and unconscious expectations of God may collide. The damaging weight of repression and its dangerous backlash can result in an underlying suffering that is not understood. This may mean that early religious images and beliefs should be unearthed, even if a client believes they are irrelevant and no longer believes in them. Therapy can examine the implicit assumptions we have about God and facilitate greater balance and individuation.

The therapist invites the client to be curious about the psychological function and/or fallout of his or her God images. By taking a religious history and attending to religious associations, the therapist may identify a pattern of psychodynamic motives. The God image can be used in the service of regression, progression, avoidance, resistance, companionship, or as an Oedipal object (Rizzuto, 1993: 27–29). The God image can be a link to a sense of divine mystery or an obstacle/false idol that prevents a healthy and helpful relationship to God. Disavowed God images may indicate the existence of restrictive or implausible God images that preclude the possibility of spiritual experience. Dysfunctional God images need to be examined and deconstructed to make room for healthy God images that are relational and dynamic, balanced, functional and relevant.

God image therapy can take place in a religious or secular therapeutic environment. There are situational advantages to each, and both seek to promote self-reflection and insight, healing and development. People often take religious problems to religious counselors because they feel more understood by someone with a similar background or belief structure. When an insider may be too close to a problem, an outside perspective can

be helpful. A secular therapist with no religious predispositions may offer a client more freedom for doubt and exploration.

Spiritual counselors have the unique benefit of clients who are interested in working directly on their relationship with God. Spiritual counseling and spiritual direction focus primarily on the client's relationship with God, whereas secular therapy will examine a client's inner psychic structure and ways of relating to God, self and others. Both techniques will affect a client's God image and self image by altering the client's sense of place and purpose in the world, as derived from his or her relation to God.

Mary Lou Randour notes, "But not all religious and spiritual experiences are God-centered, although I would argue that all are object relational" (Randour, 1993: 4). Sometimes a client is faith-based or spiritual without being God-centered. In this case the client's object relations with spiritual reality or background of faith can be examined for the client's underlying existential safety net, or for the conflicts or dilemmas that prevent its formation. In clinical cases where it is evident that the concept of God is a central guiding cognitive structure, God images are clearly worth examining directly. However, focusing on religion in therapy could worsen emotional crises if a client has a strongly negative God image. Alternatively, if a parental interpretation of a client's relationship with God is felt as explaining away a deeply held religious belief, the clinical relationship could be jeopardized.

The respectful consideration of God image in therapeutic assessment and treatment requires the therapist to maintain neutrality and prevent his or her own beliefs from interfering with the client's. The therapist needs to inquire into the dynamic meanings of God images and conflicting images without attempting to modify religious ideation.

Spiritual and psychological experiences are linked because they share the goal of integration, the coming together of the fragmented self. Psychological and spiritual development can occur in tandem, mutually aiding or hampering each other. In therapy, as images of self, others and God are examined, rethought, and rearranged, it becomes difficult to ascertain whether psychological health influences perceptions of the divine or vice versa. In some cases, increased self-acceptance permits the belief that God also cares, and a new sense of self demands a new God image to go with it (Jones, 1991: 73–85). In other cases, new possibilities for whom or what God is can loosen the hold of a judging, rejecting God image from early childhood that restricts adult development.

Commentary

Just like religion, the God image is neither good nor bad, but depends on how it is used. It can be the source of problems or their solution. By recognizing what is helpful and harmful about our God images, therapy can work through psychological issues from our religion, improving relationships with God, others and ourselves.

Some may question whether religious beliefs and/or spiritual practices are within the purview of the psychotherapist, and may argue that God should be left in the hands of religious leaders. However, traditional religious instruction may not foster a progressive developmental direction, and can create a one-sided religious faith that results in psychological imbalance. Organized religion tends to resist a dynamic God image, preferring a stabilizing one. With its emphasis on goodness, religion can shame and vilify lesser impulses, exacerbating psychic rifts. Religion should not be an escape from the unconscious, seeking to focus on the good and repress the undesirable aspects of our psyches. At their best, religion and spirituality represent the culmination and completeness of life. Healthy God images are relational and dynamic, functional and mature, balanced and unified, integrated and encompassing. These God images stabilize and perpetuate psychospiritual health and well-being.

A therapist's neutrality can aid a client in the exploration of his/her own beliefs, providing a therapeutic environment for rediscovering and strengthening, or for questioning and reformulating the client's theological system. In any work with the God image, it is important to balance psychological attention to the God image with the spiritual reminder of God's transcendence of our understanding. Our God images are not God, but they mediate our ability to experience and relate to divine reality. "Much can be learned from our particular route to or away from God, from our projected images, as well as about the God we let reach us through our projections" (Ulanov, 2001: 105).

See also: [♣ Buber, Martin](#) [♣ Female God Images](#) [♣ God](#) [♣ God Image](#) [♣ God Image in Dreams](#) [♣ Male God Images](#) [♣ Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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God Image in Dreams

Annette Peterson

Dream characters and images are reflections of ourselves and our images of God.

Sleep gives the brain the opportunity to process and store information from the day. It also provides the opportunity to anticipate the future and practice behavior and decision-making in a variety of contexts.

According to Freud, dreams provide wish-fulfillment of impulses left over from conscious waking life. Freud wrote that dream material is based in "residues of daytime life...struggle for expression during the night" (Freud, 1965: 593). These residual impulses come from what we have failed to deal with consciously, due to circumstance, our own limitations of capacity or capability, or our unconscious struggles that are rejected or suppressed in the daytime.

God images, like self images, are ubiquitous in the form and frequency they take in dreams. The dreamer may

encounter a dream character, object or place that evokes the sublime, an experience of awe, or a sudden epiphany of peace or understanding. God may be directly called upon in dreams, with miraculous results.

Dream images of a cosmic struggle between good and evil reflect internal discord and existential fear. In nightmares, dreamers frequently report being pursued by an evil person or entity, bent on hurting or destroying the dreamer. Although the dream image may be that of an anti-God, or demonic figure, the dream content is still religious in essence, in that it seeks to come to terms with our unconscious demons and the presence of evil in the world.

In psychotherapy, dream images are examined and interpreted for symbolic significance and the thoughts and feelings they evoke. Cultural archetypes are explored for personal resonance. Scriptural parallels may be discussed. Connections are drawn to the present context in order to widen the client's understanding and deepen the personal meaning of his or her God images. When the dream image is considered in light of the client's present situation, client and therapist become aware of significant patterns or underlying conflicts that can now be consciously explored.

Frequently, clients report dreams in which they felt surprised by God. Some dream material did not reflect the client's conscious God images, and they felt disturbed enough to bring the dream into therapy. The dream image can provide the opportunity for the examination and expansion of consciously held God images, furthering the developmental maturation of the client's God images.

Commentary

Dreaming "changes the channel" of our particular everyday reality, therefore dreaming expands our personal horizons and may even be practice for death and what may exist beyond this life.

See also: [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Female God Images](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ God Image and Therapy](#) [▶ Male God Images](#)

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Goddess

[▶ Female God Images](#)

Golden Bough, The

Lee W. Bailey

James G. Frazer

The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, written by the Scottish anthropologist and classicist James George Frazer (1854–1941) at Cambridge University, was a culminating comparative study of world religions seen through the eyes of major themes in nineteenth-century European scholarship. Macmillan published it in two volumes in 1890, in three volumes in 1900, and expanded it in the third edition into 12 volumes by 1915. Due to its wide popularity, a one-volume condensation has been published since 1922. Frazer's originality is that no one before him had ever dug up so many of the "primitive" elements of the religions of Greece, Rome, and the eastern Mediterranean. More boldly, he first compared these on a global scale with the religions of "savages." His work was part of the Enlightenment project of studying one religion not as self-evidently true, but as one of many religions uncovered since the world expanded after Columbus. From the start, *The Golden Bough* was generally a critical and popular success, yet it expressed the sunset of the confident European speculative, imperialistic view of superiority over earlier world cultures. The Greek and Roman classics, long the core of European education, were soon dethroned and world cultures were slowly admitted to the academy via anthropology.

The title "Golden Bough" is taken from the small evergreen plant mistletoe, which, when dried, turns a golden color. It seemed magical to ancients because it grows on the branches of other trees, high above the ground, green when the host tree is bare in winter. Its seeds are carried from tree to tree by birds, and grow as parasites on the branches of larger trees. According to classical authors such as Pliny and Virgil, mistletoe, believed to hold divine fire sent from the gods by lightning, was carried by Aeneas to the underworld, and was

cut from oak trees with a golden blade by Druid priests for magical purposes (Frazer, 1922, Ch. LXVIII).

Science and Primitives

The *Golden Bough* is a leading exponent of the naturalist, empiricist, skeptical philosophy of the Enlightenment, led in Scotland by David Hume. Its avowed purpose is to treat religion in a “scientific” way, seeing it as part of the evolutionary view of the crude, ignorant savage society over the centuries evolving into an enlightened rational Victorian culture. In a positivist fashion, Frazer reduced religion to a kind of deluded intellectual speculation, but he was often really doing psychology, as when he saw terrified fear leading even to bloody sacrifices as major motives for magic and religion (Frazer, 1922: 111). This was unlike others, such as William Robertson Smith, who saw in religion the work of more benevolent emotions, such as love and gratitude (Smith, 1889/2002). Frazer sought evidence for the emotions and motives of ancient pre-historical peoples, and his psychology was rather individualistic rather than social. In nineteenth-century fashion, Frazer assumed the heroic great-man principle of historical change. He assumed that humans seek primarily to control nature, and have, throughout history, tried three major methods.

Frazer’s cultural development scheme has three stages: magic, religion, and science. Each was essentially an intellectual system, the first two clumsy and superstitious, the last triumphant. But evolutionary theory dictated that each corrected some errors and built on other surviving elements of the earlier one, notably the annual quest to assure the continuing fertility of life. The *magical* cultures, which Frazer thought were illustrated by the Australian Aborigine cultures, he proposed, evolved elsewhere into *religious* cultures, characterized by gods and goddesses. This was not enough, however, for as each system’s flaws in dealing with nature and society emerged, *science* was bound to replace the earlier, outdated systems (Frazer, 1922, Ch. LXIX).

The colonialist reports of global indigenous cultures brought back to Europe gripping accounts of practices and beliefs that challenged Western cultural assumptions, and stimulated many scholars like Frazer to seek to explain these strange cultures to a fascinated audience, condescending to relegate the stranger customs to an inferior, barbaric position, a “low mental stratum” (Frazer, 1922: 64). Frazer’s Victorian goal was to explain how “primitives,” desperately seeking food, health and security, terrified of death, childbirth, and destructive weather, badly misunderstood the world. The logic of

religious evolution in this schema is not valid, however. The priest and ethnologist Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954) argued that religion was earlier in evolution than magic, and he saw in primordial high gods the seeds of monotheism (Schmidt, 1926/1935). And today, amid a largely scientific culture, we see hints of “survivals” of magic in rituals such as video games, the continuation of religion in mega-churches, and new age spiritual developments. And even behind the intellectual principles of science we can find psychological roots, such as the belief in domination over nature, that have led to the ecology crisis. As we are seeing in the effects of global warming, one-sided industrial “progress” was blindsided by the neglected environmental factors that are now biting back. Frazer’s view that the purpose of these three systems is to dominate nature is flawed; while magic and science may seek this goal, religion has other purposes, such as ethics, morality, social cohesion, refining instincts, and beliefs about life after death.

Early anthropologists like Frazer called their method of comparative religion “scientific,” meaning a neutral approach to religions not favoring their Christianity, and the method of hypothesis-testing with empirical data. But, by later standards, their early efforts at applying scientific principles to religion, and its social and psychological meanings found in global societies, were sloppy. Frazer’s idea of the comparative study of religion was to make wild leaps to similar practices in other cultures around the world, but without carefully examining the cultural contexts that might have shown a different interpretation. Plus, his theories were not always consistent. He waffled on the question of whether ritual precedes myth, and the question whether myths are diffused from one source or spontaneously arise in many locales. But his themes were captivating, as belief in “progress” peaked before World War I’s devastations.

His encyclopedic collection of “savage” practices, blended with accounts from classical literature, was pulled together in a grand theory that followed in the tradition of comparative religion. This method of comparing the religions of different cultures was as old as Herodotus’ (c. 484–c. 424 BCE) *Histories*, where he compared the Egyptian and Greek religions, arguing that the Greeks had borrowed many Egyptian religious themes (Herodotus, 1954: 116–135). After Columbus, this method exploded as local doctrines lost their certainty, and by the nineteenth century, grand theories of comparative religion had developed, such as those of Tylor, Müller, and Mannhardt.

Edward Tylor (1832–1917) developed comparative anthropology along the lines of a theory of a cultural evolution, “animism” or the belief in soul in nature.

He also assumed the idea of “survivals” of archaic practices still present in tribal cultures, and the global uniformity of human nature. He explored the question of cultural diffusion versus independent origins of similar themes. He viewed myths as crude efforts at reasoning, rather than symbolic expressions, and tried to extract historical nuggets from their narratives (Tylor, 1994). Frazer adopted these general themes.

Max Müller (1823–1900) virtually created the newer discipline of comparative religion, aided by his remarkable 50-volume collection of translations of *Sacred Books of the East*. He stressed philology or a linguistic basis for comparative religion, showing how the words for common things such as numbers were very similar from India to Europe. For example he says that word for “one” in Sanskrit is “*ekas*,” in Greek “*eis*,” and in Gothic “*ains*” (Müller, 1869: Vol. 1, p. 51). He interpreted myths and religions as personifications of natural forces, especially the sun (Müller, 2002). Frazer’s version of comparative religion was not linguistic, but rather focused on rituals, followed by myths, that he saw as intellectual, rather than symbolic, and euhemeristic, or revealing factual historical events, rather than psychological. Both of the latter are largely flawed assumptions.

Wilhelm Mannhart (1831–1880) was a folklorist who studied archaic tree and grain cults whose indwelling spirits (*korndämonen*) had to be annually helped in producing fertility by magical and religious practices, which was a key theme adopted by Frazer (Mannhardt, 1868/1978).

The general shift in the academic effort to understand world religions was away from the dogmatic, exclusivist certainties of familiar faiths and toward evolutionary theories and sociological analysis. Today we view these theories as early, hasty generalizations of “armchair” anthropologists, rather than the careful field studies characteristic of current anthropology. Indeed, the overzealous generalizations of these Victorian theorists, while popular, stimulated twentieth-century anthropologists such as Franz Boas (1858–1942), although friendly with Frazer, to reject hasty, broad generalizations in favor of living among the people he studied and limiting his theories to the cautious boundaries of observed societies (Boas, 1994). In view of such critiques, we see today that the themes explored in Frazer’s work still have some explanatory value, but not the universal implications that he proclaimed.

Blood and Fertility

From his chair at Cambridge, Frazer mused over a riddle that had long fascinated classical scholars. The Greek

geographer Strabo told of a temple near Rome where a runaway slave who killed the former priest-king became the next priest-king. Macaulay’s poem “the Battle of Lake Regillus” tells the riddle:

- ▶ From the still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia’s trees –
Those trees in whose grim shadow
The ghastly priest doth reign,
The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain – (Fraser, 1990: 33)

Frazer devoted most of his life to collecting parallels from travelers, mentally leapfrogging around the world, seeking to make sense of this nugget of mystery. His theory turned into a major popular epic that concluded the Victorian era’s bold but reckless efforts to sweep world religions into a single dustbin of superstitions that fall before the powers of science. Nevertheless, this kind of work was a beginning for the study of world religions with a neutral eye.

If you follow Rome’s Ancient Appian Way out of the Porta Sebastiano south-east out of the city for about ten miles, passing through a dry land with ancient Roman gravestones lining the road, you will come to a hill on the left. At the village of Genzano, you can follow the road around the base of the hill and ascend to the settlement called Nemi. Here classical scholars knew, from classic texts such as Strabo and Ovid, that this place long ago was a sanctuary of Diana. Now a few remaining columns overlook a lake nestled in a volcano’s remains, called “Diana’s Mirror.” Beneath the surface of contemporary small farms of olive, grapes, and strawberries, was once a sacred shrine where have been found numerous votive statuettes and an image of a goddess, including one with an inscription to Diana: “as blessing men and women with offspring, and granting expectant mothers an easy delivery” (Fraser, 1990: 5).

With a flourish of imaginative rhetoric, Frazer undertook to explain the meaning of what he thought took place long ago on this site: a “barbaric” custom in the sacred precinct related to a goddess-queen, in which a priest-king, once a runaway slave, must constantly carry a sword and be on the lookout for attacks. Any man who can pluck a bunch of mistletoe high in the sacred tree, then kill the ruling priest/king, can assume his role, but he will then be doomed to the same fate. Frazer argued that similar rituals were practiced far and wide, expressing patterns of human nature and society, sinister, sensuous, and bloody. His psychology was an empiricist, rationalist effort to reduce passionate themes to past nonsense, but ironically, the undertone was an unconscious collective fascination with these passions – killing the king, mating with the queen, mingling with the natural world.

Frazer's thesis unfolds as he conjectures that the King of the Wood at Nemi, Virbius, was likely the mortal lover and king of the goddess Diana (Artemis in Greece), whose spirit was to be found in the tree he guarded. Comparing this pair to other moral men and goddesses such as Adonis and Venus, Hippolytus and Phaedra, and Attis and the Cybele, Frazer proposes that the ritual at Nemi recapitulates the known mythic accounts of the goddess of fertility taking a lover who dies as in the annual death of planted seeds and is magically reborn in their rebirth as new vegetation. His theory is that the ritual led to myths about the annual cycles of vegetation, its winter death and rebirth in the spring that needed to be magically helped along by bloody and erotic human rites. The sacred marriage custom of priest-kings mating with priestess-goddess figures was the ritual of ensuring the fertility of the land. Diana was not known as a goddess of fertility, however. Her predecessor in Greece, Artemis, was a virgin huntress, but other more fertility-related goddesses such as the Greek Demeter and Gaia, the Babylonian Ishtar, Egyptian goddesses, notably Isis, and others that Frazer describes, he offered as testimonies to this practice as characteristic of archaic societies.

From the writings of world travelers, Frazer assiduously tried to link all this to other strange, far-away customs, such as those described by Captain James Alexander, Fifth Duke of Hamilton, an adventurous Scottish sailor who had wandered from the Cape of Good Hope to India and Japan for 35 years. In 1728 he published his *New Account of the East Indies*, where he reported kings committing suicide before their term of rule had expired. Another king at the end of his 12-year reign would throw a jolly feast for 12 days. If any of the guests could fight their way through his thousands of guards and kill the king in his tent, they would become the new king (Fraser, 1990: 50–52). This apparent parallel to the Roman conundrum excited Frazer and became one of his many examples of what he claimed to be widespread practice of slaying the king and thereby grabbing his throne (Frazer, 1922, Ch. XXIV; Hamilton, 1728). Just under the surface of the supposedly rational concern lurk psychological fascinations with fear and blood, political rule, religious sacredness, and erotic fertility.

Taboo and Totem

Frazer elaborated on the reports with the concept of taboo, the sacred or cursed thing or person, like an electric force field, for example, possessing a king that spread from his person to whatever he touched, sending divine

power that promotes the growth of life on earth (Frazer, 1922, Chs. XIX–XXII). Taboo was a concept fascinating to nineteenth-century anthropologists that Frazer used to help unify his collection of cases of “the king must die, long live the king.” It first appeared in English in the journal of Captain Cook, who stumbled onto the exotic practice of forbidden things in the Tongatapu Islands in the South Pacific (Cook, II, xi 1785: 410). Soon “taboo” came to describe many things, found also in the Bible, that were sacred and cursed, both unclean and untouchable, strong yet vulnerable, such as kings, blood, and corpses. Taboo was expanded to explain several practices, including the biblical scapegoat (Bible, Leviticus 16), used to ritually expel threatening evils from a community.

The totem was another recently uncovered practice that fascinated Europe. In 1885 John McLennan, the Scottish author of *Patriarchal Theory*, having discovered totems “thick under the feet” in the Arabic peninsula, lectured at Cambridge. Frazer was in the audience, and he quickly integrated totemism into his theories. He saw it in various ways as this thought developed. In his “depository theory,” he interpreted totems as containers for one's soul that kept it safely separated from the body that might be killed. This was expanded into the chapter on the External Soul (Frazer, 1922, Chs. LXVI–LXVII). He saw the mistletoe, or “golden bough” as a totem hanging high in the oak tree above the king who was defending his rule from attack. His view of the golden mistletoe as a totem he connected to the reports of the Celtic Druid priestly ritual of cutting the plant with a golden sickle. But it is an imaginative stretch to portray the same sense of mistletoe, or any mistletoe, in an Italian shrine.

Studies of the Australian Aborigines shifted the interpretation of totemism toward the idea of a totem as an image of a clan's founding ancestral spirit. It was used in the initiation of young men into adulthood in the outback, and was part of the emphasis on exogamy, where a man could only marry outside his totem's social group. A man might say of his totem that it is his brother, meaning his eternal soul participates in the same species as that totem animal, thus defining what he can kill. Hunters are typically forbidden to kill their totem animal, since it is a relative, except for special sacred occasions, Frazer explained (Frazer, 1922: 799).

Fertility Religion

Frazer's vegetation deity theory agreed with that of William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), co-editor of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, who had a

large impact on Frazer, and invited him to write articles for it. Smith saw primitive religions as social institutions for the preservation of society, not as individual creeds for the saving of souls. This debate between those who see myth and religion as primarily social or as more psychological continued between the anthropologists (Boas, 1994) and psychologists (Jung, 1979). Smith also stressed the literalism of primitive religions, where tribal beliefs believed the people to be literal descendants of a fatherly god in whose blood his descendants participated. He believed that primitives saw gods not as remote and transcendent, but as limited to specific earthly places – grand trees or mountains. Such gods need not be anthropomorphic, but could be portrayed as plants or animals. Smith envisioned religion developing from demons to totems (such as the Semitic Arabic *jimns*), to local gods, to national gods, to universal gods. Smith's use of the comparative religions method was to take a specific example, such as the *jimns*, then draw on other, perhaps far-reaching, parallels to confirm his theory (Smith, 1889/2002).

Smith saw ancient sacrifices as the food of the gods. He insisted that sacrifices are not gifts to bartering gods, but communion between people and spirit beings. Quite unlike Freud, he saw this communion unstained by notions of sin or guilt, but as positive relations with a spirit. Unlike Hume, Frazer, and others, Smith argued that religion is not based on fear, but on a happy sharing of the sacrificial food with the spirit being and with the community. The notion of sacrifice as atonement for sins developed later, he thought, when sacrificial animals (or humans) came to be seen as property to pay a divine debt (Smith, 2002).

The priest-king was a role known to classicists such as Frazer for some time. Greek kings in Homeric literature were seen as sacred or divine, Frazer says, and that the rule of a good, healthy, strong king would bring fruitfulness to the land – wheat, sheep, fish, and babies would multiply plentifully. The principle was that if a king lost his virility, became sick or unable to father children, the land's fertility would suffer. The next step was the belief in the need to kill a weakening king and transfer his power to a stronger successor before the power faded. Frazer believed this to be illustrated in the riddle of the priest at Nemi, anxious to protect his life from attackers (Frazer, 1922, Ch. XXIV).

Now we approach the core of Frazer's theory. As he expanded his research and the number of volumes of *The Golden Bough*, he increasingly strengthened his central thesis that the core of "savage" magic and religion was the obsession with assuring the continuing cycle of divine powers for the growth of vegetation and animal

reproduction (Frazer, 1922, Ch. XXVIII: 349). His thesis was centered on a vegetation religion – not a tribal totem religion, not a spiritual, transcendent god of morality religion, but the first rituals he thought to be repeatedly enacted to assure the fruitfulness of life on earth by keeping strong the divine powers of the priest-king. Frazer amplified his argument with similar cases worldwide, as well as the development of the sacrifice of a substitute for the king – humans, animals, plants, or other valuables. The divine energy could be shared in the people's feasts following the ritual, which came to be called sacramental meals:

- ▶ The worshipful animal is killed . . . that each of his worshippers may receive a portion of the divine virtues that are supposed to emanate from the dead or dying god (Frazer, 1922: 623).

This suggests that the "other" religions who sacrificed and ate foods such as pork, opposed by "our" religion, might give our priests a way of forbidding us from joining them by making their sacramental foods taboo for us. Thus Jewish and Muslim taboos on eating pork, for example, may come from the priests who saw their neighboring "pagans" eating pork sacrificed to Demeter in Greece, and to Baal in Canaan.

Dying and Rising Gods

Still controversial is Frazer's argument that there have been numerous examples of dying and rising gods. He had no trouble finding examples in classic studies of eastern Mediterranean cultures: Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Dionysus, Persephone, and the "Corn-Mother or "Corn-Spirit" (corn = grain) in plants and animals worldwide. Building on Wilhelm Mannhardt's theory of the *korndämonen*, Frazer interpreted these and many others as examples of his core theory: a. the divine force behind the planting of seeds seems to die underground, b. the growth of the plant is a resurrection of the apparently dead divine force, and c. the rituals and myths of the dying and rising gods and goddesses express this fervent belief:

- ▶ Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the people of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead (Frazer, 1922: 378).

Frazer's critics, such as Andrew Lang, rejected the centrality of the vegetation spirit practices (Lang, 1901), broadly attributing illogical archaic myth, ritual and

religion to the pre-modern failure to distinguish between humans and other things in the world (Lang, 1887, Ch. 3). Lang and others also rejected the comparative method, saying that he glossed over too many details that make the cases different (Boas, 1994), thus making the concept of dying and rising gods impossible (Jonathan Z. Smith), but others today argue that the similarities are strong enough to make the comparative method valid and the dying and rising gods a convincing concept (Mettinger, 2001).

Heady Non-Psychology

Frazer sought to find an over-arching logic, however mistaken, in pre-scientific magic and religion. He tied the vegetation spirit theme into wider practices: the expulsion of evil in the scapegoat (Frazer, 1922, Chs. LV - LVIII), the winter solstice fire-festivals in Europe (Frazer, 1922, Chs. LXII-LXIII), including burning human sacrifices or effigies, and the myth of the death of the Nordic Balder by mistletoe (Frazer, 1922, Ch. LXV). This heady mixture made for a sweeping theory, pulling a vast range of ritualized phenomena into his single theory of the vegetation deity's annual cycle.

Frazer's theory was daring and exciting to Europeans waiting for explanations of other cultures' strangely erotic and bloody practices. In the guise of a thoroughly pragmatic, materialist theory that assured the fertility of the crops and animals, Frazer in theory rejected any role of emotion – no social or psychological motives are necessary, Frazer thought. But then he would hint at deeply psychological motives such as fear in this frothy mixture of bloody murder, political domination, erotic rituals, and life overcoming death, all happening among the “others,” just beneath the proper surface of his Victorian consciousness. Denying psychology, he elaborated on in with a flourish.

Though he was friends with and initially inspired by Frazer, Bronislaw Malinowski became a leader of the new, more empirical, field-oriented, revealing functionalist, twentieth-century, anthropology that rejected the old-style reckless armchair comparative speculations and insisted upon careful observations of behavior, limited to the context of an observed tribal society. His ethnography in the South Pacific set a new standard because he learned the language of the natives he was studying, became friends with some, and developed the classic theory of participant observation, a new anthropological methodology (Malinowski, 1948). This development soon made Frazer professionally irrelevant among anthropologists,

although the themes that he explored remained fascinating to them.

The myth and ritual school, a group of classicists, also called the “Cambridge Ritualists,” was influenced by Frazer, notably in their quest for the primitive roots of classical Greek ritual, drama, literature, society, and the theory of the priority of ritual to myth. They included Jane E. Harrison, Gilbert Murray, A. B. Cook, and Frances M. Cornford (Ackerman, 1991).

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud soon picked up on the unconscious elements in Frazerian themes, such as totem and taboo, with his Oedipal interpretation, but gave more credit to the power of unconscious incest dynamics. In *Totem and Taboo* (1913/1950) Freud saw totems as ancestral fathers. But for him this was a continuation of the historical events in his speculative theory of the “primal horde.” The strongest male mated with as many females as desired, and as his sons grew into puberty, lacking women, they killed him and mated with his wives. Thus they were able to become men themselves, but felt terribly guilty, so set up a sacred totem animal as a substitute to be revered for the murdered father. The guilty sons felt the need to atone and reconcile with the dead father. So the sacrifice of the totem animal expresses both sides of the ambivalent totem psychology – anger and reverence, echoing the primal murder and penance for it down the generations. The whole ritual was saturated with Oedipal guilt and is thus filled with taboos. The strongest taboos in this situation are the taboos against disrespecting the fatherly ruler and dealing with corpses. Freud sees these taboos as Oedipal guilt aversions. This was an elaboration on Freud's theory that unconsciously, God is nothing more than an exalted father (Freud, 1913/1950: 147), an extension of the primal totem, and so Christian communion is an unconscious repetition of the guilty primal murder of the father. Freud's venture into anthropology was at least as reckless as Frazer's, both extending the daring speculations of nineteenth-century thought. Freud fares better in the realm of clinical psychology, where unconscious dynamics are openly acknowledged (Freud, 1913/1950).

Carl Jung

Carl Jung's archetypal psychology of the collective unconscious shares some themes with Frazer, such as the

comparison of motifs from cultures around the world. But Jung is interested not in grand theories of history based on myth, nor in evolution, magic, or fertility, but in healing. He focuses first on the patient's feelings and dreams, his unconscious production of images that have parallels in collective images, such as the ego, the lover (*anima/animus*), or the shadow (Jung, 1979 *CW*, 9ii, para. 1–42). Jung's comparative method is much more focused and disciplined than Frazer's speculations, even when he ventures into cultural reflections. Jung developed a strong theory of archetypal images that has had a major influence (often unacknowledged) on psychotherapeutic psychology, such as his archetypal image of the introvert and extravert typology.

For Jung the divine is not Frazer's vegetation spirit or Freud's exalted father, but a far more refined archetypal experience that he named the "Self" (Jung, 1979 *CW*, 9ii: para. 43–126). Subsequent Jungian analysts refined Jung's thought even further. Jungian feminists corrected Jung's pre-feminist views, exploring the goddess archetypal images (Bolen, 1984). James Hillman criticizes Frazerian theories that portray themselves as doing science, and revisions them as imaginative mythologies. While anthropology was striving to become more factual, Hillman's archetypal psychology re-visioned old nineteenth-century concepts such as Tylor's animism and Freud's Oedipus complex into archetypal mythologies (Hillman, 1975: 12, 18).

The development of Frazer's theory took place in the context of the development of the rise of Protestantism's higher biblical criticism, originating in Germany. Frazer came out of the Calvinist Presbyterian and Free Church struggles in Scotland and the debates in England, where Christianity was wrestling with issues such as the importance of a state church versus the need for non-conformist independent churches. Also the German-based free-thinking biblical criticism that was taking the Bible apart as a historical document, heavily indebted to the customs of its time and editing processes, challenged the literal readings of the Bible (Kee, 1997). This was consistent with the rise of comparative religion.

A fascinating blend of highly imaginative literary speculations with a page-turning effort to plumb the depths of the mysterious practices of societies strange to proper Victorian England, *The Golden Bough* has been thoroughly deconstructed, but still carries some cultural impact. The 1922 condensation has not yet gone out of print. Although (or because) Frazer never traveled beyond Greece and had no interest in actually meeting a "savage," his book resonates in the collective unconscious of Western culture. It still carries a fascination that Cambridge Classicist Mary Beard recognized as a

"metaphorical voyage into the unknown, the wild, the Other" (1992: 221). Much of its appeal has to do with its effort to separate European knowledge from the new societies appearing in the Europe's expanding horizon, and to affirm the certainty of European epistemologies by denigrating the magical and religious practices of the "savages." Its oversimplified and shocking exposés served as a reassuring effort to legitimize European imperialism (Beard, 1992: 217). It allowed readers to fantasize scandalous, dramatic, bloody and fantastic rituals while striving to keep them at a distance as alien superstitions, by shoving their psychology into the unconscious.

Yet Frazer's work is not just a charming, tawdry antique. It has serious implications for the interpretation of Jesus' death and resurrection that the study of world religions inevitably brought forth. If the dying and rising god theme was indeed common in Jesus' time, this was not the only account of a god on earth who died and was resurrected. But, the argument goes, the earlier cases were strictly vegetation deities, and Christ was a moral and spiritual reformer, not an image of the life-death cycle of plants. This of course, was not enough for church leaders, who saw his theory as an intolerable attack on traditional Christianity's view of Jesus' resurrection as unique. Though an agnostic or atheist, Frazer attended church and had an uneasy conscience and a naïve sense of the powerful impact that his kind of work would have on religions. He saw himself as a scientist who must seek truth despite the social consequences or sentiment, yet he held on to a conventional Christianity (Sharpe, 1975: 87–94; Fraser, 1990: 134).

Although his material and methods have stimulated many, such as Freud and Jung, Frazer's preliminary use of the comparative method has become an easy target of criticism of the comparative studies of religion in general (Boas, 1994; Malinowski, 1948; Smith, 2005). Thus his research provides a major locus for exploring the value of that method in the study of world religions. However, the *Golden Bough* is a monumental compendium of material, accurate and inaccurate, recklessly speculative, naïvely rationalistic and blandly confident in the archetypal mythology of "progress." Not unlike Freud's achievement of revealing the unconscious in psychology, and Jung's archetypal psychology, Frazer roughly sketched in broad outline many of the deep archaic roots that trouble contemporary society, far more erotic, bloody, mysterious, religious, and fascinating than the modern rational veneer that has developed since those dark, passionate rituals flourished. Subsequent psychological interpretations of the dramas that he described take a deeper approach. How Frazer's material might help us understand

“irrational” behavior in current politics, society, and personal life remains an important topic of debate. For the study of world religions using the comparative method, the question lingers whether this method will undermine religion or generate new religions and new “ecumenical” tolerance.

In 1959 Theodor Gaster published an updated, abridged version called *The New Golden Bough*, that sought to eliminate unreliable field reports and updated others, and modified Frazer’s theory somewhat in view of recent scholarship (Gaster, 1959). But it was seen as a “misguided facelift,” not the needed critique (Hyman, 1959: 439).

Frazer inspired many artists, such as James Joyce (*Ulysses*) and T. S. Eliot (“Wasteland”). In 1959, Stanley Hyman’s book *The Tangled Bank: Darwin, Marx, Frazer and Freud as Imaginative Writers* interprets Frazer’s work as literature, which Frazer himself acknowledged, while still trying to cling to a scientific method (Hyman, 1959: 244). Hyman points to Frazer’s “vast argument from analogy” (1959: 237), using root metaphors, such as cultural evolution (1959: 247) the mystical communion of “savages” as philosophers sharing in the spiritual powers of nature (1959: 224), the image of explosives and electricity to describe the power of a king’s tabooed energy (1959: 251), nature as a machine (1959: 235), and the military metaphor of the long, slow war against superstition (1959: 251). Hyman also pointed out the inconsistency of Frazer’s waffling theory of myth as intellectual, historical, or ritual in origin (1959: 239). Frazer certainly did write in the literary style that combined what was thought of as science in his time with the flowery rhetoric of an English gentleman. He could not describe a scene without elaborating on it artistically.

Mircea Eliade later developed a more careful and refined comparative study than Frazer’s, using the newer phenomenological method, blended with more reliable anthropological and historical studies. In his *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1958), Eliade explored “hierophanies” or appearance of the sacred in phenomena such as the sky, sun, moon, water, stones, earth, fertility, temples, time, and myths. He echoed Frazer dimly in his studies of vegetation and rites of re-generation in agricultural fertility cults. But for Eliade, “there has never been any real vegetation cult, any religion solely built upon plants and trees” (Eliade, 1958: 325). The cycles of death and life are evident, although rooted in sacred hierophanies, not efforts to manipulate nature, which to science is mechanical. Eliade edited the first edition of the classic *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987, 2nd ed. 2005) now the standard encyclopedia for the study of world religions. He was

criticized, mostly from the empiricist anthropological side, for over-generalizing and lacking sufficient observed support. But, having closely studied Hindu Yoga, for example, he believed that the symbolism of experiences of the sacred is based on reality (however it may be misinterpreted), not illusion. This was offensive to critics committed to the non-spiritual, non-symbolic scientific metaphysic (Smith, 2005).

The debate continues over comparative religion’s value, wrestling with these themes. On the one side, how much should scholars of world religions acknowledge the reality of the sacred for believers, and how much should they find some truths in symbolic, poetic language? On the other hand, how much should they use more scientific methods that do not acknowledge the reality of the sacred, even for believers, and emphasize the higher value of detailed, logical, more literal language and anthropological studies of specific societies? This is a major hermeneutic, methodological debate in our culture. Jonathan Z. Smith’s rejection of Frazer’s category of “Dying and Rising Gods” represents those who seek a more “scientific” method for comparative religion. Kimberly Patton’s *A Magic Still Dwells* represents those who think that meaningful symbolic comparisons can be made based on authentic experiences of sacred realities which cannot so easily be discredited by the scientific hermeneutic. Even scientific and post-modern skepticism about truth claims are not neutral, she argues, since they are based on imaginative and metaphysical presuppositions [such as the human right to dominate an alien nature], not simply evidence. Nevertheless, situating general themes in various social contexts far more carefully than Frazer did, as well as carefully examining truth claims, is essential as comparative religion continues.

See also: [Atonement](#) [Eliade, Mircea](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Hanging and Hanging God](#) [Hero](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Good and Evil Conflict

◉ Sin

Grace

Krystyna Sanderson

Grace seems to be a particularly Christian concept. The Incarnation itself is commonly referred to in Christian writing as an act of God's grace. "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Grace as an element of Christian faith denotes God's unmerited favor toward all people, and though a free gift with "no strings attached" is often linked with the human will to do good and seen as the means by which a person is empowered to make right choices. There is however no coercion in grace: it may be accepted or rejected by the one on whom it is bestowed.

In St. Paul's commentaries on faith, the necessary exertions of the will are displaced from seeking to keep the law to accepting, through grace, the salvation that is freely given by God: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8–9).

In psychological terms grace can be seen to be the matrix within which healing energies can pass between psychotherapist and patient. It is grace that allows the patient to safely express any and all life experiences with the assurance that they will be accepted and not harshly judged. It is also grace that enables the therapist to maintain professional detachment and not become destructively involved with the patient when the patient emotionally attacks, challenges and tests the psychotherapist in the course of transference.

See also: [Christianity](#)

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Great Mother

David Waldron

The Great Mother Archetype

From a psychoanalytical perspective, the Great Mother is the archetypal manifestation of the collective cultural experience of childhood development. More specifically, the influences exerted on children are not so much the product of the mother herself, as an individual, but rather the product of the archetypal mother image rooted in the collective unconscious. As such the image of the Great Mother reflects both the feelings of maternal support, comfort and love for a child and the negative capricious experience of vulnerability, helplessness and dependence experienced by the child in development. In this sense the archetypal image of the mother is nurturing and loving but also capricious, mysterious and linked to feelings of vulnerability and seduction (Jung, 1968).

Thus there is an intrinsic duality to the archetypal representation of the Great Mother. The imago of the divine feminine is paradoxical, serving as an archetypal manifestation in the collective unconscious but also, precisely because of the power of the symbol in the human psyche, as the focal point of a vast array of projections from both men and women. The Great Mother is seductive and capricious,

virginal and pure, mothering and supportive yet mysterious and cruel. Jung commented on this sense of a fractured and split symbolic configuration of the Great Mother, observing that such splits are common in powerful symbolic representations and furthermore that as a fundamental part of childhood development a child has to come to terms with their biological mother as a fully formed human being and reconcile these contradictory perceptions within the infant mother dyad if they are to fully develop into psychological adulthood and relate to their mother as an individual rather than as a symbol. Closely linked to this experience of reconciling divergent symbolic forms associated with the archetype of the Great Mother is Jung's hypothesis that the Great Mother is experienced differently by males and females. Jung argued that the intrinsic alien qualities of femininity to a masculine psyche would lead to the representation of the Great Mother being more deeply impressed in the unconscious aspects of the psyche of a male and thus would exert a far deeper influence. Similarly, the feminine experience of the Great Mother is far more closely linked to a woman's conscious representation of the self and thus exerts less of a hold on the unconscious (Jung, 1968).

It is this sense that the symbolic manifestation of the Great Mother in the form of Mother Goddesses is perhaps the most illuminating. The breadth and depth of Mother Goddess representations and worship through history and across cultures is remarkable. Mother Goddesses, as the symbolic manifestation of the Great Mother archetype are associated with all major aspects of life such as death, birth, initiation, fertility, agriculture, warfare reproduction and wisdom. Indeed, the sheer diversity of Mother Goddess representations closely aligns itself with Jung's paradoxical union of opposites intrinsic to the Great Mother archetype (Jung, 1968).

The Great Mother in Goddess Worship

Whilst a full discussion of the manifestation of Goddess worship or deification of the archetypal Great Mother and the complex and often controversial claims surrounding claims of neo-Lithic widespread Goddess worship is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting some common themes that resonate throughout cultural patterns of deification or sacralization of the Great Mother archetype. Sacred images of the Great Mother archetype range through the vast proliferation of the Goddesses of antiquity and contemporary Hinduism to the sacralization of the Virgin Mary in many catholic traditions to the Gnostic veneration of Sophia. Despite this proliferation there are certain common themes and distinctions in the way the

feminine imago is manifested. Typically these themes also reflect the varied and diverse associations of a reified femininity as experienced in cultural life (James, 1983).

The Great Mother and the Holy Virgin

The manifestation of the Great Mother is commonly associated with Virginity. Perhaps some of the most visible representations of this model of reified feminine sacrality are the iconic figure of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism and the Hindu Goddess Kannagi who is goddess of both chastity and the sacredness of motherhood. Similarly, Mother Goddesses are typically associated with nurturing, protection and healing. Overtly this relates to the aforementioned experience of childhood and infancy combined with the socially ascribed role given to women in most cultures. However, it also relates to anthropological notions of pollution and taboo through which the purity associated with motherhood or the sacred virgin serves to purge people of corruption and contamination. Goddesses in general tend to be attributed with nurturing qualities serving as the symbolic wellspring of life. Similarly, images of the sacred feminine are commonly constructed in local mythologies as wives and consorts of gods, also linking the role of the Great Mother with established social structure and practice. Conversely, The Great Mother is also commonly associated with violence and destructive power as illustrated by the triple aspect Celtic Death Goddess the Morrigan and the Balinese Goddess Rangda and the Hindu Goddess Kali. These Goddesses, whilst having nurturing sides and loving sides to their personas, can also be represented as capricious, destructive and cruel. This pattern closely reflects Jung's notion of the Great Mother as represented archetypally in religious forms, having a distinct duality which reflects the sense of helplessness and vulnerability experienced by infants in development and growth.

The Great Mother and the Earth Goddess

Goddesses are also commonly linked with the earth and with natural phenomena. A contemporary manifestation of this is the Earth Goddess of many neo-Pagan traditions or James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis. Developing in the nineteenth Century, this notion of a universal Mother Goddess linked to the earth has become widespread in western culture (Hutton, 1999). However, while Earth Mother goddesses are very common there are numerous exceptions to this rule of feminine Mother Goddess and earth

association. For example Egyptian goddesses are rarely Earth Mothers; indeed Sky Goddesses and Earth Gods are more common, as in the Japanese Shinto tradition. The Venus figures found by archaeologists in the neolithic period are often taken to represent a universal monotheistic Earth Mother religion preceding a later degeneration to patriarchal religious traditions. However, while there is evidence for this, the Paleolithic Earth Goddess hypothesis has come under severe historical critique due to the often indiscriminate manner in which various symbols were uncritically configured as intrinsically representative of an Earth Goddess while contemporary use of similar figures by indigenous peoples rarely corresponded with the Great Goddess hypothesis. That being said, many of these images and artworks clearly relate to examples of ritual use of feminine images and artwork and indicate the importance given to the sacred feminine in the ancient world (Gimbutas, 1982; Hutton, 1993).

The Great Mother as a Religious Manifestation

The Great Mother as a religious manifestation is demonstrated throughout history and across cultures and continues to undergo renewal and redevelopment within many new and well established religious movements. The Mother Goddess image has played an incredibly important role in prehistory, throughout the development of agriculture and contemporary civilization and in urban life, and continues to play a significant role in all religions and cultures. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate the significance and symbolic import of these representations within the context of the culture and society in which they operate. It is also worth noting that, from a Jungian perspective, whilst the Great Mother serves as the archetypal source for a host of religious representations it is not the same as the deified images of femininity and motherhood that exist across cultures. For Jung the fundamental nature of the mother child dyad meant that the Great Mother as an archetype would be a universal symbol within the collective unconscious. However this is a far cry from reifying the cultural manifestations as existent manifestations of a universal deity (Jung, 1968).

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mary](#) [Sophia](#)

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Guan Yin

Minqin Wang (王敏琴) · Lee W. Bailey

Guan Yin is one of the most popular deities of East Asia. In China she is known as *Guan Yin* (also *Kuan Yin* or *Kwan Yin*), She is a Bodhisattva also called *Guan Shi Yin* (观世音), *Guan Zi Zai* (观自在), or *Guang Shi Yin* (光世音), meaning “She who hears the voices in the world crying for help.” Cantonese variations are *Kwoon Yam*, *Kwoon Sai Yam*, or *Kwoon Chi Choi*. In Japan she is known as *Kwannon Bosatsu* or *Kwannon Sama*, in Viet Nam as *Quan Am*, in Korea as *Kwan Seum Bosal*. In *Daoism* *Guan Yin* is called “*Ci Hang Zhen Ren*” (慈航真人) “Immortal of the Benevolent Ship,” “*Guan Yin Da Shi*” (观音大士) or “*Ancient Buddha of the Southern Sea*” (南海古佛). The male Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* was brought from India to China, and his name was translated to the Chinese as *Guan Yin*. Then it was slowly blended with uniquely indigenous Chinese elements. Although often over-simplified as simply an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara*, *Guan Yin* is actually a uniquely Chinese goddess who synthesizes Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, and indigenous shamanic elements.

History

Buddhism was first introduced to China during the Han Dynasty (206–220 CE), and *Guan Yin* soon appeared as a male Chinese version of *Avalokiteshvara* in art as a monk with a thin mustache. Then, over the next several centuries, *Guan Yin* was widely transformed into a woman. As early as 483–493 CE an emperor had a vision of a feminine *Guan Yin* (Stein, 1986: 23). This presents a problem: some scholars cannot explain why the masculine changed into

the extremely popular feminine *Guan Yin* in China. This feminine transformation must have come from somewhere with good reasons. The answer has both historical grounds and psychological, social, and spiritual reasons among the people who made her so popular. Of all the imported Buddhist deities, *Guan Yin* was the only one to become a genuine Chinese figure. Many Chinese are not even aware of her Buddhist roots (Yu, 2001: 223).

Although *Guan Yin* is now commonly regarded as a female deity, she may still appear as a man or a woman. For example, the current Dalai Lama is said to be an incarnation of *Guan Yin*. In Buddhism today, when a person becomes enlightened, they may become a Buddha, no matter whether the person is a man or woman. Similarly, when a Buddhist swears to serve people heart and soul without any selfish desires, the person becomes a Bodhisattva, regardless of their gender, because ultimately the *Buddhamind* is beyond gender, although humans connect to the transcendent strongly through gender characteristics.

One historical reason for her popularity is that during the fourth through the sixth centuries, invaders from the north (“*caitiffs*”) invaded China and forced the government south into the Yangzi River valley. Amid this chaos, when traditional Confucianism struggled to maintain order and civility, people likely welcomed the warm, compassionate, saving spirit of *Guan Yin*, who was portrayed as responding immediately to sincere cries for help from people in desperate situations. *Guan Yin* miracle tales spread, telling of her saving people from warriors, drowning, sickness, infertility, often stressing a conversion experience (Campany, 1996).

Psychologically and socially, *Guan Yin*’s modern Buddhist egalitarianism goes against the ancient Confucian views of women as inferior, even polluted. Chinese goddesses helped remove women’s supposed pollution related to reproduction. Their followers might seek purity by resisting marriage, not consummating their marriage, living in celibate women’s communities, or providing their husbands with a concubine. Belief in goddesses still supports mothers and sisters who want to reduce family conflicts, such as paternal domination. The more inclusive goddesses also help unite various village territorial groups (Sangren, 1983: 11–17). These important social and psychological functions of goddesses like *Guan Yin* give many women a counter-cultural social group and goals outside family.

Spirituality

The Buddha told Inexhaustible Intention Bodhisattva, “Good man, if any of the limitless hundreds of thousands

of myriads of *Kotis* of living beings who are undergoing all kinds of suffering hear of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva and recite his name single-mindedly, Guanshiyin Bodhisattva will immediately hear their voices and rescue them (Kuo-lin, 1997). This is different from the traditions emphasizing study or meditation. This also goes against the ancient hierarchical traditions of Asia, in which the high gods were allied primarily with royalty. While celestial, *Guan Yin* is also very close to people. *Guan Yin* and the Bodhisattva *Da Shi Zhi* (大势至) are two important assistants of *Amita* Buddha. The three are called “Three Saints in the Western Paradise.”

For Chinese Buddhists, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas do not only exist in the spiritual world. Nor are they just the statues in the temples or pictures in the altars. Some old gods were deified government officials exercising imperial territorial rule. But Buddhist deities are universal and “present” among the common people in daily life, and emphasize individual salvation. But unlike some Buddhist practices that suppress the senses, *Guan Yin* is more Tantric, appearing in sensation, in sight, touch, hearing, and fragrances. *Guan Yin* was the first Chinese deity to leave heaven and appear with saving powers when people were in crisis (Campany, 1996: 256).



Guan Yin. Figure 1 Retrieved from “Forum/bbs” at <http://qiankunzhiyi.aa.topzj.com/forum-3926-1.html>.

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have many forms, including appearing as common people, giving spiritual guidance, and performing miracles (including resurrections) (Yu, 2001: 190–191). Accounts of miracles and divine wonders were well known in China before *Guan Yin*, but many of hers contained the new Buddhist psychological emphasis on conversion to a new Buddhist life. The first known compiler of eye-witness accounts of *Guan Yin* miracles was Fu Liang (374–426).

Iconography

Guan Yin is said to have 32 forms. Some of these were imported with *Avalokiteshvara* (such as the thousand-armed image), and some were indigenous Chinese images (such as giving a child):

1. the oldest known indigenous Chinese image is of the “Water moon *Guan Yin*,” white-robed with a large moon halo (Yu, 2001: 184).
2. *Guan Yin* holding a willow branch and a narrow vase of her “sweet dew” of compassion and healing
3. *Guan Yin* with a fish basket, indicating *Guan Yin* saving people in ocean storms (and in life)
4. *Guan Yin* with a lotus flower (a traditional Indian image of beautiful new life on water, growing from mud [life’s messes] yet remaining pure) indicating that she always helps people to become enlightened
5. *Guan Yin* in white (pure) clothes, indicating *Guan Yin* going to the secular world to help people
6. *Guan Yin* in red clothes, indicating *Guan Yin* staying in the temples to help people
7. *Guan Yin* with four arms or eleven faces on her crown, or one thousand hands and eyes, indicating her many powers (a traditional Indian image)
8. *Guan Yin* standing on a dragon (a traditional Chinese image), indicating her great powers to redeem sea animals.
9. *Guan Yin* with a horse’s head, indicating her going to the animal world to redeem animals
10. *Guan Yin* with a child, indicating her sending children to infertile women
11. *Guan Yin* seated in the casual “Royal Ease” pose, with legs apart and one arm resting on a knee raised high (like Hindu royal images).

But *Guan Yin*’s forms are countless. That is why there is a saying “If you be humble and modest, you will meet *Guan Yin* everywhere.” You can see *Guan Yin* even in an oyster. In ancient times, there was a king who was very cruel and killed a lot of people and animals. He liked to eat oysters

very much. In order to persuade him to love others, *Guan Yin* made his/her image into all the oysters he got. So when he opened every oyster, he found the image of *Guan Yin*. Then his Buddha nature was evoked and he realized *Guan Yin's* intention, so later he became a very good king.

Festivals and Pilgrimages

There are three annual *Guan Yin* festivals. In the Chinese lunar calendar, February 19th is *Guan Yin's* birthday, June 19th is her day of receiving *Dao* (becoming enlightened), and September 19th is her day of achieving *Dao* (having the ability to apply the *Dao* perfectly to help others). Celebrations are held in each temple, and monks or nuns lead ceremonies such as: singing “Praising Incense,” reading the names of many Buddhas, reading “Da Bei Zhou” (大悲咒) (Mantra of Great Sympathy), singing “Praising of *Guan Yin Da Shi*,” reading “Poems of Bodhisattva *Guan Yin*,” returning the benefits of prayers to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, to parents, children, relatives, friends, even one’s enemies in previous and present lives. *Guan Yin's* Ritual of Repentance and Forgiveness is also popular (Yu, 2001: 263–265).

Guan Yin's Dao Chang (道场) (main place of spreading the *Dao*) is on *Pu-tuo* mountain in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, in the bay south of Shanghai. *Pu-Tuo* was a Daoist haven from the first century BCE Han period. It has been destroyed by wars and pirates and rebuilt repeatedly. It became Buddhist by the eleventh century. It is a busy pilgrimage island where people seek blessings and visions at temples, monasteries, rocks, and caves full of surging waves. It is one of the traditional four major holy mountains in China. It is part of *Guan Yin's* connection to China’s South Sea, where miracle stories tell of her appearing in light or floating on a cloud to save drowning sailors.

Hang Zhou has also been a major *Guan Yin* pilgrimage site. In 1987 an estimated two million pilgrims went there for her birthday. At such temples, pilgrims typically light incense and candles, chant and pray, burn spirit money to ancestors, and incubate dreams to be interpreted by monks. Pilgrims may beat on a hollow wooden “fish,” and chant a *dharani* such as *Na Mo Da Ci Da Bei Guan Shi Yin Pu Sha* (Homage to the greatly compassionate, greatly merciful *Guan Shi Yin* Bodhisattva) (Blofeld, 1977: 26).

Texts

There are numerous *Guan Yin* texts, notably “The Universal Gateway,” which is the 25th chapter of the *Lotus*

Sutra. The oldest version we have of this was translated by Dharmaraksa in 286 CE (Yu, 2001: 161). Later it was translated from the Sanskrit into Chinese by Kumarajiva. It stresses how that people in need can call the name of *Guan Yin* and they will be assisted immediately. It promises deliverance from swords, chains, demons, bandits, and offers sons to women who call out to her. There is some debate about her name’s translation from the Sanskrit to the Chinese, but this is traditionally the text where the name for *Avalokiteshvara* was translated to *Guan Shi Yin*, meaning “Lord who perceives the cries of the world.”

Early texts were found in a sealed cave at Dunhuang in northwestern China – wall paintings and banners of *Guan Yin* saving people from distress, 1,048 copies of the Lotus Sutra, and almost 200 separate copies of the *Guan Yin Sutra* (Campany, 1996: 83). Another cave at Fang-Shan, near Beijing, revealed a treasure of hidden texts, stone slabs and art about *Guan Yin* (Yu, 2001: 111). They showed that ancient kings often had *dharani* (invocations) carved on stone steles with sculptures, erected them around the country, and ordered monastics to memorize and chant them, seated in front of a *Guan Yin* image.

A very popular text is the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) novel called *The Journey to West*. This long, multi-volume, historically-based legend blends a Buddhist picture of *Guan Yin* with indigenous Chinese local gods, Daoist *Xian* spirits, and various folklore scenes of dragons and monsters. The novel is based on the journey of the historical Tang (618–907) monk *Xuanzang*. His autobiography records a seventeen-year round-trip journey along the silk road from China to India to get the Dharma in sutras to take back to China. In the Ming novel he is called “Tripitaka”, which is an honorary title for a monk. The story was made into a popular 1979 Chinese television series. *Guan Yin* plays a major role in the tale. First she is sent by the Buddha to China to find a suitable messenger to come and get the Dharma. She chooses Monkey (symbol of ego), who struggles on his way with various monsters (shadow beasts). *Guan Yin* graciously appears and converts each one – Sandy, Pigsy, and Dragon – with forgiveness for their sins and their vows to behave and help along the journey. The highly allegorical and action-filled adventure shows *Guan Yin's* refined Buddhist theme of psychological conversion.

A famous ancient *Guan Yin* text was inscribed on *King Kao's Guan-Shih Yin Sutra* stone votive stele (550–577), now in the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (Yu, 2001: 110). *Lu Kao's More Records of Kuan-shih-yin's Responsive Manifestations* (in Chinese) is a typical collection of miracles stories (Yu, 2001: 579). A series of *Guan Yin* poems

are used in divination, such as this one telling of her role since the beginning:

- ▶ From the beginning of Creation, everything had meaning:
The lucky day brings everything fruiting to ripeness. . .
Then revelation comes – and don't take it lightly –
The pure-hearted will be graced by the Divine One
(Palmer, Ramsay and Kwok, 1999).

Background

Guan Yin's background is multifaceted. The Buddhist tradition of the shift from a male to a female divinity needs historical and psychological explanations. *Guan Yin* traditions are clearly rooted in Buddhist goddesses such as *Tara*, archaic shamanic Chinese goddesses such as The Queen Mother of the West, and Daoist goddess such as *Ma Tzu*; in these historical roots and current practices are several psychological factors, such as women's pollution relief.

The representations of *Guan Yin* holding a child are rooted in the archetypal maternal desires expressed in China as early as archaic Neolithic (c. 500–2500 BCE) Chinese female figurines, called “fertility goddesses,” and temple ruins found in Mongolia, with female names on buried shamanic oracle bones and later bronze vessels. This feminine side of Chinese culture was absorbed into *Guan Yin*, who is invoked to grant pregnancy, easy deliveries of both boys and girls (Yu, 2001: 127–140).

The popular legend of *Miao Shan* (“Wonderful Goodness”) had a powerful role in feminizing *Guan Yin* (Yu, 2001: 349). The oldest known account was carved on a stele in Honan in the eleventh century. With many variations and psychological implications, the story is that *Miao Shan* was a princess who refused her father's command to marry (a refusal of filial piety, an Oedipal/Jocasta conflict, and a feminist assertion of Buddhist celibacy and archetypal purity). He pressured her and she retreated to a convent. He angrily burned it down and her spirit ascended above (transcendent function). Then her father fell ill (psychosomatic illness) and heard from her in disguise that the only medicine for him would come from a person who had never been angry (transformation of archetypal shadow). He sent for it and she returned him a medicine made of her arms and eyes, willingly sacrificed. When he healed and learned of her astonishing filial sacrifice (submission of ego to higher Self), he took the family to her and they all took refuge in the Buddha (submission of ego to higher Self). She was *Guan Yin* in human form all along (presence of transcendent in daily

life). The dominant themes of are conflicting: Buddhist celibate opposition to marriage, women's resistance to traditional roles, yet Confucian filial piety and her self-sacrifice to heal her father. Self-sacrifice with a slice of flesh (*ke-ku*) to heal parents was a known practice in ancient China, although Confucians officially opposed it (Yu, 2001: 333–334). Pious Chinese were thereafter often named *Miao Shan* (Yu, 2001: 303). Many Chinese deities are described like her, either as humans later deified or as deities in human disguise.

The image of *Guan Yin* holding a Fish-basket is based on a legend also known as “Mr. Ma's Wife.” In the Tang Dynasty (809 or 817) the story emerged that one day a lovely woman appeared in a village carrying a basket with a carp in it. She attracted many men's marriage proposals. Her selection process was a contest – who could memorize the entire *Lotus Sutra*, that she carried under the fish, in three days. Only a Mr. Ma could do it. But just before the wedding, she mysteriously died. They buried her and later a monk came and showed that her bones were linked by a golden chain, indicating that she was a great sage, and he carried her up to the sky, as in a resurrection. Many were converted to Buddhism and she was recognized as *Guan Yin*.

The archaic Queen Mother of the West (*Xi Wang Mu*, 西王母), also known as the Eternal Mother (*Wu Sheng Shen Mu* 无生神母, *Yao Chi'ih*, *Wang Mu Niang Niang* 王母娘娘) is an ancient goddess who never appears on earth (thus remaining pure), and grants children. She was adopted by the Daoists, and gives the gift of immortality and the secrets of eternal life. She is worshiped by both the elite and the masses. She was the most famous Chinese goddess before *Guan Yin*, and may well have been a model for *Guan Yin* (Yu, 2001: 480). She provides the best archaeological evidence of archaic goddesses – bone carvings from the Shang (1760–1122 BCE) (Despeux and Livia, 2003: 25; Yu, 2001: 409). During a drought in 3 BCE she was worshiped by masses of people with straw manikins of her singing, dancing, drumming around fires (Yu, 2001: 410). She rules from the mythical Mt. Kunlun; she saves people and dispenses peaches of immortality, notably to emperors. Her cult involves ecstatic spirit possession. The Queen Mother is the essence of cosmic and bodily *Yin* and teaches how to balance *Yin* and *Yang* in life, including sex, and thus live a long life and become enlightened (Despeux and Livia, 2003: 25–47).

An important Daoist goddess is *Ma Zu* (*Ma Tsu P'o*, *Mazipo*) was a fisherman's daughter from Fujian (Perkins, 1999: 319–320). She refused marriage and developed her spirituality until she was able to project herself and influence nature. She used her powers to rescue her brothers

and father, who almost drowned. She died early but continued to safeguard fishermen and traveling traders. She is also known for granting children and is very popular in Taiwan (Sangren, 1983: 8). Integrated into the Daoist pantheon in the fifteenth century, she is still a popular deity in southern China. Like *Guan Yin*, she remained celibate, made a vow to rescue all, and in her immortal form she responds to the sincere chanting of her name (Despeux and Livia, 2003: 65).

Tara (“eye”), originally a Hindu goddess, in south Asian Buddhism is one of the primary emanations of *Avalokiteshvara*, born from his tears or a ray of light from his eye. The white *Tara* reveals her compassionate side. Whether called a Bodhisattva, Buddha, or deity, she is a savior who hears the cries of those suffering in *samsara*. *Tara* appears in art at the side of *Avalokiteshvara*, and *Tara* and *Guan Yin* are also called “sisters of *Amitabha*” (Stein, 1986: 35). The eye appears in *Guan Yin* art also. John Blofeld sees *Tara*, who comes to the aid of needy mortals, and *Guan Yin* as identical, although *Tara* is not well known in China (Blofeld, 1977: 53–64, 40–41). Many important themes from her predecessors were woven into *Guan Yin*’s tradition.

Psychology

Exploring why *Guan Yin* became feminine, we must look at traditional Chinese gender relations. Does *Guan Yin* offer a psychologically tame balance for the ancient traditional role of women as subservient, portrayed in the saying “I was born a woman because of evil karma in a previous life” and the scornful relegation of women to an impure role in life due to their reproductive functions (“The Blood Bowl Sutra” – 1194 CE)? Women were taught to detest their bodies and could only hope to be escape Hell by being reborn a man (male repression of shadow by projection onto women).

Or does *Guan Yin* function as a more bold, compassionate, saving contrast to that repression, even a feminist opponent to that? The answer is that both themes are offered, as in the story of *Miao Shan*, who rebels against women’s subordinate position in marriage demanded by Confucian filial piety, by seeking to become a nun, but then sacrifices her own flesh to save her father, which shows loyalty to filial piety, as well as her Buddhist role as savior (Boucher, 1999).

Daoism also views the feminine in an ambivalent way. It sees the *Yin* energy as a positive cosmic force in women, but in contrast with a strongly patriarchal view of *Yang* from the Confucian tradition that suppresses women and

sees them as polluted by their reproductive functions. The strong Confucian preference for a son to carry on the family name is a social denigration of girls not easily overcome by a Daoist balance of *Yin* and *Yang*.

Male-dominated Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) rulers and their formal heavenly gods pushed aside the goddesses and subordinated women, so, despite women’s stronger roles in Daoism, and ancient traditions such as the Queen Mother of the West, their needs went largely unmet until they were filled by *Guan Yin*. The personal and more inclusive needs of men and women of all classes were also met by *Guan Yin* (Yu, 2001: 412–416). Goddesses cannot assure the political empowerment of women in a patriarchal society, but they can provide deep-seated spiritual guidance, comfort, and some amelioration of patriarchal authority. The Maoist revolution did free women from much ancient oppression, and now religions in China are expanding.

Avalokiteshvara is primarily a Bodhisattva of compassion and a cosmic savior from perils, but was also commonly identified with royalty in southeast Asia and Tibet. In imperial China the emperor was legitimized by the Confucian “Mandate of Heaven”. By contrast, *Guan Yin* was not identified with any kings or queens, although she does appear in a royal court in the novel *The Journey to the West*. People of all social classes, especially women, and even great sinners, knew *Guan Yin* more for her mercy and kindness. No one native Chinese goddess before *Guan Yin* had all of her qualities (Yu, 2001: 5).

Chinese spirituality is highly syncretic and unique, and spread across east Asia. Sometimes people do not even realize that they are blending Buddhist meditation, Confucian filial piety, Daoist Yin-Yang exercises, and archaic ancestor or *Xian* worship. Therefore, it is not surprising the *Guan Yin* is a syncretic blend.

Guan Yin is a strong goddess who helps balance ancient patriarchal traditions, providing women with access to divine power, giving them pride (ego strength) and counteracting patriarchal assertions of pollution (shadow projection). She provides a more egalitarian alternative to Confucian hierarchical class traditions. She helps women wrestle with ancient Chinese versions of Freudian family dynamics (filial piety and conflict). She helps people of all parts of society transform their shadow archetypal patterns (monsters, tyrants) into higher spiritual devotions to the Buddha. She is a warm, maternal spirit of divine compassion.

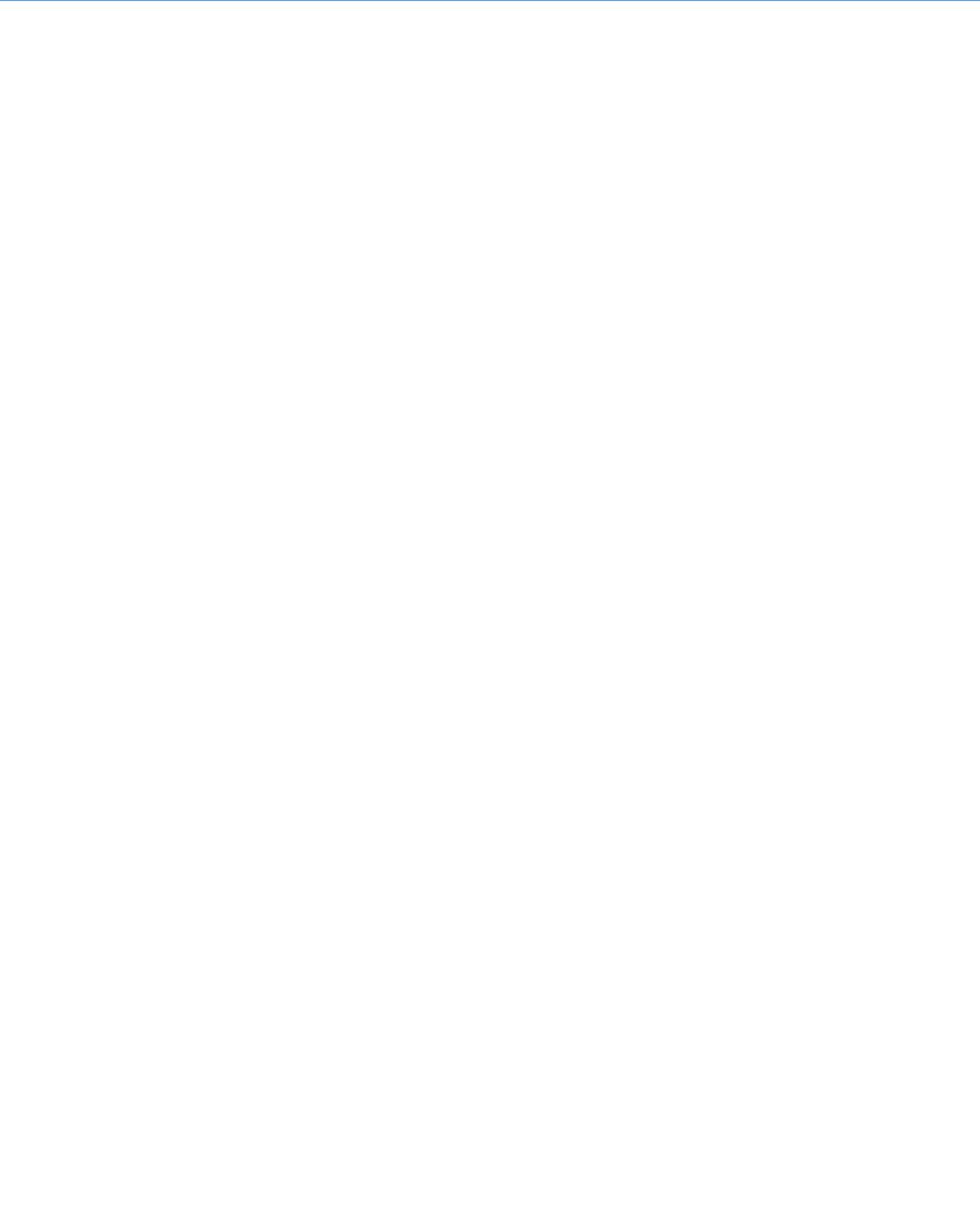
Unlike remote divinities or sages who appeared long ago, *Guan Yin* is very “present,” in methods of bringing the unconscious depths to the surface through ritual and spontaneous altered states – chanting, singing, fasting,

dream interpretation, and visions. The numerous reports of her saving miracles continuing into the present show an active openness to numinous powers available at any time. This contrasts with the “disenchantment” of industrial societies that seeks to strip the world of transcendent wonder. Accounts of her conversions emphasize not just her overwhelming power, but people making decisions to change their lives, which in Western Jungian terms, maintains free will as the divine savior archetypal image transforms the ego. *Guan Yin* follows the ancient Asian Tantric pattern of Kundalini as she transforms the shadowy effects of the lower chakras by moving them upward, as in the “Monkey” conversions of dragons and monsters into devoted seekers of the Dharma, and in the lotus image. *Guan Yin* is a widespread, uniquely Chinese goddess with a Buddhist core and background of Daoist and indigenous goddesses.

See also: [▶ Bodhisattva](#) [▶ Buddhism](#)

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H

Hafiz

Ali Ayten

It is an Arabic word used to identify the one who entirely memorizes and recites the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, which is over 600 pages with more than 6,000 verses. The word *hafiz* is also used for those who memorize the sayings of Prophet Muhammad in certain numbers, but these are rare.

The first to memorize the Qur'an was naturally Prophet Muhammad as the Qur'an was revealed to him. Given that the Prophet was an unlettered man, his early followers eagerly recorded and memorized each new revelation as it was revealed. By the time the Prophet passed away, many had memorized its entirety. This custom has been kept up throughout the Muslim world, and hundreds of thousands have memorized it. Although the number of those who endeavor to memorize the whole Qur'an seems to have been decreasing in the age of computerization, it is still one of the highest goals in Muslim life to become a human repository of the Qur'an. Being hafiz is still one of the most rewarded honorifics in Muslim society. The *hafiz* feels a psychological pressure on himself/herself to be a committed, decent, and virtuous member of the society as s/he is believed to bear a sacred trust in his/her mind.

Prophet Muhammad encouraged his followers to read and recite the Qur'an, if not to memorize its entirety and cherished such followers. In the first centuries of Islam, mosques were used to memorize the Qur'an but later special courses in *madrasas* (Islamic school) or a special school called school of memorizers (*dar al-huffaz*) were opened. In the beginning, teachers developed various techniques of their own, but these have been evolved into specific methods over time. Some asked students to memorize verses in fives first before going into the next ten. Some favored memorizing page by page to

repeat the already memorized page the following day. Students begin memorizing the Qur'an at very early ages and many memorize the whole Qur'an before adolescence.

See also: [Islam](#) [Qur'an](#)

Hajj

Ali Ayten

Hajj is an Arabic word meaning to face and visit a sacred place. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. The *Ka'bah*, in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the house of God (Allah) built by Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, is the only pilgrimage site in Islam. It is a duty of Muslims to visit the Ka'bah once in a lifetime if one can afford it financially and physically. Currently, three million Muslims make hajj every year.

The ritual of hajj is performed on certain days of the year, the first days of the twelfth month (*Dhul-hijjah*) of Islamic calendar, followed by the Festival of Sacrifice. Visits to the Ka'bah at other times are called *umrah*. The obligatory rituals in *Hajj* are to circumambulate the Ka'bah for at least seven times and stay at the hill of Arafat, not too far from the Ka'bah, for some time on the 9th day of the twelfth month. Other rituals include symbolic pebble throwing at an effigy of Satan as well as walking quickly between two locations called *Safa* and *Marwa*, also in Mecca, between which Hagar, the wife of Prophet Abraham, searched for drinking water for her son Ishmael. One who performs the hajj is called "*haji*" (pilgrim), a highly respected title in the Islamic world, which encourages one to live a moral and religious life by keeping away from sinful acts. All pilgrims are supposed to wear white garments (a pilgrim's special dress called

ihram) during *Hajj* which represents the fraternity of all races and nations.

The ritual of *hajj* is supposed to affect the pilgrim deeply and transform him/her spiritually. It covers many symbolic and sentimental acts. The white gown, having no other belongings, represents physical and spiritual purity to make the pilgrim feel humble and that s/he is nothing but an ordinary being ever dependent on the Lord. It also symbolizes that the person is bereft of worldly desires and ready to return to the Creator as s/he was born. Millions from every color, race, and nation meet around the Ka'bah to feel united in a spiritual ambiance leaving all differences behind. Pilgrims place their hands on the black stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*), which is believed to have descended from heavens, located on the corner of the Ka'bah, at every turn of circumambulation to renew their submission. Pilgrims walk in patience between the hills of Safa and Marwa renouncing unwanted habits. By throwing pebbles at an effigy of Satan, they symbolically remove themselves from Satan, who endeavors to lead humans astray. And they finally slaughter an animal to show that they are ready to sacrifice what they have for the sake of their Lord. *Hajj*, more than anything, is a practice for the Day of Judgment with millions of people from all over the world gathering around the house of God. Pilgrims therefore feel the imminence of the Day of Judgment when they will account for their acts in this world.

See also: [▶ Circumambulation](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Ka'bah](#)
[▶ Pilgrimage](#)

Hallucinations

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Numerous theories have been put forward to account for the origin and persistence of hallucinations among the human species. Historically, endogenously arising hallucinations were seen as evidence of either divine or demonic possession – usually the latter. Orthodox psychodynamic theories view hallucinations as unconscious projections of neurotic conflicts or as externalized wish-fulfillment fantasies, while biologically situated theories interpret them as dysfunctions of the brain – typically involving the neurotransmitter dopamine. Hallucinations may occur in any sensory modality – visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory,

tactile, etc., with auditory and visual being the most frequent, and the most frequently associated with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.

Hallucinations may be stimulated exogenously with the imbibition of certain psychoactive substances. Pharmacologically classified as hallucinogens, these substances would come to be known in common culture as psychedelics (mind-manifesting), and later as entheogens (god-manifesting). Regardless of moniker, the constellation of effects produced by compounds belonging to this group include altered perceptions of reality and self, intensifications of mood, visual and/or auditory hallucinations, distorted sense of time and space, and an enhanced sense of meaningfulness. Modern pharmacology distinguishes psychedelic agents from other classes of drugs in their unusual ability to produce the aforementioned effects that are known only to occur in dreams or “times of religious exaltation.” Prevalent medical models reductively view hallucinations as the result of disrupted information processing in cortico-striato-thalamo-cortical feedback loops that facilitate the filtering of external stimuli.

Entheogens maintain an important, albeit controversial, place in the history of religions. There is ample evidence to suggest that mind-altering compounds have been used since remotest antiquity by virtually all peoples of the Earth to induce altered states of consciousness. Particularly important in the shamanic context, the ritual consumption of substances (*ayahuasca*, *peyote*, *mescaline*, *salvia divinorum*, etc. – all plants and plant extracts which generate powerful hallucinations) extends across all cultures and throughout all times, including Siberia, Asia, Europe and North and South America. Approximately 150 psychoactive plants have been identified in recent ethnographic research as still being used in indigenous religious customs today.

As the academic study of religion began to develop at the dawn of the twentieth century, efforts were redoubled to apprehend the historical opacity of religious texts and to link the mythic places and potions of the past with physical locations, actual plants, and historical people.

The amateur ethnomycologist R. Gordon Wasson is perhaps best known for his work on the ancient Vedic god Soma. In a book as internationally reviled as it was universally lauded, he put forth the theory that Soma was one in the same with the fungus known as *amanita muscaria* – or the fly agaric – which, once imbibed by the officiating priests, was then passed through the body and voided by the bladder only to be drunk again, the process resulting in dramatically altered states of awareness. He theorized that the entirety of Eastern religion

owes its modern philosophical orientation to the ecstatic visionary states that Soma produced once consumed.

In a later work written in conjunction with Albert Hoffman, discoverer of LSD, he put forth the theory that the beverage known as *kykeon*, an intoxicating brew central to the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries, was, in fact, a fermented derivative of barley containing ergoline alkaloids from the ergot fungus, from which LSD was originally synthesized.

In a similar vein, the Pythia of Delphi is believed by some to have entered states of ecstatic trance after inhaling the noxious and hallucinatory fumes rising from the fissures of her subterranean abode before offering oracular advice. The alleged identities of these vapors have spanned the entire spectrum of hydrocarbon gases, but most authorities agree that ethelene, which has been empirically confirmed as producing trance-like states in persons exposed to sufficient quantities and concentrations, is the most likely candidate. These are but three of many such theories attempting to link the intoxicants of antiquity with known mind-altering compounds of the present.

The Post-Enlightenment lenticular structures of the modern age have been brought to bear on the issues of entheogens. Inquiries from fields as disparate as psychology, neurology, theology, and medicine have all made significant impacts in advancing our collective understanding of these perplexing substances and their even more perplexing effects. Beginning in the 1950s, government sponsored research projects on psychedelics ranged from efforts to “cure” schizophrenia (as the effects were seen to temporally mimic psychotic states) to the treatment of alcoholism. More existentially-oriented projects such as psychedelics’ effects on quality of life as well as exploration into how transcendent states are neurochemically mediated were soon to ensue.

Psychologists were quick to take note of the transformative potential of psychedelics, particularly of how a confrontation with death in a ritual context could lead to a reduction in the fear of mortality. Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert, all on faculty at Harvard, began a series of experiments investigating the effects of LSD on initiating transcendent mystical experiences. This psychologization of spirituality would prove to be inextricable from the transmission of Eastern religious traditions to the West, although this indebtedness to entheogenic sources would remain infrequently acknowledged.

Research was to effectively cease in 1963, when access to these substance became restricted, making them nearly impossible to procure. Due to the incendiary rhetoric surrounding the dangers to both society and self that

hallucinations purportedly posed, public interest soon subsided along with the Academy.

Commentary

Presently, entheogenic research is enjoying a scientific recrudescence. Experimental treatments for addiction using ayahuasca, psilocibin, and ibogaine have already been met with impressive success. New research on ketamine and the inducement of Near Death Experiences (NDE’s) holds much promise for the continued unlocking of the mysteries of the mind. Perhaps the most beguiling question of all becomes, then: how can we understand alleged alterations of consciousness without first understanding consciousness itself? This crucial question is central to the concerns of both psychology *and* religion and will continue to unveil progressively deeper accounts of these mysteries as inquiries of this nature continue to unfold within the fields of psychology, religion, and the meeting of the two.

See also: [▶ Eleusinian Mysteries](#)

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Hanging and Hanging God

John Eric Killinger

Deriving from two Old English words *hangian* and *hon*, and supported by the Old Norse *hengja/hanga*, “to be suspended,” *hanging* is also influenced by the Sanskrit *sankata*, “hesitate” and the Latin *cunctari*, “to delay,

defer, suspend.” Despite the fact that the terminology “hanged” is usually reserved for legal language, the word has also extended into metaphoric usage (e.g., *I’ll be hanged, hang-up, and hanging out*). There are affinities in Hebrew (תָּלָה, *tālā*, “hang up, let down, dangle, put to death by hanging,” Genesis 40:22, 2 Samuel 21:12; Esther 9:14) and Greek *kremamai* and *kremannymi* (Κρήμαμαι in the LXX (Septuagint), but seven times as Κρεμάννυμι in New Testament, referring to dependence on the entire law and the prophets (Matthew 22:40), execution of the two crucified with Jesus (Luke 21:39), and specifically to “crucifixion” in Galatians 3:13, even though it is derived from the Deuteronomic code (תָּלָה, *tālā* ‘al in Hebrew for “hanging after execution”). With the prepositions *around* and *on*, this Greek usage also literally meant *hang*, as in the millstone hung around one’s neck (Matthew 18:6) and the snake that bit Paul on the hand (Acts 28:4), respectively. Hanging upside down, as St. Peter reputedly suffered, is a mark of humiliation and derision, a reversal of what the person stood for prior to being hanged. Such a method of hanging was called “baffling” (Spenser, 1978: 956).

Hanging was, according to the Old Testament, allowed, but seems to have occurred *after* a person was executed. In compliance with Deuteronomic law, the body was to be removed before nightfall so as not to pollute the land given by God as an allotment. Even as early as the story of Joseph in Egypt, hanging consisted primarily of beheading followed by the displaying of the decedent’s head on a pike. King David’s eldest son Absalom caught the long locks of his hair in the low branches of an oak tree during his flight and was left hanging “between heaven and earth.” Disregarding the order to spare the king’s son, Joab, David’s chief general, kills Absalom with three spears to the heart (2 Samuel 18:9–15).

A liminal feature occurs in hanging. This is particularly true with regard to hanging gods such as Jesus the Nazorean who claims oneness with God, Odin the Norse All-father, Attis, and Osiris, who prior to his Dionysian dismemberment hung like Jesus for three days. According to Frazer (1914/1936, 1922/1996), the Phrygian satyr of Lydia, Marsyas, along with Adonis, Artemis and even the fair Helen, ought to be included in this list of hanging gods. We might ourselves include Herman Melville’s Captain Ahab who had a crucifixion in his face (Melville, 1967: 111) and the twelfth card of the Major Arcana in Tarot known as the Hanged Man. This liminal feature is *intermundia*, a state of being suspended between worlds suffused with death and rebirth – it is the presence of the absence of *ananke*, or necessity. It is not-space space and not-temporal temporality in much the same way as the alchemists called the *lapis philosophorum* the

not-stone stone, or *lithos ou lithos* (λίθος οὐ λίθος). Cicero (2000), in his *De natura deorum*, translates Epicurus’ term *intermundia* as *metakosmios* (μετακόσμιος), the place wherein he consigns the Greek pantheon. *Metakosmios* is derived from the verb *metakosmeō* (μετακοσμέω), *rearrange, modify, and changed in aspect*. Metaphorically it is a new arrangement, a change of condition, even a change of character, indicating its transformative aspect.

Hanging, this pathos of the god, even human hanging, often occurs outside the city wall. Jesus was crucified on the green hill of Golgotha outside of Jerusalem. Odin underwent hanging on the wind swept World Ash Tree, Yggdrasil, away from human and divine contact, yet rooted to all and none. Osiris was encased in Set/Typhon’s beautifully wrought sarcophagus that became hung up and further entombed in the trunk of a tamarisk tree after floating down the Nile, which is also “up” as it would be northward, for as above, so below. Attis, who in alchemy is synonymous with the Egyptian god Osiris, performs his self-mutilation under a sacred pine tree, and in accordance with later ritual, is portrayed in effigy and hung on the pine tree as the officiating leader of the Attis-Cybele rite sheds his own blood to promote the fertility of the crops for the coming year. The Attis-Cybele myth is linked to the Artemis-Actaeon myth (and that of Isis-Osiris) and those of the respective fragmentations of Dionysos and Orpheus, whose misogynistic “madness” causes the Thracian maenads to tear him apart. The spirit of union not yet extracted is still part of the greatest dilemma of human beings today, according to Schwartz-Salant (1995). This is the “conclusion” to the problem and recognition that fragmentation, rather than repression, has a greater significance for development and pathology. Thus, being wounded to the point where one is branded a heretic or even an apostate necessarily moves the soul to action.

Prayers and other cultic acts carried out in the hope of fertile land and crop abundance occur in the rites of Tammuz. Ezekiel 8:14 refers to the lamentation of the women over the death of Tammuz (תָּמֻז, Θάμμουζ) as an abomination to the Lord in the kingdom of Judah. Tammuz, or Dumuzi (whose name means “proper son [or child]”), was the Sumerian shepherd who married Inana, died, and was resurrected by her. Even Inana must be executed and hung like a piece of rotting meat in the underworld. When she ascends, she gives up Tammuz in her place. He escapes, then is captured, only to be freed by the love of Inana. Like Persephone, Tammuz is to spend half the year in the underworld, the other half upon the earth. The mythology of Inana–Tammuz is reckoned to date back to 3,000 BCE and encroached upon ancient Palestine, being given some recognition in various circles of the culture of Jerusalem. Ezekiel’s astonishment is at

seeing the lamentations of the Tammuz cult infringe upon the sacred center of Jewish religion. Despite such lamentations being viewed as supplementary to the worship of YHWH, the abomination of it lies in its being an insult to the “living God,” and nothing short of apostasy.

Tammuz is related to Osiris and also to the mythology of the Phoenician Adonis, whose origins are not of the Greek classical period but semitic. According to Zimmerli (1969/1979), the lament of the death of Adonis (the Phoenician vegetation god type) is also attested in the Septuagint versions of 1 Kings 14:13 and Jeremiah 22:18 (242). Adonis’ name derives from *adon* (אדון), meaning “master, ruler, lord.” *Adōn* is the aleph and tav, alpha and omega, the one who was, is and *is to come*. The Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) uses *Adonai* to refer to the tetragrammaton YHWH, and this would connect Tammuz/Adonis/Osiris with Jesus in this respect. Not only this, it freights the reading of Ezekiel 8:14 with difficulty, imbuing it with a kind of fundamentalist repression, for example, “If you are not with me, you are against me.”

The liminal state involved in hanging may be long or short. The unusual swiftness of Jesus’ execution, which only lasted a matter of hours, comes as both a surprise and astonishment. Performed as a deterrent against rebelliousness, many Roman crucifixions lasted as long as three days. Jesus was forced to carry the *patibulum*, or crossbeam (also “dungeon,” “torture”), probably several hundred meters to the execution site where the seven-foot-tall stipes (vertical beam) would have been erected and awaiting him. Curiously, the vertical pole, called *stipes* in Latin, means both “tree trunk” and “instrument of torture.”

The chronicling of Osiris the great Egyptian god of resurrection, found primarily in Plutarch (1936), had nine watchers and nine mourners, aligning it with Odin’s nine whole nights and nine songs. Like the division of the uroboros in the *Pistis sophia* into twelve aeons, Osiris’ night realm was divided into twelve parts. In Kabbalah, the number twelve represents the philosopher’s stone. Twelve also is represented by the Hebrew letter *lamed* (ל). *Lamed* is the heart and central letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Because it towers over the other letters, it represents the King of kings, an attribute also given to the Hanged Man, the twelfth trump of the Tarot’s Major Arcana. The poles of this Tarot card could refer to the Egyptian two-fingers amulet that was placed either in the swaddling of the mummified remains of the deceased or loose in the coffin. These amulets represented the two fingers of the god who helps Osiris ascend the Ladder of Rē.

The Norse god Odin’s hanging lasted nine whole nights, according to the *Hávamál* of the Poetic, or Elder, Edda. Like Jesus, Odin suffered impaling with a spear, screamed as he reached for the runes, which might perhaps have

been tinged with the horror of forsakenness (as he received no bread or drink filled horn), and sacrificed himself to himself. In the process, he learned nine powerful songs. As his wisdom grew he came to know eighteen powerful charms or runes, the twelfth of these, curiously, concerning the freeing of a hanged man for conversation. This death of god to become god is not unlike the death of Jesus on the cross. It is the death of God effected *in* God, the breaking of old patterns that bind, limit, or restrict one’s nature – the interface of *religare* (religion as tied or bound back to a previous state of existence) punishing *religere* (religion as embodiment of reflection and connection) or remembering versus unforgetting, as in the alchemical representation of the winged and wingless birds forever attached to one another. Odin, like Tiersias goes through a purgation through suffering in token of new insight. Thus the metaphor of hanging as transformative act demonstrates that the hanged god moves through a transition from knowing about to becoming being, as in the movement from knowledge/curiosity to unknowable ultimate reality (K → O).

Like Odin, the Hanged Man card of Tarot’s Major Arcana is often depicted with his head deep in the earth, seeing its secrets as Odin saw the secrets of Yggdrasil. With the card turned upside down, the hanged man appears to be dancing in the abyss over which he had been suspended. This curiously links Odin with trickster associations. Connected with this is the sense of eutony (εὐτόνέω, *eutoneō*), meaning “having or possessing faculties.” Its shadow aspect includes the meaning “distension.” Kestenburg (1978) describes eutony as a stretching out, “transsensus.” Characterized as breathful flowing, eutony/transsensus is similar to the diaphragmatic breathing practiced in yoga and tai chi, as well as choral and opera singing, and the playing of wind instruments that spiral us back to the Phrygian satyr Marsyas and the vanity of his musical challenge of Apollo. As a follower and comforter of Cybele following the death of Attis he was renowned as a flautist, and because of his fame he provoked Apollo into a musical contest. Marsyas would have won had not Apollo dared Marsyas to play his pipes upside down. Marsyas lost the duel, with the result that Apollo hung and flailed him upon a pine tree.

Such suffering, then, is helpful to us. It can indeed, as Moltmann (1974) asserts, be spiritually healthy. Despite being vulnerable, afraid, and alone, we wait for what will come and we are on the verge of something greater than we can know or about which we can think or attain through action. That is beginning to experience a new level of consciousness without preventing the advent of what can come, if indeed it is on its way.

See also: [Crucifixion](#) [Jesus](#)

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Happiness as a Goal

Mark Greene

Two questions require attention at the outset. First, whose goal is this? Second, what exactly constitutes a working definition of happiness? This entry does not attempt to address the second question in its short form due to the many assumptions inherent in the use of the word across all cultures and in all languages. The Chinese word for happiness, for example, is made up of two other words “open” and “heart.” As poetic and evocative as this usage may be, it does not aid in arriving at an actual definition. The term happiness must then be bracketed.

That happiness is a conscious goal at all seems to be a product of the Enlightenment. One such famous example can be found in the United States Declaration of Independence which groups the word among what modernist discourse deems to be basic rights by guaranteeing everyone in America (excluding slaves and women) the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

To begin to address the second question, a definition of happiness must be both deepened and broadened. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs provides an excellent model with which one can address the psychological experience and physiological requisites that might form such a definition. By classifying five categories of needs in ascending order (physical, security, love/relationship, esteem and self-actualization), Maslow overlays humanist assumptions with universal needs. This parallels the generally held assumption that happiness as a goal is a universal phenomenon. Maslow goes one step further by proposing that self-actualization, the highest level in his hierarchy, is a need just like any other (water, food, sleep) but one that the individual is unlikely to address until all of the needs underlying it have been met.

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Hasidism

Kate M. Loewenthal

What is hasidism? How has it been related to psychology and to the psychology of religion?

What is Hasidism?

The term “hasid” occurs quite widely in Jewish texts, particularly those concerned with ethics, generally referring to righteous individuals. Hasidism also refers specifically to the pietist movement which developed in eighteenth century Ukraine under the leadership of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (literally “master of the good name,” sometimes abbreviated to BeShT). Hasidism raised morale after the ills of the seventeenth century: the 1648 Chmielnitzki pogroms, which destroyed many communities, and the

religious disorientation caused by the antinomian Shabbatian movement. Hasidism is often seen as an attempt to dismantle the elitism of Eastern-European Jewish life, in which prestige accrued to religious study and to wealth. Hasidism asserted the spiritual worth and potential of every individual. The movement spread rapidly, as the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples traveled with the purpose of freeing poverty-stricken Jews imprisoned for debt, disseminating Jewish teachings including the “inward” aspects, based on kabbalah (Schneerson, 1980). Leadership passed to the Magid of Mezritch, and then branched out into a number of schools each headed by a hasidic Rebbe emphasizing a particular style of divine service. In the second and third generations the movement was opposed by the *mitnaggedim* (lit. “opponents”) who obtained the support of the famous Rabbi Elijah Gaon of Vilna, himself a kabbalist and a recluse. He thought hasidism was yet another form of an antinomian movement. Around 1800 a distinction emerged between the Habad school, which emphasized the primacy of intellectual understanding in order to arouse spiritual feelings, and the so-called Hagat style, which emphasized the primacy of emotional fervor in worship. The term “Habad” is an acronym for the intellectual divine attributes: wisdom (Hokhmah), understanding (binah) and knowledge (daat). “Hagat” is an acronym referring to three first of the seven emotional attributes: kindness (hesed), severity (gevurah) and beauty (also understood as mercy) (tiferet). Hasidic teachings can be seen as the latest stage of the Jewish mystical tradition (Scholem, 1941).

By the late nineteenth century it was estimated that well over half of Eastern European Jewry were identified as followers of one or other hasidic Rebbe. Eastern European Jewry was particularly devastated by the holocaust, but post World War II has seen the revival of hasidic life particularly in Israel, the USA, and Europe, also in Australia and South Africa. Habad hasidim have been particularly active in deploying emissaries to hundreds of Jewish communities world-wide, forming nuclei of outreach activity. Other schools of hasidim live in enclave-style communities, and such communities have proliferated and enlarged in Israel, Europe, the USA and elsewhere. Hasidism is a salient force in so-called “*haredi*” (strictly-orthodox) Judaism, although *mitnaggedic* and other non-hasidic styles of strictly-orthodox Judaism are also important.

The twin themes of hasidism are love of G-d and love of fellow humankind. In practice this involves scrupulous and inspired maintenance of the divine commandments (*mitzvot*), religious study, including the “inward” aspects of Jewish teaching (especially among Habad), and care for others. Dress is distinctive: black frock-coats or suits for men, hats and sidelocks; for

women, modest dress including sleeves below elbows, skirts below knees, and hair covering.

Other strictly-orthodox Jews adhere to a similar dress code, and scrupulous observance of the commandments. What distinguishes hasidism is the close adherence to the charismatic and inspirational leader, the Rebbe, whose advice and blessing may often be sought, which entails a close-knit social community.

As mentioned, hasidism is informed by kabbalistically-based teachings, the so-called “inward” aspects of Jewish teaching. A classic text is *Tanya* (Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 1796/1973), which is of considerable interest to psychologists of religion. Features of this work include a description of the human spiritual yearning to be united with the divine, the incessant spiritual struggle between the good impulse, based on the divine soul, and the animal impulse, towards selfish comfort. Hasidic teaching is not strictly-speaking ascetic: the material world is to be used appropriately, according to Jewish law, and in this way the divine speaks that are trapped in creation will be raised to G-dliness. The soul has a natural desire to be united with its divine source, and this can be achieved in prayer, and in right action. Particular emphasis is placed on charity and kindness to others. Hasidic psychology is thus underpinned by strong moral and spiritual themes. Human psychic structure is a microcosm of the macrocosm, which involves a progressive down-chaining of creation from its divine source, through the four “worlds” of emanation, creation, formation, and action, each comprising the ten divine attributes (wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and seven emotional attributes), until practical action is achieved. This scheme derives from Lurianic kabbalah, and expounds the cosmic significance of individual actions.

Hasidic teaching is not addressed solely to Jewish audiences. Rabbi Menachem Schneerson thought that the second section of *Tanya*, which presents a system of contemplation of the spirituality of existence, has universal relevance. He taught that “right living” involves the performance of those commandments obligatory on the particular individual, and for non-Jews this involves the seven commandments of the descendants of Noah (see Clorfene and Rogalsky, 1987; Cowen, 2003), including belief in the unity of G-d, the practice of sexual morality, honesty, and avoiding cruelty to animals.

There have been a number of attempts to apply hasidic insights into the practice and understanding of psychology, some written for lay audiences, others for academic and professional clinical audiences. The latter genre includes Rotenberg (1995), Weiss (2005) and Berke and Schneider (2008). These authors have used and examined hasidic and kabbalistic teachings and concepts in relation to psychological and psychoanalytic

understanding of behavior and feeling. Rotenberg for example suggests that the kabbalistic paradigm of creation may lead to a less assertive-aggressive style of communication, sexuality and communication compared to the Western norm.

Another genre has been the psychological study of hasidism and its distinctive features of social organization and spirituality. Schachter–Shalomi (1991) has examined the dynamics of the relationship between the hasidic leader (Rebbe) and the follower (Hasid) in the one-to-one encounter (sometimes known as *yechidut*) in which the hasid seeks advice and blessing. Winston (2005) has studied young men and women who have chosen to leave the (Satmar) hasidic lifestyle; Satmar is often said to be particularly strict in its outlook. El Or (1994) has studied the beliefs and values of hasidic women from the Gur group, in *Educated and Ignorant*, in which women emphasize the value they place on their role as the center and foundation of the home. Other studies of hasidic women have often focused on the outreaching Lubavitch group, for instance Loewenthal's (1988) study of religious development and commitment in this group, and Levine and Gilligan's *Mystics, Mavericks and Merrymakers* (2003), a study of adolescent girls.

A striking feature of hasidic life is the high value placed on family size: bearing and rearing as many children as possible is a feature of strictly-religious Jewish life, with an average of six children per family. Children are seen as a blessing. Family size has an impact on the well-being of the women, men, and children concerned, and this impact is often positive, as has been the impact of the value placed on marital and family stability (e.g., Loewenthal and Goldblatt, 1993; Loewenthal et al., 1995; Frosh, Loewenthal, Lindsey and Spitzer, 2005).

In conclusion, it may be stated that hasidism, a pietist movement within Jewish orthodoxy, has inspired considerable interest, not only among those looking for New Age-style spirituality, but among academic and professional psychologists. Its intense spirituality and kabbalistically-based teachings have important psychological content, in which human psychology is depicted as driven by spiritual and moral striving. Aspects of hasidic life have been studied by social scientists and psychologists, and there is clearly scope for further work.

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See also: [Baal Shem Tov](#) [Kabbalah](#)

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Healing

Thomas St. James O'Connor

Introduction

Healing is a concept and experience that is used by many world religions and professional disciplines including medicine, psychotherapy, pastoral counseling and family therapy. Parsons (2002) defines healing as the “restoration to wholeness.” Graham (1990) includes body, emotions,

mental functioning, family and social relationships and spiritual life in this restoration to wholeness. In the Hebrew Scriptures, healing is related to *shalom* (peace) and results from righteous living in accordance with the covenant (Graham, 1990). Healing is linked to salvation. God is the author of all healing. Often sin is linked to illness and healing of illness occurs when there is reconciliation with God. The *Book of Job* in the Hebrew Scriptures is the exception to the notion of illness as a result of sin.

Some Religions and Healing

Within Islam, healing is based on the Qu'ran and is holistic, i.e., involves the whole person and includes the moral aspects of living (Isgandarova, 2005). Muslim physicians were highly trained in the art and science of medicine and included the spiritual in their care for the patient. Avicenna (980–1037 CE) is one such doctor. The traditions (*hadiths*) of the Prophet Muhammad required the building of hospitals and care of the sick. Prayer and reading from the Qu'ran are important Islamic practices of healing. In Hinduism, healing is seen as the restoration of balance. The science of medicine is known as the “science of longevity” (*ayur veda*). Illness occurs when the different elements of the body and one's life get out of balance. Healing is achieved through restoring balance involving the use of herbs and other remedies. In Taoism, illness is connected to the context and healing requires the achievement of integration both internally and externally.

In the Christian Bible, the ministry of Jesus involves healing. Many healing miracles stories are presented in the gospels. Pilch (1998), however, challenges the view that the healing miracles of Jesus are about cure. He argues that these healings are about new meaning and restoration of the ill person to the community. Healing in the Christian context involves the whole person as well as relationships in the community. Christians in the early centuries established hospices to care for the sick and pray for miracles. The focus was not on cure but on care. There is the belief that sin brings illness. Dedication to God and keeping the commandments brings health. However, there is also the notion that sickness could be part of God's plan and the ill were urged to offer their trials for their own sanctification and the sanctification of others. Some Christian denominations such as Roman Catholic and Anglican developed sacraments of healing (Sacrament of the Sick) to heal the sick both physically and spiritually.

Medicine and Family Therapy

As medicine developed in the Enlightenment period, a split took place between body and soul based on the philosophy of Descartes and Newton. Medicine addressed the body and religion addressed the soul and both sought healing. The physician brought the cure of the body and the priest the cure of the soul. Clebsch and Jaekle (1967) note that healing is an important function of pastoral care and counseling within the Christian church. In modern medicine with the advance of antibiotics and other medical interventions, healing became synonymous with cure. The dualism of body and soul began to break down. Medicine became interested in the whole person and the view developed that the emotions, mind and spirit are all integrated in the human person and could influence the health of the body. Sagar (2005) and Koenig and colleagues (2001) see religion/spirituality as offering healing to the body and mind. O'Connor and Meakes (2005) document an explosion of research and publication on the relationship between spirituality and health in healthcare Journals. Medical research agrees that religion/spirituality can be an excellent coping mechanism for challenging health conditions. The more controversial issue is whether religion/spirituality can be a determinant of health and bring healing.

In family therapy, healing is viewed as restoring family relationships. Family therapy emphasizes a systems approach which sees the human person as part of a vast web of relationships. The focus is not so much on the individual but on the relational. Abuse, addictions, violence, disrespect can damage the web of relationships. Healing in these family relationships means striving to facilitate the I-Thou articulated by Martin Buber. Healing involves listening to each other, not being reactive, seeking the good of each other and forgiving. Strength-based and solution focused approaches assume that there is a healing process within families that is part of their experience (Walsh, 1998). Spirituality is one means to facilitate such healing (Walsh, 2009). Rovers (2005) uses the theory of Bowen and Bowlby to heal the wounds between couples and spirituality plays an important role.

Childhood Pain and Healing

There is some skepticism about healing the wounds that are experienced in childhood. Therapy and life experience can uncover these wounds. The therapeutic relationship is one way of healing the pain and hurt. Bowen and Bowlby addressed the deficits in childhood that resulted from

family relationships. Both though therapy could be helpful but did not believe in total healing. The goal is to manage the pain and seek to develop better relationships as an adult. Pargament (1997) uses the term coping instead of healing in describing the impact of religion on challenging experiences. Coping involves conservation of one's identity and transformation of identity. In psychiatry, the development of new drugs has helped persons cope with depression, schizophrenia, mood disorders, etc. This biological approach is not viewed as healing the illness but rather helping the person manage and function with the illness.

In our post modern era, healing is experienced in multiple ways: psychotherapy, medical interventions, meditation, walking the labyrinth, prayer, reading sacred texts, talking to friends, exercise, rituals, family therapy, diet, using alternative medicines, silence, belonging to a community, etc. One of the challenges of our age is healing the animosity between groups. Religion and spirituality can work effectively with psychology and science in facilitating the restoration to wholeness (healing).

See also: [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Qur'an](#)

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Heaven and Hell

Morgan Stebbins

Heaven and hell seem, at first glance, to be ubiquitous to religious systems. However there are many ancestor and spirit-based religions in which there is no such term and in which there is no concern for what happens after death or as a reward or punishment (Boyer, 2001). However, in the major religious traditions with developed cosmologies, heaven and hell are described as both cosmological regions (the heavens, the abode of God) and representative of religious consequences. Psychologically heaven and hell refer to experiential states and can be found in common sayings such as “war is hell.”

Although the description and function of heaven and hell vary widely with religious tradition, heaven is usually thought of as peace, bliss, or happiness, and hell of course with suffering and punishment.

In the Hebrew Bible, the closest thing to a reference to hell (heb. *Sheol*) can be found in Isaiah (38:18), the Psalms, and Job (7:7), although since there was no concomitant conception of heaven (apart from as an abode of God and the heavenly beings), and since *sheol* can well be translated as grave, there was not a highly differentiated idea of heaven and hell.

In the Hebrew bible, ideas of heaven and hell developed only very late, finding final form only in the Book of Daniel. Early on, Job comments scornfully that the dead “lie down alike in the dust” (21:26), indicating that it's all the same after death. This conception changes slowly, until Psalm 73 identifies moral categories: the false are dispatched “far from thee” and the loyal “near God.” Finally in Daniel we find the introduction of the resurrection (12:20) and differential consequences – the good enjoy everlasting life, while evildoers suffer everlasting defeat. This all changes with medieval Jewish mystical speculation, especially in the Zohar. With the introduction of Kabalistic traditions we find a complex system of multiple heavens and their attendant angels.

By the time of the New Testament, however, Zoroastrian speculation had changed the vocabulary of heaven

quite a bit. Not only that, very different types of places or experiences are implied by the different usages. For example in the Gospels heaven is referred to in different places as “the great reward,” the “abode of the Father,” “life everlasting,” “paradise,” “the city of God,” “the kingdom of God (or Christ, or heaven),” and “the joy of God.” We can see in this a huge variety of meanings, especially when Jesus alternately refers to this state as “within you,” “among you,” and “according to your deeds.” (cf. the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3), . . . of the Father (Matthew 13:43), life (Matthew 7:14), life everlasting (Matthew 19:16), the joy of the Lord (Matthew 25:21), great reward (Matthew 5:12), the kingdom of God (Mark 9:45), the kingdom of Christ (Luke 22:30), the house of the Father (John 14:2), city of God, (Heb. 12). From a psychological point of view we see the beginning of great differentiation of inner states which finds its apex in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. In this work, Dante is concerned not so much with punishment, but the mystery of how we injure ourselves (this is also the psychological meaning of sin). A saying in the Talmud runs, “The evils others do to me are as nothing compared to the evils I do to myself” (Blumenthal, 2009). From this perspective hell is the experience of betraying ones self and the price that is paid in the moment, not at some future point.

Other major religious traditions have very developed ideas about heaven and hell as well. There is a huge geography of heavens in Buddhist tradition. The *vinaya* sutra describes 7 hells and 26 heavens, each specific to a type of karma (not unlike Dante’s formulation). A central Buddhist concept (illustrated by the Bhavacakra mandala) involves the 6 worlds of rebirth – each represents the results of karmic past and run from the horrific world of hungry ghosts, to that of demons, animals, humans, titans, and gods. Although being reborn as a human is not the highest karmic reward, it is the only realm from which one can attain nirvana (Webb 1975). This implies, psychologically, that being fully human is the optimum place from which to grow – regardless of idealizations or collective values.

In Chinese mythology, the concept of heaven was understood on one hand as a synonym of *Shangdi* (supreme deity) and on the other hand as a synonym for nature, especially the sky. Heaven was a state both attainable and manifested in the world and its rulers. The Chinese word for heaven, *Tian*, is a cognate of the name of the supreme deity, and Confucian theorists such as Mozi understood that while heaven is the divine ruler the son of heaven (the King of Zhou) is the earthly ruler. In fact, heaven would be manifest on earth to the extent that the ruler lived according to the *Tao*.

The Qu’ran explains that good deeds lead to an afterlife in Eden. Heaven itself is described in the Qu’ran in verse 35 of Surah Al-Ra’d: “The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised! Beneath it flow rivers. Perpetual is the fruits thereof and the shade therein. Such is the End of the Righteous; and the end of the unbelievers is the Fire.” Since Islam rejects the concept of original sin, Muslims believe that all human beings are born pure. In Islam, therefore, a child who dies automatically goes to heaven, regardless of the religion of his or her parents. Furthermore, anyone who has worshipped no other god but Allah will go to heaven, thus including all Christians and Jews. However there are many levels of Paradise depending on how righteous a person is on Earth. The highest level that all Muslims are encouraged to ask for is *Jannatul Firdaus* (*The belief in Heaven in Islam*, 2/10/09).

The collective projection of what human behaviors lead to suffering changes over time and is always developing. The Vatican recently clarified the gender difference in the experience of heaven and hell. Men, apparently, will go to hell for the sin of lust and will suffer from burning brimstone. Women, on the other hand, will go to hell for the sin of pride and will be broken on the wheel.

In all of these traditions we find a veritable taxonomy of psychological experience as well as a prognostic system: some hells are harder to recover from, some people are less likely to develop in this life, or will not develop at all. The question to ask is why these nearly ubiquitous other realms have been so widespread. There may have been a time when people genuinely feared the threat of eternal damnation, but a psychological view would look toward a combination of the world-shaping power of the imagination and the innate dissociability of the psyche as the factors which allow human beings to experience and describe very subtle or vague aspects of mind and to offer them in salient, that is usually concrete form. This also explains why there is no end to metaphysical speculation, since there appear to be an ongoing (and so far untapped) geography of inner states.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Chinese Religions](#) [Christianity](#) [Islam](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Heidegger, Martin

Todd DuBose

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) is considered by many as the founder of existential or hermeneutical phenomenology. Heidegger's work has been a meeting place at the interstices between Daseinsanalysis (Binswanger, 1967; Boss, 1963, 1979), continental philosophy of religion (Caputo, 1978; Crowe, 2006), and existential theology (Tillich, 1966; Bultmann, 1953; Macquarrie, 1999). Given how his work provides the convergence of these disciplines that result in an existential approach to psychology and religion, it behooves us to attune to Heidegger's influence and inspiration for this field of study. What is more, Heidegger's work is thoroughly inspired by his life story, a story that is a tapestry of religious moments and happenings that belie presumptions of his apparent atheism. Martin Heidegger's place in the field of psychology and religion may surprise others who are more likely to consider him as a continental philosopher.

Martin Heidegger was born in Messkirch, Germany and raised as a Roman Catholic. His father was a sexton in the local parish. He studied theology at a Jesuit seminary in Austria, and then at the University in Freiburg. Putting together his foundation in theological reflection with the genesis of his commitment to phenomenology as it relates to philosophical psychology, Heidegger wrote his dissertation, entitled, *The Doctrine of Judgment in Psychologism*, and later finished a thesis on Duns Scotus.

Although presumed to be an atheist, religiosity as a phenomenological experience was central to Heidegger's entire being and works. John Caputo (1978), John Macquarrie (1999), and more recently Benjamin Crowe (2006), have all written extensively on the mystical and religious elements in Heidegger's thought, as a biography about his life that also highlights this religious dimension

for Heidegger appropriated titled, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil* (Safranski, 1999).

The relation of Heidegger's work to other religious traditions beyond Christianity may also be surprising. Heidegger contributed to the translation of the Tao Te Ching, and much has been written about Heidegger's work in relation to Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism (Caputo, 1978; Crowe, 2006). Heidegger's contextual understanding of both situations or events and human existence was ripe for these kinds of comparisons between Heidegger's thought and the deep richness of the world religions. It was out of his religious interest that he came to philosophical psychology and the philosophy of existence, and it can be soundly argued that his religious interests never dissipated; they only morphed over his life as he continually tried to clarify them. His journey was his own variance of faith seeking understanding, but not a faith in propositional or doctrinal beliefs. Heidegger's faith was a waiting for the gift of Being's disclosure.

Much of Heidegger's work was written in his small hut lodged on the hillside of Todtnauberg in Germany's Schwarzwald. There, Heidegger grew more and more appreciative of, and adopted, the simplicity of a peasant's lifestyle. He wore peasant clothing, cut his own wood, and believed the lack of distractions provided the best atmosphere for doing phenomenology. Not only did he write about dwelling *as* building, he lived it. In the *habitas* of his obvious ascetic proclivities, Heidegger's radical or hermeneutical phenomenology, and its subsequent destruction of metaphysics, offers profound implications for a deeper understanding of *homo religiosus*.

Hermeneutical phenomenology, pulsating with an ability to open up experiences beyond our typical ways of seeing events and things, offers an existential transcendence from static, mundane and profane conceptions and compartments in existence to a more open and unfolding of Being. It is not just what one discovers that is transcendent, as the very *process* of interpretation itself that discloses authentic existence, or *Dasein*. *Dasein* is the showing of Being's presence in its coming to "be there" each moment of our lives (Heidegger, 1962).

Dasein is not a fixed object or thing, as the ego or self is often understood, but the process of "clearing" in which human existence is understood. *Dasein* finds its ownmost possibilities when confronting its own death. By accepting one's finitude, facticity, and what Heidegger called, "thrownness," we are freed to value and respond to harkenings for us to stand out in our own specificity and uniqueness in the world. Our ways of being-in-the-world

find their significance in light of the circumstantial webs of meaning in any given instance, with each subsequent happening or event carrying its ownmost possibilities for us as enframed by our ever present and inescapable being-unto-death.

Two Swiss psychiatrists, Ludwig Binswanger (1881–1976) and Medard Boss (1903–1990), brought Heidegger's work on *Dasein* to the attention of psychiatric medicine and later to clinical, phenomenological psychology in what became known as Daseinsanalysis, or existential analysis (Binswanger, 1967; Boss, 1963, 1979). Daseinsanalysis is practiced around the world, and has its organizational home in the International Federation of Daseinsanalysis, that includes countries such as Brazil, Greece, Belgium, France, Hungary, Austria, Canada, England, The Czech Republic, and, of course, Switzerland. Moreover, it is not uncommon these days to see various international conferences addressing Heidegger's thought in relation to religious phenomena.

What is even more interesting from an existential-phenomenological understanding of the psychology and religion field is Heidegger's infamous "turn" during the period of his latter thinking and writing that led him away from a focus on *Dasein* in the world toward an analysis of *Ereignis*, or happening, event, or circumstance that gives rise to *Aletheia*, or the disclosure of truth. Truth, however, for Heidegger, is the very disclosure of Being itself. One can hardly ignore the similarities with theological reflection on revelation. Furthermore, Heidegger's asceticism shows itself again in his invitation toward a meditative rather than calculative approach in understanding phenomena. *Gelassenheit* is called for, or release-ment, thus allowing things to unfold in their time and uniqueness.

At the same time, admittedly, an initial view of Heidegger's being-unto-death certainly seems to preclude any otherworldly understanding of spirituality as the possibilities of metaphysical entities residing in a dualistic world. Yet, hermeneutically, even reflections on otherworldliness arise from the circumstantial "thrownness" in which we come to think of such matters. Nevertheless, I do believe Heidegger opens for us another understanding of spirituality that influenced many existential theologians, including Paul Tillich (1966), Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), John Macquarrie (1999), and Langdon Gilkey (1976), among others.

In one, concise summation of his relationship to spirituality, Heidegger believed that it is only through an understanding of transcendence do we come to a proper experience of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1977). This conviction which locates him squarely, even if unwittingly, within the

field of psychology and religion, albeit altering much of what we have heretofore understood about this field. Through Heidegger, we are offered a Daseinsanalytic perspective of psychology and religion.

Commentary

Perhaps Heidegger's typical absence from historical accounts of psychology and religion, apart from his destruction and overcoming of metaphysics, may be due to a cautionary ambivalence felt by most people regarding his unfortunate membership and participation in the Nazi party during World War II. Heidegger was strangely silent on this matter both during his membership and up to his own death. Nevertheless, Heidegger's position on these matters is notoriously complicated as he had deep and committed relationships with a variety of prominent Jewish scholars during this time, for instance, Hannah Arendt, Herbert Marcuse, Karl Lowith, and Hans Jonas, and he refused to appoint Nazis officials to administrative posts while rector at the University of Freiburg, and openly disagreed with Nazi ideology on racial genetics and other matters, which resulted in being monitored by the Gestapo (Burston and Frie, 2006). Heidegger eventually resigned from his appointment as Rector at the University of Freiburg, and withdrew from politics and much of public life, remaining silent on the whole affair. Nevertheless, it is hard pressed to find how Heidegger's life work on how the authentic life is lived by *not* succumbing to *Das Man*, or The They, could in anyway suggest a pro-fascist position. Again, similar to how Nietzsche's *Übermensch* was grossly and tragically misunderstood as a Aryan proposal, Heidegger's disclosure of *Dasein* in the event of existence was not a inaugural trumpeting for the Third Reich, the latter movement being the opposite of *Dasein* and more ominous than Heidegger himself even foresaw.

Heidegger leaves us with the possibility of understanding the field of psychology and religion from a Daseinsanalytic perspective. Paul Tillich's (1966) use of Heidegger to shift our understanding of God as *a* being to *Being* itself need not leave us with a false dilemma of choosing theism or atheism. For Heidegger, ontotheology has long since confused the ontic with the ontological or concrete things with the life that clears space for things to be-in-the-world. His destruction of metaphysics, as Benjamin Crowe (2006) has pointed out, may very be influenced by Martin Luther's thought, particularly after Heidegger's break from Catholicism.

What is specifically significant is the influence of Luther's *destructio* both on Heidegger's insistence on humanity's "thrownness" as a conditioning of freedom, and of the necessity of clearing space beyond the distractions of *Das Man*.

Finally, Heidegger shows us the inescapability of what I call our "enactments of significance" that are lived out every moment of our lives, which returns us to the hermeneutics of religiosity as well as the religiosity of hermeneutics. When we are left in situations in which Heidegger himself agreed that "only a god could save us," we can be certain that the saving god will be-in-the-world, clearing space and unburdening the heaviness of constricted existence so that we may share in *Dasein's* call toward authenticity and uniqueness.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Heresy

Clodagh Weldon

From the Greek word *hairesis* meaning choice (and by implication that which is chosen by a faction of believers), heresy is that which emerges within the Church which is contrary to orthodox teaching as it has been revealed by God and is thus rejected by the Church as false or "heretical." Aquinas (1224–1274) describes heresy as a "species of infidelity" in which believers corrupt the dogmas of Christianity. Functioning like a gangrenous disease which infects the body, heresy subverts the faith of the Church and, from an orthodox standpoint, must be removed. Excommunication, military action, inquisitions and burnings at the stake all feature as means of combating heresy in the history of the Church.

The New Testament exhibits a concern about emerging factionalism within the Christian movement and is replete with warnings about "heresy". Paul talks of divisions among early Christians in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:19), and warns the Church of Philippi "Beware of the dogs!," a reference to those who mutilate the faith. He warns believers in Jerusalem of "savage wolves," men within their group who "will come forward perverting the truth" (Acts 20: 29–30). Peter also warns of "false teachers" who introduce "destructive heresies" and thus bring damnation upon themselves (2 Pet 2:1). In Tit 3:10, purportedly from Paul, we read of what should be done with a heretic: offer a first and second warning and then break of contact with the person. They are "perverted and sinful" and condemn themselves.

The word "heresy" gains ascendancy in the writings of the Church Fathers. In the second century, for example, Irenaeus of Lyons used the word "hairesis" to describe opponents whom he categorizes as those who did not hold to his "orthodox" beliefs.

Multiple examples of heresy emerge in the early Church, most of which focus around exaggerations of either the humanity or the divinity of Christ, the second person of the Trinity. The Docetists, condemned as heretics by Ignatius of Antioch (DC 107) taught that Christ was divine and only *seemed* to be human. Representing orthodoxy, Ignatius noted that if Jesus were not fully human he would not have been able to save humanity. The Ebionites (also known as Adoptionists) taught that Jesus was the adopted Son of God. In response, Irenaeus of Lyons (DC 200) said that if Jesus were not "of God" he could not have saved us. Arianism taught that Jesus is of like substance (*homoiousios*) to God the Father. The Council of Nicea (325 AD) condemned the Arian heresy and proclaimed that Jesus is

of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father. As can be seen from these three examples, the emergence of heresy within the Church led not only to a condemnation of heretics, but to a clearer articulation of Christian doctrine. This articulation finds its expression in the Creeds of the Church. An excerpt from the Nicene Creed, for example, reads “We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, one in being with the Father. . .” The response to the heresies of Adoptionism and Arianism is clear: Jesus is not adopted, he is “eternally begotten of the Father, God from God”; he is not *like* God in substance but “one in being with the Father.”

Commentary

Freud has little to say about heresy, other than that it was condemned and punished by the Catholic Church. For Jung, on the other hand, heresy is much more important. He believed that heresy (as that which is rejected) needed to be reincorporated (“reintegrated”) in the interests of wholeness. He thought, for example, that the Christian doctrine of a Trinitarian God who is the *Summum Bonum* was deficient because it neglected the shadow side of the God image. Thus for Jung, that which had been rejected by orthodoxy as heretical because not in accord with revelation – such as the dark side of God – needed to be recovered and brought back to the whole.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [God](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Orthodoxy](#) [Quaternity](#) [Revelation](#)

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Hermeneutics

Todd DuBose

Hermeneutical Origins

Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation. Originally used to interpret texts, initially Biblical texts,

and then extended to other texts, hermeneutics evolved into not only a way to interpret literature, but also a way to interpret any human experience. In fact, hermeneutics became known as a way to describe how existence works as a whole in that life is an undulating dance between concealment and revelation.

The etiology of the word, “hermeneutics,” is based on the mythical character, Hermes, the messenger, who delivered and interpreted messages from and between the gods. As hermeneuticists and historians Richard Palmer and Norman O. Brown have pointed out, Hermes was a trickster as well, and known for his deception and thievery. Hermes stands in liminal space that is neither here nor there, but a bridge between one place and another – though not identified with either one (Palmer, 1969; Brown, 1969). This description of Hermes is apt given the profound potential for bestowing blessings or wrecking havoc as a result of the interpretive process.

Hermeneutics, although addressed by figures as early as Plato and Aristotle, originated as a more formal practice with Rabbinic and Early Church Father concerns for how to interpret sacred scripture. Central to this debate was whether or not scripture should be interpreted literally or allegorically, particularly when application to contemporary concerns was an issue at hand. Adjudicating between conflicting allegorical understandings led to “rules” established for interpreting texts, thus leading to an exegetical approach to interpretation. Historical, contextual, literary, and grammatical frameworks became privileged as essential contexts in which texts should be understood.

Medieval thought and debate led to the continuation of exegetical and allegorical analysis of symbolism, with annotations accompanying interpretations, thus facilitating better possibilities for lifestyle applications. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, further exegetical tools were developed for use in interpretation, though this time expanding the purview of textual material to any secular text. Hermeneutics continued in this vein until the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Schleiermacher saw the central task of hermeneutics as a guard against misunderstanding between the author’s intentions and the interpreter’s grasp of textual meaning. Empathy for the author’s intention, and aligning one’s own intentions and experience with that of the text, Schleiermacher thought, would lead to better understanding of the text’s meaning (Schleiermacher, 1977).

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), though, proposed that understanding is best achieved when actual life situations are the focus of hermeneutical analysis. Hence, he saw hermeneutics as a method by which one could

understanding the inner meanings of artifacts, actions, products, and experiences of others within human existence, and consequentially, argued that hermeneutics should be applied beyond texts to any human experience (Dilthey, 1989). Dilthey also brought to our attention how mediated experience is for us, and held firm to his conviction that we cannot understand inner meaning and experience related to any person, artifact or text without moving through linguistic and cultural filters. These convictions prepared the ground for further developments in hermeneutics.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), one of Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) students, was highly influenced by Dilthey's work, shifted the focus of hermeneutics beyond being a functional tool of interpretation, for texts or human experiences, and, instead, saw the hermeneutical process as descriptive of Being itself (Heidegger, 1962). The interpreter's very existence is an enactment of interpretation. The truth of one's existence unfolds in the interplay of call and response, of seeking to understand while also disclosing oneself to be understood. We are called to our "ownmost" possibilities, and discover them only when we allow ourselves to be interpreted and delimited by our limitations, contingencies, and finitude in each moment of our lives. From the moment we rise from sleep, or even during sleep, we are perpetually interpreting experiences happening around us as well as unfolding ourselves to others in light of their inquiries and engagement with us.

Each significant piece of writing, text, expression, experience, action, or otherwise, gains its disclosed meaning when seen against the backdrop of one's historicity, or immediate enactment of one's life story. Moreover, Heidegger, furthering the Augustinian focus on faith seeking understanding, argued that only through our risked and invested pre-understandings within the delimitations of our horizons can we come to know anything. What can be known, though, is not something that can be isolated and held static, as being is perpetually becoming itself through the undulation of concealment and disclosure. Existence only partially discloses itself in any given moment, and depends on solicitude, or care and concern, to clear space for its further disclosure – which is never complete.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) integrated Heidegger's emphasis on the situatedness of meaning and Schleiermacher's emphasis on the importance of the interpreter's psychology for interpretation, and saw the hermeneutical project as facilitating the meeting of horizons. Horizons are the capacities one has to understand, communicate, meaning make, and exist within the given historical and cultural traditions demarcating one's

lived experience and perspective (Gadamer, 1989). Horizons are inherently limited, thus necessitating dialog for truth to disclose itself. Hermeneutics-as-Being, then, always and already discloses existence's inherent relationality.

Among other seminal figures in the history of hermeneutics, two other names stand out: Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) and Jürgen Habermas (1929–). Ricoeur's utilized hermeneutics to integrate the field of semiotics with religious experience (Ricoeur, 1967). More specifically, Ricoeur sought to understand the existential modes of existence embedded in and mediated through religious symbolism, particularly symbols of sin and evil. Jürgen Habermas (1975), working from within the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, utilized the power of hermeneutics to critique oppressed social structures and practices.

Hermeneutics in Psychology and Religion

Michel Foucault (1926–1984), Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), John Caputo (1940–), Hans Koezler, and Charles Winquist (1944–2002) have all offered various critiques and developments of hermeneutics. Foucault critiqued and reframed how power operates in discourse and relationships through genealogical and archeological analysis of various practices of control. Derrida deconstructed presumptions that discourse could fully represent meaning and experience, by exposing all that is missed in "presencing" practices (Derrida, 1980). John Caputo further radicalized Derrida's deconstructive project by viewing deconstructive analysis as a type of religious experience that functions much like a type of negative theology or apophatic mysticism (Caputo, 1987, 2000). Hans Koezler, a contemporary critical hermeneuticist, combines Foucaultian genealogy and Gadamerian hermeneutics to establish a critical hermeneutics that exposes oppressive power practices in relational patterning and dialogical discourse, thus allowing for horizons to meet without domination or submission. Finally, Charles Winquist established a practical hermeneutics in which he invites pastoral practices toward depth relating with others in contemporary cultural situations by allowing interpretations of story and symbol to take us towards deeper dimensions of existence (Winquist, 1980).

Commentary

It is important in the field of psychology and religion that prior to hermeneutics being a way of interpreting texts or

human experiences, this art and science was, and still it, a process of “discernment” in general, and a “discerning the spirits” in particular. Similarly, “diagnosis” is an art of “completely seeing through or into” another person or situation and also predates contemporary diagnostic practices by hundreds of years. Hermeneutics, therefore, is itself a sacred activity in that its very process unfolds being itself. What is often forgotten is that “divining,” from which the word “divine” arises, is an interpretive process. One could say that the divine, or sacred, is the process of hermeneutics itself. In this way, the experience of grace, then, is the experience of being truly understood.

Hermeneutics is not a mere “cognitive” activity of neocortical executive functioning, but a holistic comportment of desire that intends communion via the mutual grace of understanding and of being understood. What makes us *homo religiosus* is our never ceasing desire to understand, as Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984) noted, so that we can become discerning, interpreting, responsible and loving human beings toward one another (Lonergan, 1973/1990, 1957/1992).

See also: [▶ Daseinsanalysis](#) [▶ Dying and Rising Gods](#) [▶ Faith](#) [▶ Homo Religiosus](#) [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [▶ Lived Theology](#) [▶ Meaning of Human Existence](#) [▶ Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Hermits

Paul Larson

A hermit is a person who lives a solitary life as part of their spiritual path. The etymology comes from the Greek “eremos,” meaning desert. This reflects the history of the hermit in the Christian tradition. The first Christian hermits sought out the solitude of the desert. Hermits generally live a monastic life, though not all monks are hermits. Some modern hermits in the Roman Catholic Church are lay people living solitary lives in their own apartments in the city.

Western hermits began living in desert regions in the third century of the common era, in Egypt and Syria. St. Anthony (251–356 CE) is among the most famous of the early desert fathers and mothers, men and women whose life of seclusion and self-denial marked the first Christian monastic tradition. Most, but not all contemporary hermits are part of recognized monastic order in Christianity.

Judaism, with its emphasis on marriage and family life, does not have an eremitic tradition. Islam, also does not have many hermits, though some Sufi mystics were known to be solitary wanderers.

In Eastern religions, there is also recognition of the value of the solitary life. Hindus have several orders of

monasticism. “Sannyasa” refers to those who have taken vows to give up the secular household life and live celibately in community, and sometimes in solitary states. The “sadhus,” are among the most widely known of sannyasi who often take up life as a solitary hermit. Buddhists also have monks who live off in long-term meditation retreat, but are attached to the larger monastic community for their basic support. They periodically come out of retreat and engage in teaching meditation to monks in community or lay devotees. Taoism was founded by Lao Tzu who reputedly left his work, *The Tao Te Ching*, with a border guard as he walked off into the wilderness alone. So it’s founding figure was a hermit and through the ages others have followed his path of solitude. Confucianism, like Judaism and Islam, emphasizes the importance of family life, so it does not support a tradition of hermits.

It is difficult to live completely alone and be able to sustain oneself. Thus, most hermits are attached to either a lay community or a monastic community for sustenance and support. In the Christian tradition this is the difference between an anchorite (hermit) and a cenobite (monk living in community). But as much as possible the hermit seeks solitude.

The eremitic life is a continuum of self-denial, or asceticism, which can range from simple living with some comforts to strict discipline and practices involving self-mortification of the body. After practicing such harsh disciplines, Siddhartha Gautama decided that a middle way of ascetic practices was better, and thus struck a new path as he became the Buddha, eschewing extreme practices but seeking simplicity and non-attachment.

The hermit was portrayed in the Rider-Waite Tarot deck as holding a lamp to illuminate his and other’s paths. This symbolism affirms the primacy of the role of seeker after wisdom which is associated with gnostic traditions in the West as well as the more orthodox Christian forms of solitary life. There is a long tradition of solitary practitioners of Hermetic spirituality, including magicians, rosicrucians, and others in the Western esoteric tradition.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Christianity](#) [Hinduism](#) [Occultism](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Hero

Robert A. Segal

The “Great Man” View of History

It is commonly said that where in the twentieth century impersonal forces were believed to make history, in the nineteenth century heroic individuals were believed to make history. The epitome of this nineteenth-century outlook was the English man of letters Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). Carlyle opens his *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) with a statement that has come to epitomize the “Great Man” view of history: “For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here” (p. 1).

Carlyle’s concern with outward accomplishment sharply distinguishes his conception of heroism from that of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885) (see part 1). The achievement of Nietzsche’s *übermensch*, or “overman,” is personal, not societal. Rather than praising the *übermensch* for changing his society, Nietzsche praises the society that produces him.

Carlyle’s most vitriolic contemporary critic was the pioneering English sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), for whom the attribution of decisive events to the talents of individuals rather than to the fundamental laws of physical and social evolution is a hopelessly primitive, childish, romantic, and unscientific viewpoint. In Spencer’s famous summary phrase in *The Study of Sociology* (1874), “Before he [the great man] can remake his society, his society must make him” (p. 35).

The twentieth century has spawned still stronger skepticism toward the impact of heroes, even in the face of the seemingly all too real impact of dictators like Hitler and Stalin. Defenders of heroism nevertheless remain. Best known is the American philosopher Sidney Hook (1902–1989), author of *The Hero in History* (1943/1955). Hook argues for a sensible middle ground between crediting heroes with everything, which he assumes Carlyle to be doing, and crediting them with nothing.

Modern Heroes

Some heroes, or kinds of heroes, fit only certain periods. For example, it is hard to imagine an aristocratic hero like

Don Juan surviving into the twentieth century. Other heroes do survive, either because their appeal continues or because they are protean enough to adapt to the times. Heracles, the greatest of ancient heroes, was by no means confined to the crude image of him as Rambo-like – all brawn and no brains – but on the contrary has been depicted as the embodiment of wisdom, the exemplar of virtue, a tragic hero, a glutton, and even a romantic lover.

In the twentieth century, as in prior centuries, not only have traditional heroes been transformed, but new heroes and new kinds of heroes have emerged. If distinctively nineteenth-century heroes were the romantic hero (Byron's Childe Harold) and the bourgeois hero (Flaubert's Emma Bovary), distinctively twentieth-century heroes include the ordinary person as hero (Miller's Willy Loman), the comic hero (Roth's Alexander Portnoy), the schlemiel as hero (Singer's Gimpel the Fool), and the absurd hero (Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon). Far from divine, the contemporary hero is hopelessly human – mortal, powerless, amoral. The present-day hero is often lowly even within the human community – more the outsider than the insider, more the loser than the winner, more the villain than the savior. The contemporary hero is not a once great figure who has fallen but a figure who never rises. Sisyphus, not Oedipus, let alone Heracles, epitomizes contemporary heroism. Yet Sisyphus is still to be commended for never giving up. Persistence replaces success; survival replaces achievement. Old-fashioned heroic virtues like courage and duty give way to new ones like irony and detachment. Today's hero, for example, is heroic in persisting without success.

Yet it would surely be going much too far to argue that traditional heroism has died out. Present-day heroes in sports, entertainment, business, and politics are admired for their success, not for their mere persistence, and the acclaim conferred on them often reaches the same divine plateau as in times past. They are “idolized” and “worshiped.” At most, the notion of heroism as persistence has arisen alongside the traditional notion of heroism as success.

Hero Myths

Stories of heroes take the form of myths. The study of hero myths goes back at least to 1871, when, in *Primitive Culture*, the pioneering English anthropologist E. B. Tylor argued that many of them follow a uniform plot, or pattern: the hero is exposed at birth, is saved by other humans or animals, and grows up to become a national hero. In 1928 the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp, in

Morphology of the Folktale (trans. [1968] 1958), sought to demonstrate that Russian fairy tales follow a common biographical plot, in which the hero goes off on a successful adventure and upon his return marries and gains the throne. Propp's pattern skirts both the birth and the death of the hero.

Of attempts not merely to delineate patterns but also to determine the origin, function, and subject matter of hero myths, the most important have been by the Viennese psychoanalyst Otto Rank (1884–1939), the American mythographer Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), and the English folklorist Lord Raglan (1885–1964). Rank later broke irreparably with Sigmund Freud, but when he wrote *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909) [trans. 1914], he was a Freudian apostle. While Campbell was never a full-fledged Jungian, he wrote *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) as a kindred soul of C. G. Jung. Raglan wrote *The Hero* (1936) as a theoretical ally of James Frazer. Because Raglan's approach is non-psychological and even anti-psychological, his will not be considered here.

Otto Rank

For Rank, following Freud, heroism deals with what *Jungians* call the first half of life. The first half – birth, childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood – involves the establishment of oneself as an independent person in the external world. The attainment of independence expresses itself concretely in the securing of a job and a mate. The securing of either requires both separation from one's parents and mastery of one's instincts. Freudian problems involve a lingering attachment to either parents or instincts. To depend on one's parents for the satisfaction of instincts or to satisfy instincts in anti-social ways is to be stuck, or fixated, at a childish level of psychological development.

Rank's pattern, which he applies to thirty hero myths, is limited to the first half of life. It goes from the hero's birth to his attainment of a “career”:

- ▶ The hero is the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibition or obstacles. During or before the pregnancy, there is a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle, cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representative). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by animals, or by

lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by a female animal or by an humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents, in a highly versatile fashion. He takes his revenge on his father, on the one hand, and is acknowledged, on the other. Finally he achieves rank and honors (Rank, 1990: 61).

Literally, or consciously, the hero, who is always male, is a historical or legendary figure like Oedipus. The hero is heroic because he rises from obscurity to the throne. Literally, he is an innocent victim of either his parents or, ultimately, fate. While his parents have yearned for a child and abandon him only to save the father, they nevertheless do abandon him. The hero's revenge, if the parricide is even committed knowingly, is, then, understandable: who would not consider killing one's would-be killer?

Symbolically, or unconsciously, the hero is heroic not because he dares to win a throne but because he dares to kill his father. The killing is definitely intentional, and the cause is not revenge but sexual frustration. The father has refused to surrender his wife – the real object of the son's efforts. Too horrendous to face, the true meaning of the hero myth gets covered up by the concocted story. Rather than the culprit, the hero becomes an innocent victim or at worst a justified avenger. What the hero seeks gets masked as power, not incest. Most of all, who the hero is becomes some third party, a historical or legendary figure, rather than either the creator of the myth or anyone stirred by it. Identifying himself with the literal hero, the myth maker or reader vicariously revels in the hero's triumph, which in fact is his own. *He* is the real hero of the myth.

Literally, the myth culminates in the hero's attainment of a throne. Symbolically, the hero gains a mate as well. One might, then, conclude that the myth fittingly expresses the Freudian goal of the first half of life. In actuality, it expresses the opposite. The wish it fulfills is not for detachment from one's parents and from one's anti-social instincts but, on the contrary, for the most intense possible relationship to one's parents and the most anti-social of urges: parricide and incest, even rape. Taking one's father's job and one's mother's hand does not quite spell independence of them.

The myth maker or reader is an adult, but the wish vented by the myth is that of a child of three to five. The fantasy is the fulfillment of the Oedipal wish to kill one's father in order to gain access to one's mother. The myth fulfills a wish never outgrown by the adult who either invents or uses it. That adult is psychologically an eternal child. Having never developed an ego strong enough to master his instincts, he is neurotic. Since no mere child

can overpower his father, the myth maker imagines being old enough to do so. In short, the myth expresses not the Freudian goal of the first half of life but the fixated childhood goal that keeps one from accomplishing it.

Joseph Campbell

Where for Freud and Rank heroism is limited to the first half of life, for Jung it involves the second half – adulthood – even more. For Freud and Rank, heroism involves relations with parents and instincts. For Jung, heroism in even the first half involves, in addition, relations with the unconscious. Heroism here means separation not only from parents and anti-social instincts but even more from the unconscious: every child's managing to forge consciousness is for Jung a supremely heroic feat.

The goal of the uniquely Jungian second half of life is likewise consciousness, but now consciousness of the Jungian unconscious rather than, as in the first half, of the external world. One must return to the unconscious, from which one has invariably become severed, but the ultimate aim is to return in turn to the external world. The ideal is a balance between consciousness of the external world and consciousness of the unconscious. The aim of the second half of life is to supplement, not abandon, the achievements of the first half.

Just as classical Freudian problems involve the failure to establish oneself in the outer world, in the form of working and loving, so distinctively Jungian problems involve the failure to reestablish oneself in the inner world, in relation to the unconscious. Freudian problems stem from excessive attachment to the world of childhood; Jungian problems, from excessive attachment to the world one enters upon breaking free of the childhood world: the external world.

Just as Rank confines heroism to the first half of life, so Campbell restricts it to the second half. Rank's scheme begins with the hero's birth; Campbell's, with his adventure. Where Rank's scheme ends, Campbell's begins: with the adult hero ensconced at home. Rank's hero must be young enough for his father and in some cases even his grandfather still to be reigning. Campbell does not specify the age of his hero, but the hero must be no younger than the age at which Rank's hero myth therefore ends: young adulthood. While some of Campbell's own examples are of child heroes, they violate his scheme, according to which heroes must be willing to leave behind all that they have accomplished at home, and violate even more his Jungian meaning, according to which heroes must be fully developed egos ready to encounter the unconscious

from which they have largely become separated. Campbell's heroes should, then, be adults.

Rank's hero must be the son of royal or at least distinguished parents. The hero of the egalitarian Campbell need not be, though often is. Where Rank's heroes must be male, Campbell's can be female as well, though Campbell inconsistently describes the hero's initiation from an exclusively male point of view. Finally, Campbell's scheme dictates human heroes, even though many of his examples are of divine heroes. Rank's pattern, by contrast, readily allows for divine as well as human heroes.

Where Rank's hero returns to his birthplace, Campbell's marches forth to a strange, new world, which the hero has never visited or even known existed. This extraordinary world is the world of the gods, and the hero must hail from the human world precisely to be able to experience the distinctiveness of the divine one. The hero has sex with the goddess and marries her – the reason the hero must here be male. He clashes with the male god and defeats him – the additional reason the hero must here be male. Yet with both gods he becomes mystically one and thereby becomes divine himself.

Where Rank's hero *returns* home to encounter his father and mother, Campbell's hero *leaves* home to encounter a male and a female god, who are neither his parents nor necessarily even a couple. Yet the two heroes' encounters are seemingly akin. But in fact they are not. Because the goddess is not the hero's mother, sex with her does not constitute incest. And the conflict with the male god is resolved.

When Campbell writes that myths “reveal the benign self-giving aspect of the *archetypal* father,” he is using the term in its Jungian sense (Campbell 1949, 139–140). For Freudians, gods symbolize parents. For Jungians, parents symbolize gods, who in turn symbolize father and mother archetypes, which are components of the hero's personality. A male hero's relationship to these gods symbolizes not, as for Freud and Rank, a son's relationship to other persons – his parents – but the relationship of one side of a male's personality – his ego – to another side – his unconscious. The father and the mother are but two of the archetypes of which the Jungian, or collective, unconscious is composed. Archetypes are unconscious not because they have been repressed but because they have never been conscious. For Jung and Campbell, myth originates and functions not, as for Freud and Rank, to satisfy neurotic urges that cannot be manifested openly but to express normal sides of the personality that have just not had a chance at realization.

By identifying himself with the hero of a myth, Rank's myth maker or reader vicariously lives out in his mind an

adventure that, if ever directly fulfilled, would be acted out on his parents themselves. While also identifying himself – or herself – with the hero of a myth, Campbell's myth maker or reader vicariously lives out in the mind an adventure that even when directly fulfilled would still be taking place in the mind. For parts of the mind are what the myth maker or reader is really encountering.

See also: [Campbell, Joseph](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Myth](#) [Monomyth](#) [Rank, Otto](#)

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Heschel, Abraham Joshua

Mark Popovsky

General

Born in Warsaw, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972) was designated from his youth as the heir to the great Hasidic court of Apt over which his father and grandfather

before him had presided. Following a rigorous traditional Jewish education, Heschel enrolled at the University of Berlin in 1927 where he earned a doctorate in Bible while simultaneously studying at a liberal rabbinical college devoted to the critical study of religious texts. Heschel remained in Berlin through the 1930s writing poetry in Yiddish, publishing scholarly works in German, and teaching at a number of Jewish institutions during the rise of Nazi power. German officials deported Heschel to Poland in 1938, where he taught briefly before escaping to America via England. His mother and two sisters were killed in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941. Heschel moved to New York in 1945 where he taught for the remainder of his life at the Jewish Theological Seminary, publishing several major works of theology both in Hebrew and English.

Theology

Heschel believed in a God intimately concerned for human beings. He rejected the Aristotelian view of God, which had entered Jewish thought through Maimonides, as a Prime Mover who himself is not moved. Instead, Heschel laid out a theology of divine pathos in which God is deeply affected by human actions. God, in Heschel's view, reaches out to form relationships with human beings, but humans often ignore God's overtures, blinded by arrogance and a fatal underestimation of our own limitations. Faith begins with humans recovering a sense of awe – an awareness that God is present around us and challenging us to appreciate the ineffable mystery of existence.

Heschel elevated theological concepts such as awe, wonder and mystery in his writing. Consequently, he was profoundly skeptical of social sciences that selectively ignore those aspects of human life not easily quantified or described in scientific language. He criticized the psychology of his day for its "empirical intemperance" which dismissed questions about ineffable dimensions of existence. He also rejected the idea that religion reflects human beings' need to believe in God. Conversely, Heschel wrote that religious feelings arise as individuals become aware of God's need for them. Heschel consistently maintained that evil acts were rooted in human egocentricity. He accused psychology of "intellectual narcissism" to the degree that it placed ultimate confidence in the power of the mind, dismissed questions of morality and professed that man can attain his own salvation without resort to God.

Heschel also strongly critiqued religious orthodoxies which mistakenly view ritual piety as an end in itself. While Heschel was traditionally observant in his own life and wrote several moving works about the importance of

observances such as prayer and the Sabbath, he understood religious rituals as a spiritual tool to help one continuously redirect his or her attention back towards the mystery of God's presence. Heschel simultaneously argued that ritual observance itself, even in the absence of belief, can help to open the individual's consciousness up to God's intimate love for humanity. Heschel famously wrote that Judaism does not demand a leap of faith but rather a leap of action.

Heschel refused to interpret the Bible as a document describing historical events. He wrote that scripture is not the object of divine revelation but rather a human commentary on revelation itself. The biblical text represents not what God said but rather a human effort to render into words a genuine experience of the divine which far transcends logic and language. Heschel read the prophetic message as demanding that individuals actively engage in a relationship with God by behaving morally and by developing an awareness of the sacred. In his own life, Heschel interpreted this to require his active participation in the American Civil Rights movement and his protest of the Vietnam War.

See also: [▶ God](#) [▶ Hasidism](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Hestia

Susan Wyatt

In Greek mythology, Hestia was the firstborn of Cronus (Saturn) and Rhea. Since it had been prophesied that one of his sons would overthrow him, Cronus swallowed each of his children; first Hestia, then Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. When Zeus, her third son, was born; the infuriated Rhea hid him and gave Cronus a stone to swallow. When Zeus grew to manhood he forced Cronus to disgorge his brothers and sisters. Hestia, the first to be swallowed, was the last to be released.

Hestia, like her Roman counterpart Vesta, is best known as the Goddess of the Hearth. While she was sometimes portrayed in human form, she was more

often represented by images of flames or glowing coals. She had the most awesome responsibility of the Olympian gods. She became involved in none of the caprices and disputes that characterized her family because she was the one charged with keeping the flame alive, reminding us of the critical dependence of early humans on fire. It was Hestia who invented the art of building a house as a place to safeguard the flame and contain its light and warmth. She eschews the blood sacrifice; her preferred offering is sweet wine. She obviates the need for humans to steal fire because she gives it freely as a gift.

Hestia is one of the Goddesses that Jean Bolen used in her explication of archetypal feminine patterns. She represents an inward focus in a woman's psyche. Her identity is not tied to external circumstances or to outcomes. She looks inside herself to find meaning, peace, sanctuary, and the sense of being related to others in a common spiritual bond. Her focus is on the inner flame, her own values and what is personally meaningful to her. Her concern is with the spiritual, with being centered and being connected. She stays in the background, seeking anonymity, tranquility, and solitude.

As the Goddess of the Hearth, Hestia represents the relationship of women to the domestic sphere of life for whom household tasks are a central activity. She also has a social role as the hearthkeeper for the temple of the collective. Just as Hestia's flame is an image of the spirit that animates a home, it also represents the spirit that sustains the life of a culture. Her role, like that of the priestesses of Vesta in classical Rome, is to hold the soul of her culture, steadfastly to keep the flame alive whatever the turmoil of the outer world. Her inward search for meaning is not for herself alone, but to sustain the spirit that gives meaning to the culture. Sometimes this task requires her to sacrifice her tranquility and anonymity and step out of the background to remind her culture of who they are, what they value, and what they have forgotten.

As well as the flame in the domestic and communal hearths, the Homeric Hymns identify Hestia as the fire at the center of the world in Delphi. While Apollo made himself the presiding deity of the Delphic oracle, Hestia is the fire that ignites the prophecy. The flame is often used to symbolize psychic processes such as inspiration, intuition, and imagination and Hestia represents these ways of knowing that were celebrated by Ovid in his hymn to Vesta. The story of Hestia's wooing is an image of a feminine way of balancing the tension between conscious and unconscious. She was desired by Poseidon, who as God of the Sea is often taken to represent the power of the unconscious; and by Apollo, who is an image of rational thought, art, science, and language. To keep peace in

Olympus, Hestia vowed to remain a virgin. She is ever poised between the two gods and, between the rational and the irrational, yet ever complete in herself. In gratitude, Zeus declared that the first and last libations would always be hers and, in Greek religious rituals, Hestia was always the first god to be honored.

However, Hestia lost this honor when a new god, Dionysios, was born. To make way for him among the 12 places on Mount Olympus, Hestia, weary of intrigue and arguments, gave away her position, knowing that she would be welcome wherever she chose to settle. In this ending of the myth, the Greek religion and Western culture suppressed an element of the feminine spirit and moved into the dualistic patriarchy defined by Nietzsche in terms of the polarity between Apollo and Dionysios.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [Myth](#)

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Hierophany

Paul Larson

Hierophany is a term for manifestation of the divine. It is a broader term than the more familiar term, theophany, because it allows non-personal forms of the divine to become manifest. The term was popularized by the noted scholar of comparative religion, Mircea Eliade (1907–1986). His major thesis (1959) is the distinction in human experience between the sacred and the profane modes of life. Our ordinary lives are profane, but he does not use this in a pejorative sense, but as simply the opposite of sacred. When we are in contact with the divine ground of being we are in “sacred space and sacred time,” and when we are out of contact we are in a profane or ordinary mode of existence. Whether it is in a formal worship service, or a private experience of mystical communion with the divine, we have the capacity to enter into a new and more profound

mode of being in the world. In this world of the spirit we experience some type or degree of communion with the divine. Hierophany is the unfolding of that experience of contact, connection or communion with a transcendent power or person.

For many people it takes the form of a feeling of warmth, love, connection to and receiving inspiration from a deity. For others, there is a “dark night of the soul,” a profound experience of suffering, unworthiness and alienation. Either the positive or negative inner and private experience we associate with mystics is what Rudolf Otto (1917/1958) referred to as the experience of the numinous. Even the relatively frequent experience the normal worshiper has of connection with the divine during the act of worship is an example of hierophany. Experience of and with the divine does not have to be dramatic and earth shattering, it can be quiet and secure. The experience of oneness with nature while in nature, likewise, can be the basis of a spiritual connection. This was articulated by such writers as the American Henry David Thoreau, whose spirituality centered on a sense of connection to the natural world.

In the Western religions, hierophany is experienced as theophany, since the divine takes on the form of a person. Buber (1958) characterizes this as an encounter of an “I” with a “Thou,” the highest quality of relationship that one can aspire to. There can be experiences which involve only part of senses, “auditions” for example, are the experiences of voices of the divine or their angelic representatives, “apparitions” are the visual manifestations of the divine or angelic beings. The many appearances of the Virgin Mary are examples of this type.

Another type of hierophany is revelation. This can be dramatic and life changing. The classic example is the experience of Saul, who on the road to Tarsus experience an epiphany and turned from being a persecutor of Christians to become St. Paul, one of its most effective missionaries. Muhammed, likewise experienced the dramatic visitation of an angel heralding the beginning of the revelations that became the Q’uran.

See also: [Buber, Martin](#) [Eliade, Mircea](#)

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Hierosgamos

John Eric Killinger

Introduction

Hierosgamos is a composite of two Greek words ἱερός (*hieros*) and γάμος (*gamos*), meaning “mystical marriage” or “sacred ceremony.” The word occasionally appears transliterated as two (*hieros gamos*) as it is presented in Greek. Often used interchangeably with *coniunctio*, the hierosgamos is recognized as the highest form of the union of opposites (e.g., King and Queen, Sol et Lunae) in the alchemical opus. Hierosgamos is found chiefly in the literature and theoretical work of analytical (Jungian) and archetypal psychology; nevertheless, it may possess implications for acting out of Oedipal vicissitudes observed in Freudian and psychodynamic psychology.

Hieros means “filled with or manifesting divine power, supernatural, holy.” Of this latter meaning, the word refers to the sense of being hallowed or consecrated, for example, holy scripture, even *hieroglyphics*.

Gamos, on the other hand, means “wedding,” “marriage,” even “wedlock.” Pythagoras uses *gamos* as a name for the numeral *three*, which is masculine frequency. This would account for the motif of the divine child (produced by the union of the king and queen, Sol et Lunae, gold and silver) being usually male, e.g., Christ, Marduk, etc. The usage of *gamos* for the number three allows for the realization of the hierosgamos as the divine third. In this sense it is connected with the Trinity in much of the writing of C. G. Jung.

Whereas Pythagoras designates *gamos* as three, Plutarch uses *gamos* for the number *five*. This immerses us into the symbolization of the marriage aspect of the hierosgamos as it is the combination of the feminine aspect (even frequency, i.e., two) and the masculine aspect (three, or odd frequency). Rendering *gamos* as “five” could also refer to the alchemical *quinta essentia*, the quintessence that is the fifth element or red tincture that is indexed to the Void or chaos encircled by the tail devouring serpent, or uroboros (q.v.).

Further usage of *gamos* reveals it to denote the number *six* as used by Iamblichus (1998). In this sense, $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$, where six is viewed as a symbol of harmony or balance. It thus fits Islamic alchemist ibn Umail’s projection of the *coniunctio* in his *Hall ar-Rummuz*: one equals the observer of the hierosgamos, two equals the feminine aspect, and three equals the masculine aspect.

For ibn Umail, six therefore symbolizes the union of polarity which thus creates balance and harmony.

The Prominence of Hierosgamos

As the highest form of the *coniunctio oppositorum*, or union of opposites, hierosgamos is the spiritual wedding of matter and psyche. We see this in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, wherein Âpsu and Tiâmat are not simply the ancestors of the pantheon of gods, but they are also matter and divine spirit united and coexistent.

Often used as a metaphor in reference to the union of two divinities, the hierosgamos can also refer to the union between a human being and a god or goddess, as in the Sumerian story of Tammuz (Dumuzi) and Inanna (Ishtar/Astarte), Zeus and Leda, the Holy Spirit and Mary. Even Christian mystics such as St. Teresa of Avila and Hildegard of Bingen describe such experiences in their ecstatic visionary writings. The hierosgamos can also refer to a ritualized public sexual union between a king and a *hierodule*, or sacred prostitute, as a reenactment of such stories as that of Tammuz and Inanna. While popularized in *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), such reenactments were believed to increase potency not only of the king but of the land's continued fertility. The alchemical text known as *Rosarium philosophorum* (Smith, 2003) depicts the hierosgamos that occurs during the alchemical opus in the creation of the homunculus (little man). This homunculus is the divine child resulting from a more often than not incestual pairing within the hierosgamos. It is the potential for the hierosgamos to be incestual that leads an analytical relationship toward being inflationary (a wedding of the gods) or to sexual acting out – and that may have Oedipal ramifications.

Religious literatures are replete with the imagery of the hierosgamos. We have already noted its depiction in the Sumerian account of Tammuz and Inanna, which is wrought in erotically charged language. The hierosgamos occurs within reenactments of the Egyptian Osiris dramas of death and rebirth, which again has affinities with fertility cult rites. Union of the Kundalini (as Shakti) with Shiva is also equivalent to a hierosgamos. The Babylonian genesis account, *Enuma Elish*, presents the hierogamynous aspect in its depiction of Âpsu and Tiâmat. In Kabbalah, we find the hierosgamos in the union of Yahweh with the Shekinah, who is often portrayed as Sophia (Wisdom). In *Sefer Zohar*, we find in the thought of Adam as an androgynous being that without a hierosgamos, without male and female being one, God does not place God's abode in their midst (Matt, 2004: 314). Adam is the primordial

image of the hierosgamos. Interestingly, though, Adam in the Old Testament represents the *imago Dei*, whereas the hierosgamos reflects the godhead. It is the genius of *Sefer Zohar* to point out that even the *imago Dei* is linked to the godhead, for male and female God created *them* – not *him* – and God called *them* Adam.

It is within the corpus of New Testament literature we find more allusions to this sacred marriage. In Matthew 25:1–13 (Aland, et al., 1998: 71–72), for example, we have a hint at a hierosgamos in Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The hierosgamos itself psychologically indicates a hostile, emotional outbreak of the divine element which destroys the world of consciousness – Jesus' coming to bring not peace but a sword is indicative of this; however, the deeper significance of the sacred marriage implicated within this parable is that the anima is made pregnant and initiates a new birth, that is, a further and more comprehensive incarnation with God. This is the psychological meaning of the need to be born from above in the exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3 (Aland, et al., 1998: 252–254). It is an archetypal incest in which the god must join with the *imago Dei* in order to produce a new creation. Such an irruption of the hierosgamos and the devastation it causes is not unlike the irruption one encounters when Lacan's Real forcefully breaks into one's consciousness. Such devastating irruptions implicate the difficulty many Protestant Christians have with religious vocation, as the call to become (and be) a minister of God – let alone a religious – means at least metaphorically being wedded to the divine and not to the immediate environs or the world.

The potential unity of the cosmos is indicated in the seed motif (cf. the Christ's image of having as much faith as would fill a miniscule mustard seed in Matthew 17), but it also possesses an intrapsychic meaning as the germ of conscious realization of the self. Whereas this takes fertility rites such as those practiced in Osiris cults to deeper and higher levels – for as above, so below – such seed motifs were apparently abused. As reported by Iranaeus, the gnostic sect known as the Marcosians celebrated a hierosgamos as a sexual initiation of women into their fold, a sacred marriage both inflationary (of the gods) and incestuous in its acting out. The *Corpus hermeticum* relates that God sows virtue, reason, and *gnosis* in the human mind, and the thirteenth treatise describes the inner rebirth of man from intelligible wisdom (Sophia) and the seed (*spermata*) of goodness that comes from God (Scott, 1993).

It is in the apocalypse (Revelation) of John in which we witness more hierogamynous imagery. For

example, the banquet of Christ alluded to in Revelation 3 (Aland, et al., 1998: 639) has been interpreted as a hierosgamos with God. And in this sense the celebration of the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) furthers the image of our union with God to bring about and perpetuate the vision of the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem. A similar image of the banquet occurs in the pseudepigraphal *Odes of Solomon*, and its precursor is to be found in the Sumerian story of Inanna/Ishtar's descent to the underworld.

As the Sol et Lunae joining, the hierosgamos results in not just an inner reality. It is total reality according to the fifth parable of the alchemical text of the *Aurora consurgens* (von Franz, 1966, attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas). The *Aurora's* vision of the union of Sol et Lunae is no doubt influenced by its appearance in Revelation 21:9 (Aland, et al., 1998: 676) in which the pair is joined in the image of the Sun-Moon Woman. She gives birth to the *complexio oppositorum* (complex of opposites), the uniting symbol which is a result of the union of the god and human sacred marriage. What is born is tantamount to a *χριστὸς ἄχριστος*, a “not-Christ Christ” (not-Messiah Messiah), who not only separates/fragments, but also unites.

The phenomenal popularity of *The Da Vinci Code* (Brown, 2003) has prompted much speculation and debate on the hierosgamos relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, even including the grail mysteries' sexual reenactment of the hierosgamos to insure the Magdalene's rose, or blood, line. This subject has been previously broached in other texts such as Kazantzakis's *Last Temptation of Christ* (1960), not to mention the inferences contained in the gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi, Berlin, and Tchakos codices. The question has been raised regarding the figure on Jesus' right in Leonardo's fresco of the Last Supper. Is it John who is the beloved disciple or the woman, Mary Magdalene, since she it is Jesus loves best? It is known that male youths were often painted with female attributes, perhaps as a nod to the inner feminine, and in early Christianity John was occasionally referred to as “maiden” (*parthenos*, i.e., “virgin” or “chaste man”). He is indeed Lacan's *jeune homme*, a *sinthome* – playing on the words *saint home* – possessive of rejuvenating qualities. In the gnostic Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles, John is charged to be a doctor of souls, a healer of the heart (Meyer, 2007: 365). Perhaps it is no mistake, then, that transliteration of the Greek *ἱερός γάμος* transitioned from two separate entities (*hieros* and *gamos*) to become one: *hierosgamos*.

Still, the transference field posited by the hierosgamos within guided image therapy and active imagination, or

even its context within the relationship between analyst and analysand or therapist and client brings to bear all the rich symbolism of this *coniunctio* or sacred marriage, awakens our awareness of the unconscious connection, and allows us to witness firsthand the numinosity of *coniunctio*. Balance and harmony must be stressed, for on the one hand, conscious evolution of the symbolism of the hierosgamos' numinosity can have very creative and releasing consequences; on the other hand, the shadow side of the unconscious development of this same symbolism can have deleterious and destructive consequences. The hierosgamos is thus linked to the uroboros as life-giving/renewing qualities as well as for its ability to take and/or destroy life.

See also: [Revelation](#) [Ritual](#)

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Hillel

Lynn Somerstein

Rabbi Hillel (born in Jerusalem, traditionally c.110 BCE–10 CE) was a famous Jewish religious leader and scholar associated with the development of the Mishnah and the Talmud. He was renowned for his love of learning and his compassion.

He asked “If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

Hillel’s question, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” underlies individual human development— the search for the self, and understanding who the self is in relation to others. Psychotherapeutic interaction concerns itself with searching deep within to find what is true for the individual, and then finding ways for the individual to make contact with others, a process leading from a narcissistic engagement with the world to a fuller, open, mature being, whose everyday life embodies a full engagement with God and the world.

Hillel also said: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Law; the rest is the explanation; go and learn” (Shab. 31a). With these words Hillel recognized as the fundamental principle of the Jewish moral law the Biblical precept of brotherly love (Lev. xix. 18).

He is also reputed to have invented the “Hillel sandwich,” many centuries before the Earl of Sandwich, who is more commonly held responsible for that culinary morsel. The Hillel sandwich is eaten at the Passover Seder. Ashkenazi Jews eat horseradish on matzoh as part of the Seder meal, and call that the Hillel Sandwich.

See also: [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Self](#)

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Hillman, James, and Alchemy

Stanton Marlan

It has been said often that James Hillman is one of the most original American psychologists of the Twentieth Century. He is the founder of Archetypal Psychology, considered by some to be an orientation or school within the larger context of Jungian analysis and by others as a radical departure from it. In its own regard, Archetypal Psychology has had wide influence both in the United States and internationally and has impacted not only psychology, analysis, and religion, but also the wider range of the cultural imagination as well. Hillman’s work on alchemy is an important part of his overall vision and has its origins in the work of Carl Jung.

Jung’s Psychology of Alchemy

Jung, too, had thought about alchemy in a way that few others before him had imagined. Rather than understanding alchemy as a protoscience of chemistry, he concluded that the alchemists were speaking in symbols about the human soul and were working as much with the imagination as with chemical materials. In short, the gold that they were trying to create was not common gold, but an *aurum non vulgi* or *aurum philosophorum*, a philosophical gold (Jung, 1963). For Jung, “alchemy represented the projection of a drama both cosmic and spiritual in laboratory terms. The opus magnum had two aims: the rescue of the human soul and the salvation of the cosmos” (Jung, 1977: 220). This move brought our understanding of alchemy into the realm of both psychology and religion. A vital part of Jung’s work soon began to address these disciplines. In and through his work on *Psychology and Alchemy* (1953/1968), his essay “Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon,” and other works, Jung was led to discuss alchemy as a form of religions philosophy (Jung, 1963: 209).

As Jung continued to grapple with his personal experience of alchemical transformation, questions continued to surface and shed light on his ongoing relation to Christianity. For Jung, Christianity was of central importance for the Western psyche, but he also felt it cast a collective shadow that needed to be addressed if it was to

remain vital to the spirit of the times and relevant to modern men and women. Jung's attempt to bring analytical psychology into relation with Christianity ultimately led to the question of Christ as a psychological figure. From Jung's alchemical view, Christianity had depreciated the body and "the feminine" and, in so doing, ultimately had devalued "nature." Alchemy, with its emphasis on matter, compensated for this lack in Christianity and thus offered the possibility of the further development of the religious psyche.

Hillman's Alchemical Psychology

While Jung critiqued Christianity via his alchemical vision, for James Hillman, Jung's psychology was still overly influenced by Christian psychology, its images and its metaphysics. This led Hillman to make a distinction between a psychology of alchemy and an alchemical psychology, the former representing Jung's views and the latter Hillman's. For Hillman, the transformation of the psyche must be differentiated from the Christian idea of redemption. For Hillman, images speak more directly when their Christian and metaphysical coverings are set aside; then the "level of the collective consciousness can be peeled away, so that the material may speak more phenomenally. Then pagan images stand out: metals, planets, numerals, stars, plants, charms, animals, vessels, fires and specific locales" (Hillman, 2003: 101).

In short, alchemy's curious images are valuable not so much because alchemy is a grand narrative of the stages of individuation and its conjunction of opposites, nor because of its reflection on the Christian process of redemption, but "rather because of its myriad, cryptic, arcane, paradoxical, and mainly conflicting texts [which] reveal the psyche phenomenally" (Hillman, 2003: 103).

For Hillman, imagining alchemy within the narrations of metaphysics, Christianity, and Jung's psychology led to a "psychology of alchemy," a psychology in which the powerful images of alchemy were reduced to generalized abstractions. He, on the other hand, proposes an innovative move away from a "psychology of alchemy" to an "alchemical way of psychologizing." In so doing he hoped to restore an alchemical way of imagining, that could rematerialize our concepts, "giving them body, sense and weight" (Hillman, 1980: 37–39).

- ▶ The work of soul-making requires corrosive acids, heavy earth, ascending birds; there are sweating kings, dogs, bitches, stench, urine, and blood I know that I am not composed of sulfur and salt, buried in horse dung, putrefying or congealing, turning white or green or

yellow, encircled by a tailbiting serpent rising on wings. And yet I am! I cannot take any of this literally, even if it is all accurate descriptively true (Hillman, 1978: 37, 39).

Through the use of the alchemical imagery and concrete metaphor, and by seeing through them, his alchemical psychology seeks to find those qualities of human life which act on the very substance of personality.

Development of Hillman's Perspective

This move toward concreteness was present in Hillman's earliest lectures in Zurich in 1966 and continued to run through his papers beginning in 1970 with "On Senex Consciousness." In 1978, Hillman published "The Therapeutic Value of Alchemical Language," which set the stage for his continuing reflections.

What followed were a series of papers: "Silver and the White Earth, Parts I and II" (1980, 1981a), "Alchemical Blue and the Unio Mentalis" (1981b), "The Imagination of Air and the Collapse of Alchemy" (1981c), "Salt: A Chapter on Alchemical Psychology" (1981d), "Notes on White Supremacy: The Alchemy of Racism" (1986), "The Yellowing of the Work" (1991), "Concerning the Stone: Alchemical Images of the Goal" (1990), "The Seduction of Black" (1997), and "The Azure Vault: The Caelum as Experience" (2006), which is a revision and elaboration of his paper "Alchemical Blue." Hillman is in the process of organizing his alchemical papers which will be published in the Uniform Edition of his collected works as Volume Five, to be titled *Alchemical Psychology*. To his published papers to date, he is adding "Rudiments: Fire, Ovens, Vessels, Fuel, Glass," which will complete his texts on alchemical psychology. Like alchemical texts themselves, the content of these papers is complex and difficult to summarize in any unified narrative, but if there are any themes that run through them, it is in his turn to the nuances of language and image, the importance of the imagination and attention to alchemical aesthetics, and to color as an organizing focus for reflection.

See also: ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#)

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Hiltner, Seward

James G. Emerson

If one line would describe the contribution of Seward Hiltner (1910 to November 19, 1984) it would be this: he put the “theology” into practical theology. In Dr. Hiltner’s work, developed at the University of Chicago in the 1950s, the personality sciences and the theological or religious field came into dialog.

Pastoral Theology Defined

For many the phrase “practical theology” meant simply techniques of doing ministry. For some the techniques

had to do more with manners than with the practice of care – proper dress and appropriate behavior rather than the “care” or “cure” for the parishioner. Seward Hiltner saw pastoral theology as the theology of the practice of ministry.

Every science has a method and the method for the personality sciences, especially when related to religion, was the “perspectival method.”

The Perspectival Method

Therefore, to understand Dr. Hiltner’s approach, one must first understand his concept of perspectives and the perspectival method. As early as the 1950s, he developed “the perspectival method” of research and evaluation. Today the perspectival method has been picked up by people such as Jerome A. Feldman (2006) in the field of cognitive theory.

For Dr. Hiltner, there were three perspectives from which to look at the total work of the pastor – the communication perspective, the organizing perspective, and the shepherding perspective. The “shepherding perspective” he identified with pastoral theology.

In his basic book, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, Dr. Hiltner gave a review of the development of the “cure of souls” – care of souls – that preceded what became pastoral care and counseling. To develop his approach he dipped into history and the work of an Ichabod Spencer – a nineteenth century pastor in Brooklyn who, according to Dr. Hiltner, was among the first to develop case studies of his pastoral work. It was in Spencer that Dr. Hiltner came to focus on pastoral care as the province of the shepherding perspective.

The Shepherding Perspective

The significance of this perspective lay in not identifying pastoral care just with counseling or times of calling on the sick. The perspectival approach meant that one could look at preaching, church administration, and Christian education as much from the shepherding perspective as much as the moment when someone said, “Pastor, I have a problem.”

Dr. Hiltner, therefore, identified pastoral care as related to the shepherding perspective. He saw this perspective as particularly a function of the parish minister in practice. Although his work resulted in a profession of pastoral counselors and of pastoral counseling centers, that development was never his intent. Dr. Hiltner understood this shepherding perspective as strictly part of a pastor’s pastoral ministry in the context of the parish congregation itself. The

ministry was not something done outside of the parish in a context unrelated to a particular parish.

Pastoral Counseling Centers

Dr. Hiltner's approach laid a foundation for bringing science and faith together as the cornerstone of the work of the pastor. Contrary to his expectations, the clarity with which this foundation developed in Hiltner's books resulted in people who developed a specialty in such a ministry just as others developed a specialty in Christian education. As a result, this specialty soon broke out of the congregational realm and became a free standing profession in itself. Ministers with a specialty in pastoral care and counseling soon became members of church staffs. More than that, centers of pastoral care and a profession of pastoral counselors emerged.

In some instances, these centers were adjuncts of congregations. More and more, however, the profession of pastoral counseling broke off into its own discipline with standards of practice and criteria for both certification and evaluation of pastoral counselors. In several instances around the United States, counseling centers emerged. One such example is the Lloyd Pastoral Counseling Center connected with San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California.

This major diversion some see as a contribution of Seward Hiltner. Yet Dr. Hiltner himself always saw pastoral care and counseling as in the context of the pastorate, not the context of a center unrelated to a congregation.

This matter of context was not just a passing interest of Seward Hiltner. In a book authored with the late Rev. Dr. Lowell Colston entitled *The Context of Pastoral Care* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee), the picture was given of the contrast between counseling done at a Center and counseling and care in the context of a parish community. The argument was made that there is a basis for seeing the counseling done in the context of a congregation as having, for many, a greater rate of success in healing than in a setting where there is no relation to a community of people.

The other two perspectives that Dr. Hiltner identified with the work of ministry are "organization" and "communication." Note that he did not speak of preaching, counseling, educating or administration as perspectives. Each of those he saw as a *function* that could be viewed from the three perspectives. One could ask, "what is the shepherding dimension of preaching" just as one could ask, "what is the communicating dimension of pastoral care?"

Seward Hiltner represented the second generation of leaders in the movement of pastoral education who

related the insights of the personality sciences – especially individuals such as Freud, Jung and Adler – to the professional practice of ministry. The fountainhead or "father" of this direction was Anton Boisen of Boston.

In the course of time, Seward Hiltner was ordained a Presbyterian Minister. He became the secretary for the department of Religion and Health of what became the National Council of Churches. His first book related to the interplay between the personality sciences and religion. He then wrote on *Pastoral Counseling*, and *The Counselor in Counseling*. The very title of the encyclopedia in which this article appears would not exist without the pioneering work of Boisen and the key "disciples" that moved out across the United States and developed what they had learned.

In 1950, Seward Hiltner was tapped by the Divinity School of the University of Chicago to join with Dr. Ross Snyder in developing a doctoral program. No longer was pastoral care seen as a technique. The University of Chicago called the field, "Religion and Personality." Because "personality" referred to personality studies such as psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology, subsequent years saw changes in the title. The breakthrough came, however, in that first program that pioneered the field of pastoral care as an academic discipline and as seen at the doctoral level.

Under Dr. Hiltner's leadership, the program involved not only the Divinity School but the Medical School of the University of Chicago and the Counseling Center of the university established by Dr. Carl Rogers.

The impact of the program was tremendous. Of the first graduates who earned the PhD, most went to establish similar departments in divinity schools and seminaries across the United States, in Australia and New Zealand, and in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Hiltner himself wrote ten books and over 500 articles. Those who graduated from his and similar programs around the world have added much. Whole sections of libraries in both secular and theological schools now have space to hold the work of this relatively young theological discipline that relates science and theology in the academic world.

See also: [🔗 Pastoral Counseling](#)

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Hinduism

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Hinduism has its roots in the fusion of two ancient cultures, the Aryan and the Indus Valley, resulting in the formation of the Indian civilization in the second millennium BCE. This mixture entails the inculcation of the Aryan nature deities or *devas* including Agni as fire and altar, Indra as storm and warrior, Vayu as wind, Ratri as night, and Surya as sun. These deities appear in some of the earliest hymns dating possibly to 1500 BCE. The hymns relate a mystical bond between worshiper and the natural world indwelt with spirit. The *Brahman* or supreme Godhead has special qualities as one from whom the cosmos comes forth and moves (*Katha Upanishad*, 2.3.2). His power “reverberates like thunder crashing the sky,” and those who “realize him” go beyond the sway of death (*Katha Upanishad*, 2.3.2). Priests called brahmins used hymns as part of worship and ritual sacrifice. They also produced commentaries to explain the meaning of religious rituals. Together with the hymns, they constitute the Hindu scripture, *Veda* (Sanskrit, *vid*, “to know”), which occur in four family traditions: Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva. Each of these traditions consist of two parts. The first, *karma-kanda*, contain the hymns and interpretations of the sacred rituals. The second part of each tradition, named *jnana-kanda*, contains wisdom material addressing fundamental questions about the meaning of life and the nature of the Divine. The *jnana-kanda* includes the Upanishads, which translates “sitting down” – a reference to the student sitting attentively at the foot of the illumined teacher who gives inspiration based upon personal experience. Ancient sages composed individual Upanishads, ten of which are thought to be the “principal Upanishads” according to the prominent eighth century mystic named Shankara. The Upanishads are unique in the Vedac tradition as writings which are introspective with a focus upon human consciousness. According to the *Mandukya Upanishad*, there are four kinds of consciousness. In the first, called Vaishvanara, one lives with all the sense turned outward, “aware only of the external world” (3). In the second, Taijasa, one lives in a dreaming state with the senses turned inward to enact the “impressions of past deep and present desires” (4). In the third state of consciousness, Prajna, one exists in deep sleep of neither dreams nor desires, neither mind nor separateness (5). In the fourth state of consciousness there is neither inward nor outward, but a beyond sense and intellect “in which there is none other than the Lord.

He is the supreme goal of life. He is the infinite peace and love. Realize him!” (7). In Hinduism Aum (OM) stands for the supreme Reality and occurs as a symbol for past, present and future. It is the symbol of the Godhead, and by realizing it one finds “complete fulfillment of all one’s longings.” It is of the “greatest support to all seekers. Those in whose hearts OM reverberates/Unceasingly are indeed blessed/And deeply loved as one who is Self” (*Katha Upanishad*, 1.2.16). According to the *Aitareya Upanishad*, “The Self” which is inseparable from Aum, existed before all other things, and it is the Self who creates all other things – the worlds, Purusha (God), the elements of earthly existence, and human creatures (1.1.1f.). The Self is realized through a personal desire to know the self: “Those who long for the Self with all their heart are chosen by the Self as his own” (*Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.2.3). The Self does not come through the intellect, discourse, or the study of the scriptures (*Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.2.3). To realize the Self is to enter into a higher state of consciousness, breaking through “the wrong identification that you are/The body, subject to birth and death” (*Kena Upanishad*, 2.4). To see the Self in all goes beyond death (*Kena Upanishad*, 2.5). The Upanishads have as their starting place mystical experience and the realization of the Self come through concentrated attention given to the meaning and significance of such experiences. The overall movement of Hinduism concentrates inwardly toward intense introspection and a heightened state of “illumination.”

See also: [Consciousness](#) [Enlightenment](#) [Ritual](#)

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Holocaust

Krystyna Sanderson

The term holocaust, or “the Holocaust,” is most commonly used to describe the persecution and murder of some six million European Jews during World War II. The term is derived from Greek *holos*, “completely” and *kaustos*,

“burnt.” The Hebrew term is *Shoah* – “destruction” or “desolation.”

Other victims of Nazi persecution and murder included Gypsies, Russians, ethnic Poles and other Slavic people, the disabled, gay men and political and religious dissidents, bringing the total number of victims to 9–11 million.

There is no individual psychological equivalent of the Holocaust, which stands as a uniquely horrifying cataclysm in the annals of European history, and attempts to “explain” the Holocaust in psychological terms have been singularly unsuccessful. Jung devoted much attention to the study of mass psychoses and observed a “psychic inflation” of the individual in which ego-consciousness is flooded by the unconscious with resulting mass psychotic behavior.

See also: [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Holy Grail

David Waldron

The Holy Grail is one of the most profound and complex psychological and historical symbols. In terms of mythology, literature and popular culture the Grail mythos deeply permeates Western culture as a symbol of perfection, struggle, purity and sacred quest. However, it is worth noting that despite its ubiquity in Western European culture it was far from well known in Eastern Orthodox nations and in many predominantly Catholic regions, such as Spain and Latin America until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Typically, the grail mythology in its many forms and variations, focuses on two archetypal narratives. Firstly there is the grail itself as a symbol of purity, completion, the divine and plenty. In the *Parsifal* grail myth and *Arthurian* cycle the grail serves as the panacea, curing sickness and devastation brought to the land by the ailment of the king as the spiritual embodiment of the land and guardian of the grail. The grail as a symbol of wholeness and purity

reconciles the king to the source of his ailment and thus leads to the restoration of the land. This theme is well developed by Jungian analyst Robert A Johnson who utilizes Parsifal’s search for the Holy Grail as a metaphor for the development of wholeness in masculine psychology and reconciliation between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. The absence or loss of the Grail, from this perspective, represents a symbolic dissonance between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche, leading to neurosis, insecurity and depression. The grail itself becomes the symbol of psychological wholeness and well being achieved through the completion of the quest and reconciliation with the unconscious and shadow aspects of the psyche (Johnson, 1957).

The Grail Quest

The quest itself forms the second part of the grail narrative in mythology and literature. The quest is a symbolic manifestation of a spiritual pilgrimage towards psychological wholeness and well-being. The quest, comprising three levels: separation, initiation or trial and return, serves as a parable for the growth of the psyche and the journey towards psychological wholeness and adulthood. Indeed the narrative of quest or pilgrimage closely follows the pattern of pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases engaged in ritual and symbolism by all cultures to mark transitional phases and focal points of doubt, turmoil and anxiety identified by anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep. In this case the grail serves as the ultimate focal point of resolution to turmoil, unhappiness and neurosis (Van Gennep, 1960).

The Origins of the Grail Myth

There are other powerful symbolic and psychological associations to the myth of the Holy Grail. However, in part they depend upon perceptions of the historical antecedents of the grail mythology. For example, one school of thought championed by historians and folklorists such as Roger Loomis, Alfred Nutt and Lewis Spense is that the Grail mythology is a Christianized derivation of the Celtic myths and legends surround the Goddess Cerriden’s “Cauldron of Inspiration”. In early Welsh literature attributed to the mythic figure *Taliessin* for example, the vessel recovered by Arthur and his companions is a cauldron set with a rim of jewels and pearls, the fire beneath kindled by the breath of nine maidens and it would not cook the food of a coward. Similarly, Celtic myth and folklore is replete

with images of a cauldron from which issues knowledge, unlimited food and drink or cauldron born warriors. The cauldrons in Celtic myth are associated with a variety of Gods and Goddesses and serve as a symbolic womb of birth, creation and wisdom and recur continually throughout Celtic mythology and legends. From this perspective the Holy Grail is a Christianized myth popularized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this sense the grail also has powerful symbolic associations with the psychological feminine, the notion of rebirth and the sacred mother or divine feminine (Spence, 1994; Mathews, 1991; Hutton, 1993; Nutt, 1965; Weston, 1957).

Criticisms of the Grail Mythology

However, this theory of the Grail's origins, and thus its symbolic associations has come under historical criticisms. Ronald Hutton for example, comments that aside from the superficial similarity of both being a vessel, the Grail as a small dish or platter carried by a singly maiden as a symbol of purity, wholeness and reconciliation to the divine has little in common with the gigantic cauldrons of the Celtic gods kept perpetually filled with inexhaustible food, wisdom or cauldron born warriors. An alternate school of thought, led by writers such as Richard Heinzel, Joseph Goering, Wolfgang Golther and Rose Peebles among others, suggests that the grail mythology is primarily a Western Christian invention. In particular, this school of thought links the rise of the Grail myth to the overwhelming preoccupation with the doctrine of transubstantiation in twelfth century Western Europe (Hutton, 1993; Goering 2005). As the well spring of all communal chalices, the Grail became the focal point of this preoccupation with the physical manifestation of the divine and the bridging between the realm of the spirit and the flesh that distinguished Christianity from the proliferation of dualist heretical movements of this era. Thus the grail served both as the symbol of ultimate purity and wholeness but also as symbolic bridge between the realm of the flesh and the divine, connecting humanity to the imago dei. In this sense the grail also becomes the epitome of the struggle for spiritual transcendence endemic to Christian belief, and for that matter, the search for enlightenment and the lapis that lay at the core of medieval alchemy and the hermetic tradition of medieval neo-Platonism (Yates, 1972).

However, despite the competing historical origins of the grail mythology, in terms of archetypal symbolism and psychological association both interpretations of the Grail's origins have deeply inspired contemporary symbolic representations and interpretations of the grail myth. Indeed,

there are clear antecedents within both Pagan Celtic and Christian mythic structures for the contemporary manifestation of the grail mythology. In either case the image serves as the focal point of the mythic quest for psychological wholeness and development and the wellspring or birthplace of wisdom, nourishment and purification. As such it remains one of the most profound, ubiquitous and complex archetypal forms in Western culture.

See also: [Myth](#) [Quest](#) [Shadow](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Homo Religiosus

Todd DuBose

The phrase, *homo religiosus*, refers to the idea that human existence is inherently religious. There is a long lineage of scholars that have proposed this idea, including Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), William James (1842–1910), Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), Rudolf Otto (1884–1939), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950), Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), Paul Tillich (1886–1995), Erich Fromm (1900–1980), Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), Erik Erikson (1902–1994), Langdon Gilkey (1919–2004), and David Tracy (1939–). The inherent religiosity, these and other theorists refer to is not a person's creedal beliefs or institutional commitments per se, but refers to our existential drive toward transcendence, freedom, and meaning-making, no matter the differences of religious or a/religious backgrounds or convictions.

Various phenomenologists of religion have helped us view religion as more than collective, institutional practices and beliefs, and, instead, helped focus us on the nature of religious experience itself and its impact on how we come to understand ourselves as human beings. Soren Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism, described human development, particularly the development toward deeper subjectivity, as an ethical, aesthetic, and religious progression in becoming a “knight of faith” (1843/1954). William James demonstrated that we use religious symbols, words, and practices for pragmatic reasons, and that such religious artifacts and activities represented existentially significant aspect of human existence (James, 1902/2007). Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) wrote of the centrality of hierophanies, or experiences of the sacred breaking into mundane existence (Eliade, 1959). Eliade further disclosed how we mythologize the significance these experiences in our lives, which in turn become narratives that orient our own identities as human beings. The stories and myths describe our relationship to both sacred and profane orchestrations of our everydayness. Rudolph Otto (1917/1958) focused on the phenomenology of the “holy” as a numinous experience, that is, as both terrifying, attractive, and wholly other to us, and how such encounters clarify who we are in relation to the numinous (Otto, 1917/1958). Otto’s emphasis on numinosity is taken from the Latin, *numen*, meaning “deity.” The deity, from this perspective, is not a thing or substantial entity, but a qualitative experience, albeit one of Otherness. Nevertheless, if the numinous is a qualitative human experience, and a most intense one, then it inescapably influences the development of human being.

Our relationship with the numinous is particular. Given the power and awe evoked in its presence, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1893/2007) described our relationship to the divine as that of “absolute dependence,” noting the predication of human identity on that which is more than itself (Schleiermacher, 1893/2007). Gerardus van der Leeuw (1933/1986) described the numinous as one of ‘power,’ which, for van der Leeuw, should be understood in experiential ways rather than in objectified, political or sociological ones. Much like Otto, van der Leeuw noted that the experiential encounter with the numinous is an encounter with that which is completely overwhelming (van der Leeuw, 1933/1986). We come to understand ourselves better as we see ourselves in perspective when confronted with such power. Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), the existential psychiatrist, addressed this phenomenon as well (Jaspers, 1919). He wrote that we inevitably experience what he called, “ship-wreck,” in our lives when we stumble into what he called, “boundary situations.” Boundary situations, namely, conflict, death, suffering,

chance, and guilt, bring us into contact with “the encompassing,” thus moving us toward the need for each other and the desire for free and meaningful communication. Boundary or ultimate situations, for Jaspers, initiate our transition as human beings from mere *existence* as functional and biological creatures to what Jaspers considered existential, meaningful *Existenz*. Finally, a survey of central figures in the phenomenology of *homo religiosus*, must include Paul Tillich (1886–1965). Tillich emphasized the inescapable nature of our intentionality as human beings toward what is of “ultimate concern” (Tillich, 1952).

The ideas offered by these thinkers in this survey on the phenomenology of religion include several points to consider: the idea that the sacred is experiential, that consciousness presupposes and is dependent on otherness, that transcendence is related to our intentionality toward otherness-as-ultimate concern, and that ultimate concern as enactments of significance are ever present in our everydayness. These issues are present and show themselves throughout the life span. “Otherness” is the particular qualitative distinction in experiencing the sacred, and one that does not reside “in” human consciousness as much as in the “between-ness” co-constructed from our openness to the Other and its call for us to dialogue.

If we start with an analysis of our formation as human beings, we find that we come to consciousness about ourselves only in relationship to another, thus suggesting that our very formation relies on the mutual exchange with otherness. Hegel’s (1770–1831) dialectical development of consciousness is one way to understand this process, and challenges our conceptions of ourselves as self-contained (Hegel, 1807/1979; O’Neill, 1996; DuBose, 2000). Independence presumes interdependence, so, consequentially, we are not sole creators of ourselves. We desire to complete ourselves through engaging with the other, who in turn desires to engage with us. The unceasing call and demands of alterity, or otherness, as Mark Taylor’s (1987) survey of continental thought reminds us, demonstrates the centrality of alterity and interdependency in identity formation, which nonetheless is not a formation of the human being as a static and self-contained thing, such as ‘person.’ If we mean by ‘religiosity’ that we are absolutely dependent on the Other, as Schleiermacher proposed, and if it is a given that we develop as a result of this dialectic, then the human being is necessarily *homo religiosus*.

We are also desiring creatures, thus disclosing the transcendent nature of our existence. Erich Fromm (1900–1980) described how the “x” experience, or God experience, is a desire for ultimate values in human existence that requires a letting go of egoism (Fromm, 1966). Letting go of egoism is often forced when the impact of significant experiences beyond our control jar lose our

grip on life. Many thinkers have written on these kinds of “limit” or “boundary” experiences inherent in human existence (Jaspers, 1919; Tracy, 1996), and at times have called them experiences of the impossible (Bataille, 1988; Blanchot, 1992), the abject (Kristeva, 1982), unresolvable aporias (Derrida, 1980), or as an unreachable Other (Lacan, 2007). For Jaspers, homo religious communicates within boundary situations by way of “ciphers,” or symbols of the encompassing, which signify what is experienced by us as beyond our ability to confine and reduce its nature. This “absent presence” is transcendence for Jaspers (Schlipp, 1957). Although these thinkers would differ widely in their theological proclivities, they all highlight the centrality of how “that which is more than we are” shapes who we are as human beings.

Commentary

There are differences of opinion as to whether or not *homo religiosus* refers to a “peak experience” (Maslow, 1970), and whether or not *homo religiosus* describes an exceptional person, such as those individuals who have reached rare and higher levels of faith (Fowler, 1981) and moral development (Kohlberg, 1981), or is a description of the very constitution of any human being. David Wulff (1997) has written about how Erik Erikson’s (1902–1994) project of comparing Luther and Gandhi was an exploration of *homo religiosus*, and emphasized the resolution of life crises in development, starting with our basic trust in the world. For Erikson, basic trust is the cornerstone of *homo religiosus* (Wulff, 1997; Erikson, 1958). Also for Erikson, *homininess religiosi*, are those individuals in history who have offered us a new set of images and ways of being that promise renewed lives. As Wulff reads Erikson, the journey of *homo religiosus*, which is indeed a lifelong journey, brings one to a sense of centeredness, wholeness, a settled presence, and a greater sense of self and other awareness and well-being. Nevertheless, reserving the title of *homo religiosus* for exceptional individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi or Jesus of Nazareth perpetuates exclusivism and rank ordered hierarchy of spiritual elitism, thus mitigating against the incomparable uniqueness of transcendence in our lives. Moreover, an elitist position for *homo religiosus* inattends to how meaning-making, transcendence seeking, encounters with numinosity, and finding oneself in the intimacy of relational engagement, even though unique in how these experiences are taken up, are also existential in the ontology of human existence as a whole.

Another separatist assumption is found in the popular distinction between religion and spirituality, which is spurious if we heed the wisdom of seeing human nature

as inherently religious. To be a human being is to be an enactor of significance in each moment of our lives. Living out significance, or what matters most to us, is the heart of being *homo religiosus* in the world. The original etymology and history of the role of the psychologist was as an “*iatros tes psyche*,” or “physician of the soul.” The logical positivist agenda of only accepting what is observably real contributed to the dissection of the theologian from the psychologist. Yet, lived experience itself is invisible, immeasurable, and incomparable, as life is lived rather than isolated, extracted and objectified, as the French phenomenologist Michel Henry (1922–2002) has argued (Henry, 2003). Hope, significance, emotions, creativity, and intuition are expressions of the soul that propel our everyday decisions, and are nonetheless invisible. The objectification of *homo religiosus* leads to the death of *homo religiosus*, which leads us back to the wisdom of Kierkegaard as we close. Access to our natures as *homininess religiosi* is found in the radically subjectivity and intersubjectivity of our lived experiences, and in the enactments of significance accompanying them.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Homo Totus

Kathryn Madden

Homo totus: [Latin origin: the Son of Man, the *homo maximus*, the *vir unus*, *purusha*, etc.]

Analytical Psychology

Says Carl Jung (1971: para. 419), the *homo totus* is an archetype of the Self, the beginning and the end of psychic process, an exercise of Platonic *anamnesis*, a memory of wholeness and an *apocatastasis* that restores an original

wholeness that pre-exists the consciousness of the human ego.

Jung speaks of the *homo totus* in the context of the alchemical process, the chemistry of the Middle ages, or the art of transmuting metals, which was primarily a psychological process expressed in projective form. Jung says that “The moral equivalent of the physical transmutation into gold is self-knowledge, which is a re-remembering of the *homo totus*” (1968: para. 372).

In Jungian psychology, the notion of individuation indicates the personal journey in which the unconscious is the universal mediator and the all-embracing One (Jung, 1971: para. 419) out of which consciousness discovers itself. Consciousness then separates itself out of the unconscious and distinguishes a series of pairs of opposites which unfold in an endless multiplicity in human life. By relating to all the opposites in the process of individuation, we “arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time,” (Eliot, 1963: 208). This place is the knowledge and experience of the Self, the goal of individuation. The Self, in archetypal psychology, is a psychic entity more intensely unified than the unconscious, possessed of and by a oneness equaled only in its own archetype, the *imago Dei*.

Christianity and Analytic Psychology

In the Christian tradition, the objective referent of this archetype is the *imago*, or image of God. The Christian formulation of this symbolic figure, or *homo totus*, the archetype of the Self, was Christ within whom all the opposites were reconciled and no longer divided; thus, death was conquered. If we bring Jungian psychology into dialog with the Christian perspective, we might say that we individuate toward the goal of living in this image.

Yet, the fact that Christianity produced what would psychologically be considered an archetype of the Self, or archetypal god-man, is not unique to Christianity, nor original to this one tradition. Because the *homo totus* is an archetypal idea, it is by definition universal in occurrence.

The *homo totus* is capable of autochthonous revival, “an image arising from the depths of the ‘chthonic’ unconscious” (1968: para. 26) anywhere, at any time. In other words, wherever there is psyche, there are archetypes, and wherever there are archetypes, the archetype of wholeness, or the archetype of the Self, will be foremost in primacy, always at the center of the psyche as a self-regulating force within the individual personality.

Jung tells us, when this archetypal idea emerges, it is a reflection of the individual’s wholeness, i.e., of the Self which is present in the person as an unconscious image

(1971: para. 230). Christianity succeeded and sustained itself for over 2,000 years largely influenced by the archetype of the Self that constellated in the soul of those who persons in the first century (and after), who responded to the Christian message. The result was that the concrete, human Rabbi Jesus was rapidly assimilated by the constellated archetype. Christ realized the idea of the Self, representing the culmination of all psychic processes to that point in the history of human consciousness.

Christ did so in that he represented the symbolic ultimate in individuation in which the many are entirely subordinated to the One, the One being God. As symbolic, the *imitatio Christi*, living in the image of Christ, was not meant to be a superficial imitation (Jung, 1971: para.522) but a self-realization. Such an exemplar reaches back before Christianity to the Empedocleans and Platonists who believed in a transmigratory supernatural self, the *daimon* of Empedocles. To realize this Self was to attain the philosopher's goal in the highest degree and to ascend to the *eidōs* of humanity, in the philosophical sense.

Christ then, is an image of the psyche's inherent oneness. Christ depicts the living image of unity-in-complexity and the very nature of the structure of the psyche itself in that psyche insists upon a system with a center that repeats itself archetypal in the unconscious realm of all humankind for all time to be discovered and related to on the journey into wholeness.

If we interpret the content of experience of the *homo totus* by a particular faith, we tend to identify with our subjective interpretation of the manifestation, Jung tells us. To do so would be to lay absolute claim on only one specific image of the godhead, and Jung believes instead that, at least psychologically speaking, we should interpret images of the godhead by comparing all traditional assumptions of faith without insisting upon one over the other. His emphasis is upon the unconscious that expresses itself in a multiplicity of images and symbols.

Absolute Knowledge

In Jung's own confrontation with mystery, he was not slow to pronounce that there is such a thing as "absolute knowledge." Absolute knowledge pertains to the existence of an *a priori* knowledge, a pre-existing order, an order before the ego comes to consciousness, (Jung, 1960: para. 947). Absolute knowledge is knowledge as the formally directing fact that activates and directs the archetypal field of the Self "as a deeper regulating and ordering field" (1960: para. 947, 47–49).

Author James Olney concurs that the Self reflects absolute knowledge as it contains the marriage of the

opposites of consciousness and unconsciousness in a marriage, a *hieros gamos*, a unified One. In this Unity of Being, "because the microcosm is identical with the macrocosm, it attracts the latter and this brings about the *apocatastasis*, a restoration of...original wholeness" (Olney, 1980: 323).

Absolute knowledge is Self-knowledge, knowledge of the Self, which is an anamnesis, a memory of wholeness represented by the *homo totus* as an archetypal idea "by definition universal in occurrence and capable of autochthonous revival anywhere at anytime" (Olney, 1980: 323).

In essence, we are speaking of a dynamic inbreaking of the collective unconscious, the notion of spirit coming toward us, summoning us in conjunction with culture and the unfolding of human history. The *homo totus* is a repeated expression of unitary reality in the psyche and is emblematic of that which is unconscious and needs to be made conscious again and again in our intrapsychic and collective lives as a symbol of individuation.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Homosexuality

Paul Larson

Same sex attraction, love and relationships have existed from very early times, though the ways in which they have been understood have changed over time and across cultures. Scholarly debate continues between "essentialists" and "constructivists." Essentialists see sexual orientation gay as a stable trait recognizable across history

and present, a “gay sensibility” across time. Social constructivists hold that our modern categories of “gay” or “straight” have been more recently created and human sexual orientation is a more fluid characteristic. In any event, out of similar but slightly differing interests common ground is shared by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people.

What is unquestionably true is that modern communities of self-identified lesbians and gay men, existing within most industrialized Western societies as open members of the social whole is a relatively recent phenomenon. The political movement of gay liberation, which began in Europe in the late nineteenth century has resulted in significant changes of both attitude and practice in those societies. Elsewhere, even now, the existence of homosexual communities is less common in many parts of the world, and it is still viewed as either criminal, sinful or a type of mental illness.

Since history has been written mostly by men, it is not surprising that we know more about same-sex love among men than among women. In sexual politics, what the dominant gender does is of greater consequence and thus has been more likely to be recorded and given attention. This means that the negative attitudes about homosexuality have been particularly focused on males, often ignoring altogether female homosexuality and women in general.

In terms of spirituality it must be recognized that there is no spiritual tradition that is uniformly accepting and favorable toward persons with same-sex attraction. This is, in part, due to the recency of the modern lesbian and gay community. Having said that, there is a range of opinions within each of the major world religions as to the status of persons with different sexual orientation. It is important to note that the formal views expressed in the scriptures or writings of prominent religious figures may be more negative than the actual practice within any given spiritual tradition. As theology is translated into pastoral care, there may be more willingness to accept the human condition in its variety.

The Western monotheisms, Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been the most explicitly rejecting. Modern gay Jews, Christians and Muslims face a long history of scriptural condemnation and outright persecution. The Eastern religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism have generally been less rejecting, though neither have they been positive and affirming. Throughout most of human history the family comprised of mother, father and children, has been the social focus of spiritual teachings. Thus, alternate forms of sexual expression, or emotional and social attachment have received considerably less attention. Strong condemnation of many forms of sexual expression, heterosexual or homosexual, which do

not support biological reproduction has characterized the official pronouncements by religious leaders across all major types. As long as individuals did their part in producing off-spring there was often little concern with any additional emotional or physical involvements. Bullough’s (1976) work, despite its age, remains the most comprehensive history of sexual variance across time and culture and chronicles the varying approaches of different religious traditions.

It is widely believed that the most favorably disposed culture toward homosexuality was found in classical Greece. However the form that it took in that society is quite different that the forms in the current world. Men who sought out relationships with other men to the exclusion of marriage were shunned; viewed as odd and unfortunate. However, society was relatively tolerant of an adult male (termed an “erastes”) having a social and sexual relationship with an adolescent (termed an “eromenos”) up to the time when they began growing a beard (approximately 16–18). The older man was responsible for the moral education of the boy and often presented him with his first spear, shield and armor as he joined the ranks of adult male citizens of the polis. There was sometimes a mock abduction and the pair would go off to the mountains for a period where sexual activity, male bonding, and education in the ways of adulthood took place. This sort of initiatory sexual relationship had broad social tolerance. Femininity was ridiculed as was excessive lust. In light of contemporary attitudes about the sexual abuse of adolescents and children, this model is no longer found acceptable.

Another model for same-sex desire and relationships involves gender transformation. Many cultures had rigid definitions of male/female characteristics, but allowed those who didn’t fit the mold to switch roles and live as the opposite sex. Several native American tribes allowed this in one form or another. The older term “berdache” has more pejorative connotations and is now replaced by the term “two-spirit” people, to emphasize the presence of both masculine and feminine features in people we would view as lesbian, gay or transgender.

The modern lesbian and gay culture continues to grapple with the mixed heritage from the world’s spiritual traditions. There are gay friendly advocacy and support groups in most Christian denominations (Fortunato, 1982), within Judaism, Islam and among Buddhists (Leyland, 2000) and Hindus. Many GLBT individuals wish to remain in the traditions that reject them to one degree or another and among gay Christians, a thriving market exists for books with more favorable scriptural exegesis. But a gay spirituality movement seeks to trace out the more same-sex friendly aspects of the world’s religious traditions and

craft a synthesis. Animistic and pagan perspectives from a variety of traditions, not just classical Greece, are often woven together (Conner, 1993; Johnson, 2000).

From a psychological standpoint the treatment of GLBT persons by established religion leaves deep wounds and feelings of alienation. It is a sore spot in terms of both individual counseling and psychotherapy as well as in the larger arena of group to group relations. Yet the movement toward a gay-affirmative spirituality is well under way.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Islam](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Hope

Gilbert Todd Vance

Hope is an expectation of positive outcomes for future events. Hope is more than a mere wish as hope implies a belief and confidence that positive outcomes will be attained.

Hope is usually viewed as a positive attribute; however, the ancient Greeks were an exception to this view. In the myth of Pandora's Box, when the box was opened, all the evils of the world flew out to torment mankind. Hope, however, remained in the box. The Greeks were ambivalent as to whether hope was a blessing and consolation to mankind or a curse. Some modern writers have also voiced the view that hope is an evil. For example, Nietzsche stated that hope is the greatest of evils, because it prolongs mankind's suffering.

Hope is a prevalent and positive theme in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Old Testament, hope is placed in God or directed toward God (Psalm 42:5), rather than toward other, less sure means of deliverance (Psalm 33:17;

Isaiah 40:31). Those who place their hope in God will not be disappointed (Isaiah 49:23). Hope is also associated with a future provided by God (Jeremiah 29:11).

In the New Testament, hope is one of three enduring theological virtues, along with faith and charity (love), described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. Hope is an attribute of love (1 Corinthians 13:7). In the New Testament there is a specific object of hope – hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which believers themselves are redeemed (Romans 8:24; 1 Corinthians 15:19; 1 Peter 1:3). Hope in the resurrection steadies believers during times of suffering. This hope is described as a “living” hope, one that is not frail or perishable (1 Peter). Functionally, hope serves as an “anchor” for believers (Hebrews 6:19). Hope is confidence that God's plans will be realized (Romans 5:2).

Psychologically, hope has been conceptualized as a goal-directed cognitive process consisting of pathways to achieve goals and the perceived ability to use those pathways. Using this operational definition, C. R. Snyder and colleagues have conducted extensive research on hope. In this program of research, hope is positively related to positive outcomes in academics, athletics, health, and psychotherapy.

Clinically, one function of psychotherapy is to instill hope for change or healing. Karl Menninger called hope a “basic but elusive ingredient” in his comments to the American Psychiatric Association's 1959 annual meeting. Hope also falls broadly under the category of positive psychology, which focuses on strengths and resilience.

See also: [Christ](#) [Christianity](#)

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Hormic Psychology

Paul Larson

William McDougall (1871–1938) was one of the giants of early psychology, yet his legacy has gone largely unheralded, and his name is seldom recalled outside students of the

history of psychology. His brand of psychology, termed “hormic” psychology serves as one of the foundational frameworks for understanding the wide range of human motivational forces. The term “hormic” comes from the Greek word for impulse, and according to Hilgard (1987) was drawn from the work of T. P. Nunn, a British colleague.

McDougall was born and raised in Britain and studied biology at the University of Lancaster, and later medicine at Cambridge. He completed his medical training at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London, with some additional physiological research under Sherrington. He went on to study experimental psychology under G. E. Müller at Göttingen.

His current lack of popularity in part stems from his taking up the cause of Lamarckian evolutionary theory, the notion that acquired traits can be inherited. He also supported the eugenics movement which was popular in the early twentieth century, but became tainted by its association with forced sterilization of the retarded, as

well as its use by Nazi law makers as a rationale for their race laws. He also defended the concept of instinct at a time when behaviorism was rising to ascendancy and instinct declining.

One of his less well recognized contributions that is with us today is his advocacy of “three fundamental faculties, of knowing, of striving, and of feeling” (McDougall, 1923: 378, as cited by Hilgard, 1987: 813). This is now taught as the ABC of psychology, affect, behavior and cognition, though behavior is substituted for the faculty of conation, or will.

See also: [▶ Psychology](#)

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I Ching

Nathalie Pilard

The *I Ching*, or Book (*I*) of Changes (*Ching*), belongs to the greatest treasures of religion; it is hierarchically the first of Old China's Five Classics (The four other Classics are the *Shu Ching*, or The Book of History (rules for Politics); the *Shih Ching*, or The Book of Odes; the *Li Chi*, or The Book of Rites; the *Ch'un Ch'in*, or The Spring and Autumn Annals, annals of one Chinese province where Confucius lived).

A Two Fold Structure: Oracular Formulae and (Official) Commentaries

Ten centuries of successive stratifications of practices and texts frame this monument of Chinese wisdom, whose secrets have not yet all been discovered by archeologists, philologists, and after them theologians or thinkers. Out of divination customs from the Shang dynasty (1750–1050 BC) appeared, during the Chou dynasty (1050–771 BC), the ancestor of the *I Ching*, the *Chou I*, or Changes of Chou, a compilation of oracular formulae. From the eighth century before the Common Era to the second of the Common Era, hundreds of commentaries joined the collection. Carefully selected and corrected under the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), they became the official Ten Wings which “protected” the *Chou I* and allowed its understanding. The twofold structure of the *I Ching*, the compilation and – its hermeneutical ground – the official commentaries, was then fixed.

The eastern *Chou I* consists of 450 oracular formulae attached to each of the 64 hexagrams of the book, and to each of their constituting six monograms, or lines. A line, as the result of a divinatory casting, can be broken and *yin* (— —) or unbroken and *yang* (— — —). The opposition and the complementarity of these two principles are emphasized in the two opening hexagrams of the

compilation, which each possess a supplementary formula ($64 + (6 \cdot 64) + 2 = 450$). Made of six unbroken lines and six broken lines, the first hexagram, “The Creative,” and the second one, “The Receptive,” are the immanence of *yang* and *yin*. *Yang* is first, *yin* second, and together they give birth to all the “existents,” all the things that exist in the three levels heaven, humanity and earth.

The ten Wings provide numerous keys and rules for the reading and casting of the oracle. Some are technical, theoretical, others are more philosophical. The respect of hierarchy and the correctness of the position characterize the two main guiding principles of the Wings. All the 64 hexagrams and the complex rules of their trigrams and lines are assumed to symbolize all situations likely to happen in the course of the universe. For instance, there are inferior, nuclear and superior trigrams at work in the hexagram; the sixth line is the king's line, the fifth the prince's; the first, third and fifth lines are correct if unbroken, but have also to behave with regard to their neighbor lines, etc. Hence a casting of the oracle supplies the reader with a statement which is the present correct position in the Tao he or she has to follow. The sixth and the seventh Wings form the *Ta Chuan*, The Great Treatise, a major work of the Chinese thought. First attributed to Confucius himself, it was in fact written after his death. Integrating both Taoist and Buddhist thoughts, it expresses the Old Chinese vision of the world, where reality is the daughter of the process of the Tao and where humans, thanks to the right attitude of morality, have to find their way between heaven and earth. The eighth Wing is the *Shuo Kua*, the “Discussion of the Trigrams.” These trigrams belong to the mythology of the *I Ching*.

The wise ancestor Fu Hsi is, for the tradition, the first of the four authors of the *Book of Changes*, with King Wên, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius. He is the one who discovered, rather than created, these eight original trigrams; the eight possible combinations of three unbroken and broken lines; the symbols (or images, *xiang*) of heaven, the earth, the thunder, the water, the wind, the fire, the wind and the lake. This is the naturalist and cosmological foundation of the *Book of Changes*. The natural “Resonance” (*kan-ying*) heard between all existents

(see Le Blanc, 2003) allows the *I Ching's* operation of connecting together the structures within the perpetual process of the Tao, the Changes. This Chinese theory is close to the Western notions of macro and micro cosmos, to Goethe's elective affinities, and to Baudelaire's correspondences. The *I Ching* is thus supposed to be the impression and the symbol of the everlasting wholeness and emptiness of the wise man which relate the reader to its correspondence of the moment, to its affinity and duty.

Philology and History (of the I Ching)

Near to the traditional myth of the book stands its scientific history which does not cancel out the philosophical hermeneutics of the work but rather enlightens its oldest utilizations and goals. Recent archeological discoveries (see Kalinowski, 2006) showed that the *I Ching* has been used differently than was previously thought. The three assumed separate and successive stages of the book – religious, divinatory and philosophical – are no longer taken for granted, reality proved to be more complicated. The religious age was characterized by the casting of the oracles – turtles or stalk of milfoil – which allowed humans to communicate with their ancestors or gods. The collective procedure testified to the fear for the gods who were asked for authorizations to act through the intermediate of the oracle which transmitted both questions and answers. The utilization of the *Chou I* – the different compilations of oracular sentences and the turtle or milfoil material – within a sheer divinatory context had different goals. Individuals from all groups, used to consult local wise men, having expectations on their future. The philosophical age supposedly drained these too numerous practices around the *Chou I* to give birth in the second century to the Commentaries which would form the *I Ching*. In fact, the recent discovery of inscriptions on carapaces of turtles showed that religious purposes remained till high antiquity. In this period, divination still belonged to religious rituals. As early as the fourth century BC, there appeared the philosophical stage with Confucius using the *Chou I* in order to spread Confucianism. This political concern coexisted with the divinatory use of the compilation, like religion had coexisted with divination.

Since the fixation of the work at the second century till now, many commentaries by the most eminent Chinese thinkers have secured the actuality of the living aspect of the book, like new other wings. The desire to penetrate the

intrinsic mystery of the “Classic of the Classics” remains. In the twentieth century, the work became known in the West thanks to the German Protestant missionary Richard Wilhelm's translation, itself retranslated into English by one of C. G. Jung's pupil, Cary Baynes.

(I Ching) Jung and Spirituality

C. G. Jung discovered the *I Ching* with James Legge's translation in the twenty-ten's, but the reading of Richard Wilhelm's met his understanding of the huge symbolic aspect of the canon, disregarded by Legge. After the rift with Sigmund Freud in 1911, the *I Ching* was the superior voice, intuition embodied, which intimated Jung to find his own way. Companion of the personal Jung, the *Book of Changes* sometimes entered his consulting room, but never really reached the sacred area of his works until 1948 and 1949, the dates of the two forewords of Baynes's translation (see Pilard, 2009).

The writing of 1948 constitutes the published foreword of 1949's draft, but the significance of the differences between the two texts allows the designation of the first and second foreword to the *I Ching*. The text of 1948 reveals the first risk taken by Jung: introducing the intuitive book among Western rationalism by a personal casting of the oracle rather than a simple theoretical commentary. The text of 1949 constitutes the second risk: introducing the Eastern theoretical background of the *I Ching* within his own Western thinking. It is the public birth of synchronicity. Both risks were considerable, but to Jung's eyes, indispensable. A sheer commentary would have let Jung be an observer, seemingly objective, in front of the masterpiece. The traditional casting of the *I Ching* involves subjectivity in order to correct it and to redirect it in the Tao, by providing the objectivity the reader cannot pretend to have *a priori*. Jung chose to render this necessary implication in a living dialog between him and the book. He interrogated the *I Ching* about its introduction in the English-spoken world and his own role on the event, getting from it an optimistic answer the future would confirm.

The second foreword of 1949 replaces five pages out of twenty in order to introduce, for the first time, the notion of synchronicity. Jung's contemporaneous correspondence shows the significant role of the Physics Nobel Prize Wolfgang Pauli in the psychologist's decision to reveal his controversial concept. Since Albert Einstein, whom Jung had met years earlier, and current discoveries of atomic physics, objectivity and the laws of causality had

been *ipso facto* challenged, but science had not found any competitor yet among thinkers for this crucial debate.

Within rational language, synchronicity means acausality. Two events happen not to be linked by causes and effects but by meaning grounds. This is the translation of the Chinese theory of Resonance in one scientific hypothesis. Practically, the “meaningful coincidences” between the two events reveal the theory, but does not prove it, as they happen only once. The *I Ching*, as the agent likely to connect all the existents, is the one able to repeat, at will, these meaningful coincidences between the question of the reader and its symbolic answer. Synchronicity does not undermine causality but on the contrary completes it. It is a working but needed hypothesis based on the inability of reason to grasp the whole reality.

Religious Attitude and Depth Psychology

The efficiency of synchronicity hence resides in any personal casting of the *I Ching*. However, the right interpretation of the esoteric language of the book belongs to the right attitude of the reader. The religious attitude towards the book that Jung thinks the reader must keep corresponds to the accurate attitude that one must have towards the unconscious. The remarkable inner knowledge that the messages of the *I Ching* provide to moderns should remain as respected as these provided by the same medium to ancients then understood as the gods' orders. This idea appeared in Jung's foreword embodied in the casting of the hexagram of the Caldron, the *Ting*. In Old China, the *ting* was a ceremonial vessel used in banquets to link humans to gods. In Jung's casting, the *I Ching* saw himself as the Caldron. Thanks to Baynes's translation and Jung's foreword, it was thus able to connect gods to humans, East to West, past to present. This symbolic object contained Jung's will to transmit the respect towards the book the reader must have. Since individual, with no support of social or collective instinct, a modern casting requires humility and simplicity before any interpretation, the same way the psychologist depicted the correct attitude towards a dream.

The *I Ching* entered Jung's world and life by intuition. His recognition of it was immediate. Jung saw archetypes in the 64 *xiang*; symbols in each line. He instinctively used his method of amplification to translate one monogram in his foreword. He could have seen in the *I Ching* a manifestation of the Self. But above all, Jung recognized that the *Book of Changes* was an impression of the world in its wholeness in symbols. No language, either

psychological or rational, can exhaust its meaning, its process, its vitality. These interested in the Old China wisdom can read and cast the *Book of Changes*. Anybody who asks himself the question: “What do I have to do in order to . . .” can use the oracle. A fortune teller could answer by a prediction, but then would stop one's implication in the process of the event. A friend could offer an advice, but some acts must be decided alone. The *I Ching* is supposed to provide a perspective: some radial point of view whose center is the question of the reader. The more the question is clear and necessary, the more accurate the answer will appear to the “humble” and “simple” asker.

See also: [Chinese Religions](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Ibn al-'Arabi

Fredrica R. Halligan

An Islamic mystic, known as the “Greatest Master” (*Shaykh Al-Akbar*), Muhiyuddin Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240 CE) grew up in Seville, where Islamic, Jewish and Christian mysticism flourished with mutual enrichment. He was educated by Sufi masters in alchemy and esoteric studies as well as Moslem scriptures and traditions.

Ibn 'Arabi possessed prophetic gifts and psychic abilities and was thought to be a “dazzling mental force” (Husaini, 1996: 6f).

The lives of mystics provide psychological insight into the upper reaches of consciousness where we discover, in the psychological processes of highly evolved persons such as Ibn 'Arabi, a broader and deeper understanding of the essential issues involved in psychospiritual development to its fullest potential.

All Moslems seek to live under the sovereignty of God, since “Islam” itself means “surrender.” God is viewed as active in human affairs, and each person aims to fulfill His Will. A central objective is unity with God (*tawid*). Among medieval Sufis, asceticism and renunciation were highly valued, and Ibn 'Arabi was tenacious in his efforts to perfect himself so as to be worthy of divine union. His life was totally dedicated, aiming to achieve personal annihilation in the Divine Presence.

Following an internally-mediated sense of “call,” he traveled widely in Spain, North Africa and the Middle East. When disciples were attracted to his spiritual power, he taught with clarity and spiritual authority, always emphasizing quotations from the *Qur'an* and traditional stories of the Prophet Muhammad [*Hadith*], while interpreting and embellishing the scripture with the fruits of his own experiential wisdom.

He lived several years in Mecca where he frequently circumambulated the Ka'ba in rapture, repeatedly receiving mystical experiences. His most prolific writings began in Mecca and were continually sustained by his mystic insights. Finally, at age 58, he settled in Damascus where he lived his last 15 years, finishing his major writings: *The Meccan Revelations*, *The Bezels of Wisdom* and *The Diwan*.

Dreams and Visions

At midlife Ibn 'Arabi had a dream: “I was wedded to all the stars of the sky. There was not a single star left, and I married every one of them with great spiritual pleasure. Then I married the moons” (Ibn 'Arabi cited in Husaini, 1996: 6). This dream of mystical marriage reveals his spiritual expansiveness and forthcoming awareness of divine union.

Islam characteristically emphasizes prophecy, with dreams seen as typical ways that God communicates with humanity. Like Muhammad before him, Ibn 'Arabi claimed his writings (over 400) were in obedience to divine command. *The Bezels of Wisdom*, for example, was given to him in a single dream. By surrendering his own will, he followed the Sufi path of heart, obeying the Prophet's summons to vision (Corbin, 1969: 232). In a visionary's life, complete annihilation (*fana*) in the Divine opens the doors to imaginative perception of Divine Realities. This marriage, when the visionary and God are united, is a common theme.

Divine Messengers frequently inspired and brought him insights. In Mecca a powerful vision of a female

Beloved had great influence on his writing and his experience of Divine Love: “While circumambulating the Temple [ruminating]. . . [s]uddenly there emerged from the shadows the feminine figure who was for him the earthly manifestation of *Sophia aeterna*” (Corbin, 1969: 278). She rebuked him for seeking intellectual answers to questions that were essentially mystical, and she taught him to trust the illuminations and wisdom of his heart. Ibn 'Arabi alluded to this young woman as an “apparitional figure,” both “sublime and divine,” one who “manifested. . .visibly. . .with such sweetness as to provoke. . .joy and happiness” (Ibn 'Arabi cited in Corbin, 1969: 139). Another of Ibn 'Arabi's archetypal Messengers was Khidr, the Verdant one, associated with Elijah and Shi'ite liturgy. “[T]he fact of having Khidr for a master invests the disciple, as an individual, with a transcendent, ‘transhistorical’ dimension. . .it is a personal, direct, and immediate bond with the Godhead” (Corbin, 1969: 54).

Immersed in the divine milieu, Ibn 'Arabi developed to the point where he consciously experienced all life as manifestation of the Divine. He saw theophany everywhere and would interpret even the smallest coincidences as symbolic communications. Night and day were God-filled, living in mystic love and gnostic intuition.

In summarizing Ibn 'Arabi's psychospiritual development, it appears that his mystical experiences began with dreams, progressing with the appearance of fleeting dreamlike images during wakefulness, as well as locutions that voiced Divine Commands quite directly. Then, as he became more attuned to subtle messages, more surrendered and more obedient to the Divine Intent, the visions appeared more full-bodied, more human and “real.” Finally, all life became a communication from God for himself as mystic lover.

Active Imagination

For Ibn 'Arabi, intuition occurs in the heart as “Active Imagination” (*alam al-mithal*), an intermediate world – neither matter nor spirit – but some sacred space between, similar to Jung's Collective Unconscious. He distinguishes premeditated imaginations evoked consciously, from those imaginative products that present themselves to the mind spontaneously like dreams (or daydreams). The spontaneous process or “autonomous imagination” (*munfasi*) is the special locale of dreams, fleeting images, and spontaneous visions, which were commonly reported by the Prophet Muhammad and by many Sufis.

In the intimate relationship between matter and spirit, the energy flow of Active Imagination is bi-directional. The human (matter) evokes Spirit, reaching up, with prayers of the heart, expressing needs and inviting spiritual intervention. God reaches down, sending a message (e.g., the image of an angel); thus Spirit is made matter. In these transmutations of energy, matter becomes Spirit and Spirit becomes matter in the intermediate world of the creative Active Imagination.

For Ibn 'Arabi, God uses the human faculty of imagination for Self-revelation, entering consciousness through the door of imaginative processes. "Unveiling . . . is knowledge that God gives directly to the servants when He lifts the veil separating Himself from them and 'opens the door' to perception of invisible realities. . . . Unveiling is an everyday occurrence for prophets [and] for the friends of God [Sufis]" (Chittick, 1998: xxii f.).

Ibn 'Arabi discovered, as have many other mystics, that rational thought actually blocks spontaneous imaginal processes. Anyone can fall into intellectualization, but those who think they know are not open to receiving revelations. The role of the gnostic, the prophet, or the Sufi is to temporarily suspend rational judgment in order to perceive through the imaginal pathways. The desire of the heart is what the aspirant brings to the mystic encounter. Surrender of the ego in a state of annihilation (*fana*) allows the individual to release the illusion of separateness and to perceive the unity underlying all life. "The mystic is then the medium, the intermediary, through whom the divine creative power is expressed and manifested" (Corbin, 1969: 228).

Ibn 'Arabi's world of imaginal reality predates contemporary psychoanalysis by over 600 years, but one finds understanding of the unconscious, such as Freud's idea of dreams as wish fulfillment, and Jung's idea that psychic energy is found primarily at the region where the opposites meet.

Conjunctio Oppositorum

The theme of unity of opposites (*conjunctio oppositorum*) was a predominant alchemical preoccupation, one that fascinated Ibn 'Arabi, even as it did Jung six centuries later. For Jung, the union of all opposites comprises the ever-emerging psychospiritual Self, while for Ibn 'Arabi, the union of opposites is experiential evidence of the underlying Oneness of Being. Thus it seems that the one theorist (Jung) was working at the level of the Immanent, the other (Ibn 'Arabi) at the level of the Transcendent. But

even this duality must be encountered in unity. The Immanent Divine and Transcendent Divine are essentially the same. Ibn 'Arabi recognized this unity: "There is but one Essence. . . . He who is universal is particular [while] He who is particular is universal" (Ibn al-'Arabi, 1980: 150). Self and God are One. For those who can see, multiplicity and oneness are similarly linked. Ibn 'Arabi writes, ". . . he who has attained to realization sees multiplicity in the One, just as he knows that essential oneness is implicit in the [multiple] divine Names" (Ibn 'Arabi, 1980: 153).

Another duality to transcend is the polarity of active and passive. In a full life, both action and contemplation are needed. Ibn 'Arabi also grappled with paradox: how apparent passivity may, in fact, be activity and vice versa. Reflecting on the *Qur'an* verse: "You will not will unless God wills" (*Qur'an* 76:30), Ibn 'Arabi sees the question as: whose action is it? When one shoots an arrow, who really shoots? Who really hits the mark? His commentary on this paradox is related to predestination versus human choice:

- ▶ We say, concerning the relation of choice, that God created for the servant a will through which he wills as a property of this relation. This newly arrived will derives from God's will. God says, 'You will not will unless God wills.' [76:30] Thereby He affirms will for Him and for us, and He makes our will dependent upon His will (Ibn 'Arabi cited in Chittick, 1998: 59).

Here the mystic delights in paradox, a dance of opposites that cannot be separated. The question of "Who wills?" has implications in conscious experience: if one has surrendered entirely to God's Will, then one is essentially passive (in terms of self-will and control) even while being thoroughly active (in terms of behavior.) Thus as *conjunctio oppositorum*, activity and passivity are one.

The ultimate *conjunctio oppositorum* is God, both Manifest and Unmanifest. For Ibn 'Arabi the omnipresence of God is central. He perceives the Godhead as having five levels and infinite variety of manifestations in a vast Oneness of Being.

- ▶ The first of these five planes of Being. . . is Reality in its first and primordial Absoluteness or the absolute Being itself. It is the Absolute *before* it begins to manifest itself, i.e., the Absolute in a state in which it does not yet show even the slightest foreboding of self-manifestation. The four remaining stages are the essential forms in which the Absolute "descends" from its absoluteness and manifests itself on levels that are to us more real and concrete. This

self-manifesting activity of the Absolute is called by Ibn 'Arabi *tajalli*, a word which literally means disclosing something hidden behind a veil (Izutsu, 1983: 20).

The remaining levels of unveiling are the Absolute manifesting itself as:

1. God: the One of many Names (Allah, Yahweh, Brahman etc.)
2. Lord: Divine Incarnation (e.g., Jesus)
3. Human: half-spiritual, half-animal beings
4. The sensible world: every aspect of the cosmos (animal, vegetable and mineral.)

Ibn 'Arabi was thus a pantheistic monist. “[E]verything in Ibn 'Arabi's world-view, whether spiritual or material, invisible or visible, is *tajalli* [manifestation] of the Absolute except the Absolute in its absoluteness” (Izutsu, 1983: 20). From the smallest to the largest element of the universe, all is a manifestation of the Divine, and to that Divine Source all will ultimately return.

In Ibn 'Arabi's writings, the Active Imagination is the locus of unification, the matrix out of which the *conjunctio oppositorum* arises. Essentially God is unity. So is humanity. And humanity – good and evil alike – is part of the Godhead, the great Oneness of Being.

As we in the twenty-first century observe our global community in its struggles to unite, we find that we have much to learn from those wise mystics who understood unity at its deepest levels. Christian, Muslim and Jew can still learn from one another. Psychology can contribute by modeling respect and the capacity to listen and ponder in-depth the worldview and spiritual perspectives of other cultures.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Islam](#) [Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Iconography

Paul Larson

Since the earliest times of human evolution, we have communicated with each other by visual means as well as verbal. In semiotics, which is the study of signs and their meanings, the term icon refers to any kind of visual sign. Thus, in a religious context, iconography is the study of the spiritual or religious significance of visual signs or symbols. These can be concrete objects in three dimensions (statues, even buildings), or pictorial representations of symbols in two dimensions, or even gestures by live actors used in religious settings. Iconography is often seen as a sub-discipline of art history.

Religions differ with regard to the status of visual representations of the person of God or significant religious figures. In the Western monotheisms there is a prohibition of the use of idols to represent the divine. In Christianity this has been relaxed somewhat with regard to portrayals of religious persons, especially in Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican traditions. Statues of Jesus, Mary, and a wide variety of saints are found in most churches, cathedrals or other buildings. In Judaism the use of personal images of religious figures, is uncommon, though some illustrations of prophets or other personages is not prohibited. In Islam there is a strict prohibition of portrayals of God or the Prophet Muhammed. Islam has developed its own form of visual decoration using plant and animal motifs in tiles as decorative aspects to sacred buildings, and widely uses calligraphy, especially in the stylized Kuffic script of Arabic to visually present scriptural material from the Q'uran.

Hinduism has no qualms about representing the various forms of divinity in sculpture or painting. While Buddhism has less emphasis on the personhood of the divine or transcendent, there are numerous representations of the Buddha, various bodhisattvas, and especially in Tibetan tradition, a whole panoply of demi-gods, demons, major religious figures and founders of significant schools of Buddhism. The classical pagan religions of the ancient world, were likewise quite comfortable in portraying divine or semi-divine persons graphically. It is, however, an oversimplification to say that the pagans worshiped idols. They were quite aware that the statues of their deities were representations for persons or powers that transcended the physical manifestations. It is also true, however, that the deities could come to dwell within their statues and be physically present to the worshippers.

Especially when dealing with complex polytheistic pantheons, iconography is important to distinguish exactly which deity is being portrayed. Thus the basic human shape in male or female form was enhanced by certain clothing, physical characteristics, objects held, and so on. In Egypt, many of the deities were portrayed as half human and half animal. For example, Thoth could be distinguished from Horus, as the former had the head of an ibis, whereas the latter had the head of a hawk. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the human form could go beyond the literal form and have many arms. In each hand the deity could grasp a different implement and these represented various qualities of the deity or bodhisattva.

Likewise, among Christian saints, St. Sebastian is usually portrayed as pierced by numerous arrows, his means of martyrdom. St. Roche, the patron of the plague is portrayed lifting his tunic and revealing the buboes on the inguinal part of his leg. St. Francis is often portrayed in the brown habit of the order he founded with birds or other animals. Blue has come to be associated with Mary, the mother of Jesus and her mantle usually takes that color.

Gesture is likewise a party of iconography. For Christians, making the sign of the cross is part of the Mass, or Eucharist, which is initiated by the priest and copied by the laity. The gesture of prayer, orans, is made with arms open at or above waist level, palms facing up. The gesture of blessing is made with two fingers of the hand. In Hindu and Buddhist traditions various hand gestures, known as mudras, are performed in the act of worship or meditation. Indeed, all the bodily postures of yoga, the asanas, have a quasi-representational quality; the plow, the locust, the thunderbolt are used both as mnemonics for the pose itself, but embody aspects of thing the pose represents.

Recently, the understanding of the origins of paleolithic rock art has been understood in light of the neuropsychology of altered states of consciousness (ASC). The cross-cultural similarities in very early, largely geometric designs has been linked to shamanic visionary experiences (Lewis-Williams and Dowson, 1988). Entoptic (behind the eye) phenomena are common to many ASCs and while cultural significances may still vary, the possibility of an iconography of primitive spirituality and religion is enhanced.

Iconography catalogs and explains the meaning of all the graphic devices used to convey religious or spiritual significance. Whether it is in the form of personal representations of the deity, saints or other religious figures, or whether it is in the form of symbols representing

abstractions, or whether it is in the live use of gesture during worship, visual signs are a major part of most religious traditions.

Psychologically speaking, iconography is the playbook by which visual imagery of the divine and the unfolding human understanding of spiritual experience is encoded and recorded. We can use the playbook to unlock meaning in existing visual representations and to create new ones through modification and combination of visual elements. Thus as our spiritual experiences continue vary iconography provides sources of continuity and a fertile field for change.

See also: [▶ Animism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism](#) and [Psychology](#)

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Id

Stefanie Teitelbaum

Introduction

The Id is the Latin translation of Sigmund Freud's "das es." This translation is accepted in most English translations of Freud's work, including the Standard Edition translated by James Strachey. A direct English translation of "das es" is "the it". The id is the psychical agency in Freud's structural topography of the psyche which is unconscious, containing both the innate or instinctual and the repressed. For Freud, the goal of psychoanalysis is to

tame and transform the id, moving psychical energy from the id to the ego and superego.

The id has no formal place in religious and spiritual literature. Freud acknowledged that his “it” was significantly influenced by the physician, analyst Georg Groddeck, whose “it” concept is both compatible with and divergent from Freud’s. Groddeck’s “it” is “all” and “The Other” of human experience, lending itself to interpretations of the innate presence of the Divine or the godhead in human existence.

Psychology

Georg Groddeck published *The Book of the It* in 1923. Groddeck “it” is all, and the experience of ego “I” is illusion. Words like id-iom and id-iosynchratic suggest the authentic individuality of the personality is id-derived, (Bollas, 1992). While comparisons have been drawn between Groddeck’s “it” and the Tao, and detachment, his influences are from Greek philosophy and German Romanticism (Durrell, 1949).

In 1923 Sigmund Freud published *The Ego and the Id*, which contained the first mention of the id. In his earlier writings, Freud laid out conceptual models of the workings of the mind in metatheory, or metapsychology which are fictional representations of mental processes. The first topographical metapsychology has three psychological agencies; system unconscious, system preconscious, and system conscious. The second topography, the structural model, consists of the Id – the it, the Ego – the I, and the Superego – the over-I. The second topography was primarily laid out and elaborated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923b). Both topographies were efforts to describe and explain the movement of libido to occupy or cathect the psyche’s agencies and developmental zones. Freud acknowledged Groddeck’s influence in conceiving the second topography; “by following Groddeck in calling the other part of the mind into which this entity extends and which behaves as though it were Ucs, the ‘id’. Freud called the id the ‘great reservoir of libido’. The movement of libido between id, ego, and superego is the subject of Freud’s Economic metatheory; the conflict between id, ego, and superego is the topic of the Dynamic metatheory. The second topography was driven, in part, by Freud’s Revision of the Theory of Instincts, and the conflict between the sexual instincts and the ego instincts” (La Planche and Pontalis, 1973).

Freud said “where id was, ego shall be.” He stated that the goal of psychoanalysis was “to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen

its field of perception and to enlarge its organization, so that it can appropriate fresh portions of the id. if it a work of culture not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee” (1930).

Both Groddeck and Freud acknowledge their “it” concepts as influenced by Nietzsche’s “it” of general causation. Groddeck embraced the “it” and dismissed the “I”; Freud’s “it” was to be tamed and overcome the “I.”

Religion

Martin Buber published in 1923 *I and Thou*. The concept of “it” as opposed to “thou” is central to that work. *I and Thou* seeks to model subject–object relations as well as man’s relation with God. Buber seeks to transform God from an “it” object to be worshiped, to a “you” with whom a subject had a relationship. Freud and Buber met, and found much to admire and respect in each other, but their “its” are vastly different.

Commentary

Bruno Bettelheim (1982) challenged the Latinization of Freud’s id, ego, and superego metapsychology. The psyche itself is a Latin translation of “Die Seele,” the soul. Bettelheim posits that Freud condoned the mistranslations due to his wish to have the infant field of psychoanalysis accepted as a scientific discipline, in addition to his well-documented atheism.

The three “its” of Buber, Freud, and Groddeck were born in the public’s consciousness in 1923. Only the “it” of Freud is the id. Existential psychoanalysis, as exemplified but not limited to R. D. Laing, finds place for some synthesis of the three “its” (Burston, 2000). The “its” diverge and overlap in an effort to differentiate and facilitate a subject to subject relationship between self and self, self and other, humanity and the dehumanized, and man and god.

See also: [▶ Buber, Martin](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Instinct](#) [▶ Libido](#) [▶ Super-Ego](#)

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Ignatius of Loyola

Paul Giblin

Born of a noble family in the Basque region of Northern Spain in 1491, Inigo of Loyola was a great saint and mystic of the Church. His story is a rich study in the dynamics of *spiritual conversion* and psychological decision-making, i.e., how a young man in his late 20s, a strong-willed soldier filled with zeal became a saint and mystic, deeply in love with God. His *Spiritual Exercises* document his process of grappling with life's major questions, i.e., to whom and what is one to commit, how to assess the goodness of one's choices, how to live in accord with that which gives life and freedom? Inigo's spiritual journey brought him into profound contact with Jesus Christ. His discernment of spirits and *Examen of Consciousness* provide tools for ongoing living in spiritual awareness.

Conversion

Inigo was born the youngest of 12 children to an aristocratic family. His mother died shortly after his birth. He was likely destined for the clerical state but by age 14–15 it became clear that he was much more interested in romance and chivalry. He trained to be a knight in the service of the King of Spain. He was described as full of life, with a strong ego and strong sense of vanity. Sword and cloak symbolized his identity. At age 20, in the service

of the Duke of Navarre, he led a largely outnumbered body of Spanish soldiers against a French invasion of Pamplona. He was a fierce fighter but within 6 hours the battle was over and he suffered a shattered knee and a seriously injured other leg. Two weeks later the French carried him by litter back to his family castle of Loyola. His convalescence did not go well. Surgeons had to rebreak and set the broken knee. Even then one of the reset bones protruded and Ignatius demanded that it be cut away. William Meissner notes "His willingness to undergo the torment of the surgery is a measure of the extent the ego-ideal dominated his life and behavior to that point" (Meissner, 1991: 41).

Following the second surgery Ignatius was confined to bedrest. His only reading material was a book on the lives of the saints and a book on the life of Christ. After reading and reading he would fantasize himself "outsanting the saints" at one moment and at another pursuing knightly deeds in the service of a noble woman. He began to notice a difference in his moods after day-dreaming. The aftereffects led on the one hand to stillness, peace and joy, and on the other hand to turmoil and dissatisfaction. He began to recognize God as directly instructing him; when he considered following Jesus' way of life he was excited and the excitement persisted. When he considered returning to his previous life of courtly pursuits, an initial excitement quickly turned to emptiness. Ignatius felt himself being moved by two spirits, that of God in the former and that of evil and Satan in the latter. Thence began his life-long love affair of God revealed in Jesus Christ. He wanted to go to Jerusalem and experience the Gospel accounts firsthand; He left Loyola castle in 1522.

He travelled to the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat where he surrendered his knightly attire and took on pilgrim clothing. He confessed his sins in great detail and emerged with a stronger spiritual identity. He departed Montserrat with intentions of staying a few days in the remote hill town of Manresa on route to Barcelona and then on to Jerusalem. Ignatius in fact stayed in Manresa for 10 months, living in a hillside cave, fasting and begging, and praying for long hours. His health became poor and he suffered from severe depression. During this time, as back in the castle at Loyola, Ignatius continued to "conduct his experiments" in consciousness, attending to his mood shifts/"movement of the spirits," and recording notes about the Gospel passages influencing him. These were to become the basis for the *Spiritual Exercises*. At the end of the time at Manresa, along the river Cardoner, Ignatius had a profound religious experience, "the great illumination of his life." He came to understand his faith in powerful new way. Ronald

Modras notes “Manresa made him a changed man; at the Cardoner he was given a purpose” (Modras, 2004: 18).

Experience taught Ignatius that God was acting in his and other’s lives, that all people can have this direct, personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ, that all we have and are is gift from God, that we are loved in spite of our limitations and sinfulness, and in realizing and appreciating these things we are called to love and service.

Ignatius would go on to preach the Gospel, “help souls,” and engage in spiritual “conversations.” He realized the need to be educated, studied Latin, the Classics, philosophy and theology, and was ordained. He continued to refine his notes on and give the Spiritual Exercises. A small group of fellow students, companions, gathered around him in Paris to share the Exercises and Ignatius’ transformative vision. Together they were intent on becoming missionaries and putting themselves at the service of the Pope.

The group practiced “discernment of spirits” and together, in 1540 founded the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits. Ignatius, its first Superior General, would remain in Rome until his death at age 65 in 1556.

The Spiritual Exercises

Ignatius developed a keen interest in the inner life and the interplay between desire, and the feelings and thoughts that follow from entertaining various desires. As he recuperated in Loyola castle and on pilgrimage at Monserrat and Manresa he became convinced that God was acting in his life. He read and reflected on Christ’s life and the lives of the saints and felt himself being drawn into an intimate relationship with God in Jesus. He continued to take notes on these experience and refine the notes over the next 20 years. His notes became the basis for guiding others on a similar spiritual journey. The intention of the Exercises is to bring one’s spiritual journey into focus and to help clarify a sense of life purpose, ultimately grounding that life in the fullness intended for each of us by God. The Exercises provide a very concrete and adaptable method for spiritual guidance that was quite distinct from the more logical, ritualized forms of religious practice dominant in the sixteenth century. They provide a highly positive view of God’s action in the world, a world that continues to be created and which invites human participation.

The Exercises encourage a variety of prayer forms including imaginative reflection on the Gospels, lectio divina, breathing and full use of the senses, dialogue with inner wisdom/God, and especially paying attention to

the movements of one’s heart. Prayer sessions begin with attention to the desires of one’s heart. The structure of the Exercises is “four weeks.” These are not chronological weeks but rather periods of focused prayer seeking specific graces. Week One focuses on the “purgative way,” examining one’s faults (“doing one’s personal inventory” in other spiritual language) with the goal of choosing God over sin. Week Two focuses on the “illuminative way” with the intention of better knowing, loving and serving God. Week Three and Four focus on the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, the “unitive way,” identifying with his suffering and then with his joy, with the intention of strengthening one’s commitment to follow Christ.

The *Spiritual Exercises* are not a book to be read, but rather notes for the director to use with a retreatant. They are given in a variety of forms. The more extended form is a 30 day retreat. Each Jesuit typically makes the “thirty day retreat” twice in his life. They are also given in an eight day retreat, often yearly for the retreatant; a third form is the more extended nine month retreat entitled the “Nineteenth Annotation,” designed for lay people who wish to make the Exercises in the context of ongoing life. The Exercises are offered and tailored to individuals and to groups.

Examen of Consciousness

Central to the practice of Ignatian spirituality is the Examen. Originally understood this was an examination of conscience, a twice-daily reflection on the shortcomings of one’s life. A contemporary understanding is an examination of consciousness, and a tool for living a more spiritually aware life. Typically five steps are recommended (Hamm, 1994): (1) Pray for light, to understand how God’s Spirit is acting in our life; (2) Review the day in thanksgiving for “gratitude is the foundation of our whole relationship with God”; (3) Review the feelings that surface in the replay of the day, pay attention to any and all the feelings that arise; (4) Choose one of those feelings, positive or negative, and pray from it; choose the feeling that most drew your attention; and (5) Look toward tomorrow, turn your feelings and thoughts into a prayer. Close with the Lord’s Prayer. The Examen has been much examined and adapted. One adaptation by Linn, Linn, and Linn (1994) is particularly helpful in family and marital contexts. The authors encourage prayerful reflection on two questions, “for what moment today am I most grateful,” and “for what moment am I least grateful,” and to then share reflections with each other.

Discernment of Spirits

Ignatius was just into his 30s when he was recuperating from the cannonball wounds at the Loyola castle. He needed to choose a life direction; was it a return to the knightly and chivalrous life, or a move into the future following Christ? Which king or standard, Satan or Christ was he to follow? During these and the following months he developed the habit of attending to what was going on in his psyche, especially to the feelings that were evoked in response to his reading and reflection, in response to considering his desires. He became convinced that God was acting in his life; he tuned into God's actions by listening to the movements of consolation and desolation in his heart. Ignatius developed his rules for discernment to help "people understand the typical patterns of compulsion and grace in their lives so that they are not unwitting victims of their own biases" (Dunne, 1991). Discernment of spirits is a means by which persons determine their unique personal vocation; it is also a means by which persons deepen their faith and relationship with God. Discernment calls into question one's image of God, taking of responsibility and freedom of choice. For Ignatius God was clearly loving and generous, available and self-giving; relationship with God called forth Discernment can be either a personal or communal process. Discernment requires humility, openness/detachment, love and courage. In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius detailed his "Rules for Discernment of Spirits."

Ignatius of Loyola continues to have a powerful influence on contemporary spirituality 450 years after he lived. His *Spiritual Exercises*, rules for discernment of spirits, and use of the Examen continue to be valuable guides for many on the spiritual journey today.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Conversion](#) [Discernment](#) [Jesuits](#) [Meditation](#) [Prayer](#)

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Immanence

Paul Larson

Immanence is the experience of the divine as within and among us. The term "divine" will be used because the doctrine of immanence is found in both theistic and non-theistic forms of spiritual world views. It is dialectically linked to the term transcendence and they constitute a primal contrast in the philosophy of religion. In the psychology of religion the same dichotomy is conceptualized as the difference between self and other. In theistic spirituality the relationship between humans and God or the forms of the divine is a relationship between persons. Buber (1958) conceptualized all relationships as either I/It or I/Thou, either instrumental or fundamentally personal and mutual in its very constitution.

In this context, immanence refers to the experienced presence of the divine within the mundane world and transcendence as the experience of the ultimate "alterity" or the divine as other. In transcendence, we experience of the divine as more than us, something beyond our capacities and knowledge. In immanence, we can experience the divine as a continuous background presence or as a specific epiphany, a concrete manifestation limited in space and time.

An alternative experience is the absence of the divine, a void. Emptiness can be nihilistic, a cold material world decayed into the completely random state of total entropy, which is the ultimate end of the universe in physics taken in context of materialistic monism as an ontological position. But emptiness can also be experienced as fruition and completeness. This is at the heart of Madhyamaka Buddhism, which is the experience of total emptiness as enlightenment, completely non-dual being. Nagarjuna, the late Indian Buddhist sage, and a key figure in Tibetan Buddhism, is the clearest exponent of this position.

The presence of the divine within us can be seen as the source of all spiritual experience; a recognition of self by self. It was first seen in the myth of Narcissus, self

compounded by recognition of self. But the magic of spiritual experience is to shuttle the immanence and transcendence of the divine. This is the basis for not only the fear and trembling in awe in the presence of the mysterious and totally other, it is also the source of the experience of warmth and loving presence at the other end of the spectrum of spiritual experiences. Whether in joyous ecstasy or through the dark night of the soul, we shuttle between the experiences of immanence, transcendence and emptiness.

See also: [Buber](#), [Martin](#) [God](#)

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Immortality

Morgan Stebbins

Human beings, as far as we know, are unique in the ability to understand that each one of us will die at some point. Although we are forever on this side of the “undiscovered country/from whose bourn no traveler returns” (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, scene 1) this other type of time or place has been a concern of philosophy and religion from very close to the beginning of human history. Anthropologists consider the transition from living to not-living to cause a basic cognitive dissonance so extreme that the nascent Neolithic consciousness as well as modern humans are incapable of making sense of it. In the ancient caves of Lascaux and Trois Freres we see what may be indications of shamanic transformations – the precursors of conceptions of the soul and the beginning of the idea that there might be something more at the end of life than merely stoppage. Funereal remains have also been uncovered from this same period in the Neolithic age suggesting a conception of something going on after the death of the body. This is developed a bit more in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which contains a section in which the hero-killing Gilgamesh searches for the herb of immortality. He is tricked by a snake, however, and misses his chance.

In this very early (22nd century BCE) epic poem we see an approach to the afterlife that has already gained some momentum.

Not far away in Egypt there developed perhaps the most highly differentiated conception of multiple souls, their judgment and fate, and the proper internment of the body – at least for the Pharaoh, found in the ancient world. It seems that the common person did not have access to the soul nor of course to much in the way of a pyramid-like tomb in which to transition. This would have to wait for religions of the masses, such as Christianity in the West and Buddhism in the East. The Pharaoh's body was preserved so that he himself might have real existence in the Otherworld of the Celestial regions, and in various texts we can trace a variety of beliefs regarding the manner in which he was supposed to reach the sky. Some early and late texts told of a ladder similar to that which Jacob saw in his dream – “a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 28:12). In both of these examples there is the sense that something beyond the body must exist – what we understand psychologically as the psyche – and that there is a veritable hierarchy of unconscious states which are only dimly perceived as instincts, urges, muses, ragings, and all the other demonic or divine possessions to which humans are susceptible.

Another version of immortality is fame, as defined by the story of Achilles. It was prophesied, according to his mother, that he could either have eternal fame and a short life or a long life, children, satisfaction, and perhaps just a few generations of being remembered by his children. Ovid wrote that although “his ashes would hardly fill an urn” he fared better because “his fame now fills the world.” Although Ovid states clearly that “fame makes the man” there is a later scene in which Odysseus finds him in Hades and tells him there is no man more blessed. To this Achilles responds, “By god I'd rather slave to another man on earth than rule down here over all the breathless dead” (Ovid, 12:615–19). This episode shows the social value (perhaps the ideology) of the concept of immortality and the ways in which it can form behavior.

Of particular interest just after the era defined by *Gilgamesh* are the mystery religions and their role in the development of the concept of the soul and its eternal or immortal destination. The Eleusinian Mysteries are believed to have begun about 1600 BC. This Mycenaean age was marked by a new turmoil about the fate of the soul. Before this, in most Western traditions, the soul just went to the place of the shades, or went with the ancestors, whereas suddenly a level of doubt about what

happens after death ran through the Mediterranean world. The Mysteries were intended “to elevate man above the human sphere into the divine and to assure his redemption by making him a god and so conferring immortality upon him” (Nilsson, 1947: 42–64). Of course the mysteries were only for the upper classes who could afford to travel to Eleusis and pay the high fees of the priests. In periods of cultural transition there is often a deep rearrangement of core unconscious values. These values, as well as the symbols which can translate and contain them, are often communicated through metaphysical assumptions. When the anxiety about mortality and the soul reached the general public (exacerbated by the relativization of local ancestor cults by the religion of the Emperor), a new solution was needed of a more global scope. This is, psychologically, the explanation for the advent of the Christian symbol system.

A completely different form of literal, bodily immortality was posited and pursued almost contemporaneously by Taoist sages and medieval alchemists (Wilhelm, 1962 or Dorn etc.). For the both the Taoists and the alchemists, it was thought that the correct bodily nutrients along with a state of mind that corresponds to the way (or Tao) would lead to endless life. In both cases the search was for the *elixir vitae*, or potion of life. In fact, the elixir is a concept of great breadth. It is found in Arabic texts where it is referred to as the *elixir of immortality* or *Dancing Water* (in Persian, *Aab-e-Hayaat*). The elixir is sometimes equated with the alchemist’s philosopher’s stone. As well, it can be found in the myths of Enoch, Thoth, and of course Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice-blessed Hermes). In all of the myths the hero has drunk “the white drops” (liquid gold) and thus achieved immortality. We can even find a reference in the Qu’ran (Sura 18; the Khidr), and it is mentioned as well in one of the Nag Hammadi texts. In all of these references we can derive a psychological image of how a particular relationship with the physical world could lead to a very different experience of temporality.

We can see similar attempts in the efforts of the believers in cryogenic research and other futurist enterprises. Indeed some very simple organisms do live in a kind of immortal existence in that they don’t die unless killed, and the futurist community believes this may be possible in relatively near future. Of course millennial groups have always thought that the end time, or better, the end of time, was impending. If it were not, let’s say it was predicted in a few hundred years, then it would have very little personal urgency. This urgency is an important psychological mechanism, since the degree of urgency is what motivates change, and change, as we have seen, is behind the image of rebirth.

The state of immortality, being the province of the gods and divine beings of many sorts, would seem to be desirable – especially if we factor in the ‘good’ immortality conferred by the reward of going to Heaven. However thinkers of many types have posited that human mortality is critical to development. Jorge Luis Borges explored the idea that life gets its meaning from death in the short story “The Immortal” and Earnst Becker, in *The Denial of Death*, explains that a lack of grappling with the fact of death leads to neuroses of different kinds (Becker, 1997). Instead, a confrontation with limitation, especially the limitation represented by the barrier of death, leads to a grounded personality and frees the creative potential which can be thought of as a playful interweaving of elements within a given structure or set of limitations.

In most religious traditions (especially the monistic ones) the status of immortality is confined to heavenly beings and of course the soul. However, depending on whether one (or rather, one’s soul) ends up in heaven or hell – immortality can be experienced as either bad or good. Indeed in these traditions there is often an idea of some sort of eternal reward or punishment. It’s not hard to see the anthropological view of this as a coercive social mechanism, but again that tells us little about why it comes about in this form. We can therefore translate the form of this very widespread belief as an intuitive experience of something *other* than normal consciousness, especially in terms of temporality. Wittgenstein may have been referring to this, saying in the *Tractatus*, “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present” (Wittgenstein: 6.4311). Psychologically this points to the a-temporal and synchronous aspect of the psyche which does not conform to the rules of efficient or necessary causation nor to the usual rules of the time-space continuum (see especially Jung, 1973).

One of the most perplexing types of immortality is that defined by metempsychosis, or the dynamic of the soul’s re-emergence in a new body life after life. In both the Hindu and Buddhist (and Jain) forms, life is seen as negative, the realm of *samsara* or illusion and suffering, and the goal is to end the round of rebirth through extinguishment (that being the literal translation of *nirvana* – a blowing out of the flame of life), or for the Hindu tradition, *moksa*, a liberation which ends individual existence. One of the most sustained and beautiful contemplation of the nature of time and being is found in the Japanese Buddhist monk Dogen Kigen’s work *Uji*, written in the 13th century (found in lots of places, but a nice scholarly work is by Heine, 2006: 56). Although it would be ridiculous to paraphrase it, he pushes the

understanding of time and timelessness to a point and with a subtlety perhaps still not excelled. These religious conceptions of rebirth can be translated as the experiential understanding that after major change we are, in fact, a different person: there is a discontinuity with the past when a major threshold is passed. Liberation is not very far from a psychological concept to start with, especially given that a subject's re-connection with the numinous core of a given collective symbol-set relativizes the personal ego and also frees the subject from ideology.

See also: [▶ Eleusinian Mysteries](#) [▶ Gnosticism](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Incarnation

Charlene P. E. Burns

Literally, the act of being "made flesh;" the earliest and most common usage is in reference to the Christian doctrine about the divine nature of Jesus.

Historical Overview

Belief that the divine manifests in human form is as old and diverse as religion itself. Cave art from the late Paleolithic Age depicts masked figures thought to represent the divine animal spirit; sacred heavenly visitors are portrayed in the art of premodern societies. Many Native American religions teach that souls of the dead return to earth in human or animal form, and also that the divine incarnates itself from time to time. Some Australian

indigenous peoples teach that the human has two souls; one mortal, the other immortal and believed to be a particle of the totemic ancestral beginnings.

Ancient Greek Gnostics believed that the human being is a duality of material body and immortal soul. The souls turned away from contemplation of the One and fell from the divine realm to be incarnated and imprisoned in the body. These ideas combined with the mythologies of Olympus which told of the gods' interaction with humanity, very often taking on human or quasi-human form. Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Plato, for example, taught that the immortal soul sinned, fell from an original blissful state, and suffered repeated incarnations until achieving spiritual restoration to bliss. Pythagoras and Plato were themselves thought to have been gods made incarnate.

Several centuries before the Common Era, the ancient Persians believed that Mithra, the God of light, would incarnate at the end of history. Mithra would be a universal king and savior, God born of a woman. Human kings were believed to be the divine Horus in ancient Egypt. In China it was taught that the emperor, as Son of Heaven, was the representative of Heaven on earth. Since the inception of Buddhism in China, emperors have from time to time been believed to be incarnations of the Buddha, and for the ancient Japanese, the emperor was *akitsumi kami*, god manifested in human form (Waida, 1987).

Among present-day religions, in the *avatar* of Hinduism we find what may well be the oldest clearly developed exposition of divine incarnation. In its earliest form, divine descent in Hindu thought was described as *pradūrbhāva*, manifestation. By the fourth century before the Common Era, the term *avatar*, from the words meaning "to cross over" and "down," had come into usage, primarily in relation to the earthly presence of the preserver god Vishnu (Parrinder, 1982). In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, says, "To protect men of virtue and destroy men who do evil, to set the standard of sacred duty, I appear in age after age" (*Bhagavad Gita* 1986, 4: 6–8).

In some forms of Buddhism, emphasis has shifted away from the historical Buddha to the Eternal Buddha, a transcendent being said to embody universal truth. The Mahayana Buddhist doctrine of *Trikāya*, the "three bodies," teaches that the Buddha is known as *dharmakaya*, True Body (the essential Buddha who is ultimate reality independent of all and yet the "thatness" of all), *nirmanakaya* (Body of Transformation, that by which the earthly historical Buddha was enabled to work the good), and *sambhogakaya* (the Body of Bliss or celestial Buddhas and bodhisattvas, those who have attained enlightenment but

choose to return to earth to help others reach *nirvana* (Gard, 1963). In Japanese Buddhism, the doctrine is further developed into a cosmic theism wherein creation is believed to be the embodiment of the Buddha Mahavairocana. This cosmic figure is both immanent, through embodiment of himself in the six constitutive elements of the universe – earth, water, fire, wind, space, and mind – and transcendent, absolute, eternal (Waida, 1987).

It is widely held that Judaism is adamantly non-incarnational and yet according to some mainstream Jewish scholarship, the texts of normative Judaism present God in terms of incarnation and that in fact, incarnation as a concept is integral to Hebrew Scripture (Neusner, 1988; Wyschograd, 1996). Even in Islam, which is a faith based firmly in insistence on the absolute unity of God, there are sects that teach something very like incarnation. Although for the majority of Muslims the idea of incarnation is the greatest form of sin, some Shi'a believe the Imam was the actual embodiment of the divine light. For the Druze of Lebanon, for example, the Imam has been said to be the literal incarnation of God on earth (Martin, 1982; Parrinder, 1982; Waida, 1987).

Psychological Interpretations

Given the nature of the claim, the idea of divine incarnation is not subject to experimental or laboratory examination. It can be addressed, however, from the psychoanalytic point of view. Strictly Freudian approaches tend toward explanatory claims whereas other depth psychological approaches attempt to address the question from a functional point of view.

For Freud, religion and all its expressions are infantile regressive defenses. He believed that Christianity is an especially clear manifestation of dynamics at work in the Oedipal complex. The longing to eliminate the father and take possession of the mother is, in a sense, the original sin which gives rise to the guilt from which we must be redeemed. Christ, as both Son of God and God Incarnate, atones for us through his own death. Freud's focus in his writings on Christianity was primarily on the meaning of the Eucharist (as symbolic and defensive reenactment of the Oedipal wish to both eliminate and identify with the father), but it can be inferred that the idea of incarnation is an expression of the infantile wish to become the father.

Early in his career, Carl Jung accepted Freud's stance that religion expresses infantile wishes, but as his own understanding of the self evolved, he came to see religion in a more positive light. Writing about the Christian

doctrine of the Trinity, Jung (1948) suggests that this symbol is an expression of individual psychological maturation. The Father symbolizes the original state of unreflective acceptance similar to the way we function in childhood. The Father gives birth to the Son, which correlates to growth in discrimination and differentiation from parents, and the Spirit corresponds to a new level of consciousness involving the mature incorporation of the unconscious and discriminatory aspects. In one of his most controversial works, *Answer to Job*, Jung expands this thesis and interprets the idea of Jesus as God incarnate as a manifestation of evolution of the God-image. Cautioning that "the image [of God] and the statement [about God] are psychic processes which are different from their transcendental object; they do not posit it, they merely point to it" Jung argued there that the book of Job tells the story of God coming to consciousness through encounter with Job (1976: 556). In the story, God is capricious and jealous, allowing Satan to torment Job without justification. Job remains steadfast in spite of his suffering, and in the end God, not Job, is changed. Remembering that for Jung religious ideas are symbolic expression of aspects of the human psyche, we see that the incarnation of God in the human Jesus is the necessary next step in evolution of the Western God-image. God must become human in order to atone for the wrongs committed against humanity; expressed in psychological terms, the appearance of the symbol of God-incarnate reveals the maturation of Western humanity's internalized image of God. The fact that we find incarnation in many religions demonstrates, for Jung, the universality of the god-image archetype.

In Object Relations and self psychologies, religion is a potentially positive expression of human psychic experience. It can promote wholeness through enhanced object relations and/or provide a bridge between inner psychic and outer social experience. Although the idea of divine incarnation tends not to be directly addressed by psychoanalysts in these schools of thought, the ubiquitous nature of the idea lends support to the thesis that narcissism is basic to human psychological development. For Self psychologies, narcissistic libido is a basic energy that functions in the cathexis of objects felt to be a part of ones' self (selfobjects). The challenge of psychological maturation involves redirection and integration of narcissistic cathexes. The God-image, one of the most important selfobjects, is derived from early parent/caregiver relations and changes over time (Rizzuto, 1979). Conceptions of divine incarnation, then, may be said to be manifestations of the tension between narcissism and internal object relations.

Theology and Psychology

Some theologians with expertise in psychology have made interesting use of these theories to develop a range of new understandings of the doctrine that incorporate explanatory and functional aspects of interpretation. C. Burns (2001) interprets incarnation in terms of the human capacity for intersubjectivity made possible by the innate processes of empathy, sympathy, attunement, and entrainment. In a more classic psychoanalytic mode, J. Moltmann (1973) interprets the powerlessness of the crucified God-incarnate as a counter to the Oedipal father imagery of the Hebrew Bible. The image of God crucified opens us to the depths of our own humanity and prepares us to accept the moral responsibility that accompanies freedom of the will. H. Heimbrock (1977) expands on Moltmann's thesis to include the claim that the death of God-incarnate on the cross signifies renunciation of the grandiose self which leads to transformation of narcissistic fantasies.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Avatar](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ God Image](#)

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Individuation

Leon Schlammm

Jung's Definition of Individuation

C. G. Jung defined individuation, the therapeutic goal of analytical psychology belonging to the second half of life, as the process by which a person becomes a psychological individual, a separate indivisible unity or whole, recognizing his innermost uniqueness; and he identified this process with becoming one's own *self* or *self*-realization, which he distinguished from "ego-centeredness" and individualism. The self, the totality of personality and archetype of order, is superordinate to the ego, embracing consciousness and the unconscious; as the center and circumference of the whole psyche, the self is our life's goal, the most complete expression of individuality (Jung, 1916/1928, 1939a, 1944, 1947/1954, 1963). The aim of individuation, equated with the extension of consciousness and the development of personality, is to divest the self of its false wrappings of the persona, the mask the personality uses to confront the world, and the suggestive power of numinous unconscious contents. While individuation appears to be opposed to collective standards, it is not antagonistic to them, but only differently oriented and never isolated from collective relationships and society. Nevertheless, the stunting of individuation by the individual's adherence to social norms is injurious to his vitality and disastrous for his moral development (Jung, 1921, 1916/1928).

The Spiritual Nature of the Individuation Process

In his later writings, Jung claimed that individuation is as much a spiritual as a psychological process, uniting instinctual with religious experience. Affirming individuation to be the life in God, insisting that man is not whole without God, and identifying numinous symbols of the self with those of the deity, he conjoined psychological with spiritual development, frequently identifying the former with latter. By sacralizing psychology, as well as psychologizing religion, Jung's writings on individuation, celebrating the union of man and God and matter and spirit within human consciousness, anticipated a widespread contemporary movement away from traditional religion towards detraditionalized and privatized, New Age forms of spirituality recently examined by sociologists and historians of religion (Jung, 1951, 1951–1961, 1952/1954, 1956–1957, 1963; Heelas, 1996; Hanegraaff, 1998; Tacey, 2001, 2004; Forman, 2004; Main, 2004).

Individuation, closely associated by Jung with the transcendent function, is the “teleological” or “synthetic” healing process, underlying all psychic activity, of balancing, mediating or uniting conflicting psychic opposites, which overcomes psychological disequilibrium and initiates the experience of “wholeness” of the personality. Distinguishing between a consciously realized individuation process and a natural one that runs its course unconsciously, Jung insisted that the former requires the difficult integration of projected, numinous, archetypal, unconscious contents – for example, the shadow, the anima/animus, the wise old man, and the self – into consciousness. Through this union of the opposites of consciousness and the unconscious, frequently triggered by Jung's dissociative technique of active imagination, the clarity of consciousness is intensified, a unity of being is realized and recognized as objective, the individual is freed from emotional attachments to the outer world, and the individuated ego is enriched by the understanding that it is not that something different is seen, but that one sees differently (Jung, 1931/1962, 1939b, 1952/1954, 1963). The individuated ego senses itself as the object of an unknown and superordinate subject, the self, the God within us, which, while strange, is also so near to us, wholly ourselves while still an unknowable essence transcending our powers of comprehension. The function of the transcendental postulate of the self, which Jung acknowledges does not allow of scientific proof, is to point to this experience of the incarnation of God in human consciousness, encountered so frequently in his empirical research (Jung, 1916/1928, 1939b, 1963).

Synchronicity, *Unus Mundus*, and the Mandala

However, one should not conclude, as many of his critics have, that individuation was understood by Jung to be a wholly intra-psychic experience divorced from the world and human relationships. His meta-psychological concept of individuation was gradually broadened and enriched by his theory of synchronicity, identifying experiences of meaningful, numinous, archetypal, acausal connections or correspondences between inner psychic and outer physical events. These experiences confirmed, for Jung, that individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself. However confused Jung's theory was, it succeeded in drawing attention to a baffling reciprocity between human consciousness and the outer world, a zone of experience where physical events appear, mysteriously, to collaborate with and support the individuation process (Jung, 1947/1954, 1952; Aziz, 1990; Mansfield, 1995; Main, 2004). Jung's theory of synchronicity led him, in turn, to his concept of the *unus mundus* (unitary world), which, drawing heavily on alchemical sources, affirmed that man as microcosm is of the same essence as, or indistinguishable from, the universe and identified his own mid-point with its center. While his concept of *unus mundus* was inconsistent with his professed metaphysical agnosticism, it enabled him to distinguish three phases of the individuation process: (1) the wholly intra-psychic process of withdrawing projections of unconscious contents from the material world, thereby separating consciousness from it, (2) the reunification of transformed consciousness with the material world, as in synchronicity, and with the body, (3) the experience of unification of the whole psyche, the microcosm, with the macrocosm, during which time and space are transcended. Jung identified this third phase with the alchemical image of Mercurius as a conjunction of opposites, which he believed anticipated the interconnectedness and ordered unity of the multiplicity of contents of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1930–1934, 1941/1954, 1942, 1955–1956, 1958, 1963; von Franz, 1975).

Jung also argued that the ultimate unity of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as well as of the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, equated by him with his concept of the *unus mundus*, is expressed with particular clarity by the symbol of the mandala. The mandala, an instrument of contemplation frequently used by Eastern and Western religious traditions to provide spiritual instruction, is a magic circle, square, flower, cross or wheel, divided into four or its multiples, which emphasizes a central point of orientation and an ordered unity of

its many parts. While refusing to identify the individuation process with the soteriological perspectives and goals associated with these religious symbols, he recognized them to be numinous, archetypal images signifying the wholeness of the self, the microcosmic nature of the psyche, and the divinity incarnate in man. As early as 1916, Jung began to produce his own mandalas and to understand them as cryptograms of the development of the self and the psychic process of centering taking place within him. This practice, which he encouraged his analysands to emulate, led him to the conviction that the mandala expresses the path to the center of psychic totality, the goal of individuation, realized through the circumambulation of the self. Moreover, Jung interpreted the frequent appearance of mandalas in the modern clinical setting, in his analysands' paintings and drawings as well as their dreams and visions, as either psychic images compensating for conscious confusion and disorientation or as instruments of contemplation facilitating the transformation of such psychic chaos into order (Jung, 1931/1962, 1934/1950, 1950, 1955–1956, 1958, 1963).

The Conjunction of Opposites and the Unknowable Nature of the Self

Acknowledging the perils of the individuation process, psychosis on the one hand, and spiritual inflation of the ego by numinous unconscious contents, particularly the self, on the other, Jung insisted that the individuation process is the product of a conjunction of two sharply opposed orientations. On the one hand there is a tremendous experience of expansion, of an opening to the transcendental (an experience which the alchemist Gerhard Dorn described as the opening of a window on eternity), and on the other an experience of the concentration of one's being, an emphasis on the value of the uniqueness and particularity of the personality requiring considerable ego strength. There is at the same time an experience of a boundless enlargement and of the narrowest of limitations in the ego. Only consciousness of our narrow confinement in the self forms the link to the limitlessness of the unconscious. The individuated person experiences himself concurrently as both limited and eternal. However, he is never more than his own finite ego before the deity who dwells within him (Jung, 1952/1954, 1955–1956, 1963; von Franz, 1975; Aziz, 1990).

Jung also insisted that the individuation process can never be fully realized in this lifetime. He argued that there is little hope of our ever being able to reach even approximate consciousness of the self, since however

much we may make conscious there will always exist an indeterminate and indeterminable amount of unconscious material which belongs to the totality of the self (Jung, 1906–1950, 1916/1928, 1952/1954, 1963). Clearly, for Jung, because the self is unknowable, the individuation process is qualified by its suspension between the opposites of the known and the unknown. Individuation is incompatible with unconditional acceptance of unqualified claims to religious knowledge; rather it requires a humbling acknowledgement of the relativism of all knowledge and experience, albeit one grounded in numinous experience of the self. However, for Jung, this agnosticism is experienced not only as a limitation, but also as an invitation, even a challenge, to consciousness to further explore its unknown psychic background, thereby extending its boundaries and understanding (Jung, 1963; Hauke, 2000; Rowland, 2006).

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Anima and Animus](#) [Archetype](#) [Circumambulation](#) [Coincidentia Oppositorum](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [Enlightenment](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Healing](#) [Individuation](#) [Inflation](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Mandala](#) [Numinosum](#) [Objective Psyche](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Reductionism](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shadow](#) [Synchronicity](#) [Transcendent Function](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Inflation

Leon Schlammm

Jung’s Definition of Inflation

C. G. Jung defined inflation – an unconscious psychic condition – as expansion of the personality beyond its proper limits by identification with the persona or with an archetype, or in pathological cases with a historical or religious figure. It produces an exaggerated sense of one’s self-importance and is usually compensated by feelings of inferiority (Jung, 1934–1939, 1963). Most of Jung’s comments about inflation are concerned with an identification of the ego or consciousness with the numinosity of an archetype (Jung, 1934/1950, 1952), leading to a distortion or even dissolution of the former. The key to avoiding inflation is knowledge of the proper boundaries of the ego or consciousness, and this is achieved by discrimination between it and the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious – the self, anima, animus, and shadow – which possess psychic autonomy. When the ego can distinguish what belongs to itself from what belongs to the objective or transpersonal unconscious psyche, it will be free of inflation (Jung, 1951).

Psychopathological Manifestations of Inflation

However, the psychic discrimination necessary to avoid inflation is very difficult to achieve, because the integration of archetypal materials into consciousness typically leads either to a ridiculous self-deification or to a moral self-laceration. The individual makes himself either a god or a devil (Jung, 1917/1928, 1951; Edinger, 1995), as the archetype through its power of fascination seizes hold of the psyche with a kind of primeval force and compels it to transgress the bounds of humanity. This causes exaggeration, a puffed-up attitude of inflation, loss of free will, delusion, and enthusiasm in good and evil alike. Jung equates inflation with the experience of godlikeness or of being superhuman, an extension of personality beyond individual limits. In such a state a man fills a space which normally he cannot fill, and he can only do this by appropriating to himself contents and qualities which do not belong to him, either because they belong to someone else, or to everyone, or to no-one (Jung, 1916/1928). This experience may lead to fathomless transformations of

personality, such as sudden conversions, as well as to a transitory or permanent disintegration of the entire personality. In all cases, whether inflation is the product of some innate weakness of the personality or encountered during an individuation process, the real clinical difficulty is to free patients from the power of fascination by archetypal figures (Jung, 1916/1928, 1951–1961).

The identification of consciousness with eschatological knowledge of the collective unconscious is one of the most frequent expressions of inflation, which can either be equated with megalomania or a form of prophetic inspiration providing a renewal of life for the individual. In either condition one can be so puffed up or overpowered by new knowledge as to be hypnotized by it, and thus foolishly believe that one has solved the riddle of the universe and that all previous understanding is worthless. But this is almighty self-conceit (Jung, 1916/1928). When lucky ideas from the unconscious come to the ego, it should not take the credit for them, but begin to realize how dangerously close it had been to inflation (Jung, 1955–1956). Jung even speculates that inflation by knowledge, leading to a dangerous extension of consciousness, may be the nature of the deadly sin represented by the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2:17, 3:5 (Jung, 1916/1928, 1934–1939, 1941/1954, 1948, 1963; Edinger 1973).

The issue that Jung constantly returns to is our need to be aware of the pitifully limited nature of the ego, especially during individuation when the great psychic danger is that ego-consciousness will be identified with the *self* (Jung, 1950, 1958). Inflation and man's hubris between them have elected to make the ego, in all its ridiculous paltriness, lord of the universe and this is productive of nothing but anarchy and destruction (Jung, 1938). If the ego has a spark of self-knowledge, it can only draw back and rapidly drop all pretence of power over the unconscious (Jung, 1916/1928). Indeed, every encroachment by the ego into the realm of the unconscious which brings about inflation is followed by an encroachment into the realm of consciousness by the unconscious. An inflation is always threatened with a counter-stroke from the unconscious, which in the Bible took the form of the deluge, the great flood of Genesis which destroyed civilization (Jung, 1952/1954, 1944).

What this means in clinical terms is that inflation so enlarges the normal ego-personality as to almost extinguish it. The result of such inflation (whether leading to megalomania or to a feeling of annihilation of the ego) is the same: an experience of a serious lesion of the ego (Jung, 1946). Alchemy expresses this through symbols of death, mutilation or poisoning, or the curious idea of dropsy, the desire to drink so much water that an individual melts away, expressing the experience of suffering

from a surfeit of unconscious contents and psychic dissociation. Paradoxically enough inflation is a regression of consciousness into unconsciousness. This always happens when consciousness takes too many unconscious contents upon itself and loses the faculty of discrimination, the *sine qua non* of all consciousness (Jung, 1944). This is why Jung argues that, when dealing with extreme cases of inflation, it is far more necessary to strengthen and consolidate the ego than to understand and assimilate the products of the unconscious (Jung, 1934/1950). The decision in which way to proceed must be left to the diagnostic and therapeutic tact of the analyst.

Inflation, Deification, and the Shadow

The key to overcoming inflation lies in the recognition of the projection of the shadow and its painful integration into consciousness. Inflation by an archetype is irreconcilable with deflationary acceptance and befriending of the shadow. The conclusion to be drawn from this observation is that, we Europeans in a state of unconscious possession must become scared of our god-almightiness (Jung, 1944). If we do not, if we unconsciously accept a religious inflation, then we are in danger of putting the divine germ within us to some ridiculous or demonaical use (Jung, 1942/1948). In other words, the danger of accepting such a portentous claim as Nietzsche's that "God is dead" is that, in becoming gods ourselves and thereby unconscious of our shadows, we are capable of a level of violence and destructiveness towards our fellow human beings never before known in human history. At the same time, Jung observes that the inflationary effect of declaring God is dead is that, one is forced to assume an awful responsibility for intrapsychic experiences, such as one's own dreams, which were hitherto believed to be caused by God (Jung, 1934–1939).

Significantly, the danger of inflation of the ego by spiritual knowledge and experience is examined in the writings of Christian mystics and Sufis (Underhill, 1961; Welch, 1982; Svirid, 1997; McLean, 2003), as well as transpersonally oriented psychologists (Wilber, 1980; Naranjo, 1987; Rosenthal, 1987; Assagioli, 1989; Caplan, 1999). However, unlike these writers who can find no value in the experience of inflation for spiritual transformation, Jung acknowledges that inflation is one of the unpleasant consequences of becoming fully conscious, instrumental in the discovery of the boundaries of consciousness during the individuation process, a painful but necessary Luciferian deed of disobedience to both God and the unconscious (Jung, 1916/1928, 1934–1939, 1948, 1963).

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Individuation](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Numinosum](#) [Objective Psyche](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shadow](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Initiation

Paul Larson

Initiation is a part of most religious traditions; at its heart it is a ceremony for beginning and important part of the spiritual journey. Van Gennep (1909/1960) coined the phrase “rites of passage” to refer in general to those moments of transition where ones moves from one social status to another. There are age-graded rituals, rites of passage from childhood into adulthood, from single to married status, and the final rites of burial after death. But in addition to these major life passages, there are in each society a number of special groups one can join or is invited to join that have their own initiation rituals as part of entering into the community.

Initiation is an essential component of most esoteric constituencies within larger traditions; but rites of passage

are also celebrated in the exoteric or more publically available forms of the tradition. Initiation is a particular type of beginning, one marked by a special process of preparation, often involving physical or psychological separation from one's current space and social status, which moving toward the formal rite of transition. There is a basic distinction between being a spiritual seeker and an initiate into a particular tradition the seeker has only an etic, or outsider's perspective on the group and its beliefs or practices, whereas the initiate now enters into an emic, or insider's perspective. The rite often is done in a very private, even secret ritual; only other initiates are allowed to participate. But not all initiations are secret; regular Christian baptism is part of public worship even though it is a type of initiation into the community of the faithful. Likewise, ceremonies validating conversion to a religion is public for reasons of affirmation of group identity.

Most attention, though, is given to initiation as a ceremonial entry into an esoteric tradition. The esoteric/exoteric distinction refers to not only the private versus public nature of the gatherings and communities, but refers to an additional level or type of teaching that is conveyed. This special knowledge, or gnosis, is a teaching that is reserved for more dedicated students who take the opportunity to study beyond the basic level. Esoteric groups generally have "outer court" teachings which are conveyed through the most public means as a way of attracting prospective initiates. The "inner court" court teachings then follow for those who show consistent interest. The process begins when a seeker attaches her or himself to a teacher in the tradition. There is a period of preparatory study before initiation and often tests of worthiness to continue. After the initiation ceremony, the student is now part of a community in which there may be additional levels or grades of initiation. A common example is Freemasonry where the Scottish Rite has 32 degrees to reach the pinnacle of gnosis.

Among the oldest initiatic groups are the mystery religions of classical antiquity. In Greece the most popular initiatic group was the Eleusian mysteries, into which Plato was admitted. The rites of Dionysos, Orpheus and others flourished as well as mystery religions from Egypt (Isis), Syria (Cybele and Attis). Persia was the source of the Mithraic initiatic tradition. In the Western esoteric traditions most adherents of magic or witchcraft were structured as initiatic systems. In the nineteenth century the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn became the quintessential initiatic system, and the origin of most contemporary systems of ceremonial magic. The spelling of magic with a k is a convention used by adherents to

distinguish the spiritual practice from stage magic or the art of the illusionist.

In Hindu and Buddhist traditions, initiation is closely linked to the strong relationship between the teacher (guru) and the disciple or student (chela). In the Western spiritual traditions the teacher is not viewed as other than human, but in the two forms of Indian spirituality, the teacher is seen as the literal embodiment of the divine, as an incarnation of the deity. This embues the relationship with a special intensity. If you see your teacher as divine, then obedience and veneration can become blinded to the humanity, leading to an increased potential for abuse. In the first generation of Indian gurus moving into the West, several teachers became embroiled in sexual and financial scandals with former disciples. But when the teacher maintains the proper role, then there is an effective transmission of both teaching and experiential practice that allows the student to grow in their chosen faith.

In the late Indian Tantric tradition, with both Hindu and Vajrayana Buddhist streams, the initiation takes on special significance and is termed an empowerment. The teacher not only gives teachings but gives primary instructions in particular meditational practices. The teacher gives the student power to practice the technique under guidance. While it is not denied that in the modern world one can find texts of formerly secret Tantric initiations and can practice them without initiation, the teachers would add the proper use of the techniques need guidance that can only come from someone who is deeply grounded in the meditation technique.

Initiation across all traditions is liminal process (cf. Liminality), that is, it is a vehicle and a process for bringing about transitions. Beginning at the transition from seeker to initiate, the ceremony moves the person from one state of development to another. As other degrees of initiation are conferred, the process of transition is repeated. At each juncture the ceremonial leader acts as a psychopomp to aid the person into a deeper understanding of the path on which they have embarked. The act of initiation can be seen as a parallel concept in the psychology of religion to the rite of passage in anthropology. The common thread is the crossing of a threshold from one state of being to another.

The psychology of initiation is likewise characterized by liminality, the movement from one phase of development to another. The rite of initiation itself marks off the boundary between ordinary time and sacred time, between ordinary space and sacred space, and between our ordinary way of being and a sacred and spiritual mode of being (Eliade, 1959). Crossing boundaries

involves gaining gnosis, or sacred knowledge, and also the core instructions for further practice of whatever spiritual techniques are taught. It is likened to climbing a mountain, or perhaps diving deeper and deeper into a well, but however the lived experience unfolds it is transformative. Initiation is just the beginning of a series of changes often interspersed with periods of stasis. One can have several initiatory experiences across a life time, each one unfolding a new mystery which may yet be seen as a continuation of the first mystery into which the seeker was drawn.

The process of counseling and psychotherapy can be likened to an initiatory process, as Jung understood through his own studies of esoteric lore which informed his depth psychology. Particularly with clients new to therapy, there is some teaching of how to talk, what to talk about and what limits there are to expression of feeling or rehearsing of new ways of acting. As the process unfolds over time, it deepens because of the cumulative nature of therapeutic dialog. The goal is to give the client the necessary tools to continue life without the help of the therapist, but with their own renewed and enhanced set of personal skills and values.

See also: [▶ Baptism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Liminality](#) [▶ Rites of Passage](#)

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Instinct

Stefanie Teitelbaum

Introduction

Biological instinct is the innate, inherited fixed action patterns of responses or reactions to certain stimuli, both internal and external. These responses or reactions

are intermittent and fairly predictable within a specific species. Freudian instinct differs from strictly biological instinct in the uniquely human experience of a consciousness of the pressure to respond, the sometimes consistent presence of such pressure with or without identifiable stimulus, and the variation within the human species. Freud used the words *Instinkt* and *Trieb* (drive) to describe such instinctual pressure, often interchangeably.

Inconsistency about mind/body dualism is a core component in Freud's writings about instinct. Freud feared monism would make psychoanalysis a religious or mystical discipline, and compromise its place in a scientific *Weltanschauung*. Biologically driven forces shaping humanity remain a problematic topic in religious thinking. The polarized debate between biological evolution and intelligent design persists. Segments of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam acknowledge the presence of instincts and a struggle with animal instincts, but view the instincts as implanted by the Divine, fundamentally embracing a material monism. The Eastern, Islamic and mystical Judeo/Christian objective in the struggle with the instincts is to achieve enlightenment and/or union with the Divine. Pragmatic elements of Judaism and Christianity incorporate the thoughts of Aristototele (350 BC) and Descartes seeking to free and/or transform the energy of the instincts into rationality and free will, as did Freud.

Religion

Islam

In the Saheeh Muslim, a collection of the hadith or oral transmission of the words of the prophet, Chapter 16, verse 7 states "Indeed God specified one portion of His Mercy to the word, and with that a mother cares for her young and wild animals and birds care for each other." Modern commentators use this portion to argue Darwin's natural selection, stating that there is no scientific explanation for instincts other than of Divine origin.

Judaism

Moses Maimomedes wrote the *Guide for the Perplexed*, drawing upon Aristototele and Descartes, to position Providence as the source of instinct, whose direction impels mankind towards free will (1187).

Christianity

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote *Summa Theologiae*. His thoughts are similar to those of Maimonides, sharing the influences of Aristotle and Descartes. He states that animals are moved towards the future without knowledge of future by instinct, but instinct is planted in them by the Divine. He defined freedom from instinct as free will (1265–1274).

Psychology/Evolution

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1809) publishes *Philosophie Zoologique*, theorizing the direct inheritance of characteristics acquired an individual during its lifetime.

Charles Darwin (1859) publishes *Origin of Species*. Darwin's thesis of the interplay of natural selection and diversity contributing the modification of inherited instinctual inheritance behavior and motivation.

James Mark Baldwin (1896) publishes "A new factor in evolution," proposing that acquired characteristics could be indirectly inherited based on an organism's ability to adapt to external stimuli during its lifetime (Turney, Whitley, Anderson, 1996).

Psychoanalysis

The index of *The Standard Edition of the Works of Sigmund Freud* (1975, XXVI) contains nearly 1,000 references to instinct, often contradictory, sometimes returning to previously rejected ideas. The primary areas Freud investigated are:

1. The transmission of inherited instinctual ideas: Freud grappled with the Darwinian, Lamarckian debate in scientific circles in turn of the century Vienna, and was aware of Baldwin's theory. Throughout his body of work he touched upon the theories of Darwin and Lamarck, starting with a biological parallel to Darwin, touching upon a monistic theory of instinct de-differentiating much of the mind/body split, and returning to biology in his last works (1887–1902, 1933). Most Freudian scholars reject the accusation of Freud as Lamarckian (Garvey, 2001).
The instinctual, inherited motivations that captured Freud's imagination include the incest taboo, the primal scene – a child's experience and/or fantasy of his parent's sexual intercourse, the murder of the Father of the Primal Horde, and the Oedipus complex (1913).
2. The breaking down of sexual instincts into its components in the theory of perversion. Freud theorized that instincts have (1) a biological source a psycho-sexual zone; a body part cathected, or occupied, with libido most often but not exclusively referring to the mouth, the anus and the genitalia, (2) an aim; an action relieve the unpleasure of the sources excitation, and (3) an object; the thing that would facilitate relieving built up excitement. If the sexual instinct broke down into its components, the aim and object were de-differentiated and the sexual perversions resulted. i.e., in exhibitionism, the flasher will experience release of unpleasure in the act of exposing himself without orgasm or intercourse, thus merging the aim and object of the instinct. In Freud's teleological, evolutionary perspective, the perversions eclipsed the object of heterosexual genital intercourse, the necessary action for the survival of the human species (1905d).
3. The conflict between sexual and ego instincts in the theories of neurosis, sublimation and culture.
Freud's initial instinctual opposites were sexual and ego instincts (1905d), the forces of the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle. The sexual instinct sought release of unpleasure *unlust*, and the ego instinct attempted to modulate the pressure for release within socially and psychically approved places. When such congruence could not be reached, either a neurotic solution – sometimes called a compromise formation, or sublimation – the de-sexualizing of the instincts towards the object of art, civilization and religion satisfied the need to release while disguising any violation of Reality Principle. The Super Ego became the psychological agency responsible for regulating instinctual pressures (1920g). The meta-theory of libido (1923a) is inextricably linked to the meta-theory of instinctual forces (1915c).
4. Observations of the failure of the pleasure principle: Freud conceived of a time in human development without conflicting instinctual demands in the idea of primary narcissism (1915). When Freud could not integrate the compulsion to repeat often painful experience with the meta-theory of pleasure seeking instincts, he formulated the concept of the death instinct (1920g). The dualistic couple was of Eros and Thanatos. The death instinct was conceived along biological terms of an organism's urge to return to an inorganic state, free of object and desire.
5. The psyche's effort to represent instinctual life and bring it to consciousness. Freud conceived a primary process as the psychological method of processing instinctual, biological sense impressions into thought that is

understandable by the conscious mind. The elements by which these instinctual sense impressions are translated into thought are; displacement, condensation, reversal, symbolization, secondary revision and dramatization (1900).

Freud's Contemporaries and Post-Freudian Thought

Freud's formulation of primary narcissism (1915) opened a door for a Freudian instinctual monism, a concept embraced by Carl Jung and one of the theoretical points leading to Freud's break with Jung. Freud returned to his fundamental dualism, modifying his death instinct thinking, and positing opposing forces of Life and Aggressive instincts. The aggressive instinct was at first a concept of Alfred Adler, and a key factor in the Freud/Adler break. Freud's Id (1920g), the "great reservoir of libido," the source of instinctual energy, was an elaboration of an idea of Georg Groddeck's. Both Freud and Groddeck's "acknowledge the influence of Nietzsche in their 'its'. Groddeck's 'it' is a structure of unity with no such material or instinctual dualism split. For a brief time, Freud's primary narcissism permitted a harmonious overlap with Groddeck and Jung. While Groddeck himself viewed his "it" from a Hellenistic rather than spiritual source, spiritual and existential psychoanalytic thinkers have used the Groddeck "it" in a spiritual context. Jung further posited that the instinct to worship, create and play is innate, whereas Freud considered creativity, religion and worship to be expressions of neurosis and/or sublimation, although recognizing the soothing and civilizing effect of religion as a life affirming adaptation (1927c) (Gay, 1988; Greenberg, 1990).

Ego psychology, notably represented by Heinz Hartman (1955), emphasized the ego's role in adaptation of the instincts, further solidifying a rebuttal of the Lamarckian implication. Early Object Relations Theory as conceived by Fairbairn emphasized the instincts seeking objects and internal or external representation of a soothing or persecutory person and/or idea into or against which to discharge instinctual pressure. Modern Object Relations Theory emanating from the British Independent School and then from American Object Relations have little reference to instinct. The death and aggressive instincts remains a critical component of Adlerian, Kleinian and Modern Psychoanalysis, but the biological death instinct has not survived in psychoanalytic thought. Heinz Kohut, founder of Self Psychology, criticized Freud's reification of instinct, and particularly

challenged the innate nature of destructive or aggressive instincts, calling such phenomena an adaptive reaction to an inadequate environment (1976). Attachment Theory posits an infant's instinct to emotionally and psychically attach to the mother as instinctive. Freud also spoke of the anaclitic, or helpless and dependent phase of the infant; attachment disorder may be seen as Freud's anaclitic depression, a failure of the object of the infant attachment instinct. Attachment Theory draws upon modern Neurobiology, each of which refers back to Freud's 1902 biological perspective and rejects the biological death instinct (Fonagy, 1999).

Commentary

The perspective of material dualism applied to Freud's writings about drive and instinct (LaPlanche and Pontalis, 1972) might suggest that a good deal of Freud's writing about instinct would be more accurately defined as psychically determined drive. Perhaps Freud's inconsistency with the two terms reflects his own uncertainty about material dualism. On Narcissism (1914c) suggests Freud's uncertainty in his commitment to instinctual dualism, and one wonders about the fate of such uncertainty without the Freud/Jung rift. Lorca's (1955) *Duende* "the energetic instinct" of the dark forces in flamenco and bullfighting may be seen as a synthesis of Jung's monadic creative instinct and Freud's dualistic death instinct. Ironically, Freud's thoughts about the nature of man were influenced by Aristotle and Descartes as were Maimonides and Aquinas, but Freud's own conflicts about religion prevented his being able to integrate his science with spirituality. Thoughts about struggle and material nature of Freud's opposing instinctual forces have much in common with thoughts about good and evil, and God and the Devil. While Maimonides and Aquinas are monists as to the substance of God, they are dualists in differentiating God and man.

The nature of libido – the energy of the sexual instinct – and its counter force or split off force of death and/or destruction, and maintaining that source of that energy as biological occupied a good deal of Freud's energy. Jung opened the door for the Divine source of instinctual libido in psychoanalytic theory, the substance responsible for all human instinctual energy much as Aquinas envisioned. William Blake's summary in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is what eluded Freud, but implicit in religious and Jungian monism: "Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound and outward circumference of Energy."

See also: [Adler, Alfred](#) [Drives](#) [Dualism](#) [Duende and Psychoanalysis](#) [Id](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Libido](#) [Maimonides, Moses](#) [Providence](#)

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Interfaith Dialog

Louis Hoffman · Matt Thelen

Interfaith dialog is a specific type of interaction between religious groups intended to build bridges and foster understanding between religious groups. The terms “interreligious dialog” and “interchurch dialog” often refer to the same process. Interfaith dialog is intentionally more inclusive in that it can refer to dialogs within a religion (i.e., intrachurch dialog) or between religious groups (dialogs between sects or denominations). Dialog between and within religious groups can occur on multiple levels of communication ranging from the individual level to the institutional level where a designated spokesperson represents beliefs held by the group. As the size of the groups engaged in dialog increases so does the risk that political motivations will impede understanding of the other's position (Magonet, 2003). For this reason the essential purpose of interfaith dialog is to understand the other's faith as they experience it.

Distinguishing Interfaith Dialog from Other Religious Conservations

The motivations for the conversation distinguish interfaith dialog from other forms of interactions between faith groups and individuals. *Evangelism* is a type of conversation intended to persuade the other into sharing one's own religious belief or faith. *Debate* is intended to use rational means to prove or convince the other party

that one's own views are correct. *Assimilation* refers to the forceful adaptation to a secondary religion. *Apologetics* is a type of conversation, often initiated without the other party present, intended to provide a rationale or defense of faith. Apologetics is often an interaction between faith groups and science with the motivation of defending faith against science. *Teaching* assumes a power differential in which was in educating the other individual about a belief system. *Mentoring*, similarly, assumes a power differential in guiding one into a particular belief system. *Ex-communication* refers to the banishment of an individual from a religious group. *Revelation* refers to communication between an individual and a metaphysical source.

An interfaith dialog, conversely, emphasizes equality between participants to facilitate learning from the other. The purpose is not to change the other's faith or belief system, but rather in fostering understanding, deepening one's beliefs, and potential adapting one's beliefs. In the tradition of Martin Buber (1965), dialog often is referring to openness to being changed by the encounter. Several motivations can exist as to why one would enter into an interfaith dialog. First, it is useful in the ecumenical purpose of establishing common ground as a deterrent to stereotypes, conflict, and terrorism. Many Protestant denominations have entered into interfaith dialogs in order to establish an ecumenical relationship with other denominations in which they share resources such as ministers and theologians. Moreover, interfaith dialog is a strategy that can be used to encourage open worship across denominational lines and to better serve the needs of a diverse congregation. Second, interfaith dialog is often engaged in to promote understanding. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the pentagon and World Trade Centers, many religious institutions, including Christian, Muslim, and Jewish, perceive the need to dialog on differences and similarities (Takim, 2004). A primary intention of these dialogs is to dispel misunderstandings that led to the other group being perceived as a threat or danger. Similarly, many attempts at promoting peace in the Middle East have utilized interfaith dialogs to help establish a more respectful understanding of religious differences. This ties to a third motivation for interfaith dialog: promoting peace. An emergent theme of interfaith dialogs is to promote an understanding that all major world religions value compassion and peace. These dispelled the grossly mistaken perspective that some religions advocate for war, acculturation, and even genocide. Although most of the major world religions have a history of engaging in

genocide and war, interfaith dialog clarified that this is the result of mistaken, misused, or misguided theology, not an essential proclivity for violence and killing within the religious group. Last, some of the deepest forms of interfaith dialog return to Buber's ideas of the openness to change and growth through dialog. Some religious groups believe that while retaining the core tenets of their belief system, they can grow through interfaith dialog. This may include incorporating beliefs of different religions, or may refer to sharpening one's own beliefs through comparison and conversation. An example of this is the interfaith dialog between Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism engaged by John Cobb, Jr., Maslo Abe, and others (Cobb and Ives, 1990).

Barriers to Interfaith Dialog

Challenges to interfaith dialog are evident for some religious groups. Religious groups with strong evangelistic beliefs often deem the only purpose for engaging in conversation with someone of another belief system is to work toward conversion. These groups generally are associated with fundamentalist values and a rigid theology. They fear that interaction with people of different belief systems may be a threat to one's own belief. Therefore, they often prohibit or discourage relationships with people outside of their religious group unless there is an underlying goal of conversion. This, however, has led to distrust of the motivations for why many engage in interfaith dialog. Many religious groups who have a minority status or who have been subjected to prejudice and discrimination are fearful of other religious groups that show interest in them. The suspicion of ulterior motives makes it difficult to establish the trust necessary to engage in genuine interfaith dialog.

Psychology, especially peace psychology, has played an important role in researching, assessing, and promoting interfaith dialog. Psychology's interests are often in increasing peace and conflict resolution. However, interfaith dialog is also relevant on a personal level. As interfaith marriages and families increase, a need for assisting couples and families becomes important for many therapists and counselors. At the institutional level of communication, business and organizations frequently turn to psychology for assistance in dealing with religious differences as the work environment becomes more religiously diverse.

See also: [Evangelical](#) [Revelation](#)

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Introversion

Adele Tyler

A psychological term formulated by Carl Jung in his book *Psychological Types* to describe the flow of psychic energy inward, toward the inner world of ideas and emotions or “subject.” The word introversion comes from the Latin *introvertere*, meaning to turn inward. Jung theorized introversion and its’ opposite, extraversion, to explain the two fundamental and innate attitudes of people toward outer the world or “object.” Introversion and extraversion describe theoretical polarities on a continuum, with all persons using some degree of both attitudes in reality. Jung defined introversion as a withdrawing of psychic energy, or libido, from the object into the subject. People with a preference for introversion both use and renew their energy by focusing inward and can feel drained by focusing energy on the outside world. Some general characteristics of introversion include a preference for solitude and solitary activities, for one-on-one and small group interactions, and for listening more than talking; an ease with concentration, and a reserved nature. Introverted forms of religious expression seek the God within and the inner spiritual journey through practices of reflection and contemplation like meditation, solitary prayer and study of the written word alone or in a small group.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychological Types](#)

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Intuition

Nathalie Pilard

The largest place conferred on intuition by the modern psychologists belongs to C. G. Jung. The notion had several meanings in his production depending on whether intuition belonged to Jung’s psychology of consciousness, to his psychology of the unconscious, or to his interest in religion and esoterism as an expression of religious movements, or of extraordinary gifts.

Extraordinary Intuitions: Visions and Revelations

“Intuition is a function of perception which includes subliminal [i.e., unconscious] factors, that is, the possible relationship to objects not appearing in the field of vision, and the possible changes, past and future, about which the object gives no clue” (Jung, 1936/1960: para. 257). The function of intuition allowed, for everyone, the perception of the possibilities inherent in a situation. For more intuitive individuals this perception could become a *Ahnung*, which meant both the presentiment of future events and the premonition of things unknown, secret or mysterious. “Visions” belonged to this category, whereas “revelations” were closer to the German term *Einfall*, which described the way (“fallen”) one intuition suddenly arose in consciousness. Paul’s sudden conversion to Christianity in his way to Damascus was a revelation, but the voice – enumerating complex alchemical principles – heard by the gnostic Zosimus was a *Ahnung*. The *Einfall* had reached its end in consciousness, giving a “hunch” or a sudden clarity to a content, such as Paul’s faith. By contrast, the *Ahnung* lay between the unconscious and consciousness, allowing the perception of a content not clearly – or not yet – differentiated from other ones, such as Zosimus’s potential alchemy.

Jung’s *Seven Sermons to the Dead*, written in 1916, has been seen and studied as a vision of his whole future work

(see Maillard, 1993). This episode proved to be the climax of Jung's years of confrontation with the unconscious. The description Jung made of this period in his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* revealed this visionary aspect. "The years when I was pursuing my inner images, wrote Jung, were the most important in my life – in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was the *prima materia* for a lifetime's work" (Jung, 1961/1995: p. 225). This *prima materia* was a *Ahnung*, it would require to be clarified in consciousness, but it was so strong a vision that it would represent Jung's whole psychology.

Intuition as Type and Function of Consciousness

Psychological Types constituted Jung's main work of his psychology of consciousness. There Jung made intuition foundational by elevating it to one of the four basic functions next to thinking, feeling and sensation. Which function one most relies on constituted the individual's psychological type, such as the intuitive type. A type characterized the dominant psychological attitude (*Einstellung*) of consciousness. It was "an *a priori* orientation to a definite thing . . . a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way" (Jung, 1921/1971: para. 687). The intuitive type could be either extraverted, directing his intuitions onto external objects – for example, being attracted to anything new and in the making – or introverted, thereby prone to remain strongly attached to internal visions. Seers and prophets belonged to this second category.

Jung distinguished intuition from instinct, fantasy, fantasies, and empathy. The fact that "all psychic processes whose energies are not under conscious control [we]re instinctive" (Jung, 1921/1971: para. 765) disqualified intuition from being the same as instinct. In consciousness, intuition was a function which made assimilate a content – even new and sudden – whereas instinct remained an impulse. "Fantasy," or "imagination," was, for Jung, the general expression of psychic life and had no other specific meaning when used as a single term and in the singular. "Fantasies" were also distinct from intuitions. While one made fantasies, one had intuitions. Fantasies were artificial and required reason. Intuitions were natural. They were given, direct perceptions beyond reason. "Empathy," for Jung, defined in consciousness, a form of extraversion well rendered by the German term *Einfühlung* (*ein*: in; *fühl*:

feel). One felt oneself in an external object, or projected one's feeling onto the object – projecting one's own fears or likings onto someone else, for instance. There empathy did not involve intuition, but occasionally, Jung used the term *Einfühlung* to describe an intuitive capacity required for the interpretation of dreams.

Intuition and Archetypes

Beyond consciousness, lay the instincts and the archetypes, to which intuition was attached. In the collective unconscious, "intuition is a process analogous to instinct, with the difference that whereas instinct is a purposive *impulse* to carry out some highly complicated action, intuition is the unconscious, purposive *apprehension* of a highly complicated situation." (Jung, 1919/1960: para. 269). "Apprehension" was the key word that linked intuition to archetype. Archetypes were inborn "forms of intuitions," but the exact German expression *Archetypen der Anschauung* is better explained than approximately translated. *Anschauung* characterized, in this context, intuition as one's apprehension, a perception by way of the unconscious, by one's ability of representation, of perceiving everything imaginable, and everything in images. Translated into the standard single term "archetypes," the locution *Archetypen der Anschauung* loses a significant part of its meaning. It omits the dependence of archetypes on intuition revealed by the genitive. Correctly understood, the expression thus avoids any association of the archetype with any inherited image that the ancestor of the term, the "primordial image" (*Urbild*), might have suggested. As a capacity to represent, *Anschauung* inherently attached to archetypes depicted an *a priori* tendency, a *facultas praeformandi*, rather than the forms themselves.

In the collective unconscious archetypes differed from instincts as "archetypes [we]re typical modes of apprehension," whereas "instincts [we]re typical modes of action" (Jung, 1919/1960: para. 273, 280), the manifestations of which were always regular and recurrent. In both cases, however, *Anschauung* was required to reach consciousness. Later, Jung would even assimilate instincts to archetypes as not differentiable entities of the collective unconscious.

From Empathy to Synchronicity

In Jung's psychology of the unconscious, the term *Einfühlung*, empathy, had a different meaning than in his

psychology of consciousness. Whereas *Anschaung* linked archetypes to a differentiated consciousness, *Einfühlung* described a link close to identity between the collective unconscious and varied forms of not differentiated consciousness. The first form depicted the “primitive,” who lived in a state of almost unconsciousness by identifying himself with the nature or with ancestors as a mechanism of defence. Jung also studied two other, more elaborated, forms of *Einfühlung* through the experiencing of the annulment of the other. They both concerned esoterism, in its historical religious sense. Psychologically, absolute disregard of the ego was the aim of certain oriental meditations; voluntary identification of the ego with the collective unconscious was the aim of mysticism. In these two cases, mind and body were trained to become themselves the invisible tool intuition and consequently the sheer receptacles of the archetype in consciousness. The frontier between the archetype and consciousness could also be reduced in the phenomenon of synchronicity (see entry). This time, intuition did not fall into consciousness in the form of a feeling (the dreadful effect of numinosity), but of a “meaningful coincidence” which challenged thinking and the law of causality.

Intuition in Jung’s Answer to Job

Intuition is a key to understanding the role accorded by Jung to Sophia and to the Holy Spirit in his *Answer to Job*. The symbol of God, or *Imago Dei*, evolved from God the Almighty, to Jesus, to the Paraclete, and to humanity. Between the composition of Job and that of the New Testament, Sophia appeared in many writings in many parts of the world. Peoples longed for her Wisdom in front of God’s power. Sophia personified in the unconscious the changing consciousness of the end of the previous era, the intuition of new times. She was pregnant with the unconscious hopes of the peoples. Ancient civilisations had projected their patriarchal culture onto the image of an omnipotent God, leaving His first fiancée stayed in the background, as a latent archetype. By reappearing in the writings, Sophia became the function of intuition which would reunite the unconscious to consciousness. She would fall into her symbol in consciousness Mary, to give birth to Jesus, thereby intuitively creating and enabling the perception (*Anschaung*) of the new symbol of God.

From the unconscious to consciousness, the drama proceeded. The Holy Spirit, symbolized by the Paraclete, continued to ensure the link between the Self – the eternal God – and the evolving self of humanity. The Holy Spirit

reduced the gap between Christ (divine), unique son of God, and the God incarnated – realized – in each human, who, like Job, gave God the “conscience” that God had not had. Once God incarnated, each “son of man” had to realize the power of the god within. The H-Bomb opened the era of man the almighty, who became responsible of his fate. Man received the duty of the power and the truth of his intuitions. The Holy Spirit and Sophia were neither God nor human – neither the archetype nor its future symbol – but the factor which reunited the two: intuition. They were the entity expressing the hitherto unconscious will of people to get involved in the divine drama. For Jung, religion, rather than disappearing in contemporary times, became conscious.

Intuition and Mandalas

After his rift with Freud, Jung’s confrontation with the unconscious gave birth to the method of active imagination (see entry). Intuitively driven, Jung drew circles to reunite his consciousness to the unconscious. Jung had then the same intuition as his cousin Hélène Preiswerk, when she had held the role of medium during spiritist sessions. In his medical dissertation, Jung had studied the psychological meaning of the trances of Hélène. During the last sessions, she had had the intuition, the clairvoyance, of a “gnostic system.” She had drawn circles representing a higher and higher level of gnose (knowledge of ultimate realities), the content of which she could not have possibly read or heard of. These circles were the intuition of her next stage in life: adulthood, such as these drawn by Jung intuited his own psychology freed from Freud’s theory.

Jung would later recognize these figures as *mandalas* – the Oriental religious symbols of unity, emptiness, and resolution of opposites – and see them as one of the best symbols of the Self. The religious function of the psyche described a specific moment of the method of active imagination, when the third term, the symbol such as Jung’s and Hélène’s *mandalas*, was created from the opposition between consciousness and the unconscious. The tension at once revealed and created the symbol, which intuitively understood, led to a new level of comprehension. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, the last *mandala* painted by Jung appeared at the end of the chapter “Confrontation,” just before the chapter “The Work.” (Jung, 1961/1995: p. 224). *Mandalas* were intuitive symbols which led Jung to his next stage: work. The religious function of the psyche and Jung’s historic-psychological interpretation of religion through *Answer*

to *Job* depicted religion as official or secular, or even personal, but always as an experience where intuition was involved.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychological Types](#) [Self](#) [Synchronicity](#)

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Islam

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Islam (Arabic “submission”) aligns itself with the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Christianity and the belief in the prophets whose attestation to the sovereign, ongoing and active purpose of the one God: “We believe in God and that which was revealed to us; in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes; to Moses and Jesus and the other prophets of the Lord” (Sura 2:135). It is founded upon a succession of religious vision experiences by Muhammad (b. ca. 570 CE), a poor and probably illiterate Arab who struggled through much of the first 40 years of his life. Around 610 CE while meditating in a cave in Mount Hira near Mecca (Saudi Arabia), he receives revelations from the angel Gabriel. The angel “who is powerful and mighty” (Sura 53.5) imparts the “Book” into the heart of Muhammad who is instructed to “*iqra*, “Recite” (*Al-Quran*, “The Recitation”). Through the encounter Muhammad understands himself to be an emissary of God as the last and greatest of

the Judaeo-Christian prophets. He attracts a small following, and eventually the hostility from the wealthy merchant class, causing him to flee to Yatrib (Medina) north of Mecca. His flight (*hegira*) marks the starting point of the Islamic calendar (16 July 622). The Koran consists of a collection of a range of teachings having to do with faith, religious ritual practice and worship and codes of behavior for day-to-day life. The work is arranged in sections called “Suras” so as to impart “gradual revelation” (Sura 17: 106). As the “*Book of Revelations*” it includes good news and warning” (Sura 41: 2). A range of subjects receive attention such as Kneeling, Muhammad, The Moon, The Dawn, Clots of Blood, Alms, The Poets, and Women. For “true believers” the Koran is a balm and a blessing, while for the “evil-doers” it is “nothing but ruin” (Sura 17:82). For those who do not adhere to Islam, their deeds will be brought to nothing (Sura 47:1). Those who do believe are promised Paradise to enjoy divine forgiveness, every kind of fruit, rivers of purist water, ever fresh milk, delectable wine, and clearest honey (Sura 47.15). Those who follow base desires will reside in Hell eternally drinking “scalding water which will tear their bowels” (Sura 47:15–16). According to the Koran, Satan seduces those who once received divine guidance but have opened themselves to those who abhor the Word of God. These ones will lose their souls (Sura 47: 26–27). Unlike various religions including Judaism and Christianity, Islam does not evidence the development of ecclesiology or a priestly hierarchy. Rather, its requirement for piety and attention to revelatory experience especially through the mellifluous intoning of Koran verse are collective practices which inherently resist the formation of institutional structure and dogma. Believers are expected to practice a disciplined, conscious life of patience and prayer: “Turn your face towards the Holy Mosque; wherever you be, turn your faces toward it” (Sura 2:144). They are to recite prayers at sunset, at nightfall, and at dawn, and to pray during the night as well (Sura 17:78). Each is to show kindness and give alms, and make regular pilgrimage to Mecca during which time abstaining from sexual intercourse, obscene language, and argument (Sura 2:197). Islamic culture is known for its contribution to alchemy especially through the work of Muhammad ibn Umail at-Tamini, known as Senior. A Muslim Shi-ite, he lived and worked during the tenth century. His *De Chemia (On Chemistry)*, translated into Latin during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, describes Senoir’s entry into what he calls a *barba* – an Egyptian pyramid tomb in his quest for the alchemical secret. There he and his colleague see amid the “fiery prisons of Joseph” (*carceres Ioseph ignitas*) a statue in the middle of the

chamber sitting on a throne and holding tablet (*tabula*). The images of the sun and moon on the tablet relate ancient Greek notions of the processes of the *coniunctio*, the coincidence of opposites. The text reflects Islamic interest in Egyptian mummification as the source of alchemy. It also evidences parallels with the ancient Emerald Tablet (“all things were made from this one, by conjunction; the father is the sun, the mother is the moon”) attributed to the Egyptian god Thoth and Greek god Hermes Trimegistus. *De Chemia* shows the significant role Islam played in the interpretation and transmission of religious ideas and symbols from ancient Egypt, Greco-Roman, and medieval cultures into the time of the Italian Renaissance and the work of figures including Roger Bacon and Isaac Newton. Al-Razi (ca. 850 CE–ca. 924 CE) and Jabir ibn Hayyan (ca. 721 CE–ca. 815 CE) also play in important roles and make significant contributions in Islamic Arabic alchemy and the pursuit of the elixir. Out of the work of each issues an interest in healing properties

of “strong waters” (corrosive salts), eventually influencing Arabic medicine and being translated into Latin Europe in the twelfth century.

See also: [☛ Qur'an](#)

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Islamic Law

[☛ Sharia](#)

J

James, William

Curtis W. Hart

William James and the James Family

William James was born on January 11, 1842 in New York City and died on August 26, 1910 in Chocura, New Hampshire. He was a bridge figure between the intellectual and social milieu of the mid nineteenth century America of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman and the evolving international Modernist world of Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, and Alfred North Whitehead. He was part of one of America's most remarkable families who in the generations before his birth built resources of great wealth through business and entrepreneurial success. His father, Henry Senior, was an itinerant philosopher and theologian who authored dense and idiosyncratic texts related to the work of Swedish religious figure Emanuel Swedenborg. William was the eldest of five children born to Henry Senior and his mother, Mary Robertson Walsh. His eldest brother, Henry, born in 1843, became one of America's greatest novelists and men of letters. He had two younger brothers, Garth Wilkinson (Wilky) and Roberson (Bob), along with the youngest of the five, his sister Alice, born in 1848. It was Alice who came closest to the literary and analytical gifts of William and Henry as evidenced in her letters and diaries. She also shared with them physical and mental collapses which in turn mirrored the experience of Henry Senior with what he called in a nineteenth century term his "vastation" which denotes something closely akin to a depressive breakdown.

The James' family traveled widely and frequently during William's younger years due to Henry Senior's search for an ideal place to educate his children and to satisfy his own restlessness. William was thus raised and educated in both the United States in Europe. He never completed an undergraduate degree but he did manage to receive an M.D. from the Harvard Medical School in 1869 though he never practiced medicine. His medical and previous

scientific training opened him to the world of physiology and experimental science. He taught anatomy and physiology at Harvard and went on in 1880 to pursue another career interest in the teaching of philosophy. A key point in this formative period came in 1872 where for nine months he met in Cambridge, Massachusetts with Charles Sanders Peirce, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Chauncey Wright in what came to be called the Metaphysical Club. These meetings proved to be a prime source of inspiration and reflection that grew over time into what later came to be known as philosophical pragmatism. Pragmatism (a term James himself coined) became a school of thought that dominated American intellectual life up through the first third of the twentieth century.

James' Contribution

In 1876 James married Alice Howe Gibbens and proceeded with having a family of his own to go along with a wide ranging career that spanned the next three decades. In 1877 he met the philosopher Josiah Royce who was to become one of James's great companions as well as a friendly intellectual rival and whose idealist framework differed dramatically from his own empiricism. James also discovered and incorporated insights from the work of the French philosopher Charles Renouvier that emphasized the role of freedom in human choice and action. During this most productive phase of life James published a set of true classics. Among them are *Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Will to Believe* (1896), *Pragmatism* (1907), and in 1902 the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh that became *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. His written works including a voluminous correspondence along with his teaching and public lecturing constitute a major contribution to an understanding of the working of the mind with its functions, its needs, and its potentials. His recorded legacy stands the test of time and remains accessible to the specialist and the non-specialist alike.

Throughout his work James became and remained a radical empiricist. He upheld and never relinquished his belief in experience as a reliable guide in the search for

truth. It is crucial to note in any discussion of James' study of psychology and the psychology of religion his reliance upon an experiential, empirical, and pragmatic approach. Pragmatism viewed means and ends as interdependent. And in pragmatism knowledge is social, relational, and dependent on the "flow" (an important Jamesian word) of ideas, sensations, and interactions between the interior self and any larger, this worldly context. Indeed, it was James who originated the term "stream of consciousness." It would be hard to imagine the contemporary clinical world and the dialog between psychology and religion without James' contributions. There the emphases on narrative and process can be directly traced to James and those who follow his often invisible influence. Indeed, pastoral counseling, clinical pastoral supervision, and pastoral care would be significantly diminished without his concepts of "time line," "pluralism," and "healthy mindedness" as conceptual tools and perspectives to enlighten the search for meaning within the therapeutic alliance.

The Varieties of Religious Experience

The Varieties of Religious Experience deserves an exploration for a number of reasons. First, it is a crucial source for analysis of religious experience for interdisciplinary work among psychology, religious studies, anthropology, philosophy, and clinical supervision. Second, it has had a significant impact among those involved in recovering from addiction, most notably William Wilson, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. Wilson names James and *The Varieties* as a critical source in his understanding the enlightenment and freedom that came to him when he began to lay aside his addictive burden. And third, a number of the terms used in *The Varieties* (e.g., "sick soul," "twice born," and "healthy minded") have not been clearly or consistently identified with him in spite of their having shaped cultural, therapeutic, and academic discourse.

It is the content of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* that fixes its place among the realm of the classics. He explores in these two sets of lectures such topics as "Mysticism," "Saintliness," "Conversion" (two lectures), and the relation of "Philosophy" to religion. James takes on a perspective that places primary emphasis on what happens, what a person goes through, and what *are* her feelings or responses in regard to events, persons, texts, and life crises. He focuses upon direct human experience and not on the perspectives of philosophical speculation or abstract theological dogmatics. Overall, James believes that his empirical and pluralistic approach makes the most common sense.

In *The Varieties* he sees one form of religious experience as that of "healthy mindedness." It emphasizes human capacities for happiness and self confidence. These qualities are evident for him in the persons of Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson and in Protestant liberal theology in general. The experience of the "sick soul," on the other hand, identifies an inclination to melancholy and to a view of human nature as deeply flawed and in need of assistance. Examples identified with the "sick soul" are John Bunyan and Jonathan Edwards who demonstrate a consistently troubled or "anhedonic" response to life. James also articulates how the "healthy minded" and the "sick soul" represent characters that are either "once born" (optimistic, confident, determined) or in need of becoming "twice born" in order to be renewed, reinvigorated, or restored to a transformed state of wholeness. It must be added that no simple summary can convey the depth and subtlety of James' analyses and commentary.

Several justifiable criticisms have been leveled at *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The book is marked by a "decontextualized" and "ahistorical" frame of reference. Historical figures make appearances without commentary regarding what constituted the historical or social circumstances which may have contributed to their encounters with religious experience. He shows less or little innate sympathy for the experience of the Roman Catholic figures mentioned in the book thus perhaps displaying an attitude common to the era of Protestant hegemony in America at the time the lectures were written. And reviewers, notably G. Stanley Hall, were critical of his abandonment of experimental, positivist science as a way of testing and verifying his hypotheses about the various categories of religious experience he explores. In short, James is accused of having abandoned the scientific method for something that appears to be a methodology based on more purely descriptive, biographical accounts laced with philosophical language. These are all fair criticisms that unfortunately fail to take into account the carefully nuanced and empirically derived portraits and concepts that make up the work. James' writing is deceptively simple and yet richly allusive as well as being psychologically precise and astute.

James' Legacy

So what category of religious experience best describes William James himself? Was he "healthy minded" or a "sick soul"? Biographical evidence seems to indicate that he was both though not at the same time. Weighed down with fear and anguish, he progressed through a period of

deep doubt and search for an identity and purpose as a young man suffering what appears to be a mix of clinical depression and panic disorder. James may thus at one point at least be identified as a discernible “sick soul.” He became, as he went forward, filled more with confidence and satisfaction with life that was communicated to others including his family, students, and professional colleagues. He transcended and moved beyond the anxiety, self doubt, and inhibitions of the morbidly self-absorbed adolescent and young adult he had once been. James may thus be viewed as one who was among the “twice born” who incorporated and displayed a disposition marked by “healthy mindedness” as he matured. His curiosity and zest for exploration for all things was virtually never ending. He was, in the words of the great American psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan, committed to being among those “human beings to whom nothing is alien.” James died in 1910 at his beloved country home in Chocura, New Hampshire of complications related to a heart condition that had plagued him for many years. His legacy is rich and filled with meaning for all who would take the time to get to know this most American of philosophers.

See also: [▶ Psychology as Religion](#) [▶ Twelve Steps](#)

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Jerusalem

Erel Shalit

History

Jerusalem is a city holy to Judaism, Christianity and to Islam, in which it is the third holiest city after Mecca and Medina.

The history of Jerusalem dates back to the fourth millennium BCE. According to the Biblical narrative, it was a small, fortified Jebusite city until made capital by King David in the tenth century BCE. He brought the Ark of the Covenant, holding the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, to Jerusalem, later placed in the Holy of the Holiest in the Temple built by his son, King Solomon. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and deported much of the population in 586 BCE. However, decades later King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return, and the Second Temple was completed in 516 BCE, later rebuilt and enlarged by Herod in the first century BCE. Hellenism was introduced by Alexander the Great, who ruled from 332 BCE. While the Jews eventually regained the rule, the Romans took control in 63 BCE. Jesus, born c. 6/5 BCE, towards the end of Herod's reign, was crucified at Golgotha, probably in 30 CE.

The Second Temple was destroyed, presumably on the day of the destruction of the first Temple, ninth of the month Av, in 70 CE. In 131, Emperor Hadrian renamed the destroyed city Aelia Capitolina, and built a temple to Jupiter, prohibiting the Jews from entering the city. With the Muslim conquest in the seventh century CE, Jews were allowed to return. In 715, the Umayyads built the al-Aqsa Mosque at the Temple Mount.

The Crusaders ruled from 1099, barring non-Christians from the city, which was captured by Saladin in 1187. In the early sixteenth century, Jerusalem and the Holy Land were conquered by the Ottoman Empire. Jerusalem remained desolate for centuries, with a population of less than nine thousand in 1800. Only in the mid-1900s did the city recover and grow again. In 1948, Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan, reunited in 1967 when Israel gained disputed control over Eastern Jerusalem, as well as of the Old City.

The Name of Jerusalem

Legend says Jerusalem has seventy names, and is mentioned in the Bible by names such as City of Joy, of Confusion, Praise, of Justice, Righteousness and of Bloodshed (e.g., Isaiah 1:22, 26; Jeremiah 49:25; Ezekiel 22:2). *The Holy* (Heb. Y'r haKodesh) is today the name commonly used in Arabic (Al-Quds). The meaning of the name Jerusalem has been variously interpreted, e.g., as Y'r Shalem, the city of peace and wholeness; as combining the Hebrew words Jerusha and Shalem, meaning *Legacy of Peace*; and as a combination of the name that Abraham gave the place after the near-sacrifice of Isaac, (Adonai) Yireh, *the Lord*

sees (Genesis 22: 1–14), with Shalem. The Septuagint and the Vulgate transliterate the name as Hierusalem, thus combining *Hieros*, the holy, with Shalem.

The plenitude of names, such as “Gateway to Heaven” (Genesis 28:17), reflects the extent to which Jerusalem is pregnant with archetypal imagery and projection of wholeness, often in tense contrast to the conflicts it has suffered through history. The Jerusalem Syndrome is a manifestation of the archetypal possession from which some visitors to the city suffer, as they tread ground numinously soaked in myth and religion.

Jerusalem takes its origin in the City of Shalem, and bears its name from its mythological founder Shalem, the Canaanite god of creation, completeness and the setting sun. However, while peace and wholeness have become the insignia of Heavenly Jerusalem, the darker shadow side of Jerusalem is present already in its archetypal origin; the twin brother of Shalem being Shahar, the Morning Star. Shahar (as in *Shaharit*, the Jewish morning prayers), or in his Christian denomination Lucifer, announces the arrival of light and consciousness, the shadow that brings light, the light of consciousness that attempts to overthrow the rule of the gods, but falls from heaven.

Archetypal Image of Center and Wholeness

In Judeo-Christian tradition, Jerusalem is a central image of peace and wholeness, a symbol of unity, justice and future redemption (cf. Psalm 122:1–9; Revelation 21). The ancient Jewish prayer, “Next year in Jerusalem,” entails a request for spiritual rather than physical redemption.

Likewise, in Revelation 21, John describes Heavenly Jerusalem; “I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man’ .” Jerusalem is then described as “having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal . . . the city was pure gold, clear as glass.” Thus, Jerusalem is a prominent symbol of the Self as God-image, as an image of the seat of divinity in the soul of man.

In reference to Jerusalem as “the centre of the earth” Jung considers her as a symbol of the Self (1959, *CW* 9i., par. 256). However, as the heavenly bride (Revelation 21:9) and as “the goal of our longing for redemption” he emphasizes Jerusalem as an archetypal image of the mother (1956, *CW* 5, par. 318; 1959, *CW* 9i., par. 156; 1958, *CW* 11, par. 612).

Likewise, the Shekhinah, God’s feminine aspect, which means dwelling, implies God’s manifestation in the world. The Temple in Jerusalem represents the dwelling of the divine presence, and with its destruction, says the legend, the Shekhinah was forced into exile. This would indicate not only a split between the masculine and the feminine aspects of the God-image, but also that the sense of wholeness and completion is absent from the material dimension of the world. In the individual psyche, this reflects a condition of split between ego and Self (cf. Edinger (1972); Neumann (1970)), an incapacitating separation from one’s soul and inner sources, as expressed in Psalm 137:4–5; “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.”

Judaism ascribes central events, such as the binding or sacrifice of Isaac (the akedah), to the Temple Mount at the center of Jerusalem. An ancient belief has it that Jerusalem is the navel of the universe, and here Adam, the first man, was supposed to have been born out of the dust, the earth, adamah. Successive religions have claimed (cf. Elon, 1996: 11) that the creation of the world began at the Foundation Stone of the *Temple Mount*, where the Muslim *Dome of the Rock* now stands. Some Jewish legends tell about stones raining from the sky, and from the stone that God threw into the abyss, the world originated, with Jerusalem at its center. The Kabbalistic Book of Splendor, the Zohar says, “groups of angels and cherubim hover above the Foundation Stone, and. . . from there all the world is blessed” (Vilnay, 1973: 15).

Transformation from Human to Divine

In Christianity, the pivotal event taking place in Jerusalem is prominently Jesus’ casting out the money-changers and the pigeon-sellers from the Temple, and the Passion story, with the crucifixion at its center. Jesus confronts the shadow which has taken its seat in the house of prayer, and the corruption which has taken predominance over the spirit. The process of individuation often requires a betrayal of collective loyalties (Edinger, 1987: 83). The ensuing passion story, with the Crucifixion, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus, entails the grand transition of *Yeshua*, Jesus from Nazareth to *Christ*, the Anointed, and the Messiah. The human ego “is nailed to the mandala-cross representing the Self” (1987: 98). As a psychological process, the coniunctio of the crucifixion reflects the ego’s transformation into Self.

The Night Journey

Muhammad's night journey on his flying horse *al-Buraq*, which had the face of a woman, the body of a horse and the tail of a peacock, is described in the 17th Sura (chapter) of the Quran as taking place from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to "the farthest mosque" (*al-masjid al-Aqsa*). While al-Aqsa has been understood metaphorically, it is sometimes considered to be in recognition of Islam's roots in Judaism that al-Aqsa received its earthly location and was built at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. According to legend, Muhammad tied the horse to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, from where he ascended to the seventh heaven, together with the angel Gabriel. On his way he met the guardians of heaven, the prophets of other religions: Adam, Jesus, St. John, Joseph, Moses and Abraham, who accompany him on his way to Allah and accept him as their master. As Muhammad ascends to heaven, he leaves his footprint on the Stone, and as he returns, he brings the instruction for the daily prayers.

Muhammad's ascension and return from heaven takes place on a ladder of the prophets that preceded him, thus serving as an axis between earth and heaven, between human and divine, similar to Jacob's dream of the ladder, the foot of which was in Beth-El (house of God), while its top, according to Rabbinical folklore, reached the gates of heaven from Jerusalem.

Self and Shadow

While Jerusalem is a symbol of wholeness, it entails a plenitude of shadows, as hinted in its archetypal origin. The prophet Ezekiel describes the Godforsaken Jerusalem as poor and neglected, as a shameful and condemned whore (Ezekiel 16).

The shadow-aspects of the psychological myths pertaining to Jerusalem are evident in actual locations in this city, so full of places where religious events with great psychological implications have taken place. The agony of Via Dolorosa and the tears at the Western Wall are prominent, and both reflect the close proximity of shadow with Self, of pain, agony, loss and destruction with wholeness and ascent.

Legend has it that Judas Iscariot struck the deal to betray his Master in the country home of Caiaphas, at *The Hill of Evil Counsel* (cf. Shalit, 2008: 125ff.). Likewise, near the Old City lies Gehenna, *The Valley of Hell*, which once was the site of a fire-altar called Tophet, inferno. Children

were burned here as sacrifice to the Ammonite king-god Molech, as mentioned in 2 Kings 23:10:

- ▶ And he defiled the Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

Eventually the shrine was abandoned and became a dumping ground for criminals and outcasts, whose corpses were burned in the constantly burning fire, creating the smells and fires of hell. It was before a crowd of priests and citizens in the Valley of Hell that the prophet Jeremiah denounced their pagan practices. He smashed an earthenware jar and cried out, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city as one breaks a potter's vessel, so it can never be mended" (Jerusalem 19:11).

Jerusalem prominently reflects three aspects of Self and Individuation symbolism: wholeness and unity of opposites, transformation from human to divine, or, psychologically, from ego to Self, and the ladder or axis between ego and Self.

However, as an image of wholeness, or Self in the terms of analytical psychology, it entails, as well, a powerful shadow of hell and evil, of conflict, loss and mourning. Jerusalem reflects the interdependence between material and spiritual, human and divine, and between shadow and Self.

See also: [Akedah](#) [Ascension](#) [Crucifixion](#) [Jerusalem Syndrome](#) [Jesus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Sacrifice of Isaac](#) [Self](#) [Western Wall](#)

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Jerusalem Syndrome

Mark Popovsky

The term Jerusalem Syndrome refers to a group of psychopathological phenomena in which religious delusions lead to or are triggered by a visit to the city of Jerusalem. Those suffering from Jerusalem Syndrome characteristically believe themselves to be biblical or messianic figures. Common patterns of behavior include splitting away from sightseeing groups or families and touring the city on one's own; a sudden increased interest in issues of cleanliness and ritual purity; shouting biblical verses or singing liturgical songs in public; formal processions to holy sites; and delivering sermons which may be strongly moralistic in nature or altogether incoherent. Violent behavior is rare. However, in one well-publicized case, an Australian tourist set fire to the al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969.

Written records of foreign tourists expressing symptoms of Jerusalem Syndrome date back to the mid-nineteenth Century when rail travel first made visiting Jerusalem accessible to a large number of Europeans. The Jerusalem psychiatrist Haim Herman published his clinical observations in 1937 opining that the phenomenon made distinguishing between the normal and the pathological psyche twice as hard in Jerusalem as in any other city. Since that time, debate in the medical literature has primarily revolved around understanding if visiting Jerusalem itself may actually trigger a psychotic episode in some or if long-standing psychopathology causes the visitor to travel to Jerusalem in the first place.

Most authors agree that the majority of cases today involve individuals with prior histories of psychiatric illness who have set out to visit Jerusalem under the influence of a religious delusion. Nevertheless, one expert describes a discrete form of Jerusalem Syndrome in which no previous mental illness exists and the psychotic symptoms spontaneously resolve to full recovery shortly after removing the person from the city. While those with previous psychiatric histories manifesting symptoms of Jerusalem Syndrome are roughly estimated to be 50% Christian and 50% Jewish, the overwhelming majority of those exhibiting the discrete form of the illness with no prior psychopathology are Protestant Christians. The overall rate of foreign tourists hospitalized for psychiatric reasons in Jerusalem does not differ from that of comparably-sized cities. Though less well-documented, similar psychiatric phenomena have been reported in other holy cities including Florence (Stendhal Syndrome) and Mecca.

See also: [Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Jesuits

Paul Giblin

Saint Ignatius

In 1534 Ignatius of Loyola gathered a small group of university graduates in Paris and gave them the Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises came out of Ignatius' ongoing conversion experiences especially while recuperating from a cannonball wound and on pilgrimage in Montserrat and Manresa Spain. The Exercises call the retreatant to focus interiorly and accept God's action in one's life; they also help one to focus one's life direction. Ignatius and his "companions in Christ" made vows of chastity and poverty, were filled with a missionary desire to imitate the life of Christ, to preach the Gospels, and serve the poor. In 1540 the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, were formally approved by Pope Paul III and Ignatius was elected its first General.

The Jesuit charism is that of "contemplation in action," grounded in disciplined prayer practice and service to those in need. Jesuits are called to "find God in all things," to live generously, and serve "for the greater glory of God." This spirituality is not monastic withdrawal from the world. Quite the contrary, its defining vision is to find God through engagement with the world. Jesuit service has taken many forms, beginning with missionary activity, a large educational focus, and an ongoing social justice commitment.

The foundational documents of the Society of Jesus are threefold: the Spiritual Exercises, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, and St. Ignatius's autobiography. Jesuits make the Spiritual Exercises in a thirty day retreat

at the beginning of their ministry and upon taking final vows. They renew this experience annually in an eight day retreat. Essential to ongoing Jesuit spiritual practice is the Examen, which is a twice-daily time of prayer and reflection on God's activity in their lives. Jesuits learn the practice of "discernment of spirits." This involves listening to movements of one's heart; it is based on the assumption/experience that God speaks through the people and events of one's life and one tunes into God's presence by listening to the movements of one's heart. The Jesuits are the largest male religious order in the world. What follows is a sampling of five Jesuits, admittedly an arbitrary choice of the author's "favorites" who embody the essence of Jesuit spirituality. The article concludes with a summary of the essential elements of Jesuit spirituality.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Gerard Manley Hopkins is the "Jesuit's greatest poet." He is the only Catholic priest and Jesuit honored in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. He is known for intensity and originality of language, experiments with "sprung rhythm," and as a religious poet who thoroughly embraced the natural world. His poetry is meant to be heard rather than read.

Hopkins was born in Stratford, England in 1844, the eldest of eight children, and encouraged for his artistic abilities. He, like his father wrote poetry. He excelled in Classical studies at Oxford. At 21 he converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism and at 23 entered the Jesuits, neither with the approval of his family. He was ordained a priest ten years later and died at age 44. Hopkins was profoundly influenced by the Spiritual Exercises. Like Ignatius, he saw all creation as infused with the divine; he coined the term "inscape" to describe the "individual essence and uniqueness of every physical thing," and sought to understand the interconnectedness of all things. He saw God as an "incomprehensible certainty" and lived a difficult life trusting in the mystery of God's providence. Hopkins struggled to balance the dual vocations of priest and poet. His academic-preaching load was heavy, his health was poor, and he struggled to give himself completely to God. He destroyed most all his early poetry upon entering the Jesuits, seeing the dual vocations as incompatible. He created a small body of prose and poetry over a fourteen year period beginning with creation of the "Wreck of the Deutschland," and this only because of the encouragement of his religious superiors. Little of his work was published during his lifetime. Like Ignatius, Hopkins' life was one of service to God, with a significant

cutoff from his family, and including an ongoing struggle with the "fascinating and terrible" dimensions of the spiritual journey. Hopkins was driven to describe the natural world, to reflect on its abundant uniqueness and the divinity reflected through it all.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was the "most Jesuit of Jesuits in centuries" and a world class scientist and paleontologist. His vocation was to bridge science and faith, which he found as entirely complementary. God was to be found in all things, animate and inanimate, see *The Divine Milieu* (1960). He embraced Darwin's theory of evolution and wed it to spiritual/cosmic development; he believed that the universe continues to evolve, culminating in a convergence of all things in Christ. Evolution was spiritually directed, not a random process. That all humans have and are is gift from God is celebrated especially in his *Hymn of the Universe* (1965).

Chardin was born in south-central France in 1881. He was the fourth of eleven children raised in a strongly religious family. From an early age he began collecting stones and minerals, had an "innate appetite for the earth," and a "certain love of the invisible." He entered the Jesuits at age 18 where his interest in science was encouraged by his superiors. He was ordained a priest at age 30. Shortly thereafter as a stretcher bearer during World War I he saw firsthand the evils of war. Ironically he would come to be criticized by religious authorities for being theologically too optimistic and dealing inadequately with sin.

His life experience as both priest and scientist spoke of a profound integration of faith and science, an intimate intermingling of divine, spiritual and material. Like Ignatius he experienced several mystical moments. His theology however did not resonate well with the religious authorities and he was "exiled" to China for twenty years and not allowed to publish anything theological or philosophical. *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959) and *Divine Milieu* (1960), like the rest of his writings, were published posthumously. Chardin died in 1955 at age 74 in New York. If the central Jesuit question is how to experience God in one's life, Chardin answered, by uniting ourselves with the material, cosmic world and with each other. An oft quoted Chardin line captures this sense: "Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

Karl Rahner

Karl Rahner was one of the most influential and prolific theologians of the Twentieth Century. He was an official papal theologian for Vatican Council II and was pivotal in shaping the Council's thinking on church and revelation. He was a pastor and theologian who grappled with real life issues, beginning with the search for God, questions of life meaning, religious inclusivity, women's ordination, and the everyday dynamics of hope, forgiveness, gratitude, guilt and failure. He loved history and sought pastoral answers in the teachings of the church. His theological starting point was human experience, most especially the radical questioning of human existence. Humans are fully themselves in consciously exploring their desires, their "infinite longing" but not finding satisfaction, and ultimately in union with God revealed in Christ. For Rahner the Spiritual Exercises were "the existential root out of which he did all his thinking." His theology emerged from his mystical encounter with God, and his pastoral practice was to encourage such encounter for all persons.

Karl Rahner was born in Freiberg Germany in 1904. He was the fourth of seven children raised in a middle-class family. At age 18 he entered the Jesuits and was ordained at age 28. His older brother Hugo was also a Jesuit. After only two years in the Jesuit novitiate he published his first article, "Why prayer is so indispensable" and in so doing launched his life focus on spiritual practice. Rahner lived for 62 years as a Jesuit and died at the age of 80 in 1984.

John Courtney Murray

John Courtney Murray, like Rahner, was an architect of many of the Second Vatican Council's most significant ideas. His was a vocation of bridging religion and public life. He held multiple public and civic positions and engaged diverse issues including: academic freedom, religious education in public schools, tax aid to public schools, Selective Service classification, and US-Soviet relations. He advocated for religious freedom and argued for substantive church and civic debate on moral issues, trusting in Americans' abilities to deepen their religious commitments. "For him, contemporary society (church and state) was healthy and moral in direct proportion to the types of questions that it collectively pursued. The broader the types of inquiry, the healthier the society" (Hooper, 1993: 2). He argued for ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue and dialogue with atheists. He struggled

with the Catholic Church's "over-developed sense of protectiveness and authority." In 1954 his writing on religious freedom drew the censure of the Vatican; only nine years later he was invited into a substantive role in the Vatican Council. His most famous book was *We hold these truths: Catholic reflections on the American proposition* (1960).

Murray was born in 1904 in New York, entered the Jesuits at age 17, and was ordained a priest in 1933. He was a Jesuit for 47 years and died at the age of 63 in 1967. Early Jesuit missionaries like Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci found that the Christian faith needed to respect, learn from, and approach other faith traditions with humility. John Courtney Murray heard God's voice in the dialogue between faith traditions, between church and state institutions, within church structures, and between the pulls of history and the future. His legacy was to embrace and not fear diverse voices.

William Meisner

W.W. Meisner is a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and Jesuit priest practicing in Boston, Massachusetts. He brings together religious training in theology and philosophy with medical and analytic training. John Courtney Murray was his mentor. Meisner's professional life task has been to build bridges between psychology and theology, and between psychoanalysis and faith. He shows the interdependence of psychological and spiritual identity, how "grace builds on nature" while "respecting the ego's decision-making functions," and how psychosocial development has psychospiritual equivalents. He challenges Freud's view of religion as pathological, and argues for the reality base and healthy dimension of religious illusion. Meisner has developed an impressive body of work including: *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (1984), *Life and Faith* (1987), *Foundations for a Psychology of Grace* (2000), three texts exploring Ignatius and Ignatian Spirituality, and most recently *Time, Self, and Psychoanalysis* (2007). Like Ignatius, Meisner seeks to "find God in all things," most specifically in the interplay between psychology/ psychoanalysis and faith/religion.

Conclusion

Other Jesuit "giants" might have been chosen in place of the above five. Bernard Lonergan is a Canadian theologian with significant work in the area of theological method. Robert Drinnan was Dean of Boston Law School until

he became a Congressman from Massachusetts. William Barry is a psychologist, author, and spiritual director with significant contributions in the area of prayer and spiritual direction. The list goes on.

The above-mentioned five Jesuits embody the charism of “contemplative in action.” They are grounded in the experience and vision of the Spiritual Exercises. They have experienced the grace of God’s self giving often in profound mystical ways. Their response to God’s self-gift is gratitude and service. Each in their own way has sought to “save souls.” Jesuit spirituality is respectful of culture and individual freedom, while keenly aware of human limitation, constraining attachments, and social sinfulness. Jesuit spirituality is optimistic and hopeful, believing faith needs to engage fully with culture and reality. It is necessarily adaptive. It is particularly attentive to the dynamics of human desire, believing that God and human fulfillment are to be found in the depths of the heart’s desires.

See also: [▶ Grace](#) [▶ Ignatius of Loyola](#) [▶ Prayer](#) [▶ Teilhard de Chardin](#)

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Jesus

Jeffrey B. Pettis

There is no conclusive evidence to disprove the existence of the Jesus of history, although what evidence that does exist regarding his earthly life and ministry is minimal. Scholars date his birth at ca. 4 BCE. According to the Gospels, his home where he grew up was in Nazareth, possibly in lower Galilee (Matt. 2.23; Mark 1.9; Luke 1.26; John 1.45f). Most likely Jesus had siblings and was raised in a Jewish home and in Jewish traditions including attending synagogue, Temple worship, and becoming versed in the Jewish Scriptures. He probably helped his father as a builder in a nearby city. His public life begins at about age 30, and is marked in the NT Gospels by his baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan (Mark 1.9–11; Matt. 3.13–17; Luke 3.21–22; John 1.29–34). John the Baptist is thought to have been a member of the Essenes, a Jewish priestly millennialist sect invested in ascetic, apocalyptic beliefs and practices. The Gospels portray Jesus in a stronger yet respectful light in relation to John the Baptist, suggesting a regard for the Essenes, connecting Jesus himself within the apocalyptic tradition of the Essenes, as well as the Maccabees and the *Book of Daniel*. In this way he is presented as one who carries further and brings to fruition the apocalyptic expectations of past generations. He is presented as an itinerant preacher traveling from village to village addressing the uneducated and poor of an agrarian culture prevalent during this time. Scholars liken him to the cynic philosophers who speaking out against the social norms of its society. He speaks of the “kingdom of God,” an envisioned new world-order of social justice and divine sovereignty. There are various meanings of this world-view presented by the Gospel writers, although the notion of a definitive and timely advent of the Kingdom is common to all of them. Jesus expected this religio-political shift to happen in his lifetime (e.g., Mark 8.38; Matt. 10.23, 16.27–28; Luke 9.23–27), as did Paul his (unknown) contemporary (1 Thes. 4.13–18; 1 Cor. 15). Being outspoken and visionary, Jesus attracts followers – including a selection of disciples. The Gospel of John presents Mary Magdalene as an intimate follower of Jesus, while making reference also to the “Beloved Disciple” whom Jesus loved (John 13.23–25). Jesus was arrested and executed as a martyr by Rome in ca. 33 CE. More than the historical figure, most of the early Christian literature including the *New Testament* presents some quality of the spiritualized Jesus. He

appears as one who is transfigured (Mark 9.2–10) and resurrected (Mark 16.1–8) from the dead. Interestingly, his followers as portrayed in the Gospels appear not to expect an empty tomb nor a resurrection. In all four gospels the women go to the tomb expecting to find his crucified body sealed within it. In the Gospel of John when Mary Magdalene sees that the tomb is empty she demands that someone has taken Jesus' body and put it somewhere else (John 20.13–15; cf. Mark 16.1; Luke 24.5). However, a variety of post-mortally epiphany experiences of Jesus are presented. Jesus appears to Mary after his resurrection (John 20.11–18). He appears to the disciples who are gathered together in a closed room (John 20.19–23; cf. 24–29), and again appears to them on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias (John 21.1–14). He appears to Saul on his way to Damascus resulting in Saul's conversion to Christianity (Acts 9.1–22). He also appears to Peter (Acts 10.1–23) and to Stephen (Acts 7.54–60). The meaning of Jesus' resurrection has received much attention. For Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185–254), Jesus as the Christ occurs as the New Adam being in the pure and unbroken likeness of the divine prior to the Fall (*First Principles* I.2.8). Augustine says how Christ as *Adam secundus* restores the damaged *imago Dei* to its original state. This act of restoration extends even to the dead (*descensus ad inferos*). Freud likens Christ to Mithras who alone sacrifices (the bull) for the atonement of the guilt of the brothers (Freud, 1913: 190). For Jung, Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self and represents a “totality of a divine or heavenly kind, a glorified man... unspotted by sin” (Jung, 1969: 37). Paul speaks of being transformed in Christ by the “renewal of the mind” (*anakainōsei tou nous*) (Rom. 12.2; cf. 2 Cor. 4.16), relating a notion of spiritual rebirth which is fully penetrating. It is a reformulation process already begun and ongoing, and will be brought to completion upon Christ's return (Rom. 8.18–25). Through Christ one experiences both suffering/dying and transformation into a spiritual body (*sōma pneumatikon*) (1 Cor. 15.44), a body which will have angelic substance and illumination like the stars (1. Cor. 15.41; cf. Dan. 12; Ezek. 1.28; Matt. 22.30).

See also: [Christ](#) [Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Jewish Law

Mark Popovsky

General

Known in Hebrew as “Halakhah” (lit. “going” or “walking”), Jewish law represents a broad legal tradition regulating the full range of human activity including criminal matters, torts, worship, sexuality, marriage, divorce, diet, Sabbath observance, business ethics and communal structure among others. Since the Middle Ages, a number of legal codes have purported to detail it in its entirety; however, no single book or set of books contains the full corpus of Jewish Law. Rather, Jewish law is primarily a common law system with individual rabbis serving as judges who apply past precedents to novel situations. As rabbis may differ significantly in their interpretations of authoritative texts, individual practice under the aegis of Jewish law can vary widely from community to community.

Biblical Law

The roots of Jewish law begin in the legal sections of the Pentateuch, Exodus 19–24, Leviticus 1–26 and Deuteronomy 4–26. These biblical law codes combine apodictic and casuistic laws, suggesting a rich legal tradition in the biblical period containing both a centralized ruling authority and an organic process for law to develop as experience accumulated. Even in its own time however, the laws of the Pentateuch were not sufficient by themselves to govern a society. Entire fields, such as family law, are virtually ignored and individual dictates are often too vague to be applied in practice; for example, there are several commands to observe the Sabbath but almost no explicit direction regarding how to do so. Consequently, judges and communal leaders began adapting, expanding

and interpreting biblical law from its inception. No written record of this legal discourse from the early post-biblical period exists today but a vast oral tradition of legal exegesis was transmitted from generation to generation of communal leaders. These legal decisors – called “rabbis” from the first century onward – were viewed as spiritual descendants of the biblical prophets such that their interpretations and legal rulings held that status of biblical law even when they clearly limited or contradicted an explicit biblical command.

Rabbinic Tradition

This oral tradition was first written in collections of Legal Midrash (*Midrash Halakhah*) somewhere between the second and fifth centuries. The books of Legal Midrash follow the order of the Pentateuch and purport to interpret each verse with legal ramifications. Some of the exegesis seems faithful to the original intent of the text and other interpretations represent a clear effort to tie the current practices of the time to biblical verses even when no obvious link exists. This process of Legal Midrash allowed devotees to believe that their spiritual practice was rooted in the Bible even when the biblical text itself was too foreign or too vague to be of practical use without significant adaptation.

In second century Palestine, Rabbi Judah the Prince compiled a vast legal text called the Mishnah (“Teaching”). It is arranged topically instead of according to the order of the Pentateuch. Unlike later law codes, it rarely presents definitive rulings on controversial issues; rather it summarizes generations of debates among scholars and records dissenting opinions. Often the positions described are not accompanied by the legal reasoning supporting them but occasionally the rationale or exegetical basis underlying each side of the debate is presented. The Mishnah was quickly canonized and rapidly disseminated among Jews. Its popularity elicited extensive interpretation and expansion. Scholars speculated about how each rabbi arrived at his particular ruling, brought borderline cases to further define each position and added glosses to cover new situations. This body of interpretation on the Mishnah came to be called Gemara (“Learning”) and was eventually transmitted together with the Mishnah in a combined form that today we call the Talmud.

The Talmud grew to an incredible size before it was sealed in the fifth century. It weaves its legal discourse together with narrative, hagiography, theology, folk wisdom and biblical exegesis of a non-legal nature. It became the focus of Jewish scholarship for centuries and the

basis for all future legal rulings. Like the Mishnah before it however, the Talmud often does not offer a definitive ruling on an open question but rather explores the rationales behind each viable opinion. Consequently, rabbis in the post-Talmudic period faced with the need to make a specific legal determination often corresponded by letter with more senior rabbis requesting advice on how to apply a particular Talmudic passage to a practical situation. These letters are known as Teshuvot (“Responsa”) and came to set authoritative legal precedents. Later Teshuvot cite earlier Teshuvot at least as much as they cite Talmudic discussions.

Medieval Period

In the Middle Ages, several leading rabbis attempted to write legal codes summarizing all the Teshuvot and other opinions on a given topic to date, allowing the reader to quickly find a definitive ruling. Many of these codes were criticized for omitting dissenting opinions and oversimplifying what had become a richly textured system of legal discourse. Nevertheless, these codes quickly found popularity among rabbis and knowledgeable Jews daunted by the breadth of texts on even the most simple topic. The most famous of these codes (the *Mishneh Torah* compiled by Moses Maimonides between 1170–1180 and the *Shulkan Arukh* compiled by Joseph Caro in the 1540s) are still studied and cited today by rabbis as authoritative rulings on a wide range of subjects. Despite the popularity of these comprehensive codes, their rulings were general and required additional nuance prior to application in specific situations. Consequently, the responsa literature expanded throughout the pre-modern and modern periods and remains today the primary source for specific legal rulings.

Though ritual questions were usually addressed by an individual local rabbi, criminal, family and civil matters were generally considered before a rabbinic court, called a Beit Din, consisting of three or more rabbis. From the Roman period onward, few Jewish communities were afforded sufficient autonomy by the ruling authority to hear criminal cases. Jewish courts themselves ceded the authority to rule on capital cases. Nevertheless, throughout history civil matters were commonly decided according to Jewish law by rabbinic courts well into the modern period and remain so in some Jewish communities today. These courts have a range of non-corporeal enforcement mechanisms, most notably the threat of excommunication – a very serious punishment in the pre-modern period when the excommunicated Jew

would have been unable to integrate into the surrounding non-Jewish society. It is a principle of Jewish law that, with rare exception, the secular laws of the ruling authority supersede Jewish law when the two come in conflict.

Contemporary Perspectives

Varying perspectives on Jewish Law form the basis of the divisions between Conservative, Orthodox, Reform and other types of Jews today. Orthodox Jewish theologians generally argue for strict adherence to Jewish Law and believe that if it changes at all, it does so only very slowly. Conservative Jewish thinkers similarly value the observance of Jewish Law, but most argue that it has always evolved over time and must continue to do so. Forward development of the law is most necessary when the law itself causes harm or otherwise alienates individuals such as when it excludes women from ritual practice. Reform Jewish leaders generally distinguish between Jewish Law relating to ritual matters and Jewish Law relating to ethical behavior. They claim that the level of adherence to Jewish Law on ritual matters should be determined by the individual and that Jews today only have an obligation to observe Jewish Law with respect to ethical behavior. Of all groups, the Reform movement sees Jewish Law as the most fluid and open to change. Individual Jews identifying with any one of these movements may or may not observe Jewish Law in the ways suggested by the theologians of the movement.

Westerners are used to a divide between the public and private spheres, with law governing only the public and saying little about private behavior. Consequently, individuals steeped in classic Western tradition often have a difficult time appreciating the vast reach of Jewish law into even the most intimate matters an individual may face. For those who do adhere to Jewish law, discrepancies between legal requirements and personal practice can cause significant anxiety that is often underestimated by outsiders who are not accustomed to a legal system governing private matters.

One's adherence to Jewish law is measured strictly in terms of one's behavior. Consequently, one may be considered a pious practitioner of the tradition in the absence of underlying belief. This prioritization of action over creed explains why many Jews today consider themselves agnostic, atheistic or otherwise doubtful of traditional theological claims yet still feel deeply committed to particular religious practices. The apparent disconnect between belief and action can appear illogical or sometimes

even hypocritical to the outsider who may expect faith to serve as the primary motivation for religious action.

See also: [Bible](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Talmud](#)

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Jewish Mourning Rituals

Mark Popovsky

Ritual practices surrounding death and bereavement are strictly observed by many modern Jews, even those who have abandoned traditional behaviors in other aspects of their lives. Prior to death the custom is for the dying person to recite a brief confessional prayer called the *vidui* in order that he or she leave this world with no guilt or sin. There are, however, no theological consequences if this prayer is not offered.

Prior to Burial

Immediately following death, utmost care is taken to preserve the dignity of the corpse. It is covered with a sheet and never left unattended from the moment of death until the moment of burial. Those who accompany the body during this period are expected to recite Psalms and refrain from casual conversation. Jewish tradition considers the body as belonging to God and only "on loan" to human beings while alive. Consequently, following death when the body returns to divine care, it must remain as in tact as possible. For this reason, autopsies and other post-mortem procedures are strictly forbidden except when required by civil law or done for the express purpose of saving someone else's life, as in the case of organ donation. Similarly, cremation is traditionally

avoided on the grounds that no one other than God has the right to destroy the body.

Because the body is not embalmed, burial is done as quickly as possible, usually within 24–48 hours barring exceptional circumstances. In the time prior to interment, a volunteer group called the *hevra kadisha* (“sacred society”) washes the body thoroughly and immerses the corpse in ritually pure water. They wrap the body in shrouds and sometimes also a prayer shawl. No other clothes are worn to show that all people are equal in death, regardless of wealth or social status.

Burial and Funeral

So that the body may return to the earth without hindrance, no objects are buried with the corpse. In Israel, no coffin is used. In Western countries where coffins are required by law, a simple pine box is permitted. It is sealed by the *hevra kadisha* when they finish preparing the body. Open caskets at the funeral are not permissible under strict Jewish law.

Prior to the funeral, mourners will rend a garment or tear a black ribbon pinned over the heart as a sign of grief. Interment follows a simple service with prayers and eulogies. Because it is a religious obligation for members of a community to care for those who have died, all those present at the graveside share the responsibility of burying the body by each shoveling earth directly into the grave until the coffin is completely covered. This practice forces mourners to confront the finality of their loss; denial becomes impossible. Jewish graves are traditionally marked with a simple headstone again symbolizing human equality in the face of death.

After Burial

For the 7 days following burial, immediate family members will observe *shiva* – a custom in which they remain at home, refrain from unnecessary work and receive visitors. The community has the obligation to ensure that the family is well-fed and always has sufficient numbers in the home for a prayer quorum. The continual presence of visitors generally prevents mourners from retreating into isolation or self-destructive behavior. Mourners sit on low stools to signal their discomfort. Mirrors in the home are usually covered as a rejection of vanity at a time of such intense grief. Visitors offer a simple blessing and avoid casual conversation, focusing instead on remembering the

deceased and listening to the mourners describe their experience.

In the 30 days following burial, traditional mourners will refrain from sexual activity, shaving or attending joyous events such as weddings or concerts. At the end of 30 days, these restrictions relax; however, the children of the deceased continue in an extended bereavement period in which a prayer called the *kaddish*, first recited at the graveside, is offered thrice-daily during the year following the death. Because the prayer may only be recited as part of a group of ten, this tradition compels mourners to attend synagogue and avoid the social isolation that often accompanies grief. On each anniversary of the death, the mourner lights a memorial candle in the home and recites the *kaddish* prayer in synagogue.

See also: [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Ritual](#)

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Jewish Sexual Mores

Mark Popovsky

Classical Jewish tradition contains a wide spectrum of opinions about sexuality and sexual ethics. All rabbinic authorities share the core belief that sexual desire is natural and should be expressed through licit sexual behavior. The majority of traditional voices find nothing shameful about permissible sexual activity. To the contrary, most rabbis claim that sex can be sacred and holy when accompanied by the proper intention.

The first commandment humans receive in the bible is “to be fruitful and multiply.” This has been interpreted as a religious obligation to marry and attempt to have children. However, reproduction is not the sole purpose of sex in classical Jewish thought. Sexual pleasure, relief from desire and the health benefits of sexual activity are often cited in rabbinic literature as reasons to engage in sexual intercourse even in situations when procreation is not possible. Jewish law, in fact, provides a wife with conjugal

rights that continue after menopause which entitle her to a certain amount of sexual activity proportional to her husband's age, health and professional duties. Though some threads of asceticism exist in the tradition, celibacy is generally considered a rejection of God's will that humans should function as sexual beings.

Ejaculation outside of intercourse, however, is considered problematic because it involves the unnecessary destruction of sacred material that has the potential to become life. This concern underlies the classical prohibitions against masturbation and the use of contraception. The prohibition against contraception does not outweigh the imperative in Judaism to pursue good health; consequently, contraception is permitted, even in the most restrictive Jewish communities, when it is necessary to ensure the physical health or mental well-being of the individual.

While the bible includes no direct prohibition against unmarried individuals engaging in consensual sexual intercourse, later rabbinic tradition makes clear that the ideal sexual relationship occurs within the context of marriage. Divorce is considered a tragedy in Jewish tradition but not a sin. While social stigma persists in some insular Jewish communities, classical sources unanimously view the dissolution of marriage as consistent with divine will when one or both parties are suffering. Sex outside of marriage is discouraged in Jewish law. To avoid sexual temptation, many Orthodox communities observe practices which prohibit unmarried individuals of the opposite sex from remaining alone in a room together or even casually touching each other. Liberal Jewish communities have abandoned these practices and generally are quite tolerant of monogamous consensual sexual relationships prior to marriage. Adulterous and incestuous relationships are punishable by death according to biblical law and have remained strictly forbidden throughout Jewish tradition.

Even within marriage, Jewish law governs sexual behavior. Jewish tradition has preserved the biblical prohibition against sexual intercourse during and immediately after menstruation. Observant couples will abstain from sex for up to 7 days following the cessation of menstrual flow. On the seventh blood-free day, the woman immerses in a ritual bath prior to resuming sexual relations. While this practice has fallen into disuse among many modern Jews, recent creative reinterpretations of the ritual have revived its observance in some liberal communities.

The bible explicitly prohibits a man from "lying with a man as he would with a woman." While scholars debate what this meant in its original context, it has been traditionally interpreted as forbidding male homosexual sex.

Later rabbis similarly forbade lesbian sex, though this prohibition carries less weight. In modern times, many liberal Jewish authorities have sought to limit or altogether overturn these prohibitions.

See also: [🔗 Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Jihad

David A. Leeming

Jihad is the Arabic word for the Muslim concept of holy war. Jihad can be a spiritual and physical war against infidels – non believers – or it can be an inner war against temptation and sin.

The physical jihad, is communal, pitting an Islamic culture in a crusade of sorts against non Islamic cultures or against Muslims seen to be in a state of apostasy. In some cases jihad of this sort involves activities that many Muslims would consider un-Islamic – activities such as suicide and the killing of innocents. Jihad of this sort, known by different names, is common to all religions and cultures. The medieval crusades of European Christians were jihadist in effect. Jews, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists, as well as animistic peoples, have all waged war in the name of their religions. Jihad of this sort assumes a natural superiority of one religion over all others and can, of course, lead to unspeakable acts and immense destruction and pain.

Inner Jihad, known by Muslims as "the greater jihad," is also common, under other names, to most religions. Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and others all subscribe to inner searching and inner struggles against thoughts and tendencies that interfere with what are considered religious-based moral standards.

Psychologically, the jihad that involves actual warfare and killing is often a projection of a communal feeling of arrogance or, more often, of frustration, and depression resulting from injustice. The kind that involves such

activities as suicide bombing and the glorification of “martyrdom” or the senseless killing of innocents, whether practiced by splinter groups or nations, is an ultimate expression of such arrogance or such depression and frustration.

Inner jihad, whether practiced by Muslims or others, is psychologically based in the universal human desire for wholeness, for the development of Self in the face of powers within and without that would repress and deny that development.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Prayer](#) [▶ Sacrifice](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Sharia](#)

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Job

Ingeborg del Rosario

The *Book of Job* is part of the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures or the Old Testament of the Christian Scriptures. Two distinct sections of the *Book of Job* are easily identified, given their differing literary style and content. The prologue (Job 1–2) and the epilogue (Job 42:7–17) are written in prose narrative while the main body of the text (Job 3–42:6) comprises the poetic dialogues. The poetic section includes the dialogues between Job and his friends (Job 3–37) and, at the climax of the book, the divine speeches, with God speaking out of the whirlwind (Job 38–41) and Job’s responses (40:3–5; 42:1–6). While the prose and poetic sections are most probably of diverse authorship and historical origin, the book is best read as a coherent story. The *Book of Job* is a literary drama built around Job, a mythic figure who serves as an archetype for the human search for religious and existential meaning in the face of undeserved suffering, an experience replicated endlessly throughout time and across all cultures. Job’s story is the story of

everyman and everywoman who has tried to make sense of senseless, innocent suffering, who has tried to keep faith and hope alive in unendurable agony when hopelessness and despair seem to prevail.

While the *Book of Job* belongs to the Wisdom tradition, it challenged conventional religious wisdom that held that righteousness leads to prosperity while wickedness leads to misfortune. By way of retribution, good is rewarded; wrongdoing is punished. The traditional moral belief was that suffering was the result of sinfulness; therefore, if one suffers, one must have done evil and sinned. The story of Job confronts these beliefs that continue to exist into the present time, pervading consciousness and culture. Job’s story is the universal narrative of the innocent who are honest and righteous yet horribly afflicted, who have not greatly sinned nor done evil yet grievously suffer. The opening line of the *Book of Job* is laden with meaning: “There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright; one who feared God and turned away from evil” (Job 1:1). An emphatic, forward-looking declaration is made in this description of Job, that whatever is to happen next to Job does not happen because he has done anything wrong to deserve it. Job is not to blame for the agonizing pain and suffering he is about to endure.

Following the dialogue between God and Satan where, following Satan’s challenge, God allows the testing of Job (1:6–12; 2:1–6), a searing succession of tragic events unfolds for Job. He first loses his entire livestock and all the servants who cared for them. Then, in one fell swoop, all his sons and daughters perish. While he is grieving these horrific losses, he is afflicted with a leprous disease that scars him and marks him as an outcast from his community (1:13–19; 2:7). All which Job possesses, he loses. Engulfed by enormous anguish, Job is plunged into the silence of helplessness and despair for seven days and nights. Head shaven and clothes torn asunder, Job is left wordless, sitting upon an ash-heap (2:8–13). While his three friends first come to comfort him, sitting with him in his agony, they then confront Job, blaming him for causing his own misery, calling on him to recognize his sinfulness as the reason for his suffering:

- ▶ Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed (4:7–8)
- ▶ For you say, ‘My conduct is pure, and I am clean in God’s sight’. But, oh, that God would speak, and open his lips to

you, and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For wisdom is many-sided. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves (11:4–6)

- ▶ Is it for your piety that God reproves you, and enters into judgment with you? Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities (22:4–5).

Individuals afflicted by tragedy and loss, even if this be by natural cause or calamity, often carry the additional emotional burden that comes with wondering if they might have caused or been responsible for their suffering. Patients who have suffered childhood trauma and abuse often blame themselves for the cruelty and violence they experienced, believing on an affective level that they somehow caused this to happen, permitted it to continue and did not do enough to make it stop. Therapeutically, the tendency towards self-blame can be understood as a way of defense and self-protection for the patient dealing with abuse and trauma. By blaming themselves, patients need not acknowledge the more awful realization that they were helpless, trapped in a situation that was out of their control. How much less terrifying it is to blame self and claim power, agency and responsibility over what happened than to confront enormous grief and anger at the betrayal of those responsible for the abuse.

The tragic experiences of Job in the opening narrative also outline what is characteristic of trauma as it can be clinically understood. A traumatic event is extreme and terrifying, sudden and unpredictable, involving exposure to, witness or threat of serious injury or death to oneself or to others (DSM-IV, 1994). Such unexpected, unfathomable experiences that threaten life and boundaries of self can inundate and overwhelm physical and psycho-emotional resources, evoking responses of great horror, fear and terror, helplessness and powerlessness. Trauma also upends foundational assumptions affectively formed from early on: one's sense of self-worth, security, competency and mastery; beliefs in the reliability, goodness and trustworthiness of others; assumptions that the world is safe, fair and just, orderly and predictable, that life has inherent balance, purposefulness and meaning. Trauma shatters these beliefs and assumptions that had created stability in the present and provided a sense of hopefulness for the future. In the figure of Job is held a template of trauma: religious patients who have experienced trauma resonate with the impact of the tragic events that befell Job, his deep sense of horror, anguish and helplessness at their unfolding, and the shattering of religious beliefs and God-assumptions that had provided order and meaning to life. In the way of Job, patients can sit in and be with the speechlessness of their overwhelming pain and suffering. In the therapeutic space, the analyst is challenged to

reverently witness to the unspeakableness of trauma's impact, sharing in the terror and horror, helplessness and powerlessness that demand venerable, vulnerable silence as well as the empathy of presence, rather than facile interpretations and anxious interventions.

The *Book of Job* is replete with God-questions, queries about the nature of God, how divine activity is perceived and experienced. The succession of tragic events that befell Job is set off by God's innocent questions to Satan: "Where have you come from? . . . Have you considered my servant Job?" (1:7–8; 2:2–3) and Satan's challenging repartee: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1:9). In the midst of his anguish, Job raises his own questions and challenges to God: "Why have you made me your target? Why have I become a burden to you?" (7:20); "Why do you hide your face from me and count me as your enemy?" (12:24); "Why do the wicked live on, reach old age and grow mighty in power?" (21:7); "Why are times not kept by the Almighty, and why do those who know him never see his days?" (24:1); "Did I not weep for those whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" . . . "Does he not see my ways, and number all my steps?" (30:25; 31:4). Midway into the *Book of Job* is a hymn to wisdom where lies a question twice repeated that reflects the profound depth of Job's spiritual quest in the midst of his suffering: "Where shall wisdom be found and where is the place of understanding?" (28:12,20). God responds out of the whirlwind, claiming the divine right to inquire, also inundating Job with questions: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? . . . I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" (38:2–3). God's questions to Job come one after another, besieging and beleaguering, leaving him speechless, with hand over his mouth (40:4–5); yet, in the epilogue, God affirms that Job's persistent questioning towards a more radical, liberating understanding of the divine ways was a way of right speech about God (42:8).

Experiences of trauma and suffering can precipitate the doubt and challenge of traditional religious beliefs, in one's questioning one's understanding of God, the nature of divine power and authority over universal order, human freedom and will. The *Book of Job* highlights the value of questing and questioning, of going beyond the bounds of what is known and conventional towards an authentic inquiry that dares enter the ineffable realm of mystery encountering the limitless, complex possibilities God, delving into the immeasurable depth of the divine-human relationship. From a space of integrity in the search for truth, one may discover a God one cannot limit, hold or control: God elusive and enigmatic, paradoxical and contradictory, God unfettered and radically

free. Job's experience of God who is both oppressor (6:4) and protector (14:13), persecutor (19:6–22) and redeemer (19:25–27), enemy (13:24) and friend (29:4) manifests divine incongruity. Carl Jung describes this experience, as an antinomy, God as a totality of inner opposites, God who is everything in all its fullness. The prologue foreshadows this incongruity of God and the divine ways, when it describes God as having destroyed Job *hinnam*, “for no reason” (2:3). While God is apprehensible, God cannot be fully known, contained or fathomed for God is radically free, totally Other, ultimately irreducible to the established bounds of belief systems. The cosmic order also reflects the divine nature. Job is turned over to the power of Satan, the Hebrew translation of which is closer to Adversary: Job, as with all humans, will inevitably meet chaos, struggle and adversity, an intrinsic part of life's free, consequential unfolding.

While some religious patients who grapple with trauma, chronic suffering and even the adversarial encounters of daily life find consolation in their religious tradition, others may rigidly hold on to beliefs that deny the complexity of human experience, refuse to acknowledge the expanse of divine mystery, and consolidate feelings of self-blame, inadequacy, shame and guilt. The process of facilitating the creation and holding of an inner space enough for patients to notice their beliefs and observe how they come to believe without harshness of judgment or self-criticism can be painstakingly slow. The therapist does not engage in intellectual debates over the rightness or wrongness of particular beliefs but is challenged to facilitate gentle inquiry into the nature of beliefs, exploring their evolution and development in the faith-story of the religious patient. Because religious beliefs provide an affective level of grounding and foundation, the patient's inquiry into these beliefs that is usually precipitated by experiences of suffering can cause profound restlessness and disorientation, anxiety and grief. As with the figure of Job who confronted the incongruity of his beliefs and experiences and was transformed in the process of doubt and disquiet, questing and questioning towards a qualitatively new way of understanding self and God, so too are religious patients invited into a space of unbridled curiosity and wonder, of unfettered interest and inquiry, to look beyond conventional answers that no longer engage their existential questions and experiences. Such is the powerfully transformative way of “right speech” that affirms not only the complexity of God but also the complexity of self able to hold, contain and live in the midst of mystery and unpredictability, in the adversity and incongruity of life.

See also: [Bible](#) [Christianity](#) [Doubt](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychology as Religion](#)

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John of the Cross

Ann Moir-Bussy

Life

Juan de Yepes (John of the Cross) was born in Spain in 1542. He entered a Carmelite Monastery at the age of 21 in Toledo in Spain. Wanting a more rigorous spiritual life, John of the Cross was about to leave the Order when he met Teresa of Avila who encouraged him to join her in Medina where she had founded a reformed group of Carmelite nuns. Together they then founded the reformed group of Discalced Carmelites for the Friars. Opposed to the reform the friars in Toledo, captured him in 1597 and imprisoned him for nine months in a dark cell and treated him brutally. It was during this time he began to receive divine consolations and began to write some exquisite mystical poetry. He escaped in August 1578 and worked with Teresa of Avila to found more reformed monasteries of Discalced Carmelites.

Writings

Becoming spiritual director of Teresa's sisters, he taught and wrote maxims to guide them and began to write some major works on mysticism and contemplation. His major works included *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Dark Night of the Soul* and *The Living Flame of Love* (Arraj, 1986). His aim in his writings and teachings was to show

his subjects the way to achieve divine union. This could only be achieved by a “complete and penetrating detachment from all that is not God Himself” (Arraj, 1986: 50). This emptying out John described as the “dark night of the soul,” first purifying the senses and then through purification of the spirit. *The Ascent of Mt Carmel* begins with an explanation of his poem “On a Dark night” and was “an exposition of a diagram that St John had drawn illustrating how to ascend the mount of perfection” (Arraj, 1986: 49). This work was not finished. John of the Cross also left the following works:

1. An explanation of the “Spiritual Canticle,” (a paraphrase of the Canticle of Canticles).
2. An explanation of the poem beginning “O living Flame of Love”
3. Some instructions and precautions on spiritual matters.
4. Some twenty letters, sent mainly to his penitents.
5. Poems.
6. A collection of Spiritual Maxims (see the Catholic Encyclopedia).

John of the Cross lived a life of extreme austerity, yet saw this as the path of submitting to the Divine in order to attain union. Towards the end of his life, after the death of Teresa, he was opposed by some of the members of the order he had founded. Again he was mistreated and became seriously ill and was removed to the monastery of Ubeda, where he died in 1591, aged 49 years.

Psychological Implications

Psychologically the dark night can be described as letting go of one’s ego. Jung sees it as a process of facing and accepting one’s incompleteness, a time of holding the tension of the opposites and waiting for wholeness to emerge. Letting go implies working against our own unconscious outmoded attitudes, habits and assumptions, withdrawing our projections and accepting the totality of who we are. Jung wrote, “The foremost of all illusions is that anything can ever satisfy anybody” (CW 11). The discrimination of the opposites is a result of the *Dark Night of the Soul* and from it comes reunification of the opposing elements. This is similar to the purification of the senses described by John of the Cross. Greek myths also narrate the dark night and psychologically they illustrate the process of development towards individuation. Examples of these myths are the Night Sea Crossing, The Descent of Inanna to the Underworld, and Persephone. Alchemical symbolism, used by Jung show the outcome of

the dark night in the image of the *coniunctio* of King and Queen. This can be related to the divine union that takes place spiritually after one has persevered and lived through the dark night. Perceval’s (or Parsiphal’s) journey in the Grail Legend also “personifies the principle of Christian consciousness confronted with the problem of *physis* and of evil. . . as if the dark aspect of divinity had attacked him, in order to awaken him to a more conscious religious attitude” (Jung, E. and von Franz, 1970). The dark night is somewhat like an initiation before being admitted to relationship with higher consciousness. The ego must be transformed if one is to abide in one’s true nature.

See also: [Dark Night of the Soul](#) [Ego](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#)

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Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology

Richard Kradin

Perspectives on religion played an influential role in Sigmund Freud’s development of psychoanalysis. In turn, psychoanalytic thinking has continued to prejudice thinking with respect to religion. Born in Moravia (current Czechoslovakia) in 1856, Freud’s father Jakob had already begun to distance his family from observant Judaism. But while Sigmund Freud claimed to have been denied the

benefit of formal Jewish education, this assertion appears to be pretense, as there is substantial evidence indicating that Freud had been exposed both to ancient Hebrew language and to Jewish religious texts as a child.

Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century was a hotbed of anti-Semitic fervor. Freud recounted his father's humiliating encounter with a young anti-Semitic street tough and suggested that his father's failure to defend himself had left the young Sigmund deeply disillusioned. He turned in fantasy to Hannibal's father—who had urged his own son to right the ancient wrongs done to Carthage by Rome— as a proper model of masculine virility. The conflation of disappointment in his own Jewish father's perceived weakness and Christian bigotry would occupy Freud's reflections and actions into maturity.

Following a brief flirtation with God as a young man, Freud professed a staunch atheism that never wavered through his lifetime. As a young man, he admitted taking great pride in his Germanic heritage and had thought of himself primarily as a "German Jew." However, as anti-Semitic sentiments in Vienna grew increasingly blatant under the Nazis, he ceased to identify himself as a "German" and saw himself, as he confessed to his friend the Protestant pastor Oskar Pfister, primarily as a "Godless Jew." His particularly fondness for Jewish humor formed the basis of his Jokes and the Unconscious (1905).

Judaism and Psychoanalysis

The members of Freud's inner circle of Viennese psychoanalysts were exclusively Jewish. This, and the fact that most of his early clientele were members of the Jewish bourgeoisie, prompted non-Jewish critics to suggest that psychoanalysis was a "Jewish science," without wider applicability. Freud was understandably concerned by these comments, as they could have potentially limited the broader acceptance of psychoanalysis. For this reason, he deliberately attempted to recruit non-Jewish practitioners to the new movement. He courted the support of the eminent Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler and his junior colleague Carl Jung, who had made important observations concerning mental *complexes*, which Freud took to be the physiological cause of how repressed mental contents could at times intrude into consciousness. But Freud's Jewish colleagues expressed their dismay when Jung was appointed to a prominent leadership role within the psychoanalytic movement.

However, the Freud-Jung relationship was strained by a variety of factors, not the least of which was their religious differences. Jung's rejection of Freud's definition

of *libido* as overly limited led to a rupture of their relationship that has never been repaired among their respective followers (see Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion). Jung would confide that he saw Freud's view of the unconscious as overly negative and influenced by his Judaism. He further concluded that Freud's personality type (extraverted, thinking, sensation) interfered with his capacity to appreciate religious sensibilities except as neurosis. Freud would counter Jung's criticisms of *libido* in *On Narcissism* (1914), and he never again seriously referred to his one-time colleague's psychological contributions.

Freud and the Psychology of Religion

Freud authored three major theses that dealt directly with religion. In *Totem and Taboo* (1913), he argued that religion represented a phase in the evolution of the psyche. His opinions follow those of the nineteenth century British anthropologist E. B. Tylor, who argued that man's psychology evolved from a primitive phase of belief in magic to a phase dominated by religious beliefs. Modern man, according to both Tylor and Freud, has now achieved a more sophisticated stance characterized by scientific thinking. These cultural phases, according to Freud, have been paralleled by an ontogenetic evolution through infantile stages of magical thinking, childhood dependence, and mature self-reliance.

In this highly theoretical treatise, Freud argued that proto-*Homo sapiens* lived in small hordes dominated by a single male who tended both to hoard the available women and to mate with them. The younger males, distressed by their lot, banded together to kill their father and distributed the females more equitably. However, according to Freud, the guilt related to the combined acts of patricide and incest led to the worship of the dead father and to specific taboos that formed the basis of religious behavior.

Totem and Taboo was criticized in academic circles for its lack of supportive evidence, as well as for Freud's persistent adherence to the previously rejected theories of Lamarck, who had argued that memories of events could be genetically transmitted. Although subsequent field studies of great apes have confirmed that alpha-males do tend to dominate other males and aggressively ward off their access to females, this is a far cry from concluding that such behavior has been the source of religious sensibility and practice.

In his *Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* (1909), Freud compared religion, with its emphases on guilt and compulsive ritualistic behaviors, to an

obsessional neurosis. But his most damning polemic against religion came in *Future of an Illusion* (1927), where Freud argued that the image of God as a benevolent paternal figure was merely a persistent infantile wish—an illusion motivated by a need to identify a powerful figure that could protect one from the vicissitudes of nature, disease, and death. From Freud's perspective, the only appropriate response to religious beliefs was to expunge them, by identifying their roots in childhood fantasies and fostering a confrontation with manifest reality. Although he readily admitted that patients might not necessarily be happier as a result of this exercise, it was the obligation of the mature independent psyche to confront reality courageously. According to Freud, only science, and not religion, could provide explanations of the real world, and he concluded that the goals of science and religion were incompatible.

Freud's final critique of religion was completed shortly before his death. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), a set of three related essays, he extended the ideas in *Totem and Taboo* specifically to Judaism. He argued that Moses was not a Jew, but an Egyptian who espoused monotheistic beliefs, offering them to a band of Jewish slaves that he freed from bondage in Egypt. But while in the desert, the disgruntled Jews murdered him, and their guilt led them to embrace his monotheistic beliefs and to adopt penitential taboos and ritual practices. As in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud offered no proof for his theory, other than that deduced from his psychoanalytical inquiry. As a result, this work was poorly received by most academics and angered religious Jews, who rejected it as heretical nonsense.

Response to Freud

Jewish scholars are largely split in their judgment of Freud—some have rejected his ideas as antithetical to those of Judaic culture, while others have attempted to integrate them into the larger fabric of Jewish thought. From a purely religious perspective, Freud's works are unyielding in their rejection of all modes of theism. In addition, Mordechai Rotenberg contends that Freud's focus on Darwinian struggle and Oedipal conflicts, both emphasizing the aim of differentiating the individual away from the group, runs counter to the core Jewish value of community. Judaism is essentially a tribal religion, whose continued survival depends on the maintenance of communal bonds. In this regard, it stands in contradistinction to the goal of personal salvation that characterizes the Lutheran Protestantism that Freud

would have encountered around him, and that he may have adopted, in modified form, as a therapeutic goal.

Although widely criticized by religionists, anthropologists, and sociologists, Freud's psychological musings have continued to influence modern ideas concerning religion. His beliefs have been widely embraced by secular humanists. However, others have argued that Freud's conclusions may be overly simplistic, as they reduce religious impulses to “nothing but” neurosis. From the perspective of phenomenology, as William James suggests, religion is properly *sui generis*. Furthermore, from a pragmatist's perspective, religion can provide meaning and comfort for many and contribute to their quality of life. By adopting conscious rationality as a cardinal goal, Freud joined other post-Enlightenment secularists who denied the reality of innate irrational elements of mental experience, potentially contributing to psychological imbalance and neurosis.

In his monograph *A Godless Jew* (1987), Peter Gay ponders whether Freud's cultural Judaism was also an element in the founding of psychoanalysis. Freud's Judaism potentially influenced psychoanalysis in many areas. In the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud discusses the dream interpretations of Joseph and Daniel within the Hebrew Bible, and entertains the perspectives of Talmudic sages on dreams. Freud's view of the unconscious as the repository of repressed contents parallels the biblical reference to what God chooses to “reveal” versus “conceal.” Furthermore, the emphasis within mainstream Judaism on ethical humanism and legalisms, with a relative downplaying of both mystical beliefs and the importance of the afterlife, may have fostered Freud's development of a “science” of mind that was predisposed to dismissing the irrational aspects of religion as illusory, as opposed, e.g., to the inherent mystery of the Christian trinity.

It is risky to attempt psychoanalytic explanations for Freud's disdain of religion beyond those openly stated by him. But his views on religion appear to be rooted, in part, in his ambivalence towards his father, his own Jewish background, and his encounters with rabid forms of Christian anti-Semitism. When, at the end of his life, Freud found himself potentially ensnared by the Nazis in Austria, he managed to escape with his family to England, where he lived briefly until his death from oral cancer in 1939. While Freud never renounced his atheism, he did increasingly express his solidarity with the fate of the Jewish community at the time of his death.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Psychology as Religion](#)

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Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology

Richard Kradin

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was a member of Freud's early psychoanalytical movement. However, he broke with Freud in 1912 over a variety of issues, including the importance of religion in psychological life. Jung viewed the religious impulse as a *sui generis* psychological activity, and his conception of the unconscious was fundamentally different than Freud's (see *Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology*). Unlike Freud, who viewed most unconscious contents as the result of repression, Jung conceived of two strata of unconscious processes. The *personal unconscious* corresponded roughly with Freud's conception. But according to Jung, there was also a deeper transpersonal strata shared by all human minds that he referred to as the *collective unconscious*. The collective unconscious was the creative mythopoeitic center of the psyche. It included the *archetypes* comparable to the Platonic *ideas*, and like the Kantian *a priori* served to structure psychological experience.

Jung's Concept of the Self

Jung referred to the *self* (hereafter capitalized) as a supraordinate archetype whose role was to regulate all other archetypes. He held that that the psyche was a self-regulating structure, with conscious and unconscious processes functioning in an ongoing compensating dialectic. According to Jung, although archetypes were never experienced directly, they were knowable indirectly by the *archetypal images* they mediated. According to Jung, the Self was the source of the *imago dei*, or God-image, which could adopt many different forms depending on one's personal experience. A major goal of the Jungian individuation process was a progressive conscious experience of the activities of the *archetypes*, and in particular the Self, reflecting Jung's fundamentally religious view of the aim of a life.

Jung had exhibited interest in God as a boy but was unmoved by what he viewed as the impersonal approaches of organized religion. He was disillusioned with his father, a Protestant minister, who, according to Jung, lacked a strong sense of faith and was prone to limp theological intellectualization. Unlike his father, Jung's approach to religion melded pagan, Eastern, and Christian myths, in the service of providing a transformative personal experience.

Jung's theory of the psychology of religion was influenced by his studies of Eastern religions. In the philosophies of the East, Jung found what he interpreted to be references to the archetype of the Self, which he modeled on the idea of the *atman* of the Hindu Upanishads. Jung imagined this Self as a paradoxical symbol, i.e., as the center and circumference of a circle; as personal and impersonal; and as both limited and unbounded. The multicultural symbolic expressions of the Self could assume many avatars. He concluded that the idealized wholeness of the Self was depicted by the mandalas of Tibetan Buddhism, and he furthermore perceived a link between religion and psychotherapeutic healing after observing that spontaneous efforts at drawing mandalas were a routine early feature of recovery from psychosis.

However, Jung was also a pragmatist and concerned that the Western psyche would not be able to embrace Eastern religious myths that called for the progressive extinction of the *ego*. In order to distinguish his psychology from the Eastern nihilistic philosophies, he introduced the idea of *individuation*, i.e., the process via which a person becomes an enlightened psychological individual through a progressive experiences of the *archetypes*, and in particular of the Self. He viewed the life of Jesus as the cardinal example of an *individuation* process.

Jung's idea of the Self paralleled the Eastern perspective that located God within man, as opposed to the Western disposition of viewing God as a monarch residing beyond reverential of oneself and approachable only by obedience or imitation. Indeed, Jung was criticized by Western theologians for adopting a solipsistic view of God, and some monotheists argued that Jung's emphasis on the variations of the God-image was essentially a new form of pagan polytheism.

Jung and Mysticism

The Protestant theologian Rudolph Otto was an important influence on Jung's psychology of religion. Otto had examined the psychology of death and resurrection in *Das Heilig* (The Idea of the Holy). Jung's idea of an experience of the Self parallels Otto's descriptions of a transformative religious experience and is essentially a mystical one. This includes the strong affect that Otto referred to as *numinous*. During such a transformative mystical religious experience, according to Jung, the ego senses the Self as both imminent and *other*, i.e., as outside the realm of description, irrational, and pre-verbal. In following Otto, Jung termed this a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which is invariably characterized by surprise, awe, and fascination. However, both Jung and Otto agreed that the capacity to experience transcendent states was not an equally shared capacity, as certain non-verbal affectual experiences are rooted in pre-linguistic activities of the brain that may vary among individuals.

Jung viewed the *numinous* experience as the basis of all theophanies and religious revelations. But as Gershom Scholem noted, when *numinous* experiences are reported by those steeped in a given religious tradition, they generally reflect the images of that tradition, so that Catholics are more likely to be "visited" by the Virgin than by the Prophet Elijah. This observation underscores the importance of societal and cultural influences on personal religious experience. Jung's own imaginal confrontations with his unconscious included encounters with Salome, Elijah, Bacchus and Philemon, and appear to reflect his broad knowledge of the syncretistic Hellenistic and Judaic myths that form the basis of Christianity.

Throughout Jung's explorations of religious myth, and in particular the Christian myth, he stressed the importance of wholeness. He was dissatisfied with the idea of the Christian trinity, because he thought that it excluded the role of the feminine. From his own experience, Jung had come to believe that wholeness was archetypally configured primarily as a "circle" or as quaternities. In his late writings,

he noted that the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary adopted by the Vatican in the 1950s was one of the great theological advances of the Church as it raised the level of the feminine principle, thereby introducing a quaternity in heaven.

Jung's emphasis on wholeness also explains why he was opposed to the doctrine of the *privatio boni*, i.e., that evil is merely the absence of God, who according to Augustine is the all good *summum bonum*. Jung argued that the splitting of good and evil predisposed the Christian psyche to difficulties in metabolizing negative affects, which were then repressed and embodied by what Jung termed *shadow*, a concept roughly equivalent to the Freudian unconscious.

Myth and Religion

In his explorations of myth, Jung noted what he interpreted to be the struggle of the ego with a greater "other" within the psyche, i.e., a confrontation of the ego and Self. In his writings, he repeatedly referred to Jacob's struggle with the angel as a mythic representation of man's struggle to individuate. For Jung, faith was also a cardinal tenet of psychotherapy, as it called on the ego to be transformed by its own "death" and "resurrection." Therapeutic progress was fostered both by faith and by an awareness of the Self. This attitude prompted Jung to suggest to Bill Wilson, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, that alcoholism could only be cured by faith in a "higher power," an idea that subsequently became the cardinal tenet of 12-step programs.

In *Answer to Job*, Jung examined the asymmetric struggle between the ego and the Self and how their relationship had evolved historically. He argued that in moving from the image of Jahweh in the Old Testament to Christ in the New Testament, the god-image had actually shown an own evolution of self-consciousness. This idea was soundly criticized by both Jewish and Christian theologians, who argued that Jung had a persistent tendency to anthropomorphize God, thereby confusing the transcendent creator God with his creation, i.e., man.

Image and Religious Experience

One of Jung's important contributions to the psychology of religion was to recognize the primacy of image as the carrier of affect. Jung's psychology of religion emphasizes the importance of embodying experience via encounters with internal imagery, as opposed to the theological abstraction of the Godhead. He recognized that the psyche

naturally tended to concretize abstractions into images in order to experience them directly. Otherwise, according to Jung, one risks reducing religion to either ethereal abstractions or ritualistic behaviors. In this regard, like Freud, Jung appears to have both rejected and attempted to redeem his father (see *Judaism and Christianity and Freud*).

As a confessed introvert, Jung appears to place primary importance on personal mystical experience. Although he did address the importance of evil in his writings, he views it as an impersonal archetypal force. Jung does not appear to have placed considerable value on the Judaeo-Christian tenets of ethical humanism and *communitas*.

Jung and Anti-Semitism

A continued area of controversy is Jung's stance with respect to Germanic anti-Semitism during the Nazi era. Jung's psychology included a role for differences between races and cultures, and he has come under substantial criticism in some circles for this view. Such attitudes were prevalent in Jung's time, but it appears that Jung may have benefited professionally from the above systematic persecution of Jewish psychologists in Europe. His activities and public statements during the war appeared to confirm suspicions of Freud's followers that Jung harbored anti-Semitic inclinations. However, Jung's attitudes were by no means consistent and he concomitantly supported the careers of many of his Jewish colleagues.

Jungian psychology continues to play an important role in religious movements. Although Jung was more favorably disposed to religion than Freud, his psychology of religion was often at odds with traditional theological perspectives. Some have accused the Jungians of being a guised religious cult, claiming that Jung was attempting to transform the Christianity into a new religious movement. However, this view is extreme. Furthermore, many within the Judaeo-Christian tradition are inclined to view religion primarily as transcendent and beyond psychological interpretation.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Self](#) [Self Psychology](#)

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Judaism and Psychology

Kalman J. Kaplan · Matthew B. Schwartz

The Origins of Academic Psychology

The origins of twentieth century academic psychology can be traced to E. B. Titchener's school of structuralism or structural psychology, which itself was strongly influenced by the earlier work of Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig. Wundt was the father of the new experimental psychology (cf. Marx and Hillix, 1963: 62) and established the first formal laboratory for psychology at the University of Leipzig in 1870, thus succeeding in giving psychology formal academic recognition and delineating it from its two parent fields, physiology and philosophy. Titchener subsequently launched structuralism in 1898 as "the psychology."

The method for Wundt and Titchener was introspection, or the study of one's immediate conscious experience. Consciousness was seen as the sum total of a person's experiences at any given time and mind as the accumulation of these experiences across the life span. Titchener listed three problems for psychology that were similar to Wundt (1899: 13): (1) to analyze concrete mental experience into its simplest components, (2) to discover how these elements combine, and (3) to bring them into connection with their physiological conditions.

Titchener brought a number of biases into American academic psychology. First, he felt psychology should study experience detached from learning, that is, detached from attributed emotional meaning. Second, he roughly accepted Wundt's parallelism as a solution to the

mind-body problem. This position asserted that the mind and body run parallel courses, without saying that one causes the other, but simply that both are affected by an external cause. At times, Titchener seems to feel uncomfortable with this mind-body dualism, searching for a more monistic conception, but he never really formalizes this position. Third, he seemed to emphasize conscious introspectionism, rather than attempting to access the unconscious as did Freud. Fourth, Titchener's structuralist approach was very anti-functionalist in its orientation, a point on which he was attacked by American functionalist and behaviorists. Fifth, Titchener insisted that psychology be pure rather than applied, decriing the notion that the function of psychology was to find ways of ministering to sick minds.

Greek Underpinnings of American Psychology

Jews thus encountered in American academic psychology an approach quite foreign to Biblical and later Jewish views of the human being. In fact, some of the thinking in academic psychology seemed to reflect an ancient Greek view of life which Judaism had never been able to accept.

For one, the idea that mind and body are separated rather than integrated seemed to fit the Greek compartmentalization of the human being into *psyche* and *soma*. In Plato's view, "the soul is a helpless prisoner chained hand and foot in the body, compelled to view reality not directly but only through its prison bars, and wallowing in utter ignorance" (*The Phaedo*, 1993: 83a). It is the purpose of the human being to behave in a pure and unblemished manner in order to allow the soul to free itself cleanly from the body and to return to its existence in the ideal world. If the soul does not break away cleanly, it must return to this world until it achieves complete purity (Plato, *The Phaedo*, 1993: 61d-68a; *The Republic*, 1983: 11). Plato's emphasis on philosophy as "preparation for death" is dramatically different from Judaism's life emphasis. *Torah* indeed is described as a "medicine for life" (*Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 30b).

Second, the exclusive emphasis on conscious introspection to the exclusion of the emotional, irrational and unconscious aspects of the human psyche, reflects the dialectic in the ancient Greek world between the Apollonian and Dionysiac aspects of Greek life (Nietzsche, 1956). Unfortunately, the psychoanalytic alternative emphasizing the important role of the unconscious also employed Greek master stories such as Oedipus and Narcissus (cf. Freud, 1914, 1923, 1924). Third, the anti-functionalist bias

in Titchener reflects an anti-developmental view in Greek mythology and philosophy. Each age of gods begins anew (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 1973) with no developmental or historical purpose. Structures become reified as permanent edifices rather than as developmentally purposive. Fourth, the structuralist approach seemed to be too narrow for the Jewish world-view to accept, excluding the very issues of free will, morality and wisdom and emphasis on life that Judaism teaches.

Finally, the idea that psychology be pure rather than applied also bespeaks to a certain intellectual prissiness and disdain for the real world. This is quite removed from the Jewish emphasis on action as expressed in the social psychological theory of cognitive dissonance (cf. Festinger, 1957) and in certain behavior modification theories in clinical psychology (cf. Ayllon and Azrin, 1968; Bandura, 1969).

A Judaic View of Psychology

A Judaic view of psychology emanates from *The Torah* which in the fullest sense includes both the Hebrew Bible and the very ancient oral tradition which culminated in the Talmud and Midrash and subsequent rabbinic literature. It has almost nothing in common with the philosophical systems underpinning structuralism and modern academic psychology, largely based on ancient Greek thinking. It has also nothing in common with mythology, which typically centers around Fate, caprice, irony and lack of purpose. A Jewish approach to psychology also differs in emphasis from psychoanalytic thinking which, though founded largely by Jewish figures (Freud, Adler, Rank, Abraham etc.), and focused on understanding the irrational, relies on ancient Greek master stories as its base. Judaism draws its master stories from the Bible.

1. *The unique and the general*. Genesis relates that God created man in His own image. This emphasizes the value of each individual and tends towards an ipsative psychology rather than to an abstract general idea of mankind. The unique individual must be studied and understood, not an aggregate statistic. A clinical psychology naturally emerges from this viewpoint in which individual differences are valued and respected rather than written off as error variance. The Talmud stresses the value of the individual human being and the irreducibility of each life: "To save one life is to save the world" (*Babylonian Talmud*, Sanhedrin 37a).

2. *Body and soul.* A person's body and soul are holy and are created by God as an expression of love. Body and soul are by nature harmonious and not at all in conflict, and both can work to fulfill a person's purpose of being close to God and serving Him with love. Urbach (1979: 214) argues: "In *Genesis* (2:7) it is stated 'and man became a living soul (*nefesh*),' but the term *nefesh* is not to be understood in the sense of psyche, anima. The whole of a man is a living soul. The creation of man constitutes a single act." God created people in His own image and blessed them with creativity and with dominion over all the world. One of the highest acts of human creativity is to produce new human beings, as God Himself did. Every human life is valuable and unique. The human soul need not achieve total perfection in this world nor is the body a prison or a tomb for this soul, but its mansion. It is enough and wonderful for a person simply to do his best.
3. *The self in relationship.* A Jew is obligated to devote himself to studying *Torah* so that he can develop as a human being and use his freedom and creativity optimally. Nor can a person carry this out in isolation from others. This development is expressed in a social context. People were designed to live with others: spouse, family, students, friends and colleagues. People have obligations to fellow human beings and to God which require constant study and attention. Thus, Judaism tends naturally to an interest in social psychology. However as Hillel taught, obligations to self and other must be balanced (*Avot*, 1:14, Kaplan, 1998). Furthermore, both outer behavior and inner feeling matter. Cognitive dissonance theory (cf. Festinger, 1957) is very Jewish in this regard, emphasizing that the best way to change inner attitudes is to first change behavior. Thus the rabbinic expression, "the hearts are drawn after the actions."
4. *Perfection and wholeness.* While Greek Platonism emphasizes perfection, the Hebrew Bible emphasizes wholeness. For Plato, the *ideal* is always superior to the *real*, and *being* to *becoming*. The Hebrew Bible in contrast emphasizes the real and becoming. While Plato viewed philosophy as "preparation for death," the Hebrew Bible, in contrast, constitutes a "guide for living." Thus too, Pygmalion can seek unity only with a woman that he himself forms according to his own specifications. The Bible sees husband and wife as two individual beings, who support each other in searching for fulfillment.
5. *Freedom and obligation.* God has given people freedom to make important moral choices. In order to best use this freedom wisely and to make the best choices a person must develop both his intellect and emotions. The human being also has a high degree of moral responsibility that naturally complements his freedom. Although God provides a blueprint for the individual to live his life, the individual must discover it and choose to accept it. There is little sense of the determinism or fate so endemic to classical Greek thinking nor any notion that the Biblical God is subject to the impersonal forces of Fate (*moira*) and Necessity (*ananke*) which govern the Greek gods.
6. *Determinism and repentance.* The *Torah* rejects the idea that human acts are predestined. A person always has a choice to do right or wrong in any situation. There is neither Fate nor Necessity. A person need not be overwhelmed by feelings of doom, as were the Greek heroes. A single failure need not be seen as archetypal or irremediable. The Greek prophet predicts that an outcome will occur independent of an individual's actions. The Hebrew prophet, in contrast, typically predicates his prediction on the individual's behavior. The Hebrew prophet hopes that his prophecy will affect the individual's behavior and thus avoid the negative consequences. The individual may repent and thereby alter what happens to him. A person challenged by his own imperfections or handicaps or facing great difficulties can live a loving, happy and productive life. One need not despair and must always face life with optimism. Hope itself improves both the individual's condition and his outlook. A person can and must improve himself both in spiritual and material matters. Thus, Judaism sees the individual as having great potential for development (cf. Shestov, 1966).
7. *Life and death.* Human life is precious and holy. Every moment offers the individual the opportunity to be close to God; to learn, to do good and to create. The well-known Hebrew toast is "lechayim" - to life! The human being has intrinsic worth as a creation of God, in God's image, and not simply as a function of his achievements. Sometimes one moment is enough to give new meaning to an entire life. God loves and supports a person in giving him life and capacity and energy to act even when he does evil. Unlike the ancient Greeks and many other civilizations, traditional Jewish thought finds suicide a terrible destruction of human life, perhaps even more abhorrent than murder (cf. Kaplan and Schwartz, 1993).

While among Greek and Roman philosophers, freedom is often equated with suicide (Seneca, *De Ira*, 111. 15) the *Talmud* equates freedom with following *Torah* (*Avot* 6:2).

8. *The unconscious in Judaism.* Judaism is not limited to conscious introspection as was structuralism. Rather, the Talmud, Midrash and later rabbinic thought place great emphasis on understanding the hidden, unconscious motivations of human behavior. Indeed, Judaism stresses many levels of interpretation of biblical text. The reader is referred to the important work of David Bakan (1958) on Freud and the Jewish mystical tradition and the more contemporary work of Mordechai Rottenberg differentiating the following levels of interpretation: *peshat* (rational), *remez* (hint), *derash* (inquiry) and *sod* (mystical). In many Biblical stories (e.g., Jonah), God actually intervenes as would a good therapist to help a protagonist to learn why he has behaved in a manner harmful to himself and to his higher purposes, and to help him to change for the better. Sometimes learning is aided by the use of parables so that the person is able to look at himself without fear. This is exemplified in the prophet Nathan's parable to King David regarding his conduct toward Uriah's wife Bathsheba (II Samuel 12). Behavior can affect emotional states, so that some changes at the level of action can bring about changes in one's inner state of mind.
9. *Theory and practice.* Judaism features a long history of concern both for mental health and personal development. This is displayed both in the wide literature on human behavior and growth, and also on the strong pattern of close connection between sages and the general community. It was normative for people to consult closely with sages on every sort of personal or familial problems, large and small. No person should feel isolated or abandoned when facing a problem or a hard decision. He has an advisor to turn to in questions of personal development and in practical problems. The rabbis in Eastern Europe operated in many ways like psychotherapists of today. There is a major difference, however. The traditional rabbis employed Biblical master stories and Talmudic wisdom as a basis for intervention rather than ancient Greek myths.
10. *Jews, the enlightenment and psychology.* Although the previous sections may suggest to the reader that Jews in modern psychology uniformly carried values and perspectives of biblical and Judaic thought, the reality is much more complex. Many Jews in the field of psychology may actually have been less traditionally

religious than their Christian counterparts - and often times than their own patients. For example, Shafranske and Malony (1990) report that in a sample of 409 clinical psychologists, only 40% believed in a personal transcendent God, compared to 90% of the general public. There are historical reasons for this, arising from the Jewish encounter with the Enlightenment which paradoxically offered the individual Jew liberation into a new Europe but at the cost of surrendering something of his covenantal religious and national identity. This same trend existed in American academia in the early and middle parts of the twentieth century. The Jew was seemingly offered emancipation from ethnic and immigrant marginality into the faceless common culture of the secularized enlightenment world of academic psychology (and academia in general) at the expense of a Judaic world view (This held true despite the quotas on Jews at many major universities, particularly in the northeast United States). Indeed for many Jews, psychology itself may have become a religion, filled with Greek and Eastern rather than biblical ideas (Wellisch, 1954). In recent years, a far more liberated and self-confident Jew has emerged in psychology, joining some Christian counterparts in offering a serious Biblical alternative to contemporary psychology (cf. Wellisch, 1954; Yerushalmi, 1991; Kaplan and Schwartz, 1993; 2006, 2008; Schwartz and Kaplan, 2004, 2007) This has resulted in a plethora of books and interdisciplinary journals such as *The Journal of Psychology and Judaism*, *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, and *The Journal of Psychology and Religion*.

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See also: [Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#) [Biblical Psychology](#) [Psychology as Religion](#)

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Judas Iscariot

Clodagh Weldon

Introduction

In Christianity, Judas Iscariot is one of the 12 apostles who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. His name, Judas (*Ioudas*), is the Greek form of Judah, the southern territory of Palestine (renamed Judea by the Romans). The inhabitants of Judah were the Judahites (later abbreviated as 'Jews') and thus Judas' name is equated with the Jews. The name "Iscariot" is subjected to two different interpretations. The first is that it means "Man of Kerioth," a city in Judah (Joshua 15:25), which would be significant because it would present Judas as an outsider, a man who was different from the 11 Galileans. A second suggestion is that "Iscariot" derives from the Greek "sicarri", a sect of the Zealots who took up arms (daggers) against the Romans. Whichever interpretation is preferred, Judas' name is synonymous with betrayal; to call someone a 'Judas' is to express contempt for the duplicitous behavior of that person.

Judas in the Bible

In the Old Testament, Judah was the son of Jacob and Leah. His name in Hebrew, *Jehudah*, means "praise the Lord." Judah was a patriarch of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. This is significant because Jesus' call of the 12 apostles symbolizes a reconstitution of the 12 tribes. Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot (Jn 6:71) is chosen by Jesus as one of the 12 apostles, and is always listed last (Mt 10:4, Mk 3:19, Lk 6:16, Jn 6:71). He is presented in the gospels as thief (Jn 12:4) and betrayer.

Although best known for his betrayal of Jesus, another story about Judas appears in the Gospel of John. In it, Judas protests the anointing of Jesus at Bethany by Mary as a wasteful act, suggesting that the oil should have been sold and given to the poor. His concern, however, is not for the poor but, as John tells us, "because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions." (Jn 12:7)

Judas' task as betrayer is brought to light at the Last Supper, when Jesus predicts that someone with whom he shares this meal (and the table fellowship which accompanies it) will betray him (Jn 6:64, 13:11, 26), thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Ps. 41:9. Jesus' followers want to

know the identity of the betrayer (Mt 26:21), and Jesus reveals that it is the one who dips his bread with him into the dish (Mk 14:18). He warns that it is better not to be born than to betray the Son of Man. Symbolically, the dipping is an image of death.

Both Luke and John see Judas' betrayal as the work of Satan (Lk 22:3, Jn 13:2): in Luke Satan enters into him; John says he is "a devil." Judas goes to the chief priests to see what they will give him to hand Jesus over (Mk 14:10), and he betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Mk 14:10; Mt 27:10), by all accounts a paltry amount. Matthew tells us that this is a fulfillment of the prophet Jeremiah; in fact it is a fulfillment of Zechariah 11:12–13. Arriving in Gethsemane with a large crowd with clubs and swords (Mt 26:47), Judas gave the chief priests a sign – the famous and duplicitous kiss – in order that they might arrest Jesus.

According to the author of Matthew's gospel, Judas regrets what he has done (Mt 27:3) and returns the 30 pieces of silver (Mt 27:4), throwing it into the Temple. Luke, however, tells a different story: Judas used the 30 pieces of silver to buy land (Acts 1:18). Matthew and Luke also give different accounts of Judas' end. For Matthew, the cause of death is suicide by hanging (Mt 27:5), but for Luke it is a fall. He writes, "falling headlong, [Judas] burst open in the middle and his insides spilled out" (Acts 1:19). Henceforth the field was known as "Akeldama, i.e., Field of Blood" (Acts 1:20). Some scholars have tried to reconcile the two accounts, suggesting such things as a suicide gone wrong.

The question of Judas' fate has long been a subject of theological debate. For some he is eternally damned, condemned for example, to the lowest circle of Dante's *Inferno*. Placed head first into one of the three mouths of Lucifer (Brutus and Cassius, who also killed their masters, are devoured in the other two mouths), Judas Iscariot is chewed for all eternity as his back is skinned by Lucifer's claws. Not all, however, share Dante's vision of Judas' fate; for some his eternal damnation is more problematic because it conflicts with God's goodness, and for others it raises questions about the fairness of his fate given its place in the divine plan as foretold in Old Testament prophecy (Zech. 11:12–13, Ps. 41:0).

Some scholars (e.g., Klassen) dispute the traditional rendering of Judas as betrayer, based on the translation of the Greek word *paradidomi*. The word is used 59 times in the New Testament: when used in connection to Jesus (27 times) it is translated "handed over" (this is related to the word *paradosis* which is used of the tradition which is "handed down" from the apostles); when used in connection with Judas (32 times), however, the word is translated as "betray." If this reading is correct, the centuries old maligning of Judas is brought into question.

The Gospel of Judas

The Gospel of Judas, discovered in Egypt in the mid 1970s, and recently unveiled by National Geographic, also presents a very different picture of Judas. In his *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)*, which is dated c.180 A.D., St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, condemns this gospel as "a fabricated work." He identifies it as a Gnostic text because it presents secret knowledge (*gnosis*) as the way to salvation. The gnostics were dualists – they saw the material world as evil and the spiritual realm, – the realm of God and the *aeons* (or divine principles) which emanate from God, – as good. The material world is created as a result of the fall of one of these *aeons* and some of the divine substance becomes trapped in human beings. Human beings, however, are unaware of this and so Christ is sent to reveal this secret knowledge to his inner circle and thereby save them. In *Against Heresies*, St. Irenaeus tells us that Judas was the only one among the 12 who "recognized the truth and perfected the mystery of betrayal." In other words, Judas alone possessed this secret knowledge. Indeed scholars tell us that the recently unveiled manuscript of the Gospel of Judas begins with the words "The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot" and has Jesus saying to Judas "Step away from the others and I shall tell you the mysteries of the kingdom." Unlike the canonical gospels, the Gospel of Judas sees Judas as a hero, the greatest of the apostles. Jesus tells Judas, "You will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me." In other words, Judas' betrayal helps Jesus to get rid of his material body and thereby liberates the divine substance that was trapped within, facilitating a return to the spiritual realm. From an historical perspective, The Gospel of Judas doesn't reveal much about the historical Judas but it does give more insight into Gnosticism from a Gnostic perspective.

Judas and Anti-Semitism

Given the association of Judas' name with the Jews (the Judahites – later abbreviated to Jews – were the inhabitants of Judah, which is Judas' name in Greek), and the gospel identification of Judas with the demonic, the anti-semitic charge of the Jews as "Christ killers" can be seen going back to Judas. Medieval artwork often exaggerates the Jewish features of Judas, despite the fact that Jesus and his followers were all Jewish. Some scholars even doubt the historicity of the person of Judas, suggesting that he functions as a literary device to blame the Jews for the death of Jesus.

Commentary

For Freud, betrayal is oedipal and thus rooted in jealousy. He saw his split with Jung as an oedipal betrayal of the father. In ‘Two Lies Told By Children’ (Freud, 1976: 305–309), Freud makes an explicit reference to Judas’ betrayal as oedipal in nature. He tells the story of a three year old girl who was given hush money after seeing her nursemaid having sex with a doctor. The girl played with her newly acquired coins in such a way as to betray the maid to her mother. This, says Freud, she did out of jealousy. Some years later, when she was seven years old, the girl requested money from her father to purchase paints that she might decorate her Easter eggs. Much to her dismay, the father denied her request. Given her earlier association of taking money with erotic relations, Freud argues that the young girl felt this as a deep rejection by her father. Some time later, the girl needed 50 pfennigs to make a contribution for a funeral wreath of a princess who had died. Her father gave her ten marks with which the little girl contributed to the wreath collection. Having bought the paints she had long desired with another 50 pfennigs, the girl placed the remaining nine marks on her father’s table. Denying that she had purchased the paints, her brother betrayed her and she was severely punished. Consequently, the little girl felt the father’s punishment as a rejection and suffered from psychological problems, especially in relation to money. One day, just before starting school, a neighbor sent her on an errand with some money. Meeting the neighbor on the way home the little girl threw the change down on the pavement. Pondering her actions, she thought them “inexplicable”, “the thought of Judas occurred to her, who had thrown down 30 pieces of silver which he had been given for betraying the master.” But in what way could this young girl identify with Judas? He argues that her early traumatic experience of erotic relations, in which she had betrayed her nursemaid for money, had led her to associate taking money from anyone as a symbol a physical surrender (“an erotic reaction”) and taking money from the father as “a declaration of love.” He concludes that the little girl’s desire for her father is denied because it is unconscious – she cannot admit it to herself in the same way that she cannot admit that she appropriated the money (Freud, 1976: 309).

For Jung, on the other hand, Judas’ betrayal of Jesus is archetypal, i.e., it is a universal motif which taps into a tremendous force of the collective unconscious (Jung, § 42). As a myth it is particularly tragic because the hero is destroyed by a friend through treachery (Jung, § 42). Examples abound in Shakespeare (Othello, Lady

Macbeth, King Lear, Julius Caesar), in the Bible (Delilah and Samson, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers) and in Greek mythology (Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, Odysseus and Philoctetes, Medea and Jason). For Jung the betrayal myth will continue to be repeated because it articulates the idea that envy “does not let mankind sleep in peace” (Jung, § 42).

See also: [Archetypes](#) [Christianity](#) [Devil](#) [Gnosticism](#) [Heaven and Hell](#) [Jesus](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Oedipus Complex](#)

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Julian of Norwich

Jill L. McNish

Background

Julian of Norwich, sometimes referred to as “Dame Julian,” “Julian,” or “Mother Julian” was an English mystic who lived at the end of the Fourteenth and beginning of the Fifteenth Centuries. The circumstances of her early life are shrouded in mystery, but it is believed that in or about 1373 she suffered a very serious illness from which she miraculously recovered. It has been conjectured that she may have been married and had children prior to becoming a mystic and anchoress. Visions that she experienced in the course of her illness, many of which involved Jesus’ Passion, radically changed her life, and led her to become an anchoress enclosed in a single-room

cell attached to the church of St. Julian in Norwich. There were two windows in her cell. One was a small window onto the street, from which Julian could converse and provide spiritual direction (which she did for many individuals including, most famously, Margery Kempe); the other window permitted her to witness masses in the adjoining church. Julian is best known for two accounts of the visions she had had while ill, and theological conclusions that she eventually drew as she contemplated and integrated the meaning of those visions. The first and much briefer account, written soon after her illness, is sometimes known as the *Short Version of the Revelations of Divine Love*, sometimes alternately known as *Showings of Divine Love*. The second account, an expansion of the first version, was written about twenty years later.

Psychological and Theological Perspectives

It is not known whether Julian actually penned the accounts herself or dictated them to a scribe. In any event, her work is extremely significant in and of itself for being what is believed to be the earliest surviving work in the English language reflecting the feelings, thoughts and experiences of a woman. Beyond that, or perhaps partly because of that, the work is of great significance for the following theological/ psychological orientations:

1. Julian emphasized and developed an idea that had emerged only tangentially in earlier Christian writings (including places in the Hebrew scriptures, St. Paul's epistles and in some medieval writing), i.e., the idea of God and Jesus as having the attributes of "Mother" as well as "Father." Thus, she wrote, "So Jesus Christ, who opposes good to evil, is our true Mother. . . . As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother, and he revealed that in everything, and especially in these sweet words where he says: I am he; that is to say: I am he, the power and goodness of fatherhood; I am he, the wisdom and lovingness of motherhood; I am he, the light and the grace which is all blessed love. . . ." (Julian, 1978: 295–296). Julian continued in this vein in equating a mother's milk with the blood of Jesus: "The mother can lay her child tenderly to her breast, but our tender Mother Jesus can lead us easily into his blessed breast through his sweet open side, and show us there a part of the godhead and the joys of heaven. . . . This fair lovely word 'mother' is so sweet and so kind in itself that it cannot be said of anyone or two anyone except of him and to him who is

the true Mother of life and of all things" (Julian, 1978: 299). In her work, Julian perhaps more than any other mystic of the middle ages incorporated the feminine into the Godhead.

2. Julian's work is notable in its time and context for its theology of sin which is remarkably grace-filled and displays a vision of God which is at once bigger than that of most of her contemporaries and more personal. For Julian, God was not a stern, rageful, judgmental Father but a wise, loving and compassionate Father and Mother who understands our nature and expects us to sin. Thus, in one of her visions she heard Jesus say, "Sin is necessary but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well" (Julian, 1978: 225). Moreover, she said that in her visions, "I did not see sin, for I believe that it has no kind of substance, no share in being, nor can it be recognized except by the pain caused by it" (Julian, 1978: 225) Julian wrote that we were not to "be too much aggrieved by the sin that comes. . . against God's will" (Julian, 1978: 33). Perhaps most surprisingly for a person who lived in the middle ages, Julian said that she saw "no kind of wrath in God. . . ." (Julian, 1978: 33).

3. Writing in a historical time and place of much barbarism, upheaval and premature death owing to many factors including the Black Death, Julian's work is notable and unusual for its lightness, and for its sense of optimism and Divine love that it conveys. In her work, one experiences an overarching sense of an overflowing grace and goodness and kindness in the Godhead, and in Divine Providence. Thus, her *Revelations* contain the constant refrain and insistence that regardless of what may befall us, and as impossible as our life situations may sometimes seem, we will "not be overcome" (Julian, 1978: 164) and that "all will be well." Julian concludes her *Revelations* with the following words she perceived from God:

► What, do you want to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love. Remain in this, and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end (Julian, 1978: 342).

Taken as a whole, Julian's *Revelations* reveal a person who appeared to be remarkably devoid of defenses of shame, dualism, splitting, self-hatred, paranoia and negative introjections that were the hallmarks of many of the other mystics and theologians of her time; a person who furthermore was able to integrate archetypes of the maternal, the paternal and the lover into her images of God in Jesus Christ.

See also: [Dualism](#) [Jesus](#) [Shame and Guilt](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav

Murray Stein

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), the founder of Analytical Psychology, ranks as one of the major contributors to the modern psychological understanding of religion and religious experience. His signature work in this area, presented in 1936 in the annual Terry Lectures at Yale University, is *Psychology and Religion*.

Childhood

Carl Jung was born into a traditional and unusually religious Swiss family. His father, Johann Paul Achilles Jung, was a Swiss Reformed pastor with a doctorate in Oriental languages from Göttingen University, and his mother, Emilie, née Preiswerk, was the daughter of a prominent Swiss Reformed minister in Basel, Samuel Preiswerk. Jung's early years were deeply infused with religious influences and impressions. Surrounded by church and churchmen in his childhood and growing up in ultraconservative Basel, he assimilated the prevailing religious atmosphere of Swiss Protestantism of the place and times, with its characteristic narrowly provincial views of Catholics, Jews, and other cultural aliens. In time, he would rectify this narrowness.

In the autobiographical work, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung reports a number of childhood experiences involving religion and religious figures. As an intellectually restless adolescent, he questioned his father sharply about the teachings of Christianity, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, but found no satisfaction in his father's answers. Subsequently he turned to books in

his father's library for enlightenment. When his mother gave him a copy of Goethe's *Faust* and passed on to him the family myth that his grandfather Jung – also named Carl Gustav, a professor of medicine and ultimately the *Rektor* of the University of Basel – was an illegitimate descendent of Goethe's, he became fascinated by this classic of German culture for life. In the Gymnasium and later while attending medical school at the University of Basel, he read philosophy (Kant, Schopenhauer, C.G. Carus, and Nietzsche were especially important) in his spare time. All of this would feed eventually into his extensive studies of myth, religion, and heterodox traditions such as Gnosticism and alchemy. In his adult years, his erudition in the history of world religions and their symbolisms was formidable.

Early Contributions

While enrolled as a resident psychiatrist at the Bürgholzli Klinik in Zurich, where he was the chief assistant to Prof. Eugen Bleuler, he began an intense collaborative relationship with the Viennese founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. He would later call this his first big indiscretion because Freud had no standing whatsoever in psychiatry or university circles at the time. Jung recognized Freud's genius immediately upon meeting him and was initially impressed by the scientific and therapeutic value of his methods for delving into the dark corners of the human mind. The voluminous correspondence between the two men contains a graphic account of the waxing and waning of their relationship and reveals the importance that their differing attitudes toward religion played in their discussions. From the beginning, however, Jung was skeptical about Freud's heavy reliance on the sex drive and on personal psychodynamics to explain the etiology of neurosis and psychosis on the one hand and more importantly about his insistence that repression, sublimation, and wish fulfillment could exhaustively explain the creation and meaning of human culture and religion. Later, in the person and philosophy of William James, whom he met at Clark University in Worcester, MA, in 1909, Jung found a more intellectually compatible resonance. He especially appreciated James's empirical methodology in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

When the relationship with Freud broke up in 1913, Jung had just completed *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, translated as *Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1916 and later revised and published as *Symbols of Transformation*. This was his first extensive exploration into the primordial and collective foundations of dreams,

fantasies, and imagination. In 1914, having separated from Freud and resigned from the International Psychoanalytic Association, of which he was president, Jung founded his own school of psychoanalysis, Analytical Psychology. In 1921, he presented the results of his new thinking in the volume, *Psychological Types*. In these two early works, he delved deeply into the history of Western thought, including its theological and religious traditions. In addition, his broad study of world religions, mythologies, and other symbol systems is also on full display there. At the same time, he was engaged in a challenging self analysis, which is described in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and which he discussed with students in a number of seminars (as recorded, for instance, in *Analytical Psychology: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1925*). Jung was fully cognizant of the religious content of his dreams, fantasies, interpretations, and written creations (such as the quasi-Gnostic *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*) during this period. Relying heavily on these “inner experiences,” many of which are recorded in *The Red Book* (a privately kept journal that is due to be published for the first time in 2009), he constructed the psychological basis for his approach to religious life and spirituality, which would appear in many writings in the decades to follow. As a modern person who had left, or had “fallen out of,” his inherited religious tradition and was therefore without a myth to live by, Jung felt a strong need to make up for this loss. Without myth, he discovered, the individual’s life lacks meaning. Many of his subsequent essays are addressed to people like himself. In his depth psychology, Jung offered a set of methods and interpretive strategies that could be used to solve this crucial spiritual problem at the core of modernity.

Collaboration and Influences

Increasingly, Jung’s interpretations of religion departed from the typical contemporary psychoanalytic ones. Jung did not intend to be an apologist for religion, as Freud was quick to claim. While appreciative of the value of religious traditions and aware of the power of religious images and experiences to transform individuals’ lives, Jung could also be skeptical and certainly knew of the shadow sides of these institutions and psychic phenomena. Rather than wrapping himself in assertions of faith, his intent was to use his psychological theory as a scientific hypothesis that could perhaps explain the origins and significance of religious thought, imagination, and feeling and the religious behavior of human beings throughout history and across cultures. After World War I, Jung made

trips to such far-flung places as the American Southwest, Africa, and India, where he observed the religious customs and mythologies of the indigenous peoples. These journeys fed into his interest in the varieties of religious ideas, perspectives, and images that grow out of the psychic experience as well as further convinced him of their common features and patterns.

In the 1920s, through his acquaintance with Hermann Graf Keyserling and participation in the latter’s “School of Wisdom” in Darmstadt, Germany, Jung met Richard Wilhelm, the missionary Sinologist and translator into German of a host of texts from the Chinese including, importantly, the *Tao te Ching* and the *I Ching*. Through friendships such as these he developed a special and abiding interest in Eastern thought and religions, and he began as well to find intriguing parallels between Western psychology and Eastern philosophy, which added credibility to his intuition that the collective unconscious is the universal matrix of religious imagery and ideation. In 1928, Wilhelm invited Jung to write a psychological commentary for his translation of the Chinese text, “The Secret of the Golden Flower,” which gave Jung the opportunity to inspect more deeply and precisely the commonalities between the psychological processes he found active in his European and American patients and the more explicitly spiritual productions of the ancient Chinese practitioners of yoga and alchemy. These parallels fascinated him and led him to formulate the view that the unconscious is the source of a spontaneous evolution of religious imagery with a concomitant suggestion of transcendent meaning, which can eventually make its way into consciousness via dreams and imagination. In a series of lectures given in the 1930s and later formulated in more detailed terms as Part II of the work, *Psychology and Alchemy*, Jung attempted to demonstrate how this process can be observed in a modern non-religious Western person’s dreams and spontaneous fantasies. In these studies, he identified a process of spiritual development that emerges from the unconscious background of the psyche into the light of day through the medium of dreams and active imagination. A hallmark of this development is the experience of the numinous archetypal images of the collective unconscious. (Rudolph Otto’s book, *Das Heilige* (in English, *The Idea of the Holy*), played an important role in Jung’s thinking about psychology and religion. Otto coined the term “numinosum” to describe the nature of religious experience.)

In the 1930s, Jung collaborated with a number of well-known scholars of Eastern Religions, such as Heinrich Zimmer, Wilhelm Hauer, D.T. Suzuki, and W.Y. Evans-Wentz. For Evans-Wentz, who was translating and editing

a series of Eastern texts into English, Jung wrote psychological commentaries on *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. His interest in the psychological aspects of world religions was further expanded and greatly nourished by his participation in the Eranos Tagungen held in Ascona, Switzerland annually beginning in 1933. In this international gathering of scholars, he met and conversed with such luminaries as Martin Buber (on Hasidic Judaism), Henri Corbin (on Islamic mysticism), Mircea Eliade (the founder of the discipline known as History of Religions), Karl Kerényi (on Greek mythology), Gilles Quispel (on ancient Gnosticism), Paul Radin (on Native American mythology), Gershom Scholem (on Jewish mysticism), and Paul Tillich (on Protestant theology). In turn, Jung's ideas had a significant influence on the thinking of the scholars who attended the Eranos conferences.

Religion and Archetype

Jung's psychological theorizing puts forward the notion that all human beings share a common primordial level of psyche, which he termed the collective unconscious. Out of this common psychic matrix, he argued, are forged all the world's religious images and dogmas. The characteristic patterns of Deity, which take form spontaneously throughout history and across geographical regions, he designated as archetypal images. These fundamental patterns can be found in all peoples, and are particularly obvious in their myths and rituals. The religious dogmas and icons of the world's religions give expression to, refine, and elaborate, in one degree or another, the archetypes of the collective unconscious. This makes of them suitable containers for the complexity of individual human psyches. As containers, the dogmatic expressions within religions also provide a strong defensive bulwark against the onslaught of original religious experiences of the numinous, which Jung (as a cautious psychiatrist) feared could lie at the root of ominous psychiatric disturbances if they occurred to insufficiently stable personalities. They could also bring about collective states of possession and lead to social upheaval and catastrophe, as he witnessed in nearby Germany during the 1930s and 1940s.

The archetypes underlying and supporting the religious dogmas and images are psychological forces: they behave like drives, but they are not just impulses, they are also represented as images in the psyche and can express themselves as ideas and ideologies. They have both a spiritual and a biological basis. Jung regarded the production of images and ideas with a strongly religious thrust to

be a natural human tendency. In his view, the proclivity to imagine and conceive, to worship, and to recognize Divinity belongs to the human psyche's nature, and the psyche's more unconsciously created and driven religious productions are often combined with the more conscious human need for personal meaning. With this perspective, Analytical Psychology is able to take a view of religious experience and behavior in all its manifestations that is appreciative of psychological values, including both defensive and prospective ones.

Jung and Christian Tradition

After a trip to India in 1938, Jung focused more exclusively on his own background religious tradition, Christianity, interpreting and commenting on its images, doctrines, rituals, and texts in such works as: "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass" (1941/1954), "A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity" (1942/1948), *Aion* (1951), and *Answer to Job* (1952). In these writings, Jung used psychological theory to interpret critically the psychological sources, consequences, and implications of the Christian tradition – its Biblical background, its theological and ethical thinking, and its two millenniums of history. His use of a variety of heterodox and hermetic materials – Gnosticism and alchemy, especially – should be attributed not only to a personal preference for these esoteric movements nor only to his opinion that the practitioners of these were more psychologically-minded than the mainstream theologians, but importantly also to their value as resources for attaining a critical distance from the orthodox and dogmatic religious tradition. He found in these counter movements a means for purchasing insight into Christianity's one-sidedness and inadequacies due to the repression of differing but complementary religious tendencies. Jung claimed to respect all religions, their symbolisms and ritual activities, since all equally originated from a common human matrix, the collective unconscious and the archetypal patterns of the psyche. But he also allowed himself to retain a critical perspective on all of them equally from the vantage point of psychology.

During the final decades of his life, Jung carried on a rigorous epistolary dialog with the English Dominican theologian, Fr. Victor White, O.P. (1902–1960). More than any other of Jung's theologically informed and trained students, Fr. White consolidated and expanded on Jung's dialog with the Christian tradition, especially as it is expressed in the Roman Catholic Church. In his two books, *God and the Unconscious* and *Soul and*

Psyche, White explored in a highly refined and disciplined fashion the potential for dialog between Analytical Psychology and Roman Catholic theology. The collaboration between these two men broke down because of their insurmountable differences – Jung was a secular Protestant who followed Kant’s epistemological reservations about metaphysics, White was a Roman Catholic priest and a committed Thomistic theologian; Jung viewed God as a symbol, White had faith in a revealed God; Jung understood God as a coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*, following Nicholas of Cusa among others) and held out for the psychological reality of evil as a potent force in human affairs as opposed to the way he saw Christianity playing it down in its teaching of evil as “privation of good” (*privatio boni*), White accepted the Catholic teaching of God as the Highest Good (*Summum Bonum*) and considered evil, even if it is real enough in human affairs, to be but without metaphysical foundation. Their differences in methodology and ways of thinking – psychological versus theological – remain highly instructive for anyone wishing to enter into the dialog between depth psychology and traditional theology.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Coincidentia Oppositorum](#) [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ Homo Religiosus](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Numinosum](#) [▶ Objective Psyche](#) [▶ Projection](#) [▶ Symbol](#) [▶ Synchronicity](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy

Alane Sauder-MacGuire

The practice of the alchemical arts has its origin in the second or third century BCE in Greece. It spread through the ancient Near and Far East. In the most basic understanding, alchemy has always been about transformation and remains so in the psychological theory of Carl Jung. The name, alchemy, in fact, derives from the Arabic *al-kimia* meaning the art of transformation.

Transformation in alchemy is effected by the realization of oppositions and the subsequent reconciliation of those opposites. The work involved discerning oppositions and then reconciling what often seems irreconcilable opposites. The goal was to produce a unity and wholeness that was then incorruptible and was able to transcend oppositions. This remained for the alchemist and so remains today for the psychotherapist using an alchemical

model in his practice, an ideal never attained, but aspired to. In fact, the attainment of the goal would put an end to the growth as well as the needs for growth of the personality because it is from that tension of opposites that the personality develops.

Perhaps in the popular imagination, alchemy is most commonly thought to be about the converting base metal into gold, a non-reactive or incorruptible metal. Symbolically the alchemical processes naturally metamorphasize into the transforming of the corruptible into the noncorruptable and of physical matter with its corruptibility into something beyond corruption- that is eternal. A concurrent purpose of the transformation of base metal into gold became creating an elixir of life that could ameliorate the process of corruption of the body in the aging process. It was by the creation of what is termed the philosopher's stone that these processes could be accomplished. In Jungian psychology this is thought of as the third that emerges from the irreconcilable opposition of the two and is termed the transcendent function that will be discussed below.

Originally, the processes of psychic transformation and physical transformation were amalgamated in the alchemical arts. The moral and religious problems that alchemy implicitly addresses were intertwined with the idea of the physical transformation of the metals.

In the Renaissance, alchemy developed in two directions- one moving closer to science and the other became more philosophical. The former focused on the transformation of physical stuff and eventually became the discipline of chemistry. The later remained more of an art becoming more philosophical and concerning itself with the imaginal and the transcendent. The problem for these alchemist, in part, became the reconciliation of the experience of physicality with its temporal and limited orient with the soul, spirit and imagination with their limitless eternity.

In either case, Jung believed the idea of the transforming of metal into gold captured the passion and thereby the imagination of an alchemist. They described in their writings archetypal process of transformation of the personality into an integrated form in which its integrity was corrupted neither by inner or outer events. Jung called this process individuation and although unattainable it was always an inner quest.

As such, Jung believed the writings of alchemists provided a window into process of the unconscious. He felt it described the psychological phenomenology observed in the unconscious often with a detail he found astonishing. The alchemists either projected their psychological content unto the base metal or in later times,

later used the metals as a vehicle to describe their inner strivings. Because they knew little or nothing about the actual properties of the metal it provided a blank screen for their projections and descriptions.

Jung held that in understanding the projections the alchemist made unto the metal, the clinician could gain insight into the natural and archetypal processes of the unconscious and thereby bring into consciousness elements and developments within the psyche that would promote the process of individuation. In its complexity, alchemy mirrored the complexity of the human psyche.

Jung also felt that the alchemical writings provided a needed compensation to Christian doctrine. Although the majority of the alchemists whose writings Jung explored were Christian, their writings included chthonic elements that Jung felt were missing from the Christian cannon, but an integral part of psychological reality. Most importantly for Jung, alchemical writings incorporated the bodily experience and the idea of evil not just as a perversion of creation and existence but as an element of it.

For Jung as for the alchemist, the problem of the opposites was of prime importance and good and evil as the components of morality are among the most psychologically important opposites. To Jung, the Christian doctrine of original sin did not adequately address the problem of evil, but instead split evil off from good and from god in creation. Evil as sin was only a perversion of this good. Jung believed that in order for the individual psyche to individuate, evil must be considered seriously as an archetypal force as innate and fundamental both to creation and the individual self. Because evil was so split from the idea of god in Christian doctrine, the collective consciousness conditioned by that Christian doctrine, was forced to identify with the good or be burdened by a guilt that prohibited the realization of the wholeness of the personality.

The dominant worldview was that the patriarchal world with its masculine orientation of consciousness which precluded the acceptance of evil. The alchemist projected elements of the matriarchal feminine unto the metals and so thereby incorporated in their writings that which had been culturally repressed. Inclusion the matriarchal feminine allowed for the reconciliation of good and evil and made it possible in a psychological way that Christian doctrine did not provide.

Richard Wilhelm, the noted Sinologist, propelled Jung into his study of alchemy through his interpretation of a Chinese treatise, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Jung's first alchemical writing published in 1929 was the introduction to Wilhelm's translation of this work.

In 1944, Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW 12) was published. It contains a dream series that showed the process of individuation that Jung amplified and interpreted using alchemical symbolism. It also contains an essay explicating the religious elements of alchemy. Other of Jung's alchemical essays are in *Alchemical Studies* (CW 13).

What is generally thought to be Jung's greatest alchemical work and the culmination of his research and thinking about alchemy, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, (CW 14) was written between 1941 and 1954. It is concerned predominantly with the problem of opposites and uses a variety of symbolic alchemical symbols such as Sol and Luna, Rex and Regina, and Salt and Sulfur to explicate the problem. "Coniunctio" was the alchemical word for the unification of opposites and Jung felt that this unification of opposites was the central problem of alchemy.

The metaphor of the sexual unity of male and female is often used to illuminate the process because the most obvious opposition in the human experience. It was Jung's contention, certainly supported in the alchemical literature, that every human has within his unconscious a contra-sexual part or archetype that he termed as anima in man and animus in woman. The symbol of sexual unity, thus, provides the image of the human being reconciling the opposites within.

Perhaps the most explicit use of the sexual metaphor used by Jung to describe psychic phenomena is in "The Psychology of the Transference" (part of CW 16). It was originally a part of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, but was published separately in 1946 and analyses a series of sixteenth century alchemical woodcuts called the *Rosarium philosophorum*. It is Jung's major work on transference/countertransference dynamics. Jung understood the images portrayed in the woodcuts to describe the complexities he had experienced in the transference/countertransference field in a way that no other vehicle could.

Commentary

In understanding Jung's work in interpreting alchemical writings and their relation to psychological material, it is important to understand that for Jung projection was not only as in the Freudian sense a mechanism for evacuating discordant repressed material. It was also a mechanism for the realization of the eternal components of the personality that have never been conscious. Jung termed these components archetypal. They represent the innate patterning of psychological process and behavior that constitute the experience of being human. The projections, the

alchemist made upon the metals represented archetypal material that described the process of individuation.

On the one hand, Jung meant individuation as the process of the spiritual components of the personality joining together with the instinctual components into a wholeness. On the other hand, individual can be thought of as the process of fully living out the fullness one's potential – being the very being one was meant to be. Obviously both of these processes entail a unity of the personality that reconciles the opposing components that are inevitable results of the expanding consciousness resulting from confronting the unconscious.

The process of individuation has a complexity, subtlety and a myriad of variations. In alchemical symbolism, Jung found a way to describe it.

The analogy to the alchemist attempting to make gold which is a metal whose components are stable and nonreactive is obvious. The attempt was to find a substance that could contain the warring oppositions that caused the metal's instability. In his psychological theory, Jung has termed this holding together the tension of these opposites a mediating third the transcendental function. For a third way that holds these opposing tendencies together to emerge, one must work to the extent of one's ego's ability on the problem and wait for the solution from the depth of the psyche.

The following is an attempt to describe the individuation process in a linear form that must necessarily be only a surface view of a profound process.

The process begins when the original unity of being begins to break down with the confrontation of what Jung has termed shadow. The shadow is the part of the personality that is repressed because it does not meet with the ideal of what one or society believes one should be. As the individual becomes aware that these shadow qualities lie within and can no longer be blamed on mother, father or someone else, the original unity is shattered and the work of reconciling ego and shadow begins.

There is also the confrontation of the archetypal pieces that vie for the time limited space of consciousness- such as feeling the desire to be a mother while at the same time desiring a powerful work position. One desire is motivated by what Jung would call the mother archetype, the other by the power principle. Both may be aspects of the self that need to be expressed, but the limitation of time may not allow both to be expressed with a full intensity.

Another example of oppositions called forth in the process of individuation would be falling in love with someone and being in a situation where the sacrifice of much that is loved in one's present life would be necessary

if the new love is to be realized. The ego can find no solution with the attitude it holds except to split from one love and cling to the other. The answer can only emerge from the confrontation and struggle with the unconscious. It is this sort of psychological struggle, the alchemical process describes.

Jung did not believe that the problems of life engendered by these conflicting components were soluble as such, but rather that a new attitude must emerge that could hold them. Alchemically this was the philosopher's stone that allowed seemingly opposing forces to exist in harmony. Psychologically this means the ego moves more in accord with the Self. In other words, the temporal world of the ego is reconciled with the limitless Self-moving which moves consciousness to a viewpoint large enough to encompass the conflicts. The individuated way would be holding the tension of these opposites until a third way (the transcendent function) emerges.

In summary, alchemy provided for Jung insight into the process of individuation. It allows the student of his methods a map of complexity and subtlety to the unfathomable depths of the psyche.

See also: [Alchemical Mercurius and Carl Gustav Jung](#)
[Hillman, James, and Alchemy](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions

Leon Schlamm

Jung's Celebration of Eastern Religious Traditions

C. G. Jung's dialog with Eastern religious traditions, spanning almost 50 years, was profoundly influential on the development of analytical psychology, enabling him not

only to discover cross-cultural confirmation for his clinical research but also to extend his own metapsychological concepts (Jung, 1973, 1976; Coward, 1985, 1996; Bishop, 1992; Clarke, 1994; Shamdasani, 1996). Based on the assumption that Western consciousness is historically conditioned, geographically confined and represents only part of mankind, he argued that Eastern psychology forms the indispensable basis for a critique and objective consideration of Western psychology (Jung, 1931/1962, 1950/1955, 1973). Jung's primary interest was in *yoga*, a general term for him indicating the spiritual development of the personality within the Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist religious traditions. Rather than distinguishing between the variety of yoga practices and competing soteriological perspectives established by the canonical traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism, Jung was interested in yoga as a natural process of introversion, seeing the inner processes to which yoga gave rise as universal and the indigenous methods employed to achieve them as culturally specific (Jung, 1936; Shamdasani, 1996). The symbolism of oriental yoga materials provided Jung with invaluable comparative material for the interpretation of the collective unconscious, assisting him in his endeavor to develop a cross-cultural comparative psychology of inner experience (Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994; Shamdasani, 1996). Thus the intention of his essays and commentaries on Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese religious materials (Jung, 1931/1962, 1932; 1935/1953, 1936, 1938–1939, 1939a, 1939b, 1939c, 1939d, 1943, 1944a, 1950), as well as his persistent reference to these materials throughout his other mature writings (Jung, 1921, 1934–1939, 1951, 1955–1956, 1963, 1973, 1976), was not to invite his readers to uncritically adopt Hindu, Buddhist or Taoist spiritual practices but to demonstrate that the contemporary intrusion of Eastern spirituality into Western consciousness (which has a long history) possesses profound psychological significance: the Western discovery or rediscovery of the collective unconscious, the source of religious experience. Moreover, his research on Eastern religious traditions led him to realize that European alchemy, providing a bridge between analytical psychology and Gnosticism, is a Western form of yoga (Jung, 1938–1939; Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994; Gomez, 1995; Shamdasani, 1996).

Jung was drawn toward Eastern mystical traditions because of their dominant orientation toward overcoming severe imbalances between opposites (particularly spirit and matter/instinct and good and evil) causing disunity within the psyche and human suffering. This healing tendency of *yoga* traditions to focus their attention on the dynamic interplay between complementary opposites

and psychic liberation from them through either their balancing or transcendence, Jung argued, paralleled, even anticipated, his own individuation process of seeking psychic wholeness. Recognizing Chinese and Indian symbols of the *Tao*, *brahman*, *atman*, and many others, as uniting pairs of opposites provided him with confirmation that the archetype of the *self* unifies all opposites (Jung, 1921, 1931/1962, 1939c, 1955–1956, 1963; Coward, 1985, 1996; Clarke, 1994). Moreover, Jung was attracted to the emphasis Eastern yoga traditions place on detachment from egocentricity as the condition for the spiritual transformation of consciousness, because it provided support for his affirmation that individuation requires the shifting of the center of the personality away from the ego (and its emotional attachments to the outer world) and towards the self. For Jung, recognizing that the ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject leads to an extension and refinement of consciousness familiar to the East, enabling the analysand to achieve relief from suffering caused by the conflict of opposites and to realize that it is not that something new is seen but that one sees or experiences differently (Jung, 1931/1962, 1934–1939, 1939b, 1939c, 1941/1954, 1951, 1963, 1973, 1976; Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994). What impressed Jung most about the transformation of consciousness celebrated by the yoga traditions of the East (equated by him with the self-liberation of the mind in contrast to the grace of God in Christianity) was the importance assigned to bringing the divinity within the range of human experience rather than, as in much Western religion, accepting that God is inaccessible to human consciousness (Jung, 1939c, 1963; Coward, 1985).

Jung's Ambivalence Towards Eastern Religious Traditions

Nevertheless, Jung's enthusiasm for Eastern religious traditions was qualified by what he considered to be their excessively introverted psychological orientation. Observing that the mind of the Far East is related to our Western consciousness as the unconscious is, that is, as the left hand to the right, he understood the relationship between Eastern and Western mentalities and religious traditions to be one of complementary opposites. Whereas Western man is predominantly extraverted finding meaning in the external world, Eastern man is predominantly introverted, locating the meaning within himself through sinking into meditation. Adopting a position of East/West psychological relativism, he argued that whereas the introverted Eastern spiritual perspective searches for the riches of knowledge within the psyche, the extraverted Christian

perspective is driven by the principle of love which encourages worldly activity. Whereas for the Westerner the essence of that which works is the world of appearance, for the Indian it is the soul because he recognizes that the psyche alone possesses immediate reality. The world for him is a mere show or façade, and his reality comes close to what we in the West would call a dream. Jung's encounter with what he perceived to be the dream-like world of India during his visit to the subcontinent in 1938 led him to conclude that whereas the Westerner believes in *doing*, the Indian believes in impassive *being* because God is within all things and especially man (Jung, 1921, 1932, 1939a, 1939c, 1939d, 1943, 1947/1954, 1950/1955, 1955–1956, 1963; Coward, 1985; Reynolds, 1989; Clarke, 1994; Gomez, 1995).

Jung, however, was equally critical of the psychological perspectives of both the introverted East and the extraverted West. Both standpoints, he argued, while each having their psychological justification, are one-sided or extreme in underrating or losing one half of the universe (either the world of consciousness or of the unconscious); thereby, they make the mistake of artificially separating themselves from total reality. Both the Eastern and the Western standpoints need to reorient themselves toward the goal of the individuation process: the conjunction of introversion and extraversion. Since twentieth century Western man is excessively extraverted, suffering an unprecedented spiritual crisis because he has no time for self-knowledge, he is in need compensatory introverted spirituality to provide necessary psychic balance. Here, for Jung, lies the meaning of the West's engagement with the East during the twentieth century; exposure to Eastern traditions provides the catalyst for Western spiritual transformation: the realization that the unconscious is the generator of consciousness. The West must, however, approach Eastern values from within and not from without, building on its own psychic ground with its own methods to produce a Western form of yoga on the basis laid down by Christianity, rather than trying to cover its spiritual nakedness with the gorgeous, but psychologically alien, trappings of the East. Jung argues that an encounter with yoga in the twentieth century serves to remind us that we in the West possess similar forms of introverted spirituality: Gnosticism, medieval Christian mysticism and alchemy (Jung, 1930, 1938–1939, 1939c, 1943, 1944a, 1951, 1954, 1955–1956, 1963; Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994; Gomez, 1995).

Jung insisted that the mentalities of the East and the West are fundamentally different, because they are the products of different histories deeply rooted in the psyche. Because Eastern religious teachings, symbols and practices are a foreign body in the Western psyche, adoption of

them in the West can only succeed in producing an artificial stultification of Western intelligence and the means not of addressing Western psychological and spiritual problems, but of avoiding them. For this reason, Jung repeatedly warned against the practice of yoga by Europeans, a form of mimetic madness which could, on the one hand, lead to a strengthening of will and further repression of unconscious contents by consciousness and, on the other hand, to psychotic states in which consciousness is overwhelmed by the unconscious. Instead of the practice of yoga, Jung prescribed for the European his own visionary technique of active imagination to facilitate the flow of unconscious contents into consciousness (Jung, 1916/1958, 1931/1962, 1932, 1935/1953, 1936, 1938–1939, 1939c, 1943, 1944b, 1951, 1954, 1963; Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994; Shamdasani, 1996).

Jung's Objections to Hindu and Buddhist Non-Dualism

Moreover, Jung objected to the claim of non-dualist Hindu and Buddhist traditions that the ego can be *completely* dissolved in, or absorbed by, the transcendental self (*brahman*, *atman*, *purusa*, *nirvana*) in a trance-like state (*samadhi*) attained by yoga practice. He argued that the identification of the self-conscious subject with, or its disappearance within, a universal consciousness celebrated by Eastern canonical traditions must be equated with unconsciousness and that exclusion, selection, and discrimination are the root and essence of consciousness. Jung conceded that the practice of yoga can produce to a remarkable extension of consciousness, but it cannot lead to an egoless state, because there must always be something or somebody left over – the infinitesimal ego, the knowing “I” – to experience the realization that there is no distinction between subject and object. If there is no knowing subject, the non-dual position cannot be stated as an object of knowledge (Jung, 1939c, 1939e, 1951; Coward, 1985; Reynolds, 1989; Clarke, 1994). In contrast with this non-dualist position celebrating the transcendence of opposites (*nirdvandva*), ultimate perfection, and the final conquest of suffering attained through the realization of *moksa* (liberation) or *nirvana* (enlightenment, extinction), for Jung, because the infinite unconscious can never be fully known by the finite ego and the individuation process never completed, suffering caused by the dynamic interplay of opposites can never be fully overcome. Jung insists that complete redemption from suffering in this world is an illusion and complete liberation from the opposites means death (Jung, 1916/1958, 1946, 1958, 1963, 1973; Ajaya, 1983; Coward, 1985; Clarke, 1994; Muramoto 2002).

Jung's Dialog with Taoism

Jung's exposure to Taoist materials was more influential on the development of his concept of the self than his dialog with the Hindu and Buddhist non-dualist traditions. Noting that the *Tao* is the middle way between opposites such as man-and-nature and heaven-and-earth, he recognized that the goal of Taoist practice of re-establishing a balance between the opposites of *yang* (warmth, light, maleness, heaven) and *yin* (cold, darkness, femaleness, earth) in the *Tao* and the goal of the individuation process, a balancing of compensating psychic opposites in the experience of the self, were parallel processes. Jung found in the Taoist teaching that man, as microcosm, is a reconciler of opposites confirmation, on the one hand, for his view that individuation requires bringing the opposites of spirit and instinct and introversion and extraversion into harmony through letting go of the ego in spontaneous action (*wu-wei* – action through non-action) and, on the other, for his theory of synchronicity, the meaningful acausal connections or correlative parallels between inner psychic and outer physical events. Jung's dialog with Taoism led him to affirm through his theory of synchronicity that intrapsychic life must be interrelated with corresponding experience of the external world (Jung, 1921, 1931/1962, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1963; Aziz, 1990; Clarke, 1994; Coward, 1996; Main, 2004).

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Circumambulation](#) [Coincidentia Oppositorum](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [Enlightenment](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Healing](#) [Individuation](#) [Inflation](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Mandala](#) [Numinosum](#) [Objective Psyche](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Psychospiritual](#) [Reductionism](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shadow](#) [Synchronicity](#) [Transcendent Function](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism

Leon Schlamm

In response to persistent charges by his theological critics that he was a Gnostic (Buber, 1952; Heisig, 1979; Segal, 1992; Dourley, 1994), Jung insisted that he was neither a Gnostic nor a metaphysician, neither a theist nor an atheist, neither a mystic nor a materialist, but rather an

agnostic empirical scientist, an analytical psychologist (Jung, 1951–1961, 1952/1973; 1956–1957; 1963). Yet Jung's enthusiastic engagement with Gnosticism spanned more than four decades, from his early association with G. R. S. Mead and his frequent citation of his translations of Gnostic and Hermetic writings (Goodrick-Clarke, 2005; Hoeller, 1988; Noll, 1994) and his 1916 paranormally produced gnostic poem, *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* attributed to Basilides of Alexandria (Jung, 1916/1992), to his systematic treatment of Gnostic materials transmitted by Patristic sources in *Aion* in 1951 and the acquisition by the Bollingen Foundation, through the efforts of Gilles Quispel, of the Jung Codex (containing the *Evangelium Veritatis*, the "Gospel of Truth") in 1953 (Jung, 1953; Rudolph, 1987; Wehr, 1987).

Reasons for Jung's Interest in Gnosticism

Jung's interest in Gnosticism arose as early as 1909, through his discovery that they were apparently the first thinkers to concern themselves with the numinous contents of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1952/1973). Recognizing Gnosis as a psychological knowledge whose contents derive from the unconscious, Jung argued that the Gnostics anticipated and more or less prefigured the goal of analytical psychology, the individuation process, albeit expressed in a language suited to the age they lived in, thereby demonstrating that the idea of the unconscious was not unknown to them (1951). This discovery, that the Gnostics were, in their own way, engaging with unconscious contents, was the first to end what Jung saw as his intellectual isolation, providing confirmation from the history of religions for the veracity of his own psychological findings (Jung, 1921; 1951). Such confirmation and support for his work would later be supplemented by his research into European alchemy which provided a bridge from the modern world to ancient Gnosticism (1963). Acknowledging that alchemy was a continuation of Gnosticism, Jung affirmed that psychology could not be divorced from history.

Yet Jung always qualified his enthusiasm for Gnosticism, claiming that the Gnostics had no genuinely psychological conception of archetypal images. Rather, they projected their subjective inner perception into a cosmogonic system and believed in the metaphysical reality of its psychological figures (Jung, 1921; 1963). In other words, ancient Gnostics had not achieved individuation in the modern sense; but because they engaged with unconscious contents more intensely than most of Jung's

contemporaries, their symbols and experiences provided illuminating comparative material which, through amplification, could deepen Jung's clinical understanding of the unconscious. Jung's preoccupation with the parallels between Gnostic and modern clinical materials should be construed, therefore, not as evidence that he was a Gnostic - although he made no secret of his preference for religious experience over faith or belief (Jung, 1906–1950; McGuire and Hull, 1977) – but rather as a vehicle for carrying his own modern psychological research into the individuation process forward.

Jung's Interpretation of Gnostic Materials

Jung provides a summary of his reading of Gnosticism in *Aion*. The Gnostic myth of the ignorant *demiurge*, who imagined he was the highest divinity, illustrates the perplexity of the ego when it can no longer hide from itself the knowledge that it has been dethroned by a supra-ordinate authority, the *self*. The *self*, the antithesis of the ego, consisting of the sum of conscious and unconscious processes, corresponds to the innumerable designations for the Gnostic savior figure of the *Anthropos*, including Christ (Jung, 1951). Elsewhere, he observes that Gnosticism projected the union of conscious and unconscious in the individuation process in the form of a drama of redemption into the heavens, equating ego-consciousness with the vain *demiurge* who fancied himself the sole creator of the world, and the *self* with the highest, *unknowable God* who emanated the *demiurge* (Jung, 1949). For Jung, all Gnostic images or symbols of *aeons*, *archons* etc. are expressions of the operation of unconscious psychic forces. Exposure to Gnostic mythological accounts of divine emanation in the 20th century can trigger greater awareness of the complexity of intra-psychic processes, not only because such accounts provide a mirror for Jung's modern clinical materials, but also because they confirm that ancient Gnostics anticipated his psychological technique of active imagination (Jung, 1944; 1955–1956; Merkur, 1993).

Another reason for Jung's interest in Gnosticism can be traced to his identification of the typical Gnostic descent of *pneuma* (spirit) into *hyle* (matter) and its exile from the *pleroma* (fullness, denoting the transcendental field of divine reality) with the psychological process of projection, in which archetypal images of the unconscious are projected onto the outer world and lost there. Just as the Gnostic *pneuma* desires to lose itself in matter,

often because it is attracted to its beautiful reflection in it, so the archetypal images of the unconscious desire to embrace the outer world. Projection is thus a process in which numinous unconscious contents are scattered in, and imprisoned by, the material world. Similarly, there is an equally striking correspondence between the Gnostic's account of *pneuma's* release from matter or nature and its return home to the light of the *Unknown God* or *pleroma* and the psychic process of integration, in which numinous unconscious contents projected onto matter or nature are withdrawn from it and held in consciousness during the individuation process. As in the Gnostic release of *pneuma* from matter, so in the process of integration there is disenchantment with the material world equated with psychic separation from it (Jung, 1941/1954; 1944; von Franz, 1975; 1985).

Jung's Distance from the Soteriological Perspective of Gnosticism

Nevertheless, Jung's individuation process cannot be identified with the soteriological goal of Gnosticism. Not only does Jung reduce the Gnostic metaphysical perspective to a psychological one (Segal, 1992; Brewer, 1996; Hanegraaff, 1998); he also argues that the Gnostic god-head, the *Unknown God* or *pleroma*, is unconscious, without qualities or opposites, prior to their differentiation by the development of consciousness (Jung, 1916/1992; 1951; Segal, 1992). Moreover, while the goal of anti-cosmic, dualistic Gnosticism, in Jungian terms, is to abandon ego-consciousness for the unconscious, the goal of analytical psychology is to unite the two. The ego's return to the unconscious, for Jung, is merely instrumental to the latter's integration in consciousness. Whereas the Gnostic seeks to separate the spirit or divine spark from the material world, thus overcoming spiritual ignorance, Jung seeks ultimately to unite them. In Jungian terms the Gnostic goal must be understood at best as psychic dissociation (with its weakening of ego-consciousness) and at worst as outright psychosis (Segal, 1992). Indeed, Jung argued that Gnostic anti-cosmic dualism is an expression of the psychopathology of inflation, which systematically avoids confrontation with the shadow. The enlightened Gnostic is incapable of resisting the temptation to identify his ego with the *self*, the inner Christ or *Anthropos*, and as a result feels superior to the darkness within him. He has succumbed to the danger of becoming a god or higher man (Jung, 1941/1954; White, 1952; von Franz, 1975; Brewer, 1996; Segal, 1998).

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Dissociation](#) [Dualism](#) [Enlightenment](#) [Gnosticism](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Individuation](#) [Inflation](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Numinosum](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Reductionism](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shadow](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav, and Phenomenology

Roger Brooke

C. G. Jung's approach to psychology and to the psychological study of religious experience cannot be understood without an appreciation of his fundamentally phenomenological method.

Husserl's epistemological and scientific call to arms, "To the things themselves," announced the birth of phenomenology, which became one of the great intellectual movements of the twentieth century. In a number of places the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, C. G. Jung (1875–1961), argues that his method of psychological analysis is phenomenological. However his references to phenomenology are always passing remarks and his phenomenology is never systematically developed.

Jung's sense of phenomenology is evident most clearly when he contrasts his method and assumptions with those of his mentor, Sigmund Freud. Like the phenomenologists, Jung was consistently critical of Freud's materialist reductionism, namely the attempt to explain the

complex phenomena of psychological life in terms of the biologically based wishes and conflicts of childhood. Instead, said Jung, psychology should seek to understand its subject matter consistently on its own terms.

Phenomenology's insistence that phenomena be interrogated on their own terms was taken up by Jung especially with regard to religious experience. He argued that the meanings of the images and rituals of religious experience should be analyzed in terms that do not violate the integrity of religious experience. So too, more generally, should the fundamental, organizing patterns of the human imagination, which are manifest in the myths and stories of the human species. These organizing patterns, or forms, which Jung called the archetypes, were structurally autonomous and thematically irreducible to terms of reference outside of their own orbits of meaning. For example, the Virgin birth or the life of St. Francis need to be understood psychologically in terms that honor the inner coherence and meaning of the image or the spirituality of an extraordinary Saint. We should not, says Jung, reinterpret those phenomena, as Freudian psychoanalysis does, in terms of childhood wishes and anxieties, as though they were merely unconsciously determined and neurotic productions.

Jung's claim to being a phenomenologist rests on more than an understanding of its general approach. The characteristics of phenomenology's method are evident in Jung's work as well. These defining hallmarks of phenomenology are often taken to be: description, the phenomenological reduction, the search for essences, and intentionality. Each of these will be briefly considered in turn, together with its place in Jung's work.

Phenomenological Description

Phenomenology is descriptive. Phenomenological psychology is not concerned with theoretical explanation or abstraction, but with phenomena as they concretely are present to us – just as we are, in turn, engaged with the appearing phenomena. This fundamental dialectic (the ground of the hermeneutic circle) means that the description of the meaning of phenomena has an interpretative moment that intuitively reaches through individual occurrences to their phenomenological heart or "structure." Jung's method was generally a descriptive hermeneutic. It was a way of interpreting psychological meaning that stayed as close as possible to the phenomenon as it occurred. It was what Ricoeur called a hermeneutics of faith, unlike Freud's hermeneutics of suspicion. Jung studied phenomena primarily by looking for similar or contrasting images across

cultures and history. Therefore, the depth that is sought in phenomenological description is a depth that lies within the phenomenon itself as a core, or structure, of meaning manifest in many diverse occurrences of that phenomenon.

Phenomenological Reduction

The phenomenological reduction is the systematic attempt to “bracket” theoretical and philosophical pre-conceptions, thereby to return our thinking to a more original ground in lived experience and conduct. Through this bracketing, the phenomenologist tries to approach the phenomena of psychological life in their vital contexts. It is this reduction that ensures phenomenology remains a descriptive enterprise. Jung repeatedly argued that philosophical materialism and rationalism foreclosed the possibility of an indigenous psychology, one in which its assumptions and methods were self-contained *as psychology*. He also repeatedly argued against the temptation to engage in “metaphysical” speculation when discussing religious experience. As a (phenomenological) psychologist, he wanted to open up a conceptual space for describing religious experience on its own terms, i.e., as experience and not ontology. In other words, Jung did not want the study of religious experience to require an answer to the ontological question of whether or not God exists. Jung wanted his refusal to step beyond experience into ontology to be understood as a humble respect for his epistemological limits as a psychologist. However, as will be seen presently, his position was problematic, so that he has been criticized for psychologizing religious experience.

Search for Essences

The search for essences (eidetic reduction) is accomplished by considering the manifold variations of a phenomenon so that incidental, or perhaps transient, variations can be set aside and the essential structure can be intuited. The eidetic reduction reminds one of Jung’s method of archetypal amplification, which sought to approach the essential core of meaning within the range of archetypal images and themes. The structural core of meaning was the archetype, distinguishable from the endless variation in archetypal images. Interestingly, just as the existential phenomenologists, following Heidegger’s analysis of being as temporal, insisted that there are no ahistorical essences, so Jung came to realize that the archetypal cores of meaning can never be conclusively defined and that they require repeated reinterpretation.

Intentionality

Intentionality is not so much an aspect of method as a reminder that human being is always being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is the irreducible human occurrence of world disclosure, an open clearing (to use a Heideggerian expression) within which, or out of which, both the emerging person and world are gathered and constituted. Intentionality is a reminder that existence undercuts the Cartesian separation of subject and object, the place of experience (as mind, or *res cogitans*) from the world in which all experience concretely takes place. Jung’s description of psychological types described the various ways in which the world is disclosed and engaged, the important point being that there is no disclosure of the world that is not already gathered in the attitudes (extravert or introvert) and functions (thinking, feeling, intuition, sensation) of consciousness. Significantly, even deepening introversion is described as an attitude in which the world becomes increasingly oppressive and persecutory. Another important recognition of human intentionality is Jung’s consistent understanding of the living human body as already psychological and situated in its engagements with the world. The body, for Jung, is not primarily the body of anatomy, but the materiality of the soul. In this formulation Jung linked his understanding of human embodiment to Augustine’s anthropology.

Critical Discussion

Despite these features of Jung’s work that are phenomenological, the early phenomenologists were highly critical of him. Spiegelberg’s classic study on the history of phenomenological psychology effectively dismisses Jung’s significance and contribution. On his part, Jung thought Heidegger was mad, and that phenomenologists were on an irrelevant philosophical rampage.

It is clear that Jung’s understanding of phenomenology was superficial. From the disciplined phenomenologist’s perspective, Jung failed seriously to bracket his philosophical, and specifically Cartesian, assumptions adequately, with the result that his work fails phenomenologically at crucial moments. It is significant, in this regard, that Descartes’ name does not appear in the indices to Jung’s *Collected Works* or other writings. There is an irony here. Jung was justifiably critical of Freud’s lack of philosophical reflection, because he recognized that Freud carried in his thinking philosophical positions that remained unquestioned and problematic. Yet the same is true when we consider Jung and the absence of Descartes in his indices.

The result is that Cartesian metaphysics, with its radical dualisms – mind and body, subject and world, inner and outer, etc. – tends to remain awkwardly throughout Jung's thinking. For instance, he tends to speak of the archetypes in a neoKantian way as categories of perception (or imagination) that structure experience, yet he also refers to archetypal images, the objects to which we relate, as interior to the psyche and as produced by the archetypes. Both archetypal structuring of experience and the objects of experience itself are interior to the psyche. It might have been acceptable if Jung had simply described images of God as archetypal. The problem, for phenomenologists and most religious scholars, is that Jung then claims that we do not perceive, or relate to, God as such, but only to the God-image, which is interior to the psyche. In some of Jung's writings, at least, neoKantian doubt becomes a Cartesian solipsism that is tightly shut.

It is not surprising that religious thinkers such as Buber, White, and Hostie had such difficulty with Jung. The Otherness of God was reduced to the purely logical and formal category of the Kantian *noumenon*, beyond all thinking, imagination, and relationship. However, whereas, for Kant, the phenomenal world of experience was still the open realm of experience and evidence, for Jung the phenomenal world was conceptualized as interior to the psyche. For religious critics, one cannot be a solipsist and have any kind of thoughtful or affectively real relationship with God.

On the other hand, this critical reading of Jung by phenomenologists lacks hermeneutic generosity. As was suggested above, Jung's method is closely aligned with the phenomenological tradition, which his work can enrich in several ways. Jung has much to say about psychological complexes, the archetypal structure and function of our mythic and cultural images, and the patterns of human development and transformation. He thematizes the imaginal structure of human existence, showing that the quiddity of existence is not prior to its imaginal organization and self-disclosure. He then describes with great insight the imaginal patterns of the human world (Husserl's *lebenswelt*), as well as the transhistorical sedimentations that continue to run through contemporary experience and thought. Jung's psychology of religion needs to be understood in these terms. Finally, his theory of psychological types suggests that there may be constitutionally different ways of being a religious person, and that at least some of our theological, ritualistic, or experiential differences might be typological.

Finally, both phenomenology and Jung's analytical psychology have evolved over the years. A number of Jungians are phenomenologically sophisticated, and many phenomenologists have a greater appreciation for Jung's

work. Jung's philosophical awkwardness is seen through and historically contextualized. To read Jung now, in the twenty first century, is to reread Jung with a creative and critical engagement that honors his texts while interpreting them anew. In this way, hermeneutic questions and methods are threaded through both phenomenology and Jung's psychology.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion

Leon Schlamm

C. G. Jung's writings on religion were primarily focussed on the value and function of religious experience in the historical development of human consciousness, and particularly in the individuation process. Drawing heavily on Rudolf Otto's (1869–1937) account of numinous experience (derived from the Latin term for deity: *numen*), identifying the qualitatively unique, non-rational, *mysterium tremendum* and *fascinans* moments of religious experience, Jung celebrated its significance for analytical psychology but, unlike Otto, located its source in the unconscious rather than beyond the psyche. As a phenomenologist of the psyche rather than a historian of religion or theologian, Jung explored the healing function of numinous experiences which provide the psychological foundation for religious creeds, while bracketing out

any examination of metaphysical speculation about the objective reference of such experiences as beyond his professional competence (Otto, 1923/1958; Jung, 1934–1939, 1938, 1952/1973, 1956–1957; Moreno, 1970; Heisig, 1979; Stein, 1985; Brooke, 1991).

Jung's Definition of Numinous Experience

Jung defined numinous experience, following Otto, as inexpressible, mysterious, terrifying, and pertaining only to the divinity (Jung, 1963). Religion, he observed, can be identified with a careful and scrupulous observation of the *numinosum*, a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. It seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator; it is an experience of the subject independent of his will, which causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness (Jung, 1938). Identified by Jung with experience of the unconscious, its deeply stirring emotional effect, thrilling power, *mana* (psychic power) equated with holiness, and healing or destructive qualities are unusually persuasive from the psychological point of view (Jung, 1928–1930, 1934–1939, 1947/1954, 1952, 1952/1954, 1954a, 1960). Because numinous experiences are independent of conscious volition, transporting the subject into the state of rapture and will-less surrender, they are difficult to handle intellectually; since our affectivity is involved, absolute objectivity is more rarely achieved here than anywhere else. Indeed, they can be overwhelming, an admission that not only challenges our pride, but also awakens our deep-rooted fear that consciousness may lose its ascendancy. It is because they may threaten the stability of consciousness, that fear of them is justified, demonstrating a holy dread of the numinous. These experiences, identified with experiences of archetypal images understood as *daimonia*, can have a possessive or obsessive effect on consciousness (Jung, 1942/1948, 1947/1954, 1952/1954, 1963).

Numinous Experience and the Individuation Process

However, in spite of these reservations, Jung regarded these fascinating and dreadful moments of numinous experience, triggering the ambivalent conscious responses to them of attraction and repulsion, longing and horror, as fundamental to an understanding of the individuation process rather than belonging exclusively to the domain of psychopathology. Indeed, towards the end of his life he declared that the experience of the *self*, intrapsychically encountered as

other *to the ego*, carried with it a numinosity of such intensity that it could be likened to the experience of being anchored in God (Jung, 1906–1950, 1951–1961, 1955–1966; Papadopoulos, 1984; Huskinson, 2002; Dourley, 2006; Main, 2006; Stein, 2006).

Nevertheless, Jung's measured appreciation of numinous experience, in contrast to Otto's unqualified submission to it, is evinced by his insistence on the clinical need at all costs to preserve the fragile autonomy of consciousness, threatened with disintegration by the fascinating, yet dangerous, numinous forces of the unconscious. One of the aims of the individuation process is to strengthen, even to extend, consciousness in the face of these numinous psychic forces.

Consciousness needs to maintain its independence from numinous unconscious contents by freeing itself from identification with them, if its conjunction with its opposite, the unconscious, the goal of the individuation process, is to be realized (Jung, 1916/1928, 1944). It is this clinical perspective, expressing a "hermeneutics of suspicion" confronting numinous experience (Homans, 1985) and a reservation in the face of divine decrees, which, for Jung, separates analytical psychology from Western and Eastern religious traditions. Jung insists that consciousness and the unconscious, equated by him with humanity and divinity, possess equal value and must strive to collaborate with one another in pursuing mutual transformation (Jung, 1952/1954, 1963).

Jung's hermeneutics of suspicion is also evinced by his persistent preoccupation with the psychopathology of inflation of the ego by numinous experience and spiritual knowledge, producing experiences of self-deification and unjustified claims to absolute knowledge (Stein, 2006). Overcoming spiritual inflation requires the ego's discrimination between its own boundaries and transpersonal, numinous psychic contents. The ego realizes that, however powerful or intense a numinous experience may be, *it is not that experience*. Distinguishing his own deification experience of 1913 from the individuation process, Jung insisted that anyone identifying himself with a numinous experience is a crank, a fool or a lunatic (Jung, 1925). However much he valued the numinous experience of deification, the task of analysis, for Jung, was to overcome identification with it, to separate oneself from it, to realize that *I am not the god*. The experience of deification may occur towards the beginning of the analytic process; it certainly cannot be identified with its goal (Jung, 1925, 1963; Noll, 1994; Stein, 2006). Jung's writings on inflation provide some of the most convincing evidence for his deconstructive relationship to religious experience and knowledge.

Jung's Psychotherapy of Religious Traditions

Again, Jung's critical engagement with both Western and Eastern religious traditions is illustrated by his claim that numinous experiences are typically the product of projections of archetypal unconscious contents onto the outer screen of nature. When coupled with his persistent profession, as a phenomenologist of the psyche rather than a metaphysician, of agnosticism with regard to the objective reference of such experiences outside the *self* or psyche, it is easy to understand why so many of his theological critics, as well as historians of religion, have charged him with psychologism, the act of reducing religious experiences to intra-psychic processes, (Buber, 1952/1999; Heisig, 1979; Coward, 1985; Homans, 1985; Wulff, 1985; Aziz, 1990; Brooke, 1991; Jones, 1993; Clarke, 1994; Palmer, 1997; Stein, 2006). Jung, responding primarily to his theological critics, persistently denied the charge of psychological reductionism on two grounds: first, that the unconscious or the *self* is unknown, just as God's essential nature is unknown to *experience* rather than to religious belief or doctrine; second, that the psychological work of individuation is directed toward the integration of projected numinous unconscious psychic contents into consciousness, thus enriching, healing and intensifying the conscious personality (Jung, 1952/1973, 1954b, 1956–1957, 1963). Individuation is a progressive, but never completed process in which divinity is gradually incarnated within consciousness rather than experienced in projection, and consciously related to all other areas of human experience, including instinctual life (Jung, 1952/1954, 1963; Dourley, 2006; Stein, 2006). For Jung, those who have not realized that religious experience is wholly intra-psychic have not plumbed its depths (Dourley, 2004).

During the last two decades of his life, Jung became increasingly preoccupied with the treatment of his own Christian tradition as a patient in need of psychological and spiritual healing (Stein, 1985), prompting his critics to charge him not only with heresy but also with abandoning his own professed metaphysical agnosticism (White, 1959, 1960; Moreno, 1970; Heisig, 1979; Homans, 1985; Aziz, 1990; Lammers, 1994; Palmer, 1997). In spite of his insistence on the common psychic origin and equal value of the deities of all religious traditions (Jung, 1938), Jung offered his Christian and post-Christian readers an account of the evolution of the Western god-image challenging Christian salvation history Jung (Jung, 1942/1948, 1951, 1952/1954; Lammers, 1994; Edinger, 1996). Jung argued that Christ, the Western god-image of the *self* for the last two millennia, is incomplete; it lacks the

tremendous moment of numinous experience, equated by him with the divine shadow, and therefore fails to express the conjunction of opposites, the goal of the individuation process. Because integration of the divine (archetypal) shadow into consciousness is necessary for individuation, Jung sought to direct his readers' attention to the immensity of God, the conflict between His overwhelming light and dark aspects, arguing that, contrary to the teachings of the Church, we have good reason to fear God, as well as to love Him. Moreover, Jung linked his observations about the divine shadow with his depth-psychological account of the historical evolution of divine consciousness, of the *individuation of God*, evidence for which he found in Biblical literature. Because God is less conscious than man, He depends on man to integrate His opposites of good and evil, to integrate *His shadow* for Him in order to achieve full consciousness, just as man reciprocally needs the numinous experience of God to transform his consciousness. The individuation and healing of God and man are thus co-dependent, and realized only within human consciousness.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Coincidentia Oppositorum](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Consciousness](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [Enlightenment](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Healing](#) [Individuation](#) [Inflation](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Numinosum](#) [Objective Psyche](#) [Projection](#) [Psyche](#) [Psychospiritual](#) [Reductionism](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self](#) [Shadow](#) [Transcendent Function](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Jungian Self

Pittman McGehee

The Self for Jung was the archetype of wholeness and the organizing principle of the psyche. In volume 12, paragraph 44 of his *Collected Works*, he writes: “The self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness” (1943).

This paradoxical concept is both the essence and the totality of one's personality. The Self initiates life and it is life's goal. Jung's concept of individuation depends on one becoming one's true, autonomous, authentic self. The ego is the organ of consciousness. The goal of the second half of life is for the ego to subordinate itself to the supra-ordinate Self. In his autobiography, Jung writes: “In those years... I began to understand that the goal of psychic

development is the self. There is no linear evolution; there is only the circumambulation of the self.”

The Self is a transcendent or divine quality. Jung referred to the Self as the “Imago Dei,” or the image of God within the psyche. Borrowing from theologian Rudolph Otto’s book, *The Idea of the Holy*, Jung posited that the self possessed a numinous quality. Numen is divine power or energy. This numinous energy of the self has the power to generate, transform and integrate psychic life. This is the religious nature of the psyche.

One cannot know an archetype, only its images. There are many images of the Self: the mandala, king, hero, prophet, savior. Jung considered the Christ and the Buddha as symbols of the Self. In volume 9 part II of his *Collected Works*, entitled, “*Aion*,” Jung devotes his most extensive treatment on the “phenomenology of the self.”

[Robert Hopcke in his work, *A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, writes: “While the editors

of the ‘*Collected Works*,’ do not capitalize self, – in English the consention has since developed of referring to the individual ego as the ‘self,’ with lowercase s, and the archetype as the ‘Self,’ with a capital S” (1989).]

See also: [Archetype](#) [God Image](#) [Self](#)

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K

Ka'bah

Ali Ayten

It is the one and only pilgrimage site for Muslims located in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is an ancient cubic shaped building called the House of God (*Baitullah*). The word *Ka'bah* means cubic.

It is not known who built the Ka'bah first, but it is known that it was established before Prophet Abraham and was rebuilt by him and his son Ishmael. After Prophet Abraham, it was rebuilt three times by the Arab tribes. The Ka'bah was visited according to the principles of monotheism from the time of Abraham until the idol-worshippers of Mecca took it over to accommodate idols in and around it. When Prophet Muhammad conquered Mecca after migration to Medina, he removed all idols, and it remained in the hands of Muslims since then. After Prophet Muhammad, its original form and size (11 × 12 × 15 m) was preserved except for some renovations, and it was covered with a black cloth.

According to Islamic faith the Ka'bah is the first place of worship on earth (Qur'an 3:96). And the city of Mecca is called *Umm al-Qura* (mother of cities). The visit to the Ka'bah is called *hajj* (pilgrimage). The pilgrim is called *haji*, which is a highly respected title in the Islamic world that encourages one to live a moral and religious life by keeping away from sinful acts. Muslims who can afford it financially and physically are enjoined to visit the Ka'bah once in a lifetime on the specified days in each year. Visits to the Ka'bah at other times are called *umrah*. Muslims throughout the world face toward the direction of the Ka'bah for the five-daily prayers. This act of prayer and coming together for pilgrimage every year gives the worshippers a sense of union and brotherhood. The Ka'bah is, in this sense, not the end point, but a starting point to the transcendent. And as the times of five-daily prayers are set according to the daily movement of the sun, there are always Muslims somewhere in the world facing the Ka'bah at anytime of the day. In Sufi psychology, the Ka'bah is

metaphorically associated with the heart in that breaking someone's heart is believed to be equal to demolishing the Ka'bah.

Currently, around three million Muslims of different colors, races, and nations visit and circumambulate the Ka'bah each year. Pilgrims wear white garments during *hajj* which represents the fraternity of all races and nations. Pilgrims also place their hands on the black stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*), which is believed to have descended from the heavens, located in the east corner of the Ka'bah at every turn of circumambulation to renew their submission.

See also: [Circumambulation](#) [Hajj](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

Kabbalah

Jeffrey B. Pettis

An esoteric rabbinic tradition, Kabbalah (Hebrew, *kblh*, "receiving," "tradition") became manifest especially in late twelfth and early thirteenth century CE Provence in southern France. Based on the mystical interpretation of the *Torah*, the disclosing of Kabbalistic secrets occurred as a response to the influence of Maimonides (1135 CE–1204 CE) and his philosophical reading of the *Torah*. Early Kabbalah literature includes *Sefer ha-Bahir* (*The Book of Clarity*) patterned after ancient rabbinic Midrash, and also the series of writings from the family and close circle of Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquieres (ca. 1125 CE–1198 CE). The most important writing is the *Zohar* (Hebrew, "brightness"), a writing coming out of the Kabbalists in Castile, Spain. The *Zohar* consists as a collection of texts written in Aramaic and Hebrew dating from a period between about 1280 CE through 1310 CE. Its central symbol, the Kabbalah tree, consists of the ten *sefirot* or aspects of the divine personality. Nine of these issue from *Keter* ("Crown"), the first *sefirah* on the top of

the tree which is one with *Ein Sof* the endless and infinite reality of God. The sixth *sefirah Tiferet* (“splendor”) exists below *Keter*, and is understood as being the central “beam” in the divinely constructed universe. Its central location within the tree forms two triads through which cosmic life-force courses into the final two *sefirot* of *Yesod* and *Malkhut*. The *sefirot* of *Malkut* (“kingdom”) receives all the flow from the upper *sefirot* and rules over the lower worlds. She is also called *Shekhinah* (“presence”), the queen and feminine element which in the early Midrash is said to abide with Israel into exile. The Kabbalists eventually merge the *Shekhinah* and the community of Israel, thus giving divine status to the human community – something unique within Jewish tradition. The *Zohar* begins with Genesis 1.1 and the divine name *Elohim*, “God” which refers to the third *sefirah* of *Binah*, the Divine Mother. Between the two occurrences of the divine name in Genesis 1.1 are thirteen words, which are the thirteen qualities of compassion (Exod. 34.6–7). The *Zohar* significantly expands previous Kabbalah traditions with its focus on the *mysterium conjunctionis* and the uniting of the male sixth and ninth *sefirot* with the female tenth *sefiri*. Distinct from the philosophical Neoplatonic Cabbalah of the Catalonian circles, the Castilians show intrigue with teurgic, quasi-magical influence in relation to the divine and how such influence creates union and subsequent flow of blessing upon the lower world. As a mystical writing, the *Zohar* represents and occurs as a media of religious experience inseparably connected with unconscious movements of the writers (and reader). These movements are brought forth into conscious expression through the highly symbolic language and experience of language of the book. The *Zohar* came to be regarded within Judaism as revealed text having authority comparable to the *Bible* and the *Talmud*. As a religio-spiritual tradition it is preceded by Merkabah, “chariot vision literature,” and followed by Hasidism with its concern for the omnipresence of God and the notion of unbroken discourse/communion between humanity and God.

See also: [Hasidism](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Kabir

Ali Kose

It is an Arabic and Islamic name for tomb. It is a usual practice to bury the dead since ancient times due to hygienic reasons and out of the fear of the unknown. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam upheld this custom. Though there are differences among religions regarding the nature and the condition of the tomb and how the corpse is positioned, the common goal is to make the corpse invisible. In Islam, the corpse is positioned to face the *Ka'bah* in Mecca toward which Muslims turn for five-daily prayers. Muslims often write the words “*Huwa'l-Baki*” on the gravestone in Arabic meaning “only God is eternal” like Christians write “Rest in Peace.”

According to Islam, the tomb is a window to the hereafter. Muslims are strongly recommended to visit cemeteries to say supplicatory prayers for the soul of the dead and also remember death, though one may send supplicatory prayers afar. The first chapter of the Qur'an, which is only seven verses, is the favorite supplicatory prayer. One who visits a cemetery is supposed to say words of greeting in Arabic like “*salam alaikum*” (may peace be upon you) believing that the dead hears the greeting person. All these beliefs and rituals allow the feeling of contact with the deceased, and this contributes much to the psychological well-being of the bereaved.

Islamic Funeral

The Islamic funeral has two parts. In the first part, the dead is brought to the mosque yard for the funeral service and a prayer called “*salat al-janaiz*” (funeral prayer) is performed followed by a speech by the Imam (one who leads prayer) about death and the hereafter as well as paying tribute to the dead. Perhaps the most interesting moment of the funeral at the mosque is that the Imam asks the congregation and the kin whether they bear witness that s/he was a good person as well as requesting them to forgive the deceased for his/her unjust acts to them. Muslim society attaches great importance to funeral prayer, and all these rituals allow the congregation psychological satisfaction for fulfilling their final duty to the deceased. In the second part, the dead is taken to the graveyard for the burial ceremony. During burial, some chapters from the Qur'an are recited both by the Imam and friends or relatives. Right after the burial ceremony, a ritual called

“*talqin*,” which is inculcation of the articles of the Muslim faith to the dead, is performed by the Imam. In this ritual, the Imam speaks up to make the dead ready to answer the questions of the angels of interrogation. According to the Islamic creed, the dead is interrogated by angels in the grave. The sinful fails, the virtuous succeeds. The former is punished while the latter is rewarded. A saying of Prophet Muhammad goes: “The tomb is either a garden of paradise, or a trench of hell” (al-Ajluni, 1932, Vol. II: 90).

Cemetery Visiting

Cemetery visiting is so vivid in the Islamic world that one may witness a huge crowd on religious festivals, on the eve of the Fasting or Sacrifice Festivals in particular. This visit on the eve of the festivals has a psycho-social meaning as well. On the days of religious festivals, younger ones visit parents and elder relatives among others to show respect. By visiting the cemeteries on the eve of the festivals, one includes the deceased ancestors. One who visits the grave of one’s friends or kin feels relieved by offering prayer and think that his/her prayers are to free the deceased from spiritual punishment.

Muslims are strongly recommended to keep cemeteries clean and tidy. A story of Prophet Muhammad sets an example in this regard. Right after a burial ceremony the Prophet tidied up a stone surrounding the tomb. One companion asked why he had done that saying that it had not been a damage to the corpse. The Prophet answered saying, “Though it is not a damage for the corpse, it is a damage for the onlookers” (al-Sharani, 1954, Vol. I: 142–143).

See also: [Angels](#) [Islam](#) [Ka’bah](#) [Prayer](#) [Qur’an](#)

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Karma

Paul Larson

Karma is a core doctrine to Indian spirituality and has a similar meaning in both Hindu and Buddhist thought. It represents the idea of universal justice; the belief that in

the end, good will be rewarded and wrong-doing punished. It is often spoken of as the law of return, that whatever you put out toward others in conduct will come back eventually. Unlike the Western monotheism which posit only one life for each individual, in Eastern traditions the individual has an entire series of lifetimes in which to improve their spiritual and ethical development. The wheel of existence in both Hindu and Buddhist thought is a series of births, lives, and deaths over endless eons. The individual soul or karmic core gets passed along through successive incarnations until spiritual development leads to final unification with the transcendent ground of Being. In Hinduism this is viewed as Brahman, in Buddhism, this is simply termed enlightenment, or the fully awakened state. Karma has become a popular term in New Age spirituality; all actions can be good or bad karma depending on their ethical quality.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Hinduism](#)

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Kierkegaard, Søren

Tadd Ruetenik

Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard is often referred to as the father of existentialism, and not the father of depth psychology. His 1849 book *The Sickness unto Death*, however, is an exposition of human consciousness that is comparable to the work of Freud in important respects. Both Kierkegaard and Freud stressed the relative impotence of the ego in relation to non-rational forces in the mind, and both attempted to provide a remedy for this precarious condition. What makes Kierkegaard’s work in depth psychology unique is its explicitly Christian focus. *Sickness* is marked with the subtitle, *A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening*, and provides a detailed account of the disease of despair, which is understood as Godlessness. Another of Kierkegaard’s works,

Fear and Trembling, takes the Genesis story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, and provides a beautiful depiction of psychological endurance in the face of absurdity. It, like *Sickness*, operates on the belief that human existence is fundamentally paradoxical. For Kierkegaard, to be human is to be in a permanent state of cognitive dissonance, and on the verge of losing one's mind. To be saved, one must accept the dissonance and lose one's mind for the sake of gaining faith in God.

Despair and Human Existence

Human existence involves an uncomfortable synthesis of the eternal and temporal, and because of this all human beings are in despair, whether they admit it or not. Commonly, people believe that despair comes from fearing death, and brooding about the temporality of their existence. But according to the Christian perspective presented in *Sickness unto Death*, despair comes not from consideration of death and temporality, but from consideration of one's inability to die. Like a man on his death-bed, whose finite body writhes in pain but who is not yet granted the freedom of death, the Christian lives with the understanding that, in the face of despair, death is actually the last refuge. Death is the goal, but it is an unreachable one. A Christian's blessedness, that which sets her apart from all others, is her consciousness of an eternal self. Paradoxically, this consciousness is the sickness unto death.

People make impotent attempts to avoid this fundamental paradox by constructing false personalities that deal with their condition by either rebelling against it, or weakly resigning themselves to it. To avoid either of these types of folly, one must have faith, namely the faith that with God, all things are possible. Kierkegaard likens this faith to the act of drawing a satisfying breath after a period of stifling anxiety. With God, one can breathe again, and the panic disorder of infinitude is cured.

Kierkegaard was a man beset by anxiety and depression throughout his short life, and surely intended *Sickness Unto Death* to be, as much as anything else, a guide for other sufferers. Kierkegaard (who is as usual speaking through a pseudonym in this work) advocates that one must abandon the laborious process of trying to create a false personality. There is a greater control that takes over when one is brave enough to give up the ego's precarious tyranny.

Despair and Faith

Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* provides another detailed explanation of the process of losing one's mind to

find God. The inspiration for this story is the biblical account of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son. The book is especially sympathetic to the anxiety that Abraham must have felt while going up the mountain, following God-given orders that are, on any honest appraisal, ethically abominable. The faith that guides Abraham through the trip is impossible to explain, and lends itself only to poems of admiration.

Abraham's faith is, after all, a monstrous contradiction. It is not merely an example of temporary cognitive dissonance to be overcome by intellectual growth, but an absolute paradox, inaccessible to thought. One cannot appreciate the story without seriously considering whether Abraham is simply a murderer, one who is killing not only his own future, but also that of his people. Abraham maintains the infinitely optimistic and absurd belief that, by losing his son and his people, he would get them both back. Such a belief is rationally unwarranted, and yet according to *Fear and Trembling*, is the requirement for faith.

See also: [Abraham and Isaac](#) [Anxiety](#) [Christianity](#) [Death Anxiety](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Existentialism](#)

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Kingdom of God

Marta Green

The concept of the Kingdom of God was first written about in Exodus.1; a hymn celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea and proclaiming in verse 18 "The Lord will reign for ever and ever" (Jewish Encyclopedia). The concept was later developed by the prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah and expressed the yearning of the long oppressed Jewish people for the rule of their God over all the nations.

The Kingdom of God was the central concern of Jesus' ministry. Mark 1:14–15 records the first words

of his preaching ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the gospel.” There is disagreement among scholars as to what Kingdom Jesus was preaching. Some possibilities:

1. The dramatic intervention by God in the affairs of humans as depicted in the Synoptic Gospels (Luke 17 and parallels) and the *Book of Revelations*. This vision would point to a psychology of fear, a preoccupation with the division of the saved from the damned, a focus on imminently future events over which one has no control. Individuals who subscribe to such a belief system would be unlikely to seek treatment as any problem would be seen through the screen of Biblical apocalyptic prophesy.
2. The return of an earthly king like David. Jesus’ disciples certainly understood the Kingdom in this way (Matthew 20:21). Those who understand the Kingdom of God in this way would work to establish a theocracy here on earth. Their focus would be on establishing right action within such a Kingdom and right action to bring such a Kingdom into existence. Illness and Emotional problems would be read as a result of failing to follow prescribed moral codes.
3. The peaceable Kingdom, a place as in Isaiah where peace extends even to the natural world, where war will be no more and all the nations will flow towards the Holy Mountain (Jerusalem).
 - ▶ The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.
⁹They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11: 6–9).
4. Even though most of Jesus’ preaching was on the Kingdom of God, he does not specifically define what the Kingdom is, thus leaving the exact nature of the Kingdom open to interpretation. For instance, the Kingdom can be interpreted as current or future reality and an inner or outer reality, an individual or group reality or all of these, leading to a tension between/among these opposites. An example of this

is Luke 17:21 “The Kingdom is within you.” which can also be read as “The Kingdom is among you.”

The Kingdom of God is mentioned 58 times in Matthew, Mark and Luke and there are 31 references to the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew. Most are passages about proclaiming the arrival of the Kingdom or more frequently worded that the Kingdom has “come near.” There are many references to entering, seeing, receiving the Kingdom which seem to suggest that entry is an individual decision and dependent on individual behavior. For instance, the parable of the rich man seeking to enter the Kingdom in Matthew 19:24. There are other references to the Kingdom being a secret as in Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10 and references to “selling all” for the Kingdom (Matthew 13:14–46).

The Gospel of Matthew alone uses the introduction “The Kingdom is like” to begin longer parables such as the workers in the vineyard and the great banquet, though the longer parables in other Gospels are probably references to the Kingdom even if not actually specified as such. Such parables do not equate the Kingdom with one aspect of the story, say the banquet, but with the whole process of inviting and eating and even kicking out the man without a wedding garment (Matthew 22:2–14).

There is a small collection of similes which appear to give insight into Jesus’ conception of the kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, putting yeast in flour, planting seeds, a small common object of no special value which when hidden transforms the whole.

Psychotherapy also utilizes this principle. Psychotherapists align with the inborn aliveness in their patients, aliveness that may be difficult to notice with patients who are especially suppressed or injured. The therapist spots the tiny seed of initiative hidden inside, and helps the client make room for it to enlarge and transform the whole personality.

In the parable of the seed growing of itself, (Mark 4: 26–29). Jesus suggests that the Kingdom of God is a natural process of coming to fulfillment and wholeness navigated through the opposites of day and night, sleep and rising man and earth “first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.” As members of the natural world, we as humans are imbedded with a natural growth towards wholeness and fulfillment, born from within. Psychotherapy is a practice that seeks to discover and enhance this process of finding wholeness. Some Biblical scholars may equate this process with the coming to life of the Kingdom of God.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Jesus](#)

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Kingship

◉ Sacred King

Koan

Paul C. Cooper

Introduction

The term “koan” derives from the Chinese *ko* (public) *an* (case). Hence, literally, “public case.” A public case implies a standard of judgment. In the case of Zen, the judgment refers to the depth of the student’s intuitive understanding. Each koan takes the form of a story, anecdote or dialog, typically entailing an incident, situation or conversation between an historical Zen figure and a student. The use of the koan exercise as a tool for spiritual practice developed in tenth and eleventh Century China. Koan practice instilled new life into a Zen system that had become codified, calcified, dogmatic, and caught up in sectarian disputes.

Koan study developed through a long history of spontaneous question and answer dialogs, in which the question is typically turned back on the student or is given a seemingly illogical response. As teaching stories were collected, formalized and compiled into anthologies and structured, formal courses of study developed that were intended to simulate and to engender enlightenment experiences in Zen students.

Practice

After a preliminary period of practice, Zen students are given a koan to focus on during periods of *zazen* (sitting

meditation) as the subject of presentation, scrutiny and discussion during face-to-face interviews and group talks conducted by the Zen teacher. The Zen koan needs to be taken as a matter of life and death by the student. For example, in his commentary to the Mummonkan (Gateless Barrier), an important twelfth Century koan collection, Mumon, the compiler, conveys the sense of urgency and the intense level of energy applied to this task of concentration by comparing the internalizing of *Mu* (no) to “swallowing a red-hot iron ball” (Aitken, 1991: 9).

The student’s response to any koan reflects deepening or penetrating levels of awareness of reality as a result of cutting through or short-circuiting logical, linear thought. However, as Taizan Maezumi notes, the koan

- ▶ . . . is much more than a paradoxical riddle designed to prod the mind into intuitive insight. The koan is quite literally a touchstone of reality. It records an instance in which a key issue of practice and realization is presented and examined by experience rather than by discursive or linear logic (Yamada, 1979: vii).

This experientially based insight is referred to by Zennists as *satori* (enlightenment). Accordingly, the Zen master can only witness the student’s level of mastery through presentation during private interviews, but does not teach the student anything.

In practice, koan study engenders a spontaneous, intuitive knowledge beyond teachings and scriptures. This spontaneous direct knowing is reflected in the contemporary American Zen Master, John Loori’s comment that “We *do* koans, we don’t talk about them” (1994: xvii). Koans are designed to defeat rational, linear cause and effect thinking and for this reason, they frequently appear irrational and meaningless. D. T. Suzuki comments: “For the koan is not a logical proposition but an expression of a certain mental state resulting from Zen discipline” (1994: 83).

Similar to the psychoanalytic dialog, both the Zen master and the psychoanalyst are ever on the alert for dialog that deteriorates into intellectualism or logical philosophical discourse. With different goals in mind, and while not disregarding the intellect, both koan practice and psychoanalysis endeavor to go beyond its limitations and break through to a lived and felt awareness.

Stephan Heine writes that “The Zen koan . . . defines the heart of Zen Buddhism and is the single most distinctive feature in the thought and practice of the Zen sect” (2002: 1). Why does Zen ascribe such a central place to the koan? As a religion, Zen holds a salvational function. For Zen, the salvational function is articulated in the notion of *satori*. The koan and the associated dialog function to facilitate the *satori* experience. It is from this salvational

standpoint that, as Suzuki notes, “. . . the koan exercise came to be recognized as the necessary step towards realization of satori in Zen Buddhism” (1994: 31).

Koan Study and Psychoanalysis

Considering the centrality of the koan in Zen practice along with the increasingly deepening interest in the relation between Buddhism and psychotherapy, it is surprising that there is virtually no discussion of koan study in relation to psychotherapy in the literature on Zen and psychotherapy. At present, no systematic study of the relationship between koan work and psychoanalysis exists with the exception of a brief reference in Erich Fromm’s classic *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (Fromm, Suzuki, and DeMartino, 1960). Fromm noted that both psychoanalysis and Zen practice function to make the unconscious conscious.

In examining the relationship with the teacher and the descriptive aspects of satori, we can observe a number of significant connections to psychoanalysis. For instance, satori is expressed in freedom, creativity and in the arts. Koan practice involves relational dynamics that evolve over time and that parallel psychotherapeutic techniques and aims in certain fundamental ways. Some of the noted shifts in relational dynamics include a movement from contrivance to spontaneity, dogmatism to an iconoclastic orientation; from an over-reliance on intellectualization to expanded emotional expressivity; from a defensive false self expression to the authenticity of true self experiencing. Donald Winnicott describes the expression of the latter as “the spontaneous gesture” (Winnicott, 1965: 148). He characterizes the spontaneous gesture as reflective of the True Self expression in action. He writes that “Only the True Self can be creative and only the True Self can feel real” (1965: 148). While he does not make a specific reference to Zen or to koan study, he makes the observation that connects his psychoanalytic concept of “True and False Self” to religious experience. He writes that “This concept is not in itself new. It appears in various guises in descriptive psychiatry and notably in certain religions and philosophical systems” (1965: 140).

This movement from contrivance to spontaneous authenticity is crucial to psychoanalysis. For instance, Wilfred Bion notes that “There can be no genuine outcome that is based on falsity” (1970: 28). The implication for treatment centers on the analyst’s capacity for authenticity. Bion writes that “the more real the psychoanalyst is, the more he can be at one with the reality of the patient”

(Op. Cit. 1970: 28). The idea with both Zen practice and psychoanalysis conducted from this perspective is that psychotherapy relies less on preconceived thoughts, beliefs and ideas and more on intuition of the moment-to-moment experience.

A common feature of both systems is a notable movement in the dialog from observation to experiencing that closes the gap between objective and subjective self. Parallels can also be noted between koan dialogs and Bion’s notion of bridging the gap between an activity that is “about psychoanalysis” to “being psychoanalysis.” Cooper (2001) provides a detailed discussion of the gap between being and knowing in relation to Zen and psychoanalysis. Lived experienced truth replaces the accumulation of information; intuitive knowing (prajna) replaces conceptual understanding; unitive experiencing replaces dualistic thinking. Truth experiencing is prioritized in both Zen and in Bion’s psychoanalysis. A parallel can be drawn here to Bion’s notion of intuition. In expressing the truths of Zen, we become more truthful because we are basically expressing the truth of who we authentically are. As this expression becomes increasingly fresh, alive, spontaneous, and authentic we expand our capacity, as Bion notes, with respect to psychoanalysis, that is free from memory, desire and understanding, and we experience and express a wider range of emotions. What is required of the psychoanalyst is an interpretation that is enlivening, not deadening.

The explicit iconoclastic orientation as articulated in the koan literature coupled with the Zen experiential negation of an inherently existing self or essence and the deconstruction of reified versions of self and object experience resituates the psychotherapist who practices Zen in relation to the therapeutic encounter and radically alters the conception of goals and healing in psychoanalysis. Similarly, for a minority of influential psychoanalysts such as Bion, Lacan, and Eigen, truth lies beyond the parameters of any notion of goal, pathology or healing. For instance, for Bion, the notion of cure operates as a function of desire and interferes with the lived experience of Truth and at-onement. For the Zennist, the notion of cure is a function of attachment and intellect and requires deconstruction. Lacan offers a similar vantage point. He observes that the analyst’s ego functioning should not be considered as an orientation point or as a clinical measure of the patient’s health, for normality or for objective reality.

As a result, Bion observes that “The pattern of analysis will change. . . . ‘Progress’ will be measured by the increased number and variety of moods, ideas and attitudes in any given session” (1967/1988: 18). Similarly, Suzuki describes a feeling of exaltation “. . . due to the fact that it is a breaking up of the restriction imposed on

one as an individual being. . . an infinite expansion of the individual” (1994: 29). With this point in mind, the 16th C. Korean Zen master, T’ui – yin notes that

“What is required of Zen devotees is to see into the phrase that liveth and not into one which is dead” (Suzuki, 1994: 92).

D. T. Suzuki describes koan study as “. . . a unique contribution Zen has made to the history of religious consciousness” (1994: 11). He describes the development of koan study as crucial to the revitalization of Zen, which had, over time, become lifeless and calcified. He attributes this calcification to intellectualism and quietist tendencies. It is interesting to note the pervasive and perennial nature of these tendencies in contemporary psychotherapy. Suzuki notes that “. . . there was a tendency which made for the evaporation of Zen experience into conceptualism” (1994: 77). Steven Heine notes that during the thirteenth Century, Dogen, the founder of the Japanese Soto sect of Zen Buddhism revitalized koan study, which also had become lifeless. He accomplished this revitalization by criticizing the derailment of dialog in traditional koan study and by offering novel and contradictory interpretations of traditional koans that he intended to use in order to expand dialog.

One question that is relevant to contemporary psychotherapy is “Can koan practice and study enliven psychotherapy?”

See also: [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Kohut, Heinz

Joeline E. Roberts

Heinz Kohut (1913–1981): Born in Vienna, Heinz Kohut emigrated to Chicago in 1939 where he trained in psychiatry at the University of Chicago. In 1946 he entered the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis where he would remain as a supervisor and training analyst for the rest of his life.

Kohut received wide recognition late in his life for the development of the theory of Self Psychology in which he replaced Freud’s drive theory with a focus on experience of self. According to his theory narcissism had its own line of development. There could be no self without another; it was in relationship that the self was formed and developed. Hence Kohut’s vision of treatment emphasized understanding the context of the patient’s reaction. For this the analyst relied on a process Kohut called “empathy and vicarious introspection” in order to understand and explain the patient’s subjective experience within the treatment.

Kohut comprehensively outlined his theory in his 1968 paper “The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders: Outline of a Systematic Approach”. He said that the self is first sustained by archaic mergers with selfobjects. The self then progresses towards more mature selfobject experience and is sustained by empathic resonance in adult relationships. In self psychological treatment the analysand re-mobilizes his or her unmet selfobject needs through the selfobject transference. Kohut recognized three lines of selfobject transference: mirroring, idealization and twinship, which engage the analysand’s need for, respectively, self esteem, self coherence and human likeness.

According to Strozier, Kohut believed that religion’s unique function was to hold together, strengthen and make harmonious man’s self.

See also: [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Self Psychology](#)

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Kristeva, Julia

Carol L. Schnabl Schweitzer

Kristeva's Life

Julia Kristeva was born June 24, 1941, in Silven, Bulgaria. Her writings span topics including: art and art history; literary theory and criticism, in particular the study of semiotics; psychoanalysis; the abject; feminism; love; the maternal; melancholy; religion; the stranger; culture; and, her somewhat autobiographical novels. She has been identified with structuralism but has made significant contributions to post-structuralist thought.

Being the recipient of a doctoral fellowship brought Kristeva from Bulgaria to Paris in December 1965 and she began her studies in January 1966 in literary criticism. In 1973, she was awarded her Ph.D. at which time she became a professor of linguistics at the University of Paris VII where she continues to write, teach and practice today. The following year her dissertation, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, was published and she visited China. Her trip to China inspired her book *Des Chinoises (About Chinese Women)* and prefigures her life-long professional interest in the sacred and the feminine.

From 1976 to 1979, Kristeva studied psychoanalysis with Jacques Lacan. Her son was born during this period. Her interpreters herald this time as the beginning of a change in her writing style, evident with the French publication of *Powers of Horror* in 1980 (Kristeva, 1982: vii). Her early works are deemed more theoretical – and therefore, less readable – bringing together perspectives from Marxism, psychoanalysis (i.e., Freud and Lacan), Bakhtin and Barthes. Her later works appear “more relaxed, more readable, more concrete, more plural – some would say, more human – than the more theoretical works

of the late 1960s and the 1970s” (Crownfield, 1992: xii, xiv). *Powers of Horror* and subsequent texts begin to focus on the maternal and the feminine in culture. She has delineated three periods of feminist thought in her essay, “Women’s Time,” but her location as a feminist writer is controversial among many feminists in the United States as a direct result of her interest in motherhood (Kristeva, 1995: 201–224).

Kristeva’s writings were and continue to be influenced by her childhood. She grew up in a middle-class family which was ardently Roman Catholic; her parents did not belong to the Communist Party, and this reality limited the schools where Kristeva could study. The “better” schools were reserved for children of the party-faithful, which led to Kristeva’s early education in a French language Catholic school. She did, however, participate in Communist Party children’s groups as well as youth organizations. The tension between religion and psychoanalysis, or Christian faith and psychoanalysis in general, and in Kristeva’s own life in particular, is illustrated by a comment she made during an interview in 1992:

- ▶ My childhood unraveled right in the heart of Sofia. For me, Sofia can be boiled down to the Saint Nedelia cathedral, with its little gardens, its snowy slopes on which I would throw my toboggan, its secret rooms, and its nervous believers. My father, a faithful man whose beautiful voice added to the Saint Nedelia church choir, would bring me to the cathedral before dawn so that I could take communion without being spotted. *I eventually rebelled, not because I was bothered by the dissidence of the act but because of universal reason, which is, I still find, harder to understand and to embody than faith is (Interviews, 1996, 137–38, my emphasis).*

Kristeva's Work

The dissonance between universal reason and the lived experience of her childhood is still evident in her writings today as she grapples with the dissonance between faith and reason (psychoanalysis). Though Kristeva maintains a posture of an atheist, she acknowledges that contrary to Freud she does not believe religion is solely an illusion which contributes to neurosis (Kristeva, 2007: website excerpt). Yet unlike so many feminist writers she does maintain a conversation with Freud through the influence of her teacher, Lacan. In fact, she contends that the modern-day therapist has superseded the local priest/minister because religion no longer provides a privileged space for human communication and the language system

employed in religious discourse ultimately becomes a source of oppression – particularly for women because it excludes the feminine/maternal.

For those who count themselves among the religious (especially Christian believers), Kristeva suggests that restoring religious discourse to its full positive value provides a source of psychic healing. Her proposal for this includes an expansion of metaphor in the therapeutic relationship to include the feminine or maternal, and an understanding of the transference relationship as a loving relationship which has as its foundation maternal love (i.e., since all loving relationships have maternal love as their source according to Kristeva). Based on Kristeva's proposal, I have concluded elsewhere that the role of a pastoral counselor (or any therapist for that matter) is "to be a loving, 'forgiving other' – someone who listens with tact or a delicate perception of another's affect. To listen with a for-giving attitude means that I give a gift of understanding to another. I must deprive myself of my own understanding and judgment even though I continue to ask questions" (Schweitzer, 2002: xiv). Thus, one hallmark of the therapeutic task understood from this perspective is to become "an other who does not judge but hears my truth in the availability of love, and for that very reason allows me to be reborn" (Kristeva, 1989: 205). One may want to conclude (and I do) that there is at least a resemblance between Kristeva's understanding of a transference relationship in the analytic process and the Christian notion of *agapé* as well as an analogy between Christian transformation and the psychoanalytic rebirth that occurs in the context of a therapeutic relationship.

See also: ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Lacan, Jacques ▶ Object Relations Theory ▶ Psychoanalysis

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Kuan Yin

▶ Guan Yin

L

Labyrinth

Kelly Murphy Mason

The labyrinth is an archetypal form found in disparate cultures across eras spanning from prehistory and to the present day, when it has experienced resurgence in popularity due to interest in its psychospiritual applications. Regardless of how it is styled, a labyrinth is marked by a shape, usually a symmetrical one, containing a unicursal path to or through a center point. This distinguishes it from a maze, which is multicursal and contains dead ends. Following the path of the labyrinth, the traveler is eventually and inevitably brought to the center and then back out again. While travelers may not know where exactly they are on this labyrinthine path, they are never lost, but rather, somewhere along the way they need to travel. As a result, the labyrinth has become common both as a metaphor and as a symbol of the human pilgrimage through life. A great deal of conjecture exists about its history, origins, and purposes, suggesting that the labyrinth has proven fertile ground for the imagination for millennia.

Its universality among prehistoric cultures indicates the so-called classical labyrinth was a primitive form of symbolic communication, perhaps an earliest form of written transmission. It was drawn from a central cross surrounded by four angles and four seed points that were connected until seven circuits were contained in its circle. Cave etchings of this particular labyrinth appear circa 2000 BCE in Spain (Saward, 2002). These symbols appear at approximately the same time in the Indian subcontinent, as well. Later, multitudinous stone arrangements of the similar symbols appeared in Scandinavian soil, often near the coast, leading some to speculate that seafarers would walk them in preparation for their journeys over water.

In mythology, the labyrinth first appears in the Greek lore surrounding the Minotaur of Crete. Unmistakably, the Cretan labyrinth was a built environment, an

architectural structure, yet coins from Knossos featured the rounded, two-dimensional form of the classical labyrinth as its signifier. Later, Romans exported labyrinth mosaics throughout the Roman Empire (Kern, 2000), from Great Britain to Eastern Europe to North Africa. Some were purported to be sizable enough for people to travel on horseback; others were too intricate to serve anything other than decorative purposes. Roman labyrinths are distinct for their sharp angularity, both in their pathways and their outlines.

The Hopi tribes of North America had a squared version of the labyrinth that they used in addition to the classical labyrinth (Conty, 2002); it was unique in having two entrances. The Pima tribes, in their depictions of labyrinths, placed a human figure at the very entrance, in what later became known as “The Man in the Maze” pattern. This man was thought to be seeking the mythic place of his origin as a place of eternal return. Labyrinths were associated with a variety of burial rituals in Celtic cultures as well as Egyptian society, where they were believed to protect the sanctity of the tomb.

Despite its strong association with pagan rituals, the labyrinth was adopted rather quickly by the early church. In an Algerian church was found a labyrinth dating from the fourth century BCE (Matthews, 1970); its center circle contained the slogan “Sancta Ecclesia,” translated “Holy Church.” The destination of the spiritual journey was no longer reunion with the earth, but inclusion in corporate Christendom. Interestingly, there was a profusion of varying forms of labyrinths across different churches during the Middle Ages, some square, some circular, a few octagonal.

At Glastonbury Tor, thought to be site of the first church built in England, an oval-shaped labyrinth appears to have been carved into the landscape the tower sat atop, so that entrance to it would be gained by walking the steep incline of winding circuits. Such large-scale, three-dimensional labyrinths also appeared in Peru, where they figured as features in the geoglyphs of totemistic animals used in the rituals of indigenous earth-centered religions.

By and large, Christian labyrinths belonged in the interiors of churches rather than their exteriors, although turf

and hedge labyrinths were fairly frequently found in English gardens and church grounds. Often, the labyrinth was placed near the entry of the church building. These labyrinths were sometimes called “Chemin de Jerusalem,” the Way to Jerusalem, because they allowed European churchgoers to enact a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at a time when both its distance and ongoing Crusades made such travel nigh impossible. Members of the clergy would walk the labyrinth as an Easter ritual representing Christ’s descent into hell, bodily resurrection, and ascent into heaven. Many monks traveled the labyrinth on their knees.

Perhaps the best known Christian labyrinth is found on the floor of Chartres Cathedral. Completed sometime in the early thirteenth century, its eleven-circuit course led to a six-petalled rosette in the center, outlined in more than a hundred lunations. Much speculation has existed around the esoteric numerology and sacred geometry of the various labyrinths that appeared in churches (Lonegren, 2007). Whether or not the Chartres labyrinth was devised as a specifically Marinal devotion, it was obviously not cruciform, as was the octagonal Maltese labyrinth so suggestive of more martial Roman forms.

General consensus holds that the Chartres labyrinth pays homage to the feminine aspect of the divine dimension with its womb-like appearance evocative of not only actual birth and death but also spiritual rebirth. The continuous pathway can be viewed as representative of the original passage through the birth canal. Some have even suggested that the Chartres labyrinth was actually used as a birthing instrument; either way, its feminine form would be unmistakable to worshippers.

Many churches and cathedrals saw their labyrinths removed or hidden in the centuries that followed, quite possibly as part of a larger repression of the feminine principle or a backlash against vestigial Goddess worship from older traditions. Evidence exists that some pagans may even have used the labyrinth in their mating rituals. The obvious physicality of a walking the labyrinth might have suggested a sensuous and immediate experience of the Divine that organized religion would attempt to control more closely in the West.

It is precisely such kinesthetic engagement that has recently made the labyrinth so appealing to contemporary travelers whose spiritual yearnings have been unfulfilled by religious dogma and formalized worship. In a contained and sanctified way, it offers travelers a chance to practice walking meditation and full-body prayer. In doing so, it combines active and contemplative approaches to self-realization (Artress, 1995).

A labyrinth is clearly an exercise in intentionality. Its traveler is no further along spatially than when the walk was

begun and actually backtracks at several different points. The labyrinth thereby challenges some dominant notions of linear progression, time urgency, and outward orientation, suggesting that meaningful personal journeys might involve internal shifts that are as significant as external ones.

As a visual metaphor for journeying within, the labyrinth has also served as a powerful imagistic representation of the psychotherapeutic process, as well as the spiritual quest. The circuits of a labyrinth are vaguely reminiscent of the whorl of a fingerprint, that powerful symbol of personal identity (Attali, 1999). The possibility of truly knowing one’s own self emerges as one looks inwards.

The existence of a sacred interiority becomes recognized and transitional/transformational space gets created in depictions of the labyrinth. Today people may trace finger labyrinths as a meditative practice, or else contemplate line drawings of the labyrinth which they can either “walk” with their eyes or consider as a unified symbol of wholeness. Entire classical labyrinths can be easily constructed from just a few simple marks drawn in the earth. The labyrinth can in turn serve as a sacred experience, sacred space, or sacred image.

Such versatility allows the labyrinth to help its travelers bridge some of the mind-body divide, paradoxically by allowing them to ground themselves in the numinous. Circumambulating the labyrinth is a right-brained activity that allows for flashes of intuition. The winding way become clear and in that process, wandering suddenly becomes purposeful. For this reason, ritual use of the labyrinth now often occurs at liminal times (Curry, 2000), whenever people find themselves at a threshold in their lives.

Commentary

The labyrinth has been called the Mandala of the West because of its apparent usefulness as a meditative tool and non-linear activity. It seems to be a culturally consonant symbol that expands consciousness and contains the potential for both psychospiritual integration and healing. The strong revival of interest in labyrinths in Western societies has given rise to numerous organizations promoting their use, organizations that are religious and secular alike, resulting in an international movement to increase their availability in shared spaces. Literature on the topic has proliferated in recent decades.

Even as research into the past and future uses of the labyrinth continues, however, it runs the risk of remaining speculative on the question of its distant origins and almost global ubiquity. What seems clear is that the

growing popularity of the labyrinth is a response to a contemporary spiritual yearning to feel more grounded and centered. Through its indirection and reversals, the labyrinth appears to provide people an alternative to the frenetic pace of modern life and a greater sense of continuity with the past, possibly by suspending animation to a degree. Its symbolism has remained alluring and evocative through millennia of human history.

See also: [▶ Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#)
[▶ Biblical Psychology](#)

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Lacan, Jacques

John Pahucki

Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) was a French psychoanalyst associated with the literary and philosophical movements of structuralism and post-structuralism. A notoriously abstruse thinker, Lacan, like many French intellectuals associated with postmodern thought, has often been accused of being deliberately obscure in his writings. This is particularly true of his major work, the *Écrits*, which is noted for its difficulty.

Lacan is known for his claim of a “return to Freud,” though in actual practice this amounted to a radical reconfiguration of Freudian psychoanalysis as Lacan attempted to effect a synthesis between Freud’s biologically

driven psychology and the linguistic theory of structuralists like Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson. Freud’s biologically founded subject is thus replaced, by Lacan, with a linguistically constituted subject, with the Freudian drives and even the body itself transliterated or overwritten by culturally specific signifying activities. In this view, the linguistic register of one’s culture channels and determines the directionality and movements that the biological drives assume. The Freudian unconscious, formerly the a priori wellspring of irrational drives and biological pulsations, is also viewed as a linguistic product, an a posteriori consequence of our entry into the linguistic register. The unconscious possesses rules analogous to the syntactical structures which govern the conscious linguistic subject, hence Lacan’s famous claim that the “unconscious is structured like a language.”

Lacan is perhaps best known for the three orders of the *imaginary*, the *symbolic*, and the *real*. The imaginary order is inaugurated by what Lacan described as the “mirror phase” which occurs roughly at six months of age. In this phase the child identifies with a “specular” and exteriorized image of itself, in an actual mirror or in the mirror of the “other,” which it then introjects in order to stabilize and master its bodily sense. The imaginary order, being based on this fundamental misrecognition of the self in the form of a falsifying image, thus results in a state of alienation.

This alienation is compounded by entry into the symbolic order (or linguistic register) which occurs when the child is forced to accept the “law” of the *Name-of-the-Father* (*le Nom du Père*). With the adoption of language the subject is inscribed or overwritten by signifiers, thus being made subject to the regulative strictures and organizational principles embedded within the culture’s system of signification. The symbolic order is therefore *Other* to the subject, being imposed and not truly adopted. Lacan’s ubiquitous use of the term *Other* most often refers to this otherness of language. The direct consequence of entry into the linguistic register is “symbolic castration,” a notion which replaces Freud’s oedipal drama and its threat of actual physical castration with the subject’s loss of *jouissance*, an untranslated term that refers to a pre-Oedipal enjoyment of the object no longer possible for the linguistic subject. In keeping with this rejection of Freud’s biological schema, Lacan replaces the organ of the penis with the symbolic *phallus*, a term which refers to this pre-Oedipal state of dyadic fusion with the maternal object.

The real is much more difficult to describe, as it is the order of experience which completely resists symbolization. It may be the undifferentiated state of being that

precedes linguistic acquisition or it may refer to significantly traumatic experiences which resist articulation.

Lacan's theories have generated considerable interest among philosophers, literary and religious studies scholars, and feminists preoccupied with continental thought generally and the postmodern "de-centered" subject specifically. His influence is particularly evident in the psychoanalytic work of Julia Kristeva.

See also: [▶ Kristeva, Julia](#) [▶ Postmodernism](#)

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Laing, Ronald David

Daniel Burston

Life and Career

Ronald David Laing was born on October 7, 1927 on 26 Ardbeg Street in the Govanhill district of Glasgow, and died on August 23, 1989 in St. Tropez, France. Like his father, Ronald Laing was musically gifted, and received a Licentiate in music from the Royal Academy of Music at age 16. At 17, he enrolled in Glasgow University, and at 18, specialized in medicine. Because of the Korean war, military service was mandatory, and so in 1949, Laing did basic training. After a brief apprenticeship in neurosurgery at Killearn in 1950, Laing spent 1951–1952 as an army psychiatrist. In 1953, now a captain, Laing was placed in charge of the Army hospital in Catterick, in Yorkshire. Soon thereafter, he left the Army for the Royal Gartnavel Hospital and Southern General Hospital (Glasgow), where he worked under Dr. Ferguson Rodger. Rodger brought Laing to the attention of Dr. J. D. Sutherland, the Director of the Tavistock Clinic. With the help of Sutherland, and his successor, John Bowlby, Laing came to London in 1956 to train as a psychoanalyst (Burston, 1996).

During his psychoanalytic training, Laing completed *The Divided Self*, a classic in existential psychotherapy

(Laing, 1960). His second book, *Self and Others*, appeared in 1961 (Laing, 1961). From 1962–1965, he worked as the Director of the Open Way Clinic, founded by E. Graham Howe, one of the few places in Britain where Freudian and Jungian therapists worked together comfortably. In 1964, Laing and Aaron Esterson, another Glaswegian psychiatrist, published *Sanity, Madness & The Family* (Laing and Esterson, 1964). Laing also published *Reason & Violence: A Decade of Sartre's Philosophy* with South African psychiatrist Dr. David Cooper that same year (Laing and Cooper, 1964).

Critique of Normality

In February of 1967, Laing published *The Politics of Experience* (Laing, 1967). Though not his best book, it was the most influential, and one feature of the book that gripped many readers was Laing's sweeping critique of "normality," which Laing described as a state of profound self-estrangement or alienation – alienation being a hot topic at the time. By Laing's reckoning, the galloping self-estrangement that plagues Western civilization fosters a progressive attenuation of the average, adjusted person's critical faculties and their openness to transcendental experience; a state more akin to a deficiency disease than to genuine mental health. What is lost to normal people are not merely instinctual urges, or the memory of specific events or losses, as Freud suggested. The awareness of the tragic, the sublime, the absurd, of the prevalence and persistence of evil, of the peace that passes understanding – these innately human sensibilities are severely stunted, if not entirely extinguished in the struggle to adapt to an increasingly one-dimensional world.

In retrospect, it is interesting to note how often Laing disparaged normality with religious tropes and metaphors. In chapter 3, for example, he says (p. 68): "We are all fallen Sons of Prophecy, who have learned to die in the Spirit and be reborn in the Flesh" (Laing, 1967). And again, in chapter six:

- ▶ There is a prophecy in Amos that a time will come when there will be a famine in the land, 'not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' That time has now come to pass. It is the present age (Laing, 1967: 144).

Without saying so in quite so many words, passages like these implied that the loss of the sacred as a feature of normal experience is linked with the problem of individual and collective violence. But according to Laing, the escalating scale and widening scope of violence in our

time is *not* the result of innate propensities to violence and indiscipline – a “death instinct,” as Freud thought – but of *the violence we do to ourselves* in our efforts to adapt to an increasingly irrational world that is bereft of genuine transcendence. In other words, Laing implied that there is a strong correlation between the numbing routine, the mindless consumerism and the shabby ethical compromises of daily life in postindustrial society and the steady proliferation of evil.

That being so, it is important to note that *The Politics of Experience* was published at the height of the Vietnam war, when Christian, Jewish and Muslim fundamentalism had no appreciable impact on world affairs. For members of Laing’s generation, who came of age during the Korean war, religious wars were a distant memory, rather than a growing and undeniable threat to global stability. Much as he lamented the loss of the numinous, Laing was not advocating a return to a repressive, theocratic society, or advocating the revival of religious creeds based on the unreflective embrace or vehement defense of particular forms of belief. Had he lived to witness our present global predicament, Laing would probably have characterized the resurgence of Jewish, Christian and Islamic fundamentalism as a reversion to *pseudo-religious* attitudes and passions, rather than the genuine article.

Metanoia

In any case, in contrast to mere normality, Laing maintained that true sanity can only be achieved through the dissolution of the socially adjusted ego (or persona) in a process which he termed “metanoia.” Ego transcendence, said Laing, can be sought gradually and deliberately through meditation and spiritual practices, or it can occur spontaneously. The mad person, said Laing, is often catapulted into this process unawares, and without skillful guidance, will go astray, exiled indefinitely in the daemonic realms that enshroud and obstruct our access to the holy. However, given appropriate care, many psychotics can recover their emotional and intellectual equilibrium without recourse to psychotropic medication or other intrusive or coercive treatments, with the help of a seasoned therapist who is in touch with his or her own psychotic core, and is not intimidated or overwhelmed by the severity of the patient’s symptoms.

Like Jung before him, Laing borrowed the word “metanoia” from the New Testament to describe the dissolution of normal egoic consciousness. When translated from the original Greek, this word is usually rendered as

“repentance.” The problem with this commonplace translation is that it dwells primarily on the subject’s sense of sinfulness, and his (or her) earnest desire to shed sinful habits and desires. But in the original Greek, the term “metanoia” connotes an epistemological upheaval, a radical change of perspective, a total and irreversible change in one’s view of oneself and the world – in short, an epiphany or enlightenment experience more akin to the ancient idea of “gnosis” than to moral reform or reconstruction.

Laing’s Christian Roots

Though few readers were aware of it, R. D. Laing combined a rare appreciation of Asian wisdom and spiritual practices with a heartfelt immersion in Christian spirituality – a trait that he shared with E. Graham Howe and Alan Watts. Nowhere is this more apparent than in an interview with Yoga scholar George Feuerstein, entitled “Sparks of Light,” which appeared in 1983. “Sparks of Light” contains many of his most profound reflections on spirituality, but was not delivered in his usual style. Laing himself acknowledged this, admitting that he was finally expressing himself in a Christian idiom that he had become “. . . less embarrassed about affirming in the course of the last thirty years or so” (Feuerstein, 1983).

Why embarrassed? During the Cold War Era, when Laing rose to prominence, people tended to regard anyone who spoke often and earnestly of their faith outside of their immediate circle as being somewhat odd and ill-educated. However, this statement also conveys the misleading impression that though his reluctance to speak about it had diminished in the last few decades, his faith had been constant throughout. This is simply not so. Indeed, the cumulative impression one gets is that Laing spent most of adult life as a reluctant and sometimes deeply anguished agnostic who longed for the consolations of faith, but could not overcome his doubts and misgivings sufficiently to affirm what he desired to belief – sometimes ambivalently, sometimes wholeheartedly. This is the real source of his “embarrassment.”

What kind of Christian was Laing, when he was not overwhelmed by doubt? As a teenager, Laing was exposed to the Evangelical-cum-fundamentalist variety of Calvinism, and to the older “Celtic Christianity” that arrived in Scotland with Brendan the Navigator (c. 484– c. 578) and St. Columba (521–597), both of whom played a significant role in the building of Iona Abbey on the Isle Iona, in the Lower Hebrides. By the age of 14, Laing claimed, he had emphatically Evangelical Christianity in favor of the

latter, Celtic variety. This claim is born out by his on again/off again relationship with the Very Reverend George MacLeod (1895–1991), who like Laing, incidentally, was a native of Glasgow who rose to the rank of Captain in the British Army. MacLeod was the founder of The Iona Christian Community, an ecumenical community dedicated to the preservation of Celtic Christianity and the erasure of world hunger and poverty, based on the Isle of Iona in the Lower Hebrides. Though few people are aware of it, Laing spent many weeks there over the course of his career. Indeed, in the early 1980s, Laing even pondered the possibility of situating a foundation to be called St. Oran's Trust on this fair island.

Laing's leanings toward Celtic Christianity are also evident in his remark to Feuerstein that we are all one in "the Universal Fire." Indeed, said Laing, our individual souls are nothing but "sparks" emanating from this universal fire. Classicists contend that the idea that the soul is a "spark" of a Divine Fire probably originates in the Orphic religion, but gets taken up by Plato in the fourth century BCE, and subsequently, by the Stoics and neo-Platonists in the Hellenistic-Roman era. While originally a school of pagan philosophy, Neo-Platonism and the emanationist approach to theology later took on Jewish, Christian and Islamic forms, and as we survey the history of Western spirituality, the imagery of the soul as a Divine spark becomes a common idiom for mystics of all three monotheistic traditions.

Another striking feature of his talk with Feuerstein, is that when asked to share the fruits of a lifetime of introspection, Laing responded that he discovered "that hope is justifiable." The term "hope" does not surface often in Laing's work, and though he vigorously repudiated the suggestion, many readers – friends and critics alike – found *The Politics of Experience* to be an angry and eloquent expression of overwhelming despair. If so, of course, Laing had clearly recovered some of his optimism in the interim. Meanwhile, the suggestion that hope is justifiable, and that this represents a hard won discovery on his part, says a great deal about him personally.

That being so, it is also instructive to note that Laing tries here – and not for the first time – to link the idea of love to the project of scientific inquiry, and that Laing often despaired of getting psychiatrists to see that viewing their patients primarily or exclusively through the lenses of the natural scientific attitude is profoundly dehumanizing. The idea that science is (or ought) to be informed by a loving, reverential attitude toward nature was self-evident to someone like Einstein, but is odd and incongruous to most scientists, so Laing justified this linkage by pointing to the destructive potential of scientific research that lacks this basis. He said:

- ▶ If you investigate and inquire into the world without love, you don't find anything worthwhile. If you look at a tree or a frog or anything at all without the eyes of love, then you obtain only loveless, heartless knowledge. When such knowledge is accumulated and applied to practices of scientific technology, it becomes the most destructive form of knowledge ever discovered. Even the worst black magic cannot vie with the destructive capacity of science. Its very method is to destroy what it looks at in order to discover its elements.

See also: [Ego](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Self](#)

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Levinas, Emmanuel

David M. Goodman

Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) was a Talmudist, ethicist, and continental philosopher whose thought has left a lasting imprint on contemporary philosophy and theology. His sophisticated ethical system that understands the self to be radically responsible for the Other has challenged conventional theories of selfhood, subjectivity, consciousness, ethics, metaphysics, language, and social relations. Furthermore, his ethical philosophy is beginning to find its way into psychological discourse concerning psychotherapy, human development, and definitions of selfhood.

Levinas was born in Kaunas (a.k.a. Kovno), Lithuania in 1906 to a moderately affluent, Orthodox Jewish family. In his formative years, he was educated in traditional Hebrew school and was also heavily influenced by the work of Russian novelists such as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. In 1923, Levinas traveled to Strasbourg, France for formal education in philosophy. Shortly after, he went to Freiburg, Germany where he studied phenomenological theory and methodology under both Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. These experiences impacted Levinas for the remainder of his intellectual career. Levinas translated Husserl's work into French, making him the first to introduce Husserlian phenomenology into the French academy (later read by Sartre and other prominent thinkers). Husserl and Heidegger remained the primary dialogue partners within Levinas' philosophical works. He viewed their thoughts on consciousness, history, ontology, and metaphysics to be representative of the greater Western philosophical tradition he wished to engage and challenge.

Conversant in both Hebrew Scriptures and Western philosophy, Levinas represents a unique perspective on ethics. His project is sometimes described as *translation*, a communicating of ancient Hebrew wisdom through the more dominant and universalizing trends of Greek rationality and the academy. Levinas' project continues to be mined for its far reaching implications upon religious studies, philosophical systems, and psychological paradigms.

The historical context of Levinas' life further enriched the content of his writings and critique. Levinas' loss of his father, mother, and two brothers at the hands of Nazi soldiers, along with his own imprisonment for five years during World War II, left a profound impression on Levinas' thought and interaction with Western philosophy. He claimed that many trends within Western thought had created an allergy to ethics and a form of ethical immunity for persons in the world. He understood many Western systems of morality to be failures and dangerous appendages to the violence making of the ego and human history as a whole. Levinas argued for movement away from the *love of wisdom* that had sustained Western thought since the ancient Greeks (and can be seen in modern science and psychology) to a *wisdom of love at the service of love* recognized within biblical tradition. Levinas called for "ethics as first philosophy" rather than ontology, traditional metaphysics, epistemology, doctrine, or sacraments.

Levinas' concern about violence, along with his desire to provide an account of human experience/phenomenology that recognized the inherent ethical call in the face of the Other, provided the basis of his first magnum opus, *Totality and Infinity*. In this work, he argues that the ego is

not at rest within itself, but rather has a metaphysical desire for something beyond its own sameness (or immanence). Though the ego often defends against otherness by reducing the Other to totalizing depictions (through intentional consciousness), there is a compelling command within the face of the Other that calls for responsibility. Levinas understood the face of the Other to be a trace of the Divine (or infinity/transcendence). The dialogical philosophies of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig were indelible influences upon Levinas' assertions concerning the irreducibility of the Other and the requirement of justice in human relations. As Levinas' work evolved, this responsibility became even more radical and his language for it more intense. By his second magnum opus, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Levinas had come to emphasize the Other as bearing an alterity as radical as God's alterity. Furthermore, the Other's otherness, in Levinas' thought, wounds the banality and complacency of the ego and denucleates and decenters it. The ego loses its primacy and sovereignty and, instead, is hostage, persecuted, and traumatized by its inexhaustible responsibility for the Other. Ultimately, Levinas worked to uncover the phenomenological experience in face-to-face relation.

For Levinas, one's psyche is ethically constituted and called forth into identity. The Hebrew expression, *hineni*, meaning "here I am," was his most succinct definition of the human psyche and the human self. That is, the self is always an ethical responsiveness, not a self-assertion or noun. To argue these points, Levinas engages in complex analysis about intersubjectivity and time, primordial encounter, interhuman subjectivity, and sensate experience.

Interestingly, Levinas peppers much of his philosophical treatises with rich religious terminology and illustrations (e.g., substitution, expiation, glory, Divine, transcendence, *hineni*, idol, Abraham's departure from his homeland, etc.). This has created significant contention in the field of Levinas studies concerning the theological characteristics of Levinas' thought. Some argue that his philosophy was fundamentally Jewish while others want to preserve a purist depiction of his thought as philosophical. This issue is complexified by Levinas' confessional writings and Talmudic commentaries. Levinas was not entirely clear about the relation of his religious beliefs to his philosophical works. However, he was clear that he considered himself a translator of Hebrew thought (ethical concern for the Other as represented in ancient tradition) into and through Greek thought (dominant Western tradition). Though, he did not like the title "Jewish thinker" or "Jewish philosopher" to describe his work.

In addition to the works listed above, Levinas wrote many other social and religious commentaries, and

philosophical articles and books. By the end of Levinas' career, he had taught in the prestigious philosophy departments at the University of Poitiers, University of Nanterre, and University of Sorbonne. His impact on the landscape of 20th European continental philosophy has been and continues to be quite significant. Such thinkers as Blanchot, Derrida, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Lyotard, Marion, Pope Jean-Paul II, and Ricoeur are just a few of the many noteworthy figures within Western thought that came under Levinas' influence.

Commentary

Levinas did not write directly about psychology in most of his works. Scattered references can be found – mostly of a critical nature – about the naturalistic, mechanistic, and reductive practices of psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Despite this, Levinas' thought has slowly begun to make its way into psychoanalytic dialogues, with comparisons done between Levinas and Winnicott, Lacan, Freud, and Jung. Existential-Phenomenological schools utilize Levinas' work to further bolster claims about the irreducibility of the human person. Conferences and journals are forming that specifically target the interaction between Levinas' ethical philosophy and psychological systems and practices. Often, this interface takes the form of a fundamental challenging of dominant paradigms within modern psychologies. Reductive theoretical systems and practices have come under serious critique utilizing Levinas' methodology. Furthermore, the nature of consciousness, subjectivity, the ego, and the relation between self and the Other are often the topics addressed in these conversations.

Modern psychologies have frequently functioned as an extension of Western philosophical frameworks and out of a long lineage of Greek thought. As such, the Greek emphasis upon generalization, universalization, rationality, and immanence remains the preponderant base of contemporary psychology. Consciousness and rationality have been emphasized alongside of naturalistic and universalizing depictions of selfhood.

Furthermore, the individual ego is often valorized, with individuation and independence as core goals of human flourishing (in Western psychologies). Language of coping, cohesion, adaptation, and integration are among the many descriptors of a higher functioning self within the world. Seldom are theories and practices developed that understand the self as a “moral event” or emergent from ethical interchange and justice. Some theories recognize the need for social interest (e.g., Alfred Adler) or

interpersonal engagement (e.g., Harry Stack Sullivan), but are far from making ethics a “first philosophy”.

Levinas' critique of Western consciousness and the Western ego as self-reflexive and transfixed with itself is a frequent theme throughout his work. His depiction of an ethically constituted self challenges the fundamental primacy of the ego and construes the ego as vulnerable and exposed to the calling of the Other. Psychological appropriators of Levinas' work often accuse psychoanalysis, cognitive-behavioral theories, and a variety of other paradigms as being caught up in this “egology” wherein the monadic individual and his or her rationality, affective functioning, and behavioral repertoires constitute the human person. The Western ego, in Levinas' thought, has become an idolatrous entity within which persons became trapped, pre-occupied, and tormented. Persons cannot find escape from themselves. Levinas uses the story of Odysseus and his return to his homeland as an example of the prodigal and self-returning version of the ego in Western thought. In contrast, he describes the story of Abraham – who is exiled from his homeland and journeys to a land unknown – as an illustration of a self lived beyond the confines of itself.

Instead of freedom being understood as individuation, living congruently with one's biological needs/drives, or self-actualization, Levinas suggested that freedom is born from responsibility for the Other. Ethical interchange and moral attunement are more original than ontological expressions of personhood. Instead of the “I” being sovereign and imperial, it is a response to the imperative found in the needs of the Other. The ego is perpetually called outside of itself and into a selfhood beyond the practices and history of itself (sameness). Levinas utilizes the illustration of God commanding Adam into being at creation, thus showing that the self is first commanded before anything else.

The prophetic quality of Levinas' work and the translation of Jewish ethics into contemporary systems of thought is poignant and a powerful corrective to dominant skews in modern, Western psychologies.

See also: [▶ Anti-Semitism](#) [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Buber, Martin](#) [▶ Communal and Personal Identity](#) [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Ethics and Ethical Behavior](#) [▶ Existentialism](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Heidegger, Martin](#) [▶ Holocaust](#) [▶ Immanence](#) [▶ Jewish Law](#) [▶ Kristeva, Julia](#) [▶ Lacan, Jacques](#) [▶ Liberation Theology](#) [▶ Love](#) [▶ Narcissism](#) [▶ Nazism](#) [▶ Phenomenological Psychology](#) [▶ Postmodernism](#) [▶ Power](#) [▶ Psyche](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Psychology](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#) [▶ Reductionism](#) [▶ Relational Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Sacrifice](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Talmud](#) [▶ Transcendence](#) [▶ Wisdom](#)

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Liberation Psychology

Daniel J. Gaztambide

Liberation psychology is a umbrella term for a cross-disciplinary movement in psychology which originated in Central and South America as a response to

grievous social injustice, civil war, and political turmoil. It is most often associated with the work of Jesuit priest and social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989) in El Salvador. Although he is often credited with popularizing the term in social and community psychology, it was “coined” and employed independently by Nancy Caro Hollander in her assessment of the progressive social justice initiatives of psychoanalysts who integrated the psychological insights of Freud with the social and economic analysis of Marx.

Liberation psychology is a broad movement in psychology comprised of multiple schools with different cultural and ideological origins. It is perhaps most often associated with the work of Jesuit priest and social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989) in El Salvador, who called for a psychology which relinquished its aspirations for social, political, and “scientific” prestige in order to make “a preferential option for the poor,” those people who are oppressed by unjust social conditions and political regimes. This liberation psychology entailed a fusion of liberation theology, the political analysis of psychology from critical psychology, Paulo Freire’s radical pedagogy, and the methodological tools of social psychology. The social ethics and theological assertions of liberation theology in particular were of great import in the development of Martín-Baró’s thinking, who maintained a close relationship with renown liberation theologian and philosopher Ignacio Ellacuría.

Three tenets of liberation theology crucial to Martín-Baró’s development of liberation psychology were the belief in a God of life and justice who scorned oppression, the importance of orthopraxis over orthodoxy, and the preferential option for the poor. Using these three principles Martín-Baró proposed three essential elements of liberation psychology: a new horizon by which psychology would not concern itself with maintaining a privileged political or social position but with employing itself in the service of the poor and oppressed, a new epistemology that attempts to understand psychological dynamics from the perspective of the dominated poor Salvadorans instead of the perspective of the dominant elite, and a new praxis by which knowledge and research developed from the perspective of the oppressed then becomes used to empower them by developing critical consciousness regarding their psycho-social-political reality (*concientización*), in order that they may liberate themselves and change that reality. Given these elements, Martín-Baró outlined for liberation psychology three urgent tasks. Firstly, there needs to be a recovery of historical memory, by which one discovers those behaviors of the past which instill a sense of collective identity and help a

oppressed community survive and struggle toward liberation. Secondly, there needs to be a de-ideologizing of everyday experience through the subversion of dominant narratives by psychologists participating in the life of the poor, recovering their experience and “returning” it to them, so that they may reflect upon it and form a broader consciousness of their reality. Thirdly, psychologists in El Salvador should shun the importation of ethics, cultures, and values alien to the country’s people and instead use the people’s own values and virtues as represented in the cultural, social, and religious institutions that have aided in their survival during the civil war and struggle toward social justice.

Using this liberation psychology, Martín-Baró developed social psychological research projects that aimed to understand phenomena as varied as the effects of war on mental health (especially that of children), the psychological dynamics of state terrorism and oppression, the ways that psychology can collude with or go against the status quo, the use of religion as an instrument of psychological warfare, and the experiences of the Salvadoran people in the midst of social and political violence. This research was not simply published in academic journals but was likewise used to develop critical consciousness (*concientización*) among the Salvadoran people. Due to the political implications of this perspective for psychology and Salvadoran society, Martín-Baró was murdered in 1989 along with seven others on the campus of the Central American University in San Salvador. His vision, however, lives on as it has influenced many social and clinical psychologists in Latin America, North America, and Europe.

Parallel to the development of Martín-Baró’s thinking, in 1981 the North American psychoanalyst Nancy Caro Hollander became interested in the work of Marie “Mimi” Langer (1910–1987) and other psychoanalysts in the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil) who also struggled against unjust political regimes, by relating psychoanalysis and Marxism in both theory and clinical practice much in the same way that liberation theology had related theology and Marxism in liberatory reflection and praxis. Hollander worked with Marie Langer and her colleagues clinically and academically, and as a result of their relationship subsequently began writing a group biography detailing their life and work in the midst of war and oppression. In that biography it was detailed how Marie Langer and many of her colleagues had originally migrated from Europe to South America due to the growing threat of Nazism to Europe and toward their communist and Marxist political views.

Much like their counterparts in North America, in South America Langer and other migrating psychoanalysts initially found it necessary to keep a low profile on their Marxist ideologies for fear of retribution from more conservative colleagues and the local right-wing governments.

As conditions in Latin America continued to deteriorate due to civil wars, revolutions, and economic-political oppression, psychoanalysts began to speak out against injustice and take steps to both make sense of the escalating conflicts psychoanalytically as well as develop treatment relevant to the needs of oppressed and displaced people, hence making a preferential option for the poor people of Latin America. Freud’s theories concerning the intrapsychic dynamics of repression, splitting, and projection were related to Marx’s theories regarding the repressive and alienating dynamics of economic and structural injustice. The function and role of a overly-harsh and persecutory super-ego likewise became contextualized and related to the imposition of the bourgeoisie morality and right-wing politics of the governing classes. The work of Melanie Klein in particular became very influential in understanding how human destructiveness was affected by interpersonal, economic, and societal dynamics, such as genocidal ideologies molding everyday poor people into soldiers for the all-good regime against the all-bad civilians or insurgents (in many cases seen as one and the same).

In clinical practice, social justice oriented psychoanalysts in Latin America would contextualize developmental (oedipal, pre-oedipal) difficulties and mental illness in the historical economic and political oppression that their patients’ experienced in society and through family life, providing interpretations that would encourage them to speak and give voice to their psychosocial trauma. Apart from individual treatment, Langer and others also practiced group psychotherapy as a liberating practice, providing a much more socially relevant service extending mental health services to wider communities in need of support. A variety of pragmatic methodologies were developed in relation to the social ambivalence that surrounded treatment with particular clients (whether it was working with a torturer, a victim of torture, or an insurgent), including encouraging patients to become politically active in order to give voice to their fears and anxieties, a move that was found to be clinically useful in helping the healing process as well as inviting patients to work toward changing their social reality. Due to such consciousness raising and revolutionary clinical work, Hollander used the phrase liberation psychology to describe the labors of social justice oriented psychoanalysts like Marie Langer, a use that

was reinforced after she found that Martín-Baró had coined the phrase earlier to describe his social psychological work in El Salvador.

Commentary

A liberation psychology of religion would be concerned with the ways that religion could be a force of prophetic and critical consciousness for social change or a tool of psychosocial domination upholding the interests of those in power. In the specific case of El Salvador, Martín-Baró was concerned with a model of intervention the United States had developed known as “low-intensity conflict,” which emphasized sociopolitical psychological warfare which sought to “win the hearts and minds” of the people who supported the insurgency against the U.S.-backed regime. It would pursue this goal through the use of propaganda, harassment, sanctions, and even torture to make people feel insecure about their basic beliefs and shift political orientation in favor of U.S. interests in the region. Religion, as a central institution for many Salvadorans, enters the picture as one possible tool of such psychological manipulation.

In a series of studies starting in 1984, Martín-Baró and his colleagues did empirical research on the relationship between different types of religiosity and sociopolitical attitudes, which compared Catholic Christian Base Communities (groups that use the perspective of liberation theology to reflect upon their spiritual and material conditions in order to organize social justice efforts) to converts to Evangelical Pentecostalism, and charismatic Catholics. These studies took place during a time in which North American evangelical churches intensified missionary efforts into the area, thanks in part to the support of conservative political groups in the U.S. It was found that while the catholic Christian Base Communities displayed a “horizontal” religiosity which emphasized God among the people working toward a more just society, the church as a prophetic voice in society, and the war in El Salvador as a result of structural injustice which must be responded to by a socially active church, evangelical Pentecostals and charismatic Catholics alike displayed a “vertical” religiosity which emphasized God as mysterious and distant, the church as a house of prayer apart from society, with the war a result of man’s sinfulness and divine will, which will end only by praying to God and asking for mercy. As a result of these respective theologies, “horizontal” religiosity tended to lead people from the Christian Base Communities to become conscious of their

social conditions, to organize and mobilize in the interest of social justice, and to have more progressive views on child rearing, education, work, and politics, while “vertical” religiosity tended to legitimize the policies and behaviors of the government as inevitable and necessary, to become complacent and conforming to the status quo, and to have more conservative views on child rearing, and etc. Type of religiosity, then, was tied to sociopolitical attitudes which either maintained or brought into question the policies and ideologies of oppressive political regimes.

A more psychoanalytic approach to a liberation psychology of religion would attempt to correlate the effects of different types of theologies and religiosity on the psyche, and the way that particular religiosities organizes the psyche are related to the economic and power structures of society. For example, one could take James W. Jones’s study of how religion can be both a source of terror and violence or revelation and transformation, and relate that analysis to a social analysis of political power. If what Jones calls fanatical religion fosters deep psychological splits in the self between “good” and “bad,” with all the good projected onto an over-idealized God-image, and all the bad projected outside into groups designated as “other,” it carries the potential of infantilizing adherents before an awesome and magnanimous parental figure, rendering them submissive and unable of exercising critical thinking in relation to other idealized figures, such as the state, an ethnic group, patriarchy, or a nationalistic identity. The over-idealized social institution may then invoke such sentiments to maintain a particular social order and label those who would upset that social order as enemies who must be silenced or destroyed. Alternatively, Jones also refers to religion’s transformative capacity, its ability to create a space from which new insights and truths may emerge in new permutations of consciousness through a relationship – not of submission but of surrender – to a teacher, a text, an empathic community, or a spiritual practice. This transformative function may liberate the true self, and allow space for a critical voice to develop which may be able to de-idealize and critically examine the structures of power and politics within religion, culture, and society. This process may initially be deconstructive as one breaks down the over-idealization of God-images, the ethnic group, or the state, but may also become constructive as new idealizations and permutations of religious experience may emerge from within a de-idealized void. New conceptions of religion may arise with a prophetic vision of a more just society.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Communal and Personal Identity](#) [Cultural Psychology](#) [Liberation Theology](#) [Martín-Baró, Ignacio](#) [Poverty](#) [Psychology](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Religiosity](#) [Religious](#) [Religious Coping](#)

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Liberation Theology

Daniel J. Gaztambide

Liberation Theology is a Christian theology that originated in the Latin American Catholic Church in the 1960s, but which can today be found around the world in North America (e.g., Black Liberation Theology), Africa (e.g., African Women's Theology), and Asia (e.g., Minjung Theology). In Latin America it grew out of the efforts

of Catholic priests who related theology to Karl Marx's theories of social analysis in order to become more socially conscious of the conditions of political and state oppression, and to relate theological reflection about the nature of economic and social oppression to the needs of the Latin American poor for social justice. Considering God to be a God of justice, and Jesus as not only the savior of mankind but the liberator of the oppressed, liberation theologians lived among the poor as an act of solidarity, making a preferential option for the poor and protesting the unjust conditions that afflicted them through political activism, community work, and academics. Liberation theology has also been of interest to social justice oriented mental health care workers, inspiring not only a variety of liberation psychologies (i.e., the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró, Mary Watkins, and Lawrence Alschuler), but also an integration of liberation theology and pastoral care (e.g., the work of Stephen Pattison).

See also: [Liberation Psychology](#)

Libido

Jo Nash

Libido is a term used in psychoanalytic psychology to denote the fundamental sexual energy of the human organism, either a sexual “instinct” or “drive” which in simple terms compels us to reproduce the species. In Freud's economic theory of the psyche, libido is proposed as the sexual source of all mental energy, which flows towards objects of our attention, thereby investing them with interest or *cathecting* those objects. In this way, libido establishes a psychic relationship with the object whether in fantasy or reality. The sublimation of libido into creative activity is the source of civilisation for Freud, achieved through the complex processes of displacement of sexual energy away from the gratification of our individual desires, towards servicing the wider purposes of the social groups and institutions to which we belong.

Freud also described how libido cathects zones of the body during the early life of the child in phases called the oral, anal and genital stages of development. These different stages evolve as the child's awareness and interest is invested in progressively more complex activities focused on different parts of the body; beginning with the mouth during feeding, then the anus during potty training,

before moving onto the genitals, which continue to absorb more and more attention and interest into adulthood.

For Klein, however, her clinical work with children revealed that the development of these phases was not as staged as Freud proposed, but that at any time from early life onwards, a mixture of these phases of interest could be observed, with some impulses prevailing over other impulses at different times, in order to defend the infant, child and later adult against primitive anxieties of a sadistic nature. Hinshelwood writes,

- ▶ ...the sequence of dominance was the effect of the sadism, the fear of retaliation, and the anguished wish to restore damage. [...] She also thought of the genital phase as a particular upsurge of libidinal feelings, and that there may therefore be a precocious surge towards the genital phase as a reassurance against the sadistic impulses of the pre-genital phases (Hinshelwood, 1989: 338–339).

In other words, the premature development of genitally focused sexual activity may indicate that deeper impulses of oral and anal aggression are being warded off by the child, out of a fear of retaliation for the harm the expression of these impulses might cause. For Klein, libido pervades all object relationships channelled through various erotogenic zones of the body at various levels of intensity from early life to death. Libido is depicted as something of a rapacious, greedy and visceral force fundamental to the presence of life and its complex quest to sustain itself.

In the analytic psychology of Jung however, the term “libido” is deployed to denote a more generic psychic energy or life force that propels the personality towards individuation through the enlargement of the “self.” For Jung libido has a spiritual dimension which did not exist for Freud or Klein. In this way, Jung proposes that libidinal energy is invested in all forms of intentional activity, from individual developmental “tasks” such as symbolism and the acquisition of language, to increasingly complex creative activities, including art, science and religion, that aid increased psychological and spiritual integration. Libido is depicted as a benevolent force which invests both subjectivity and the world around us with the intentional activity of life itself.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Liminality

Paul Larson

Origin

Liminality is a term used to describe the psychological process of transitioning across boundaries and borders. The term “limen” comes from the Latin for threshold; it is literally the threshold separating one space from another. It is the place in the wall where people move from one room to another. Often a door is placed across the threshold to close up and restrict access between rooms. The concept was first applied to psychology as the technical name for the perceptual threshold, the degree of stimulus intensity that would just be noticed as audible or visible or detectable in any sensory mode. But its contemporary usage comes from the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957). In his study of religion as a cultural artifact, he saw that many, if not all of the rituals across cultures have the function of moving a person from one status or social circumstance to another. His major work, *Rites of Passage*, or *Les Rites du Passage* in the original French (1909/1960), sets out the thesis that at a psychological and cultural level, religion and its rituals give us the means by which we cope with change, whether it be from childhood into adulthood, from single to married, from lay to clerical, and to mourn the loss of a beloved as they transition from this world to whatever lies beyond. His student Victor Turner (1920–1983) continued and expanded his analytic framework and integrated it into role theory and the relationship of social action to drama.

Psychological Liminality

As a psychological capacity, liminality is the ability to bridge between self and the other. At an interpersonal level this is called empathy. We come to know the other by entering into their phenomenological space to some degree. We begin to see things from their perspective. At

the level of social groups, it can be described as the capacity for moving toward an insider's perspective. Pike (1954) coined the terms “emic” and “etic” to refer to the insider's and outsider's perspectives with respect to language, and this now has been broadly adopted in cross-cultural psychology for the knowledge of any social group. So liminality with respect to social groups is gaining the knowledge that approaches what an insider would have; we bridge the gap between our own groups and those of the other. Both the interpersonal and the group levels of liminality requires us to see and appreciate the other and to find bridges that would allow harmonious relationships as opposed to conflict. Liminality, therefore, is a requirement for any effective interpersonal or intercultural communication.

At the intrapsychic level, liminality is the capacity to move within and between the boundaries of one's psychological structure. Lewin (1936/1966) first used the metaphor of space in his topological psychology, defining life spaces and discussing the relative permeability of the boundaries between areas of the person's experiential world. At one extreme, one has the rigid compartmentalization characteristic of dissociation and multiple personalities; at the other is the failure of boundaries found in borderline personality disorders and termed “confluence” in Gestalt therapy.

Joseph Campbell's (1949) *Hero with a thousand faces* was much influenced by van Gennep's basic outline of the three-fold structure of liminal processes; preliminary, liminaire, and post-liminaire. He took the concept and applied it to the transitional phases between the beginning and the end of a journey or transformational process. Liminality is the process of going in between two states and the time spent in that transitional zone when one is neither one nor the other but in the process of becoming. Liminality is the journey of transformation.

Finally, the therapeutic process is itself a literal rite of passage. We can view the relationship of therapist and client as a process of helping the client move from a state of unhappiness to some greater degree of either internal peace or interpersonal harmony and adjustment. The role of patient arises out of the medical role, part of a complementary pair, physician and patient. The various sessions within the relationship, whether in brief therapy or long-term dynamic work are each small steps in the ritual of healing. Liminality describes any process of transformation from one state of being to another in human society; it is a key psychological concept.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Campbell, Joseph](#) [▶ Rites of Passage](#)

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Lived Theology

Todd DuBose

Lived theology is a phrase that describes a process more than an academic discipline. Our lived theology is the enactment of that, which is most significant to us at any given moment, and as lived out in our everyday existence, rather than the systemization of creedal propositions of any given faith tradition. Borrowing from the thought of both the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and the theologian Paul Tillich (1886–1965), and others who have furthered their thought, such as Langdon Gilkey (1919–2004), one's lived theology is one's “enactment of significance” in the world.

Theology, or speech about the divine, is traditionally seen as an academic discipline in which authoritative sources are interpreted and subsequently inform various doctrines and practices respective to one's religious tradition. An understanding of lived theology, though is aligned with existential and empirical-phenomenological traditions, and views the divine is an experiential phenomenon rather than a substantial and delimited thing, and sees speech about this experiential phenomenon is phenomenological in nature. The divine is not considered as an *object* of experience, but a *quality* of experience related to living out significance in the world, a living out of what matters most to one in any given situation. In this way, lived theology is not an exclusive property of elite academicians, but an existential of every human being. Hence, if human being enact significance in every moment of their lives, and if we understanding *lived* theology as those enactments of significance, we can

conclude, therefore, that to be a human being *is* to be a theologian. The human being is *homo religiosus*, or more specifically, *homo theologicus* (DuBose, 2000).

To be alive is to enact significance. Theological discernment from this perspective views how one is comporting oneself in one's everydayness as disclosing what Tillich called one's "ultimate concern" (Tillich, 1952). These ultimate concerns, or as I call them, enactments of significance, are not cognitively "thought out" propositions described in abstract, traditional religious discourse, but chosen ways of being-in-the-world. Agency inherent in comportment is lived out long before thought about. Such comportments are "prereflective," as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) argued (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). This perspective privileges a different knowing prior to cognitive reconsideration.

Given these premises, enactments of significance are known only after the fact, or only when reflecting on comportment as it is in operation or having just passed. Life is lived rather than objectified, as the French radical phenomenologist, Michel Henry (1922–2002) proposed (Henry, 2002a). Moreover, when enactments are translated into conceptualizations, such as when an experience of the numinous is translated as "an encounter with the Holy Spirit," the product of the translation is merely a "representation" of the experience and not the experience itself. Lived theology is not reflection on "that which is over there," but a living out of significance rather than a living in relation to a representation of that experience.

Lived theology further presumes that if we are inherently theological, then our very nature as human beings is formed and led by what is of ultimate concern in our lives. Viktor Frankl's (1905–1997) logotherapy is likened to this perspective in the conviction that meaning lures and constructs human development (1946/1997). We live and intend towards meaningful and fulfilling projects and relationships in life. Our enactments of significance, and, hence, any lived theology, is naturally transcendent seeking, but delimited by one's unalterable finitude, facticity, contingency, and "thrownness," to use phraseology from Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1962). The very delimitation of one's "thrownness" enframes the meaningful possibilities of significance enacted in each moment, and are free to change as significance shifts.

Commentary

A word about therapeutic care for, and as, lived theology is in order. Therapeutic practice based on this model begins

and ends with attunement toward enactments of significance in particular life-world comportments. It then explores constrictions, that is, how one's enactments of significance are restrained, inhibited, or confined. Finally, it has as the therapeutic goal a free and authentic living into one's cleared and lightened possibilities within one's embraced limitations. All symptoms of the suffering soul are constricted enactments of significance and related to the inextricable interplay of death, transcendence, and radical subjectivity, and are always and already lived out in equiprimordial ways. An obvious alignment with Daseinsanalytic phenomenology and practice is clear (Boss, 1979; Heidegger, 2001).

Often, discussants of this issue quibble about whether one considers oneself religious, spiritual, or theological. I choose to use the word "theology," rather than "spirituality" or "religion," because I believe the latter two concepts are less personal and too amorphous to disclose the specificity of one's very particular enactments of significance in the world. Moreover, one's comportment in existence discloses what one considers significant with much more veracity than what one verbalizes as significant. If you want to know someone's theology, look at their enactments of significance *in the world*. At no time are we absent from living out enacted significance, even (and especially) in despair. Paraphrasing once again Tillich's argument that doubt shows the significance of faith (Tillich, 1957), I say that despair is an enacted significance of *lost significance*, which is perhaps the greatest of all therapeutic challenges.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Faith](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Heidegger, Martin](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Locus of Control

Andrew J. P. Francis

The Locus of Control (LOC) of reinforcement construct was originally developed by Rotter (1954, 1966) within the framework of his Social Learning Theory, along a unidimensional internal-external continuum. An important elaboration by Levenson (1981) divided the external contingencies into separate “powerful others” and “chance” dimensions. Broadly, the LOC construct measures the degree to which people believe that reinforcements (rewards and punishments) from the environment are contingent on their own efforts, actions and personal decisions (internal LOC) on the one hand, versus luck, fate, external circumstance and powerful others (external LOC) on the other. A more internal LOC is generally positively associated with a range of indices of psychological and physical health. It is argued that many of these positive health effects reflect the adoption of more positive coping strategies in such individuals. Conversely, externality is typically associated with negative coping styles and poorer physical and mental health outcomes.

In some LOC scales (e.g., the religious revision of Rotter’s internal-external scale) the external “powerful others” set of contingencies includes reference to a deity. Thus the individual believes that, to some degree, the circumstances of their life are controlled by a god, goddess

or other spiritual force. The belief that an external deity may be controlling some contingencies in a person’s life suggests a type of external (powerful other) LOC, and might be expected to be associated with generally poorer health outcomes according to secular LOC theory. Certainly Sigmund Freud and Albert Ellis characterized religious belief in terms of defensive functioning and psychopathology; whereas Carl Jung and Gordon Allport suggested that religion may have important psychological functions and produce positive effects on mental health.

Contemporary scientific literature would suggest that degree of religiosity is positively (albeit mildly) associated with better mental health outcomes; in particular where the type of religiosity is “intrinsic” versus “extrinsic” according to Allport’s (1961) taxonomy. It has also been suggested that a person’s dispositional “spiritual/religious coping style” will influence how they respond to stressors and challenges and, in a sense, specifies the nature of the control relationship they share with their god. In a self-directing style, a person functions in an active manner, independent of god (essentially a form of internal LOC). When a person adopts a deferring style they will take a more passive role and wait for god to resolve a situation (thus adopting an external LOC). In a collaborative style the person engages with their god in a mutual problem-solving process (mixed internal/external LOC). A surrendering style involves an active decision to release personal control over circumstances beyond personal control to god (external LOC). Depending on the situation, a collaborative style is generally associated with more positive mental health outcomes; although it has been argued that even the surrendering style can provide relief, comfort and security in highly stressful situations. No matter which spiritual/religious coping style is adopted, it is also certainly the case that the use of prayer, ritual and observance can instill an element of control into one’s relationship with god.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Locutions

Paul Larson

Locutions are inner experiences of hearing a divine voice or receiving revelation. The broader category is theophany or epiphany, which means any revelation or manifestation to humans by God or the divine, or their agents such as angels etc. Visions, or apparitions, are epiphanies which are primarily visual, while locutions are the auditory aspect of contact with or from an external transcendent source. The experience can range from very realistic dialog with an angel (including an apparition) to a subtle and sudden feeling of inspiration coming in linguistic form. It is not uncommon for these visitations to be accompanied by other sorts of miracles, such as healing. St. Theresa of Avila is one of the classic examples of a mystic whose experience included locutions. Bernadette Soubirou (1844–1879) was a young French woman who also received locutions attributed to Our Lady of Lourdes. The Virgin Mary in both Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican traditions is a frequent source of apparitions and locutions. The Roman Catholic Church has a fairly detailed procedure devised over many years for checking the bona fides of claims for visions or locutions.

See also: [✦ Hierophany](#) [✦ Miracles](#) [✦ Virgin Mary](#)

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Logos

Meredith Lisagor

Earliest Use of Term

Logos, a noun, derives from the Greek verb *legein*, originally *to count*, later *to give an account*, finally as *lego*, *to say*. It enjoys an array of nuanced translations: *utterance, word, speech, thought, meaning, reason, argument, ratio, measure, standard, or principle*. Yet whatever distinctions exist among thinkers who employ the term, Logos is consistently used to denote something about creative unifying forces or functions in the composition of reality – cosmologic, religious, philosophical, or psychological.

As a concept, Logos is first encountered in the fragments of Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 500 BCE.), where it identifies the underlying ordering principle or plan of the universe, which is itself a hidden unity of opposites in tension. The Logos is not the source of creation, but rather the way in which creation operates, the flux in which “diversity comes out of unity and unity out of diversity” [Frag 10]. Although all creation is elemental of the “One,” humanity must “listen” for the Logos in order to comprehend it.

Platonic and Aristotelian use of the term was largely confined to the fact and consequences of human reason. Stoicism, however, took the term beyond the limits of philosophy. Heraclitus’ Logos became equated with a dynamic divine reason. Here, humanity did not merely participate in Logos, but was infused with it: Discourse, meaning-making, and life in accord with natural law – or the order given the cosmos by an all-virtuous God/Logos – were products of a “seed” or “ratio” of divinity within each human being.

As Divine in Judeo-Christian Tradition

The divine character of Logos underwent subtle but profound change, when Jewish and Greek thought converged in the works of Philo of Alexandria (30 BCE–50 CE), who enlisted the term to place Torah on equal footing with Greek philosophy. Adapting Jewish Wisdom speculation – and often using “word” and “wisdom” interchangeably – Logos became both the intelligible world in the mind of God, after which the created world was modeled, and the agency by which it was actually made. By Hellenizing

notions found in Jewish texts, canonical (e.g., Proverbs 8:22) and apocryphal (e.g., Wis. 7:22 and 9:1), Philo made the Logos a virtual hypostasis of God, His “Firstborn Son,” and “Image.”

Philo’s syncretism had arisen in an environment that also sustained popular belief in Apollo (especially surnamed Loxias, *fr. legein*) as the “spokesman” of his father Zeus. Thus, it was a short step to dubbing Jesus the Logos and Son of God – which the prologue to the Gospel According to St. John (1:1–18) did near the beginning of the second century. Where St. Paul, had declared Jesus Christ the one “through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (I Corinthians 8:6), the Johannine authors (adapting a Wisdom hymn) trumpeted that the creative Word of God became flesh and entered the world it had created; no less, it “was God.”

Early Christian writers would employ Logos broadly and idiosyncratically: Justin Martyr followed a Philonic impulse in his *Apologies* (ca. 55 CE) to liken Christianity to stoic and platonic philosophies; Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) even identified the eternal Christ/Logos as the giver of philosophy to the Greeks; and Christian Gnostics had at least three different notions of Logos – all disdaining the occurrence of actual incarnation. Significantly, Origen (ca. 182–254) saw Logos as a kind of effluence of God’s creativity, truth, and wisdom. It could be called God’s “Firstborn Son,” but in fact it was not only uncreated but co-eternal (“there was no *when* it was not”). Moreover, Jesus was not really an incarnation of the Son, but rather a sinless human being who followed the Logos so closely as to be indistinguishable from it. This set the stage for the great Trinitarian and creedal debates of the next two centuries. In the end, Logos language was replaced by the term “Son.”

Logos and Other Traditions

Development of the Logos concept continued into late antiquity: Hermetics declared that the “lightgiving word who comes from [God’s] mind is the son of God” (Copenhaver, 1992: 2); Plotinus (205–270 CE), deemed Logos to be a divine entity of creation, unity, and order, but denied it rationality, since reasoning-out should be unnecessary to the mind of God in which all is immediate intelligibility; and the Jewish Wisdom tradition grew to identify the whole of Torah with the plan by which God created the world (Midrash Rabbah).

While one cannot argue a hereditary relationship between Logos and eastern religious thought, Logos is sometimes likened to the ultimate principle of Self in Buddhism, and the Way of Taoism. As the second person

of the Christian Trinity, Logos has also been compared to the second facet of the Hindu formula *sac-cid-ananda* or Being-Awareness-Bliss.

Logos and Depth Psychology

Modern depth psychologists have adapted Logos in a range of ways. Freud makes the most limited use, ironically calling Logos the “god” of his argument for rational acceptance of reality against the illusion(s) of religion. Analytical Psychology often equates Logos with the Self, archetype of psychic wholeness and unity of all opposites. The most noteworthy application of the term may be that of Viktor Frankl. Based on his own experience and observation of fellow concentration-camp survivors, his Logotherapy speaks to a meaning-seeking will at the center of human existence. In even the worst objective circumstances, he contends, one has freedom as well a “responsibility” to seek transformative subjective meaning. It is exercise of this will that defines an authentic life.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Buddhism](#) [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Gnosticism](#) [Jesus](#) [Self](#) [Taoism](#)

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Logotherapy

◆ Frankl, Viktor

Love

David C. Balderston

Love is a powerful force that connects and energizes people. It has long been a theme of religions and literatures around the world. More recently, love has been studied by social scientists. This article surveys the major meanings of love, as used in various religions and in modern psychological thought.

Introduction

Love means several different things. Other languages have two, three, or more words with different meanings, where English has only the one, to use in many different situations. The authoritative *Oxford English Dictionary* describes over 30 uses of “love.” Like many writers, Scots poet Robert Burns (1759–1796) used literary devices to heighten the effects of his thoughts, e.g., “O, my luv’s like a red, red rose” – here, a simile to dramatize love’s power of attraction. In contrast, a modern definition strives for neutral objectivity: “Love is the creating and/or sustaining of the connections of mutual support in ever-widening ranges of significance” (Carothers, 1968). Shakespeare noted love’s mystery: “I know not why I love this youth, and I have heard you say, Love’s reason’s without reason” (*Cymbeline*, IV.2.20–22).

Here are some of love’s emphases:

1. A *desire for physical closeness* that connects people, to touch and be touched, whether they be sexual partners, parent and child, other family relations, or close friends.
2. *Compassion* of one person toward another, sometimes one who is in need. Altruistic self-sacrifice and empathic understanding of how another feels are components of such love, often recommended by religions.
3. A *mutual affinity* in a friendship that is not primarily sexual but emotional and value-laden, with shared interests and sensibilities, and actions of mutual generosity.
4. A *religious regard* for another, where a human and a spiritual being (a god or a saint) are linked in a relationship of gratitude and devotion by the human, and scrutiny and/or caring by the spiritual figure.

Religion

The world’s five largest religions, arranged here from the oldest to the newest, are surveyed for their uses of love. Judaism, which provided the scriptural foundation of monotheism for Christianity and Islam, is also included.

Hinduism, the dominant religion of India and of Indians living elsewhere, is a sprawling, decentralized complex of many parts. Hence the place of love in Hinduism is more diffuse compared to other religions. The following Sanskrit terms suggest the range of loving experiences. *Kama* is sensual pleasure and erotic love. It is also seen as a fundamental life force, a necessary ingredient in other human desires and strivings. *Karuna* refers

to compassionate actions to reduce the sufferings of others. *Bhakti* is devotional love, adoration, and service directed at one's chosen deity. *Prema* is an intense and altruistic longing for God, and is considered Hinduism's highest form of love.

Judaism, the religion of Jewish people worldwide, stresses ethical behavior and devotion to a single God, who formed a covenant relationship with "his people" in which He would protect, chasten, and love them, while expecting their grateful adoration and obedience to his laws. This is elaborated in the Hebrew *Bible*, where love is translated from two primary words (and cognates), *ahab* and *khesed*, plus six other less frequent Hebrew words, as desire, mercy, beloved, steadfast love, loyalty, kindness, devotion, and faithfulness.

The great ritual phrase, the *shema* (Deut. 6: 4–5), calls upon the people of Israel to love God with all their heart, soul, and might. Elsewhere, God directs them to love their neighbors and also the stranger in their midst (Lev. 19: 18 and 34). The prophet Hosea used the imagery of an unfaithful wife, lovingly sought out and forgiven by her husband, to stand for God's undying love toward his sometimes unfaithful people.

In *Buddhism*, love has a central place: its founder, Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 BCE), is typically referred to as the "compassionate Buddha." The earlier branch of Buddhism, called Hinayana or Theravada, focuses on love as *metta* (in Pali, or *maitri* in Sanskrit), a kindness or benevolence toward all. The later branch, Mahayana, emphasizes *karuna*, compassion, and its ultimate embodiment in a bodhisattva, one who has attained full enlightenment. The bodhisattva most identified with loving compassion is Avalokitesvara (Sanskrit), or Chenrezi in Tibet, often depicted with a multitude of arms and hands, to reach out and help multitudes.

Since Buddhism, a non-theistic religion, teaches that all reality is illusory, one's sense of self-importance is to be devalued, and one is to act as a vehicle of compassion toward others. The various schools of Buddhist meditation, based on deep psychological and philosophical analysis, may focus on neutralizing the mind of its self-centeredness, or filling the mind with compassion toward others.

Confucianism has long been the dominant religion of China and of millions of ethnic Chinese overseas. Confucius (551–479 BCE) taught a version of right living, preserved in the *Analects*, which emphasized the good of society more than the individual. Confucian ethics codified the "five relationships," which stressed "filial piety" (love as respect) between pairs of family members, and others. Confucius taught that the "way of Heaven" (*T'ien*), or a moral life, should be lived by *jen* (translated

as benevolence, uprightness, or love) and *li* (proper etiquette and rituals – to preserve social harmony). The Confucian emphasis, on reciprocity (mutual expectations of appropriate role behavior in social relations), was opposed by the radical views of Mo Ti, who followed Confucius about a century later. Mo Ti (or Tzu) promoted *ai*, a universal love that ignored all distinctions of rank or family position, which he said caused trouble. Mo Ti had many followers, but his ideas died out after the counter efforts of Mencius, a follower of Confucius. This conflict is an example of how different values, reciprocity and universality, can pull love in opposite directions.

Christianity, the world's largest religion, relies on the New Testament of the *Bible*, which used two Greek words for "love," *agape* (self-sacrificing love) and *filia* (friendship love), while ignoring a third word, *eros* (erotic love), also in common usage then.

Jesus, the central figure of the New Testament and the Christ of Christianity, was a Jew living in a Jewish society in the land of Palestine, then governed politically by Roman rulers and religiously by Jewish high priests. Love was a major theme of Jesus' message. In the "great commandment," (Matt. 22: 35–40, Mark 12: 28–34, and Luke 10: 25–28), Jesus rebutted Jewish leaders trying to entrap him doctrinally, saying that people should love God with all their heart, soul, and mind (or strength), *and* their neighbors as themselves – just as the scriptures had said earlier but in two separate passages (see Judaism, above). When asked a follow-up question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story of a compassionate Samaritan who helped an injured Jew, even though Samaritans were despised by Jews.

Jesus also preached the radical notion of loving one's enemies (Matt. 5: 43–48 and Luke 6: 27–28, 32–36). Twentieth century examples are the effective non-violent protest campaigns of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

During Jesus' ministry, his ethical message became layered with the additional identification of himself as the Son of God, as he anticipated his death, as a chronic disturber of the Jewish and Roman status quo, to be the necessary means of conveying God's ultimate message of self-sacrificing love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. . ." (John 3: 16).

After the death of Jesus (ca. 30–33 CE) and his followers' experience of his resurrection, the apostle Paul emerged as the leading missionary to the Gentiles. His letters to the non-Palestinian churches often develop the dual themes of God's salvational love through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus (now the Christ), plus the need for Christians to love one another. Paul made explicit the universal quality of this love of Christ that recognized no distinctions of gender, ethnicity, or social status (Gal. 3: 28 and Rom.

10: 12). Paul glorified the ultimate virtue of love in 1st Corinthians, chapter 13. A later apostle also wrote to exalt love, declaring that “God is love” (1 John 4: 7–21).

St. Francis of Assisi (ca. 1182–1226 CE) expanded the scope of love to include animals and all of creation.

A tension has always existed between the commandment to love your neighbor *as yourself*, and the *selfless* love exemplified by Jesus. A balance is needed between loving oneself too much and not enough: both extremes prevent one from loving God and others, although finding that balance can be difficult.

Modern Christian theology and devotional literature continue to confront this tension regarding “self” and the human tendency for self-serving self-deceptions. Psychology has also studied this tendency. Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, “Goodness, armed with power, is corrupted; and pure love without power is destroyed,” (Niebuhr, 1937) a theme developed later by Paul Tillich (1954).

In *Islam*, God (Allah) is always referred to in the *Koran* (*Qur’an*) at the beginning of every chapter (*sura*) as “the merciful, the compassionate,” or as “most gracious, most merciful.” These phrases come from one of four frequently used Arabic word groups that convey various Koranic nuances of love, from the roots of *hbb*, *rdy*, *rhm*, and *wdd*.

Of the Five Pillars of Islam, the injunction to give alms to the poor is the one most directly connected to loving activity, but the Koran is suffused with themes of benevolence, kindness, and mercy – variants of love.

One movement within Islam is Sufism, which promotes an intimate personal connection between the believer and Allah through a mystical development of love.

Overall, the message about love from various religions might be summarized in interfaith terms something like these, with “God” representing the various names and conceptions of the Ultimate Reality or Ground of Being:

Love is what God is – the energy that binds together Creation and all its creatures.

Love is what God offers *to* humans – a way to be Alive despite imperfections, anxieties, and suffering.

Love is what God expects *from* humans – respect for the Creator and all Creation, with awe at its vastness and complexity.

Love is what God desires *between* humans – to give unselfishly. . .

Psychology

Psychology has studied love from five different perspectives: (1) as an individual emotion, especially in romantic love, (2) as individual behavior, (3) as a relationship

between two (or more) people, (4) developmentally over time, and (5) socially as influenced by various social and cultural group norms. Psychotherapists also deal with the absence and failures of love in crumbling marriages, child neglect and abuse, adolescent problems, addictions, depression, and other anxious and lonely states.

1. *Love as a feeling of an individual* is a wonderful, tumultuous experience. In romantic love, a person who has “fallen” in love experiences a heightened sense of well-being: one feels special in the eyes of the beloved, understood as never before, with an improved sense of one’s sexual identity as a man or woman. One may be preoccupied by frequent thoughts of the beloved or inspired to act in unusual ways on behalf of the beloved. Sexual desire – or at least the desire to touch, be physically close, and kiss – is a major part of romantic love, along with an idealization of the beloved. This is in contrast to a depersonalized lust for a sexual “object.”

The emotion of love contains strong elements of wish, hope, longing, and fantasy. What is often sought is a sense of being made whole, through closeness with another. This goal is also a theme of religious devotion: that divine love will make a flawed human whole: worthy of being loved by another being (human or spiritual), and capable of giving love to others.

Romantic love began in the twelfth century CE songs of European troubadours celebrating the courtly love of knights of chivalry, who labored dramatically to impress and woo their chosen, often married noblewomen. While this love never applied to the rest of the population, it did idealize the quest for a pure love (later portrayed by Dante and Petrarch), and it promoted tenderness and a better view of women (Hunt, 1959).

The emotional intensity of romantic love can have drawbacks: it may be blind to reality, unrequited, or obsessive, and be the excuse for negative behaviors such as manipulative game-playing and revenge-seeking. As a feeling, romantic love is bound to fluctuate, as do all feelings, and thus is unreliable as the sole criterion of true love.

2. *Loving behaviors by an individual* are many: touching and hugging, complimenting, offering help, paying attention to what the beloved is saying and feeling, sacrificing one’s time or money for the sake of the beloved, being on time and especially presentable when seeing the beloved, being patient with the other’s imperfections, being willing to apologize for one’s own – to name a few.

Psychology usually sees outward behavior as an indicator of a person's inner motivation: we often convert our feelings into action. One is held responsible for how one behaves, but not for what one is feeling. Behavior, since it is normally under one's control, can also be used to change one's feelings – the opposite of emotions shaping behavior, as in psychodynamic theory (see an integration of psychodynamic and behavioral approaches at Weinberg, 1981). Thus, a person can learn to behave and feel more lovingly.

3. *Love is a relationship between two people* (or between a human and a divine being) and how the two respond to each other can be studied to see their patterns of interaction. Is there equality between the two, or domination by one? Is one's frequent criticism followed by the other's frequent withdrawal or defensive outburst? Repeated arguments about money, in-laws, friends, or work often conceal an underlying concern: "Do you really love *me*?" In parent-child relations, does the parent feel (and act) more tender or more frustrated? What kind of attachment behavior does the child show toward a parent: secure, avoidant, anxious/ambivalent, or disorganized? (Cassidy and Shaver, 1999)
4. *Love can be understood as a process of development.* Erikson's eight stages of human development (Erikson, 1963) expresses this idea: adolescence is the stage for developing an Identity (finding oneself), during a period of experimentation after the childhood self has been discarded. But if Identity is not adequately developed before entering the next stage, sharing Intimacy with a partner in young adulthood, then the lover will not have enough of a self to share, and the relationship will suffer. On the other hand, while "puppy love" of earlier childhood may be mocked, developmentally it is age-appropriate; it is the extent of love that youngsters are capable of, as they imitate adult behaviors and attitudes.
5. *All of the above aspects of love take place within systems of social expectations.* National, racial, religious, social class, and other cultural norms are always present, exerting limits on the permissible range and appropriate forms of expression of love. The family everywhere is a major human institution, upholding these wider norms and also containing its own local rules, rewards, and understandings of love. When a modernized culture emphasizes individualism, romantic love can happen freely, but where collective stability of the larger family or social system is emphasized, as in traditional cultures, such love is seen as a threat and arranged marriages are more typical.

Culture may also affect parent-child love, when it favors one gender over the other. Birth order customs may require that the oldest and youngest child receive different kinds or amounts of love than other siblings (Toman, 1976). A child's inborn characteristics of temperament (Chess and Thomas, 1984), intelligence, or sexual orientation may affect the ability of parents to love a child who is "different." These psychosocial and situational factors contribute to making love a highly complex phenomenon.

Among psychological *theories* about love are these: Freud developed theories about basic drives (especially sex), unconscious wishes and fears, and delayed adult reactions to childhood emotional experiences, all with implications for human love. Freud turned the Golden Rule on its head: you will do to others (in the present) as you have been done unto (in your past). Maslow posited an ascending hierarchy of human needs, with love midway (Maslow, 1987). Harlow showed, by depriving young monkeys of their mothers, that the normal development of an infant requires what might be called primate love – a stable caregiver that can offer regular, warm physical contact; otherwise, adult mating and parenting abilities will be devastated (Blum, 2002). Sternberg sees three dimensions to adult love: intimacy (sharing oneself), commitment (to the relationship), and passion (physical and emotional) (Sternberg and Weis, 2006). In addition, Rogers believed that effective psychotherapy requires that a therapist demonstrate "unconditional positive regard," a professional kind of loving (Rogers, 1961).

The opposite of love may be hatred (another kind of powerful interpersonal connection), but sometimes it is the absence of love. A loveless childhood may lead to a loveless adulthood, where a person is unable to care about the feelings of anyone else – in the extreme, an unloving, antisocial personality, previously known as psychopathic or sociopathic. By comparison, the narcissistic personality has mostly given up on ever finding, yet secretly longs for, the love of another person.

Love can be austere: a self-help group uses the concept of "tough love" to help parents cope with the emotional manipulations of wayward offspring. In such situations, religion can remind one of images of steadfast love, while psychology can recommend empathy, to feel in oneself the other's distress and alienation, plus the objective compassion of therapy.

The philosophy of existentialism has contributed Buber's "I–Thou" relationship as a model for responsible loving (Buber, 1923/2000), and Sartre's comment that there was no such thing as love, only loving acts.

In summary, love, while subject to various interpretations by different psychologies (and also religions), is a prominent, complex, and sometimes problematical feature of close personal relationships. Growth in love relationships usually requires persistence in communications of all sorts to nurture the relationship, honesty about one's shortcomings, willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of the relationship, and acceptance of a measure of uncertainty in our still-limited understanding of how, why, and when love fails or succeeds.

In conclusion, while scientific research will continue to study love's intricacies, and psychological understandings will continue to enhance our ways of improving interpersonal relationships, religion (and popular culture) will continue to put forward the belief that love is both necessary and mysterious – a positive force in human relations that we all can be thankful for.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Luther, Martin

Daniel Burston

The Rise of a Reformer

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was born on March 10, 1483, in the small Saxon town of Eisleben. His father, Hans Luther, a peasant turned copper miner, was shrewd, hardworking and prosperous. In 1501, Luther commenced studies in philosophy at the University of Erfurt, where Ockham's nominalistic philosophy (or the *via moderna*) contended with the prevailing Thomistic worldview. In 1505, at his father's urging, he embarked on the study of law. One day, shortly after, he was stranded in a field during an immense thunderstorm, and was so shaken by the experience that he vowed to St. Anne that he would enter a monastery if she spared his life. The storm abated, and to his father's considerable disappointment, he kept his promise, entering an Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. He was ordained in 1507, and the following year, followed his mentor, Dr. Johannes von Staupitz, to Wittenberg to found an Augustinian university, which was outspokenly critical of medieval scholasticism and Aristotelian philosophy. For the following ten years, Luther studied, lectured and prayed dutifully. But his anger toward Roman – and increasingly, Papal – authority grew steadily, influenced in part by *In Praise of Folly* (1511) by Erasmus of Rotterdam, a leading Hebraist and humanist, who criticized the practice of selling “indulgences.” On the eve on All Saints Day in October, 1517, Luther published 95 theses of his own criticizing the sale of indulgences. (The story about Luther nailing his theses to the door of the Cathedral is apocryphal. There were no eyewitnesses!) As his fame and notoriety grew, so did his theological daring. In the space of a few years, he went from criticizing a lucrative and hypocritical (but highly specific) practice of the Church to challenging the basic legitimacy of the Pope's authority, eventually labeling him the “anti-Christ.”

Luther and Erasmus

While he leaned on him initially, Luther broke with Erasmus and the humanists in 1525. Erasmus resembled Aristotle and St. Thomas in having some faith in our innate sociability, our ability to govern ourselves, and in the efficacy of good works, carried out in the proper spirit,

to ennoble and edify the human spirit (Green, 1964). Some humanists and their fellow travelers, the Unitarians, even allowed for the possibility that Jews, Muslims and Hindus, if they conducted their lives in a Christian spirit, could commend themselves to God, and be welcomed into Heaven in the hereafter.

Heresy! thundered Luther. Salvation is always an unmerited gift of God. There is nothing we can do in this world to really merit salvation. Luther argued that works without faith are of no avail, and indeed, are idolatry, and that only those who embrace Jesus Christ as their personal savior will enter the kingdom of heaven. By some accounts, at the end of his life, Luther hated Erasmus even more than he hated the Pope! Another contentious issue was that Erasmus and his circle interpreted scripture allegorically, for the most part, and made ample allowance for the existence of more than one valid interpretation of a text. Though not enamored of Aristotle, whose authority was generally invoked to stifle, rather than to promote free inquiry, at least in those days, Erasmus and the humanists also acknowledged the wisdom of many pagan poets and philosophers, arguing that they are perfectly compatible with a Christian way of life. In short, they were averse to a rigid or doctrinaire attitude toward religious faith. Not so Luther. Though he put a selective emphasis on certain Biblical texts, and deliberately ignored others, Luther maintained that the Bible is the literal and infallible word of God. He also claimed to know precisely what the Bible meant in any given instance, even if the text itself was deeply obscure to other learned commentators who were more deeply versed in Hebrew and Greek – like Erasmus, for example.

Apart from their doctrinal differences, Erasmus was repulsed by the violence of Luther's feelings and exhortations, and the copious blood shed that accompanied the Reformation. Erasmus deplored violence, and spotted Luther's tendencies in that direction early on. Reflecting on their disparate agendas, Erasmus said: "I layed a hen's egg; Luther hatched a bird of quite a different breed" (Green, 1964: 164). Despite these differences, Luther and Erasmus shared was the belief that the Bible should be accessible to all. In fact, Luther stressed that *all* men should read the Bible and pray in their own tongue, rather than in Latin. This doctrinal shift not only undermined the Roman monopoly on the reading and interpretation of scripture, but placed a considerable premium on literacy, creating an urgent demand for public education – an idea unheard of in feudal times. Fortunately for Luther, it also coincided with the invention of the Gutenberg's

printing press, and Gutenberg himself became a staunch ally, printing hundreds of Luther's pamphlets to spread opposition to Rome and its cunning machinations to enslave men's souls. But while it hastened the dissolution of the feudal order (and the creation of public schools,) Luther sought to keep certain features of the feudal hierarchy intact. Luther's religious revolution undermined the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Rome, but enjoined strict obedience to secular authority – even for unfortunate peasants who were thrust to the brink of destitution and beyond (Green, 1964). Indeed, a pamphlet entitled *Against the Thievish and Murderous Hordes of Peasants* (1525) explicitly encouraged German princes to suppress peasant revolts with ruthless violence – which they did, of course.

Marxist and Freudian Readings

Luther's behavior in the peasant wars (1524–1526) invited a Marxist interpretation, and in 1936, Herbert Marcuse published a brief study on Luther in a series called *Studies in Authority*, published by Felix Alcan (Paris), and reprinted in *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (Marcuse, 1973). Marcuse construed Luther's authoritarian tendencies and his growing contempt for the peasantry as an early expression of a nascent bourgeoisie starting to flex its muscles, because it was linked, in his mind, to Roman law, which Luther studied before entering the monastery. (Roman law was used by the burghers of Luther's era to undermine or circumvent the legal constraints on commerce imposed by the Church.) In *Young Man Luther*, the best known biography of Luther by a psychoanalyst (Erikson, 1958), Erik Erikson chided Marxists for being one sided and reductionistic in their emphasis on economic motives, and inattentive to the powerful "psychic reality" behind Luther's teaching. But even he conceded the element of truth in these approaches.

In 1941, Horkheimer and Adorno drew clear links between Luther's anti-Semitic statements and then-current Nazi propaganda in a report on their "*Research Project on Antisemitism*" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1941). Initially, in more charitable moods, Luther had explained the Jewish refusal to convert to Christianity as rooted in a sensible mistrust for the Papacy, and the pagan elements (including "mariolatry") that Catholicism had introduced into Christian teaching. For a few years, Luther even deluded himself into thinking that once he had purged the Christian faith of these sordid accretions the Jews would convert *en masse*. However, after many abortive

efforts to convert local Jewry, in 1543, at age 60, Luther exhorted his contemporaries:

- ▶ First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools.
- ▶ Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed.
- ▶ Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such adultery, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.
- ▶ Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb.
- ▶ Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for Jews.
- ▶ Sixth, I advise that . . . all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them.
- ▶ Seventh. . . Let whomsoever can, throw brimstone and pitch upon them, so much the better. . . and if this be not enough, let them be driven like mad dogs from the land (cited in Burston, 2007: 115).

This inflammatory speech was not an isolated incident. Luther's last sermon, was another attack upon Jews, and the Kristlnacht pogrom which swept Germany in 1938 was deliberately timed to coincide with Luther's birthday. Luther's utterances were often read in Protestant Churches during the Nazi era to incite violence and hatred toward Jews (Burston, 2007).

Erik Erikson's biography, *Young Man Luther*, minimized Luther's anti-Semitic outbursts and his destructive attitude toward peasants, dwelling instead on Luther's audacity, originality, resilience, sincerity and wit. While more sympathetic than many treatments of Luther's life, Erikson did strain credulity at times. He credited Luther's confessor, von Staupitz, with rare therapeutic abilities that supposedly saved the sanity of this prodigiously gifted but deeply disturbed young man, and helped him find his "voice," and to trust his own, inner authority, though von Staupitz remained completely loyal to the Church. Odder still, Erikson interpreted a disputed passage in Luther's *Table Talk* to mean that the decisive moment in his religious development - Luther's epiphany - took place while he was evacuating his bowels. Erikson reasoned that for someone who suffers from chronic constipation, having a splendid bowel movement could easily engender a "religious" experience; an idea echoed by Norman O. Brown 2 years later, in *Life Against Death* (Brown, 1960). If Erikson was right, Luther was the first (and perhaps *only*) specimen of *homo religiosus* to have his crucial revelation

during the act of defecation. W. H Auden welcomed Erikson's interpretation. According to Auden (1960),

- ▶ There must be many people to whom religious, intellectual or artistic insights have come in the same place, for excretion is both the primal creative act - every child is the mother of its own feces - and the primal act of revolt and repudiation of the past - what was once good food has become bad dirt and must be gotten rid of. From then on, Luther's fate became his own (Auden, 1960: 17).

Well, perhaps. But if many people have religious experiences while defecating, very few actually report them. So the question becomes: why did Luther, of all people, have this experience? Or more to the point: did he, really? We may never know, but in retrospect, Luther's epiphany probably did *not* occur in the way or in the place that Erikson imagined it. Luther's account is worded more ambiguously than Erikson allowed, and could be construed as saying that the blessed event occurred in meditation cells *adjacent to* the monastery's privy (Green, 1964; Marius, 1999). But whatever you believe on this point, the fact remains that Luther was an intriguing character. He attacked the selling of indulgences and cult of saintly relics with a clarity and indignation worthy of Voltaire. But he was also deeply superstitious, a believer in witchcraft who claimed to literally "see" demons and evil spirits lurking about the Prussian landscape. As a good medieval cleric must, Luther dutifully reviled "the flesh," echoing centuries of Christian tradition. But he was bitterly opposed to priestly celibacy, spoke frankly of conjugal pleasures, and in later years, ate and drank with deliberate abandon to "mock the devil" - or, as Erikson said, to chase away bouts of anxiety and depression. A man of great vigor and industry, who survived three epidemics of Bubonic plague and lived to the age of 63 Luther was also a legendary neurasthenic, who was prone to bouts of constipation and dizziness, and other diffuse bodily ailments. But for all his faults and frailties, Luther was still what Hegel termed a "world-historical individual," whose writings, utterances and deeds transformed the world irrevocably, for good and for ill. His illustrious contemporaries included Copernicus, Erasmus, Thomas More, Rabelais and Machiavelli - the last of the medievals, or first of the moderns, depending on how you juggle your historical schemata. Looking backwards, it is hard to think of a generation who had more impact on modernity than they. And with the possible exception of Copernicus, Luther was the most influential of them all.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Erikson, Erik](#)

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M

Magic

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Magic involves the practice of what is perceived to be the direct manipulation of material and spirit realms by human initiative. This action is meant to bring about definitive, tangible results. The Greco-Roman Egypt source entitled the Greek Magical Papyri (second century BCE–fifth century CE) provides an array of kinds and forms of magic used during this time. The spells, for instance, bring favor, produce a trance, drive out demons, question a corpse, induce insomnia, catch a thief, cause evil sleep, break enchantment, and induce childbearing. They occur as charms, oracles, dreams, saucer divination, magical handbooks, magical rings, astrological calendars, horoscopes, lamp inquiry, and magico-medical formulae. Many of the spells require complex procedures. To control one's shadow, the subject must make an offering of wheaten meal, ripe mulberries, and un-softened sesame. After making the offering, she must go into the desert on the sixth hour of the day and lay prostrate toward the rising sun, hands out-stretched, saying a formula which begins: "Cause now my shadow to serve me . . ." (Betz, 1986 PGM III: 612–632). The shadow will come before the face of the subject on the seventh hour, and is to be addressed with the command: "Follow me everywhere." A charm for sending a dream requires picking three reeds before sunrise, and incanting a formula after sunset while facing, respectively, east, south, west, and north (Betz, 1986 PGM IV: 3172–3208). The range and extent of forms and purposes of magic relate the human desire to address the complexity of day-to-day life situations. They are meant as wish-fulfillment response to human limitation and anxiety. Coursing through the material there occurs the influence of ancient Egyptian temple religion, worship of the sun, and notions of the regenerative potencies in nature seen in the ritual practices of mummification. At the same time, these magical formulae are representative of a cultural syncretism which includes

Babylonian, Greek, Jewish, and Christian religions, and as such evidence the extent to which magic was used within the ancient world. By 13 BCE however, the influence of magic becomes stemmed by Augustus' burning of 2,000 magical scrolls (Seutonius, *Augustus* 2.31). The early church reaction against magic as pagan practice contributes further to the suppression of magical handbooks and magicians. St. Augustine (d. 430 CE) makes it a point to say how the raising of Samuel from the dead by the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28.8–25) occurred through the work of demons (*Ad Simplicianum* II, III). The Medieval text *De Magis*, which is part of a larger treatise entitled *Etymologies* by St. Isidore of Seville (d. 638 CE), denounces magic as having originated with *angelorum malorum* ("evil angels"). He says that "hidden knowledge" resulting in the taking of oracles and the raising of the dead (*dicuntur oracula et necromantia*) was first employed by Zoroaster, King of Persia, and even more by the Assyrians beginning with King Ninus (9.1–3). Subsequent church figures including Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims (d. 881), and Bishop Burchard of Worms (d. 1025) rely on Isidore to denigrate magic even further in their own writings. However, by the tenth and eleventh centuries astrological handbooks reappear within the domain of the Church. Demons are perceived to exist under the rule of the Church and the raising of the symbol of the cross. Earth magic, which includes the supernatural marking of shrines, wells and springs, *sculptilia*, and *simulacra* also emerges. The European Enlightenment and its focus upon reason and religious dissociation results in the eventual demise of magic however, while contemporary intrigue seems to be occurring through attention given to books and films such as Harry Potter.

See also: [Astrology](#) [Demons](#) [Zoroastrianism](#)

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Maimonides, Moses

Mark Popovsky

General

Born in Cordova, Spain, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) achieved fame as a rabbinic authority, legal codifier, philosopher, physician and astronomer. Religious persecution sent him into exile throughout Spain and northern Africa before he eventually settled in Cairo serving as the physician to the vizier al-Fadil in 1185.

Philosophical Views

Strongly influenced by Aristotelian philosophy popular in the surrounding Muslim culture, Maimonides is regarded as the supreme rationalist of Jewish tradition. He asserted the doctrine of the incorporeality of God and devoted much of his major philosophical work, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, to reinterpreting biblical passages which suggest an anthropomorphic deity. Maimonides wrote the *Guide* in an effort to resolve the apparent contradictions between Aristotelian philosophy and traditional Judaism which were challenging the faith of well-educated Jews at the time. He argued that biblical texts have a spiritual meaning beyond their literal one – a meaning which points to the ultimate authority of reason. He attempted to prove the existence of God using exclusively Aristotelian terms without relying on the bible. Maimonides maintained that Jewish laws – even those of a seemingly ritual nature – are products of divine wisdom and, thus, wholly rational. In the *Guide* and in his work, *The Book of Commandments*, Maimonides dedicates himself to explicating the rational principles underpinning particular Jewish laws.

As in Aristotelian thought, Maimonides believed that moral behavior, while important, was simply a means to

attaining intellectual virtue, the highest ideal. He argued that the mind's ability to reason represents the divine image reflected in human beings and thus individuals have a moral imperative to develop their intellectual faculties. Maimonides asserted that morality consists of following the mean which is attained as the well-cultivated mind controls a person's desires. In an exception to this appeal for moderation, Maimonides encouraged his readers to avoid even slight traces of anger or pride and his later writings display an increasingly ascetic inclination.

In the *Guide*, Maimonides shows special interest in the interpretation of dreams and prophetic visions which he views as wholly natural events. Maimonides diverges from earlier Jewish tradition which generally regarded dreams as manifestations of divine communication. In a process similar to what Freud calls the "dream work," Maimonides interprets dream material by retracing how the dream was created in the mind of the individual, focusing on the latent context instead of the dream content itself. He argues that dreams mark the nexus point between the rational and imaginative faculties, two aspects of the mind that the Hebrew prophets and some later rabbinic figures were successfully able to synthesize.

In the *Guide*, Maimonides put forward the argument that ascribing any individual attribute to God denies God's unity and omnipotence. Consequently, one may only speak of what God is not (i.e., God is not non-existent.) but one commits heresy when attempting to define what God is. Similarly, Maimonides held the neoplatonic doctrine that evil does not exist independently but simply reflects an absence of good. While arguing that the world as a whole is good, Maimonides attributed the suffering that individuals experience to divine justice and man's misuse of free will. He rejected the claims of previous Jewish philosophers that God intentionally causes suffering to a righteous person in order to reward that person in the afterlife. Maimonides' own view of the afterlife drew heavily from the Hellenistic model of the immortality of the soul, downplaying rabbinic notions of physical resurrection.

Legal Writing

Maimonides did not write exclusively for the philosophical elite. He is most famous among Jews today for his legal code, the *Mishneh Torah*. This 14 volume work endeavors to distill the whole of rabbinic literature, rich with arguments, tangents, loose associations and dialog, into a systematic and comprehensive catalog of conclusive legal rulings in clear Hebrew accessible to the lay reader.

The topics covered include family law, torts, criminal law and ritual practice. The code also contains within it a complete system of metaphysics, refutations of Christianity and Islam, and a discussion of eschatology. This project was controversial from its inception, drawing criticism that Maimonides was interpreting previous legal debates idiosyncratically and denying his reader access to dissenting arguments. Nevertheless, the code gained immediate popularity throughout the Jewish world, strongly influencing the language, structure, and content of Jewish legal writings into the modern era.

See also: [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Male God Images

Annette Peterson

God images are psychological constructs of thoughts and feelings, coalesced into a complex relational gestalt. God images were once critiqued by psychologists of religion as projections, personifications to be rejected. Now they are recognized by contemporary psychologists of religion for their ability to provide psychological strength and resilience. They provide structure and improve functioning on the individual and the social level, by helping us internalize a moral code and a shared world view.

Male God images hold sway over the mainstream religious imagination, affecting conscious and unconscious cultural mores and theological traditions. Male God images are particularly effective in structuring and strengthening the individual and his/her society. Replicating the Western traditional father's role of provider, role model and disciplinarian on the cosmic stage, male God images provide a sense of belonging, safety, and a clear moral compass. However, these benefits are not without risk: these God images may also cause us to suffer perpetual childhood, gender imbalance and guilt/shame complexes.

In the triad of Western monotheisms, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, gendered and sexualized language is used to express the divine nature. Although Islam eschews divine images, the male referent is used. In the Judaism and Christianity, as in the Bible, masculine language for God is overwhelmingly predominant. God is consistently depicted in a paternal role, as external to but actively involved in his creation. God is a divine king, lord over all the universe, husband to his chosen nation of Israel, and father to us all. The father-child relationship functions particularly effectively as a metaphor for the relationship between God and humans. The term father conveys authority as well as kinship.

The dominant God image of recent history is of a male, divine king, who rules over all, meting out justice, demanding obedience, caring for those on his good side, and smiting those who fail to please. This historical trend dates back several thousand years, to early urban civilizations. Although earlier tribal societies favored more animistic (nature/animal Gods) or feminine (Earth Mother) God images, when humans coalesced into larger societies, the male God image was strengthened as a way of stabilizing the social structure and enforcing a shared code of ethics (Edinger, 1996). Cultures who serve a "divine king" will achieve a greater civilization than if these roles are disparate or conflicting.

Although male God images may strengthen us culturally, they can weaken us individually. Sigmund Freud critiqued the male god image of mainstream monotheism as a projection of our earthly fathers onto the heavens. Freud declared, "God is in every case modeled after the father, and that our personal relation to God is dependent upon our relation to our physical father, fluctuating and changing with him, and that God at bottom is nothing but an exalted father" (1918/1950: 244).

Freud dismissed God as a glorified father figure and rejected religion as a psychological crutch based in illusory wish-fulfillment (1928/1975). He believed that we would remain psychologically crippled until we rejected our parentified God images. Freud compared our projection of the divine father to the story of Oedipus, with God as a psychological creation to assuage our guilt for having usurped our earthly fathers, and as a means to maintain a sense of perpetual childhood, buffered and cradled by God. With God the Father as the ultimate authority figure, it is easy to shrug off free will and personal responsibility and bow to God's greater will.

Since Freud, psychoanalytic object relational theory has elaborated and amended the Freudian critique with studies demonstrating the validity of the parental projection theory. However, these studies have correlated God

images with early images of both father and mother, and often the preferred or opposite-sex parent (e.g., Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1975; Rizzuto, 1979; Vergote and Tamayo, 1981). Further, these studies have corrected Freud by showing the positive effects of the God relationship, demonstrating that it provides psychological strength and resilience.

Carl Jung offered a different perspective on the God-as-father hypothesis. Rather than a larger than life father figure, Jung believed that the God image is an archetype, or symbolic representation, of the self. He wrote, “[O]ne can never distinguish empirically between a symbol of the self and a God-image, the two ideas, however much we try to differentiate them, always appear blended together” (Jung, 1958: 156).

If the God image is also a self image, its examination reveals much about the psyche and its complexes. The God image may reflect our personal world view on a cosmic level, or it may be an idealized image that compensates for our inherent deficiencies.

The male God image appears to be a conglomerate of parental and self images, a synthesis of our relational experiences and expectations that is coalesced into a singular divine Person. The God image provides an anchor in our relation to the divine, yet it is also flexible, changing alongside our own faith development. In theories of faith and spiritual development, the personification of the divine occurs in the middle developmental stages, and later gives way to a more universal, inclusive God image (Fowler, 1981; Genia, 1995; Meissner, 1984). With developmental maturity, the God image has greater tolerance for diversity and ambiguity. It is possible that a parallel developmental trajectory also exists in our collective cultural God image development, and gendered, personified God images may gradually give way to more transcendent and inclusive God images (Edinger, 1996; Peterson, 2005).

Commentary

God images can deepen our connection to ultimate reality, but they can also limit or distort our ability to encounter it. A God image based on one’s father unavoidably has both positive and negative psychic consequences. Even within a single God image, qualities of God-as-parent have equal and opposite ramifications. For example, a God who provides safety can also be perceived as restrictive; a God who provides for our needs usually requires much in return; a God who gives loving approval can also be a source of rejection.

Similarly, a God image based on our self image can limit our openness to experiencing the divine.

The masculine emphasis in prevalent God images is symptomatic of psychological misalignment. Jung argued that a healthy God image needed to reflect the balance of male and female, which he called *anima* and *animus*. A gender imbalance results in psychological one-sidedness, limiting freedom of experience and expression. This problematic imbalance occurs on individual and cultural levels, and has resulted in fierce polemic debate.

Feminist theologians have argued bitterly against male-only language for God. They believe that God’s maleness deifies the masculine, which appears as divine sanction for patriarchy and the devaluation of women. Male God images, therefore, perpetuate injustices against women in societies across the world.

Mary Daly quipped, “If God is male, than the male is God” (1973: 19). The dominance of male God images has been used to elevate men in society, under the belief that male authority is God given and sanctioned.

In verbalizing our experience of God, both male and female traits are needed. However evident this may be from a psychological perspective, it remains a source of theological debate in religious circles. Biblical precedent (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:7) is used to argue for solely masculine names/titles for the divine, even to assert that women do not bear the image of God to the extent that men do. Theologians debate over whether the masculine language is culturally-dependent or Self-revelatory. In view of the furor involving gendered language for the divine, it is helpful to step back and acknowledge the radical difference between human sexuality and divine reality. God by nature encompasses and exceeds all our efforts to express “him.”

See also: [Female God Images](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [God Image and Therapy](#)

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Mandala. Figure 1 Double sand spiral by Jim Denevan at Ocean Beach, San Francisco, March 6, 2005. Photo by Lee Bailey.

Mandala

Lee W. Bailey

The Sanskrit word *mandala* means “circle” – circular images drawn, built, painted, danced or lived, expressing many qualities of nature and culture. Many mandalas are unnoticed images of peace, power, oneness, and transcendence. Circular fountains in cities, for example, simultaneously send out a circle of energy and bring to the “center” the community around it. Mandalas are a sacred visual art about the silent center within, the endless circumference without, an art with psychological, biological, and spiritual significance. Some are evident in nature, others products of art and religion. Cultures embroider the form with many unique variations. The focus is often on the center of the circle, which is commonly a geometric symbol of the eternal source. Mandalas with symmetry imply a tension or balance and harmony of spiritual forces. The mandala is an orienting map of the soul, the world, and the cosmos, a microcosm and macrocosm.

Natural Mandalas

We live amid nature’s own wondrous mandalas – flowers, age-rings of a tree-trunk, or the cycling of the earth and celestial lights. Sit quietly and watch a shadow move along and feel yourself sitting on the vast earth’s globe

rotating around its axis, through its seasons. Enjoy a campfire circle in the darkness, friends linking souls and fire thrusting and sparking upward. Feel the cycles of your breathing. Think of the plant cycles, such as trees, that absorb the carbon dioxide we breathe out, and produce oxygen for us to breathe in. Sit by a stream and recall the cycle of water, rising in mist to the sky, drifting in the wind as clouds, then falling in lifegiving rain, flowing over waterfalls to the ocean. Wonder at the complex variety of circular seashells – delicate sand dollars or spiraling conches. Study snowflakes, their tiny, delicate crystalline, symmetrical structure, each completely unique in design. Look at a satellite photo of a vast hurricane swirling in a powerful circle.

As you grow up and grow older, think of the birthdays, births, and deaths of your life as part of earth’s life cycles. These simple yet cosmic wonders are doorways to a higher consciousness and infinite power beyond mundane consciousness. Intuitively we can see in them reminders of our place in the grander scheme of nature. This opens up their sacredness, the geometry of life and the endless beyond within it. The cosmic cycles of reincarnation are a basic assumption of Asian religions, so historical time and life experiences are believed to be cyclical, not linear.

The ancients personified the sky’s magnificent powers with the circles of starry astrological symbols, such as

Taurus the Bull, as divinities in daily cycles, and closer stars as gods and goddesses, such as Venus and Jupiter, in planetary processions. The beauty they emanate has long seemed to be a channel to the divine.

Animals also live with cycles. A circular bird nest is the safe haven home for the oval eggs of a new year's generation of the winged nation. The old image of the serpent, that sheds its skin as it grows, in a circle eating its tail, or wrapped around an egg, evokes the cycle of life eating life and birthing it again. The complex eyeball is a circle that draws the visual and soulful world into our brains and connects us with the world. Watch the seasonal cyclical migration of birds such as graceful geese, honking in their formations as they fly thousands of miles north and south each year. Remember the hidden fish and whales that also migrate long distances with the seasons to reproduce underwater, replenishing the earth.

The plant nation also springs forth with many circles, from the sunflower's whirled center to the unfolding delicate beauty of a royal English rose or royal Chinese peony. Flowers, the perfumed sex organs of the plant world, symbolize at weddings the beauty of erotic love and family fertility, and at funerals the beauty of human and eternal life. The Christmas tree is a mandala, a miniature cosmos on an *axis mundi* with lights like tiny suns, globes like planets, and soul symbols such as children's toys all around. The lotus is an image of the divine in Asia. Hindu gods and Buddhas sit on lotus thrones.

The mineral world has its mandalas, also, from common rounded stones washed smooth by running water to precious diamonds, shaped in a circle to reflect the divine treasure of light. Gold wedding rings symbolize the loving union of marriage. The stone seen as the center or belly-button of the world, *omphalos* in Delphi, or the central Ka'bah stone in Mecca for Islam, are world-orienting mandalas. Stone circles, notably England's Stonehenge, over 5,000 years old, apparently a cosmic calendar, mark for the ages the cycles of nature, such as the solstices. Egyptian, Mayan, and many other pyramids are model holy mountains, often four-sided, orienting to earthly directions and pointing above to the eternal divine powers. The Egyptian pyramids are positioned to imitate the belt of the Osiris [or Orion, in Greek] constellation of stars, toward which the spirit of the deceased Pharaoh was to ascend.

Mandala Psychology

Carl Jung, after undergoing a confusing period of encounters with unconscious material, began in 1916 to draw

mandala images spontaneously, at first not knowing what they meant. As he came to understand it, he saw the mandala as a picture of the complete soul, conscious and unconscious, with the center as the pointer to an authority far larger than the ego, which he later called the "Self," or psychological experience of the divine within.

Jung collected numerous mandalas drawn by his patients (Jung, 9,1: para. 627–712). They pictured images sometimes seen in dreams: squares, circles, spirals, flowers, crystalline reflections, geometric multiplications, eyeballs, animals, light rays, serpents, fish, or a glowing egg. Jung saw circular UFOs as mandala symbols in machine form, bringing cosmic energies down to earth. He found that mandalas reduced confusion and panic and introduced order, balance and wholeness. Mandalas, he saw, urged one to become more truly what one is, overcoming fear, chaos, and balancing opposites, guided by the healing energy of the central image. In his translation of *The Golden Flower*, Richard Wilhelm introduced Jung to Chinese mandalas. Jung envisioned a shadow negative force in each archetypal image, so in our time a shadow of the mandala would be the swastika, which Hitler took from a Hindu tradition and transformed its meaning into one of hatred and death.

Here is an example of the dynamic energy that a mandala can have. A college girl, scornful of religion, sullen and sad, had a dream of an energetic three-inch sphere, that she found in a field, that suddenly came alive, pulsating with lightning bolts, driven by dangerous electricity. The threatening ball swooped around her as the sky became menacing. She ran and ran, until the ball faced her as she gave up and repeatedly cried out "I do believe in God!" The sky calmed, the now lifeless ball dropped to the ground and flowers grew all around. She woke up in a sweat, and soon became a Religion major (Federico, 2008). This sphere emerged from her unconscious soul with a fright that transformed her consciousness into a search for spiritual peace.

Indigenous Peoples

Of all the indigenous peoples' mandalas, we can note a few. Many dance in a circle around a fire, and some prefer to live in circular tipis. The Mexican God's Eye of cross-shaped sticks is woven with brightly colored threads, making a diamond shape. The great Aztec Sunstone has at its center the symbol of the present age *Ollin*, surrounding with calendar and cosmic images, two cosmic fire serpents, and pictures of a coming cataclysm. The Australian Aborigine Tjuringa stone, shows the map of the journeys

of the Ancestors of the Dreamtime. They build large mandala circles made of natural colors and feathers in the desert, covering two or three acres.

Celtic Mandalas are full of endless knots – ropes and vines twined in and out of each other in manifold knots, like a maze or pilgrimage through life, not to be untied, but to be followed in its endlessness. Some have women entwined as in a dance, or men whose beards are entwined with their limbs, as if swimming in a wild lake of seaweed. Others have the tidy order of linear lines and crosses or triangles. Bestly creatures chase each other in a circle, paws entwined. One anthropomorphic mandala celebrated in carved circles on United Kingdom churches, in dances, and in processions, is the Green Man, whose beard is entwined with wings, leaves and branches. Leaves may grow out of his mouth (Holitzka, 1996).

In Native American mandalas, the four directions often appear, pointing to the horizon, the powers and colors of the cardinal directions, and the cosmic forces they embody. Feathers and wings carry the powers of the winged beings of the sky. In the Lakota Sioux shaman Black Elk's great vision, he saw a cloud teepee in the center of a camp with grandfathers in it who gave him powers, and four ceremonial horses dancing at each of four directions (Neihardt). Some Native Americans make circular dream catchers or outdoors stone circles in places of power. Navahos make sand mandalas for healing ceremonies, seeking to balance spiritual forces to overcome sickness. Some call mandalas "medicine wheels." The dazzling sun may send its rays in a mandala circle mixed with images of serpents, humans, lizards, and shimmering zig-zag lines.

Rock drawings, or petroglyphs, may be mandalas marking a vision, a spirit, an ancestor spirit, or a deity, such as a rain god. Animals are prominent, such as the wolf, bear, eagle, or buffalo. The peace pipe, bows and arrows, and jagged "thunder arrows" of lightning, or a thunder bird illuminate some mandalas. The Great Mother and her growing plants, or male figures may stand arms upraised, or dancing. A ritual such as the Plains peoples' sun dance has the cottonwood tree in the center, warriors dancing around it in a circle, tipi lodges around them, mountains, and clouds, all pointing upward to the Great Spirit.

Flowers may grace a mandala, or the spiral of a tornado with jagged lightning powers swirling toward the center. Horses may stand in lines facing the central sun, with a surrounding image of a Great Spirit. A basket or plate often has woven images of human figures, spirals, suns, abstract geometric designs, or sacred foods. A Pueblo kachina dancer with elaborate mask and imagery such as wings may dominate a mandala. These images

convey the powers of the universe that appear in nature, for in many forms the ancestor spirits and the Great Spirit lives in all the world (Holitzka, 2000).

Judaism

The Jewish Star of David is a mandala, with two inverted triangles intersecting. Jerusalem and its ancient temple mount is the geographic center of historical Israel, so this holy land is the central focus of the faith. Jewish traditional dances frequently move in a circle. The family dining table is also a central focus of Judaism. Torah scrolls are cylindrical mandalas of sacred texts. The menorah candelabrum is a half-circle of nine candles, an ancient symbol of Judaism. The tree inspired Jewish Kabbalist mystics to organize their metaphysical vision of the universe as a tree, a circle on an axis. The top is the Ein Sof, the infinite creative spirit, and the various revealed aspects of God (Sepiroth) take their place as branches, until the bottom is reached as the Shekinah, the presence of God for humans.

Christianity

The labyrinth is an archaic symbol adopted by Christians, a maze, perhaps meant to trap evil spirits. At the Cretan palace of Knossos, there are reports of a labyrinth as a dancing ground, and the myth of the Minotaur at the center. Pliny reports others in Italy And Lemnia, and, like Pliny, Herodotus records a huge labyrinthine building in Egypt (Pliny, Bk. 36:xix, Herodotus, Bk. 2, p. 149, Ramsay, 664–65). Some ancient versions seem to induce confusion and being lost or trapped. Some were later altered to focus on finding the center and then a way out. They were made with stones and bushes, and one notable one remains in the floor just inside the entrance of Chartres Cathedral in France. The one in Reims Cathedral is more square (*Paroisse*) with four larger corners, and the Virgin Mary at the center. The one at Amiens Cathedral is square. The winding passages portray the sufferings on this earth, and the center depicts the divine peace. The journey is a descent into oneself to find inner divinity. A 21st-century revival of labyrinth meditative walking began at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

The cross is also a mandala, focusing on the center of meaning in the faith, the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ, which stripped his humanity bare, returned his spirit to the center of being, and left the Holy Spirit on Earth. The Latin cross has one long side. The Celtic cross

has long side with a small circle around the center of the cross inscribed with designs. Eastern Orthodox crosses may have the four sides of equal length, or an angled short piece on the longer side. The circular stained glass rose window is a large mandala in churches with pictures and colors illuminated by sunlight, developed by Gothic cathedral designers. Cathedral ground plans are cross-mandalas with high ceilings or domes.

Islam

Muslims worldwide face Mecca when they bow in prayer, forming a vast human mandala. At the Haaj pilgrimage journey to Mecca, itself a mandala journey, there is the central ritual circumambulation of Ka'aba stone in the Great Mosque. The new moon and nearby star are a Muslim symbol, appearing on the flag of Turkey. The huge dome in many mosques symbolizes the arch of heaven, and the typical four minaret towers at the mosque periphery form a symmetrical square. Muslim art forbids human images, so many designs, as on Turkish tiles, include symmetrical plants and calligraphy. Classic carpet designs often have mandala designs. The mystical Whirling Dervishes dance in a circular spinning form.

Taoism

Chinese Taoism emphasizes the ancient Yin-Yang circle, in which black and white halves flow into each other and each contains a circle of the opposite within itself, showing the inadequacies of rigid dualisms, flowing paradoxically in tension and harmony in the Way of deepest eternal mysteries. The *Tao te Ching* says: "The Tao is an empty vessel; it is used, but never filled. . . hidden deep but ever present" (Tao te Ching, poem 4).

Tibetan Buddhism

Today's most complex mandalas are the colorful Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas. They are elaborate, detailed circular designs made with colored sand by monks, with well-developed metaphysical interpretations. A mandala in Tibetan Buddhism is a map of the spiritual cosmos, an *axis mundi*, a cosmic center whose purpose is, like smoke going up the smoke hole of a circular tent, to commune with the transcendent realms. This results in a sacred spiritual transformation for those who make it. Tibetans

believe that the mandala was invented by the Buddha, who is said to have designed the first Kalachakra ("time-wheel") mandala after reaching enlightenment. A *yantra* is a purely geometric mandala, with no deity pictured, typically with several overlapping triangles.

Another type of Tibetan mandala is the "world wheel," held by the god of death Yama, portraying the various forms of suffering in the world, from the central rooster (lust) snake (envy), and pig (unconsciousness) to death holding all the earth's suffering, surrounded by garden-like, peaceful trees, ducks, clouds, and birds.

A master monk supervises the highly liturgical mandala construction for a novice initiate. A deity is commonly pictured at the geometric center and is the central theme of a mandala. The making of a mandala is a ritual of restoring the ideal principles of things to earth. The adepts involved both bring the cosmic energies down into the mandala and reawaken the immaculate principles within themselves. Giuseppe Tucci describes the ritual of making and contemplating a mandala as an "epiphany":

- ▶ ...[one] comes to be identified with the center of the *mandala*, the point from which all goes forth and to which all returns and from where the archetypal essence stream forth in luminous rays which pervade the whole world... (1973: 105).

The mandala is intended to balance, like spokes around the center of a wheel, the confused mixture of earthly passions and consciousness, good and evil. In some mandalas a god and goddess may embrace in Tantric fashion, making love to release the divine light within. Other mandalas reflect the kundalini tradition of locating various archetypal cosmic powers on the line of the spine, rising from the most coarse to the most refined, each chakra spot symbolized by a mandala. The most important dynamic of the making and contemplation of a mandala is to visualize a divine principle or divinity, bring it down from the transcendent realm, realize that it is already in one's own heart, and awaken it.

Kalachakra Mandala

The Tantric Kalachakra mandala has roots in Indian tradition. The "wheel of time" is now the favorite of the 14th Dalai Lama. Making it is to promote spiritual peace in individuals and on earth. It portrays a square divine palace within a circle of colorful symbols, full of deities. Journeying toward the center, the god Kalachakra is visualized embracing his female partner Vishvamata in his

arms. He is the sun, she is the moon. Together they unite compassion with absolute wisdom. In the center is the Tibetan blue vajra, symbol of the diamond scepter or thunderbolt. This the participants must melt into in order to be purified and be reborn beyond this world into the pure essence of the emptiness of the absolute (Crossman). When the mandala ceremony is complete, the sand is swept into a container that is retuned to the earth or waters, an expression of the impermanence of all things, even sacred mandalas.

Industrialism

The industrial era also has its mandalas, such as the early, oversimplified model of the atom as a miniature solar system with a nucleus surrounded by cycling electrons, symbolizing the foundation of material/electronic existence. The culminating space age mandala is the earth seen from outer space. This has morphed from a proud image of technological space conquest to a more awesome vision of the delicacy of our home in the vastness of space, needing ecological harmony more than the spirit of conquest of nature.

See also: [Circumambulation](#) [Great Mother](#) [Hajj](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Mantra

Fredrica R. Halligan

Many adherents of eastern religions, especially Buddhism and Hinduism, use brief verbal phrases or verses as objects for meditation. Such *mantras* are numerous, but best known are the *Avalokiteshara mantra* of the Tibetan Buddhists: “*Om mani padme hum*,” and the *Gayatri Mantra* which is widespread among the Hindus:

- ▶ *Om Bhur Bhuva Svaha*
- Tat Savitur Varenyam*
- Bhargo Devasya*
- Deheemani*
- Dhi Yo Yonah Prachodayat.*

Any personally-meaningful sacred word or phrase can be used as a *mantra* or as a focus for centering prayer. Well known among Christians is the “Jesus Prayer” described in *The Way of A Pilgrim*, a famous Hesychast text: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.” In Judaism the simple word “*Shalom*” can be used repetitively as a *mantra*, or the *Shema Israel* can be said, affirming the unity and love of God. The comparable verse in Islam is called *Dhikr*.

Recent psychosomatic research (e.g., following Benson, 1976) has shown *mantra* meditation to be very beneficial in eliciting the “Relaxation Response,” thus attenuating anxiety and improving physical (especially cardiac) health and pain reduction.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Gayatri](#) [Hinduism](#)

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Martín-Baró, Ignacio

Daniel J. Gaztambide

Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989) was a Jesuit priest, philosopher, and social psychologist who is most recognized for using the theological-ethical-political insights of liberation theology to develop a social justice oriented liberation psychology. Drawing on insights from liberation theology, Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, critical/political psychology, and social psychology, Martín-Baró conducted research projects with a "preferential option for the poor" and oppressed people of El Salvador, with the intention of raising awareness and empowering them in the midst of social, political, and war-related trauma. Due to his political positions and socially progressive psychological research, he was murdered by the Salvadoran army along with five other Jesuits and two employees at the Central American University in El Salvador.

Ignacio "Nacho" Martín-Baró was born on November 7, 1942, in the municipality of Valladolid, Spain. He became a novice of the Society of Jesus in 1959, and was transferred first to Villagarcía and then to Santa Tecla in El Salvador for his second year. From 1961 to 1965 he was sent to study at the Catholic University of Quito (Ecuador), and later to the Javeriana University in Bogotá, earning a bachelors degree in philosophy and a licentiate in philosophy and literature. He returned to El Salvador in 1966 to teach at the *Externado* San José, and in 1967 also began teaching philosophy and theology at the *Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas"* (UCA; or Central American University) in San Salvador, the capital. This was short lived, as Martín-Baró left that very year for Frankfurt and then Leuven to study theology. He returned once again to

El Salvador in 1970 to finish his last year of theology, due to encouragement from his close friend, the liberation theologian Ignacio Ellacuría. Due to a prior interest he developed in Bogotá, whereby he consumed a variety of writings from psychology, Martín-Baró began studies in the field at UCA. He earned a licentiate in psychology in 1975, during which time he was also teaching the subject in the National Nursing Academy of Santa Ana. Desiring to expand his knowledge of psychology, he earned a Masters degree in social sciences and a Doctorate in social and organizational psychology from Chicago University from 1977 through 1979. Although he was in the United States during this time, both his master's and doctoral thesis showed a deep concern with the growing social and political turmoil of El Salvador, as he wrote about group conflict and the living conditions of the lower classes in the Central American country. Although deeply involved in his studies, he was attentive to the latest news from El Salvador.

After completing his studies in the United States he returned to El Salvador to become a lecturer and head of the psychology department at the UCA. From 1981 through 1989 he acquired numerous administrative and academic positions within the university as well as became member of the editorial board of numerous social science journals, such as *Estudios Centroamericanos* (Central-American Studies), and the *Journal of Salvadoran Psychology*. Apart from these endeavors as a scholar, Martín-Baró in his capacity as a priest first served in the district of Zacamil, which lacked a clergyperson in the early 80's, and afterwards performed sacramental duties in the parish of Jayaque, a poor rural municipality some 30 km from San Salvador. It was in this role that he appeared closest to the Salvadoran people, involving himself through pastoral and community care, and helping construct necessary structures to improve their living conditions (such as a new bridge, or providing wood and materials to fix their homes, etc).

As a result of his studies in liberation theology and social psychology, of Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, political/critical psychology, as well as his experiences as a Jesuit in El Salvador before and during the Salvadoran Civil War (1980–1992), Martín-Baró developed a system of psychological thought he termed "liberation psychology." In developing liberation psychology, he critiqued the general state of Latin American psychology for its "slavery" and "scientific mimicry"- the uncritical importation of North American psychologies for the purposes of gaining prestige and power, as ideologies alien to the experiences of the Latin American people, with its attending positivism,

individualism, hedonism, and ahistoricism. He argued that such imported constructs tended to problematize the experiences of the common and poor people of El Salvador while ignoring structural injustice, and thus serving the interests of the ruling classes. In the stead of imported psychology, he proposed a liberation psychology based on three guiding principles of liberation theology: a Christian God of life who scorns injustice, the primacy of orthopraxis over orthodoxy, and the preferential option for the poor. Based on these ethical and philosophical commitments, Martín-Baró argued that psychology should ally itself with the oppressed people of El Salvador and develop research projects that would help articulate and give voice to their experiences, fostering the development of a critical consciousness (*concientización*) of their personal, social, and political conditions. This liberatory aim would be accomplished by psychology working not for but with the Salvadoran people and their cultural and religious values, recovering their historical memory as people and as communities surviving in limit situations, and by subverting the dominant narratives of the powerful and allowing people to experience their reality in more critical and liberatory ways, giving them the tools necessary for psychological and collective liberation. One particularly important application of this theoretical lens was in the development of the University Institute for Public Opinion in 1986, which Martín-Baró (as the only doctorate level psychologist in the country at the time) used to study popular opinions about the war, the U.S. government's involvement, and the Salvadoran government itself. He in turn reflected these opinions back to the common people in order to inspire discourse, reflection, and critical consciousness.

Because of this liberation psychology, its political ramifications, and the research projects undertaken through this lens, Martín-Baró's life became threatened by the dominant conservative political forces of El Salvador. In order to protect his colleagues and allies at the UCA and himself, he made numerous trips outside the country, especially to the United States, to have intellectual exchanges with colleagues in social psychology, and increase the visibility of the work being done in El Salvador. Such academic rapport led to his group and some North American colleagues extending his public opinion research more broadly to Central America, through the establishment of the Central American Program of Public Opinion in 1988.

Tragically, on the evening of November 16, 1989, Ignacio Martín-Baró was killed along with five other priests and two employees on the UCA campus by U.S.-trained Salvadoran troops. It is reported that he spoke out against injustice to the very end. His last words,

spoken over the gunfire directed at his close friend Ignacio Ellacuría, were "Esto es una injusticia!" meaning "This is an injustice!"

Commentary

George Atwood and Robert Stolorow in their classic text *Faces in a Cloud* argued that all psychological theories are the product (at least in part) of the intricate and idiosyncratic cultural, historical, and subjective experiences of the theorist. Their intersubjective systems approach would contextualize all psychological theories, then, within the respective lives of their theorists. Such an approach to the study of psychological theory would be undertaken not as an attempt to invalidate the theory, but to comprehend the theorist's intent and vision.

Atwood and Stolorow studied various metapsychologies which claimed different universal forces motivated human behavior (Freud's drives, Jung's archetypes, Reich's bioorganic energy, and Rank's notion of the will), but in the end revealed the deep texture of the meta-psychologist's subjectivity. This subjectivity with its particular personal-social-historical location, it appeared, was in many ways forgotten (was unconscious) in the construction of theory.

In Martín-Baró's construction of liberation psychology one does not find de-contextualized meta-constructs which claim universal validity and influence on human behavior (something he himself criticized of much North American psychology), but rather a set of assertions and theories developed out of his experiences as a Jesuit priest working with the Salvadoran people in the years before and during the Salvadoran Civil War. In his writings and work he himself contextualized his theories as the product of political, historical, and personal circumstances, developing research that unapologetically made a preferential option for the poor and displaced people of El Salvador. He made repeated conscious efforts to construct a psychology that validated the experiences of the Salvadoran people, allowing them to give voice to socially and psychologically repressed emotions and opinions. Liberatory psychological theories were to be crafted not as abstract universal principles developed in order to safeguard a subjectivity that craves recognition and social status, but by immersing one's subjectivity as a researcher-in-solidarity in the subjectivity of the oppressed. In Martín-Baró's case the oppressed were not abstract political entities but the particular people suffering under oppressive regimes in El Salvador and Latin America.

Encounters with the Salvadoran people in a religious and rural context, and with liberation theology and with liberation theologians such as Ignacio Ellacuría were of crucial import to Martin-Baró's development both as a Jesuit priest and as a social psychologist. Although he was born and raised in Spain, liberation theology's God of the oppressed with its preferential option for the poor can be seen as having fomented in him an identification with the people of El Salvador. Alternatively, it could be argued that his empathy and experiences with the Salvadoran people in a condition of socio-political oppression made him more attracted to the discourse of liberation theology. From the perspective of relational psychoanalytic research on God-images, the former case could be understood as the image of a God of justice and the oppressed affecting the transference-counter-transference relationship between Martin-Baró and his parishioners in El Salvador, while the latter suggestion could be understood as that same transference relationship affecting his image of God. Intersubjectively speaking, both dynamics could have been present, his experiences among the poor affecting his theology and his theology affecting his experiences among the poor. Martin-Baró's patterns of relating himself with his environment, his experiences and his theology, can be seen as deeply affecting his liberation psychology in an especially self-conscious way.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Communal and Personal Identity](#) [Cultural Psychology](#) [Ignatius of Loyola](#) [Jesuits](#) [Liberation Psychology](#) [Liberation Theology](#) [Poverty](#) [Psychology](#)

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Mary

Regina A. Fredrickson

Mary, maiden of Nazareth, Mother of God, pre-eminent follower of Jesus, has seized the personal and communal religious imagination of believers. Down the ages and across cultures, Mary has been heralded in painting, poetry, prayer and pageantry. Most often the intuitive psychology of personal and communal sentiments predates the theological articulation or liturgical celebration of Mary as virgin, mother, companion.

Whether masterpiece or indigenous work, Mary's person is inextricably bound to her assent to her role in the Incarnation-Redemption and by appropriation to her foremost place within the Church, and within the pilgriming people of God. She is the attentive, inclined young woman whispering a thunderous *Fiat mihi* (Luke 1.38). She is the rounded, redolent Madonna gazing, swaddling, and nurturing her Son (Luke 2.7). She is the restrained, resplendent Hodigitria icon beckoning and presenting her regaled Emmanuel Child (Matthew 1.11). She is the wise woman crone surrounded by prophets and populace, penitents and patrons pictured in catacomb Orans etchings, sketched Coptic depictions or embellished Renaissance family commissioned works.

The people of the early waves of evangelization were steeped in the mythology and archetypes of the goddess trilogy of maiden, mother, and crone. Agricultural peoples felt the power of the fecund, nourishing and sometimes punishing Great Mother, while others were comfortable with images of the mother-son, queen consort-ruler representations. Vestal rituals and festivals abounded. Paul preached amid Diana's temples. From a psychological developmental lens the maiden becomes mother then evolving to the wise and companioning crone. Within faithful and orthodox tradition and theology, Mary was never deemed a goddess yet there were epochs of popular excess, political contrivances, misguided homage, and stark purgings.

Mary: Maternal Theotokos

British pediatrician and psychoanalyst, D. W. Winnicott, wrote of the intensity and perduring influence of the mother's early "primary maternal occupation" [with her child]. His works convey the ongoing function of the mother's presence, her ordinary ministrations and her facilitation of the integration of her child's psyche, soma and mental development (Winnicott, 1992: Ch. XXIV).

Both psychological constructs are applicable to the centrality of Mary's motherhood as theologically defined in the patristic church. Her singular relationship to her Son, who was both the *Logos* and *Verbum* of God, and her evolving presence within the soma of the church were hailed at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431. Mariology followed Christology and Mary was decidedly declared Mother of God, Theotokos, God-bearer. This proclamation affirmed that Christ was one divine Person, with both a divine and human nature. The emphasis of the Council was to refute the several variations of heresy concerning the Person and nature(s) of Jesus. Mary was deemed mother of the fully human incarnate, second creation, nature of the one Person. The response of the people further enunciated Mary as Mother of God.

The psychological literature is replete with references to the essentiality of the mother. The love relationship between the mother and son was seminal in Freudian thinking. For child analyst, Margaret Mahler, the mother's capacity of attentive empathy made her "a beacon of orientation [for the child] in the world of reality" (Bacal, & Newman, 1990). The pastor and psychoanalyst Harry Guntrip, writing of the mother-infant dyad, asserted that "the deepest thing in human nature is 'togetherness.' After passing through separation at birth to 'aloneness' . . . there still persists that oneness of the child with the mother It remains as the secret foundation of the stillness, security and peace of the Brughes Madonna . . ." (1992: 269).

Scarce are the Scriptural accounts of Mary's lived and shared experiences. Yet what is recorded of her is analogous to the motherhood constellation posited by Daniel Stern, infant researcher and psychoanalyst. For the new mother there is the life growth concern for the physical and psychological well-being of her child. There is the oscillating questioning of her capacity for "primary relatedness" and her efforts to secure the ties of attachment, security, cohesion, and affection. The synoptic Gospel accounts of the Incarnation, the infancy and early hidden life of Jesus suggest that Mary's relational self was analogous to that of other mothers. She exhibited the normal tensions between her hopes and expectations and her fears and premonitions keeping all these things in her heart.

Stern continues in his delineation of this motherhood constellation affirming that the mother herself demands a "supportive matrix" and that she undergoes an "identity reorganization" as she evolves over time. The pericopes of Jesus' ministry and the subsequent Pentecost event reveal Mary's evolving communal self and the consequent demands for her psychological reorganization from virgin, mother, pre-eminent companion to the followers of Jesus.

The mother-child dyad is a continuous flowing of mutual-reciprocal influencing and while the externals

of the early and deep maternal musings and preoccupations may dissipate, they are subject to reactivation over the mother's lifespan. Within the child these early and intense emotional and neurological working models of the mother's presence, containment, and soothing can be elicited again as the "evoked companion" (Stern, 1995: 171–185). Through the centuries, such had been the reactivation of Mary's natural protection and the pilgrim peoples' eliciting of her evoked presence.

Mary: Strong Maiden

Were we to visualize the maternity of Mary as a triphytic with its two covering panels, the first panel would depict Mary as a daughter of Abraham and virgin of Nazareth. This historical Mary and her choice of virginity is indeed a paradox, personally, religiously, and culturally. Mary lived in a multicultural milieu, a multi-governed political regime, a marginalized position of poverty, gender and religion. From another perspective she was deeply knowledgeable and rooted in the Messianic prophecies and their reference to the Virgin (Genesis 3.15 and Isaiah 7.14). Living near trade routes, hearing many languages, coping with competing cultural values, Mary could not be naïve or complacent about her volitional virginity. This virginity grounded her personal sense of self as a singular "at-one-ness" yet positioned her communal self with respect to her people and her God. Upon her visit to Elizabeth, her kinswoman (Luke 1. 46–58), Mary proclaims her integral fullness and magnifies and rejoices in her God. She aligns herself intergenerationally and affectively to our father Abraham and his descendants. She resonates with a fundamental option for the poor and oppressed. She acknowledges that her grace-filled person will be called blessed through the generations.

Reflecting on the poet William Wordsworth's words, she was indeed "... our tainted nature's solitary boast" (Wordsworth, 1977). Her call to this virginity went beyond physical intactness and integrity to that of psychological attentiveness and attunement. It was a transformative source of personal cohesion and spiritual unity culminating in both virginal sufficiency and maternal abundance. Her stance of introspection and interiority moved outward in Mary's embrace of the virgin-mother paradox and encircled ever-widening communities.

Mary: Companion in Our Pilgrimage

The second panel covering the maternity triphytic would elaborate Mary's position within the ever-widening communities of the followers of Jesus. The wise woman, crone,

holds the traditions and companions the pilgrim people. Psychologically and developmentally she is a grounded, seasoned and tested woman abounding in lived and shared experiences, relieved of individual family responsibilities and available for those generative and integrative functions in the larger community. From the Pentecost event emerge two Marian considerations. She was among the disciples who “were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1. 14). She is both locus and encounter for the new community of Jesus’ followers, and again she receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit. She is commissioned to minister among the diverse peoples “from every nation . . . [who] at the sound [of the rush of violent wind] gathered and were bewildered, because each one heard them [the disciples] speaking in the native language of each” (Acts 2. 5). The Pentecost paradigm is the nodal psychological and life cycle event that thrusts Mary into her relational and communal vocation of companion to the journeying people of God.

Jaroslav Pelikan, eminent historian and scholar in the humanities, in his exhaustive and artistic volume on Mary’s place in culture, proposes that the Maryam of the Qur’an, and the Miriam of Zion may function “as a bridge builder to other traditions, other cultures and other religions” (1996: 67). In the Christmas greeting (2007), “A Common Word,” addressed to the Christian communities, leading Muslim teachers opened their letter quoting from the Chapter of Mary. The metaphor of Mary, as the bridge builder and its psychological implications are not lost in considering her most documented apparitions. While assent is not incumbent, these apparitions show a predilection for the poor and unlearned, the young and the indigenous peoples as seen at Lourdes, Fatima and Tepeyac (Guadalupe).

The merciful and powerful queen, advocate, and refuge theme runs deep in the religious psyche. Personal and communal blessings, victories, rescues and restorations have been attributed to Mary’s presence and patronage. While miracles and apparitions do not require belief among Roman Catholics, the Church has declared two dogmas for ecclesial assent concerning Mary, namely, the Immaculate Conception (1854) and the Assumption into heaven (1950). The first defines Mary as free from any or all sin from the first moment of her conception and throughout her life. This singly graced position distinguished her and was prescient and orienting for her role in the Incarnation. The second definition, that of the Assumption, follows the long tradition in both the Eastern and Western churches of Mary’s dormition, of her incorruptible body and soul being taken up into the glory of her Son and the fittingness of her hailed position

relative to her Son’s glory. Neither declarations supported Carl G. Jung’s attempts to feminize the Triune Godhead as depicted in the quaternary image of the feminine and the goddess within the Trinity. Both declarations bring to prominence the integrative wholeness of body and spirit but they have limited accessibility and intensity for the religious imagination of other communities.

Righting this tendency to imbalance in Marian devotion and theology, the Second Vatican Council (1966) in the decree *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, situates the statements on Mary within the schema dealing with the total community of the Church, with her living as a “pilgrim of faith” (no. 58), and being “one with all human beings” (no. 53). In Chapter VIII of the document, the council fathers renew the concept of Mary as model of the Church, citing her obedience, faith, hope, burning charity and perfect union with Christ (nos. 61 and 63). Such virtues together with her solidarity with the poor, strength in faith and response to grace, and her call to ongoing justice ministry speak to a wider ecumenical fellowship and are vital to dialog with the present culture. Such virtues appeal to the broader human community, address the ruptures of the human condition and culture, and resonate with acts of global concern, conscience, and care.

Our psychological and religious sensibilities about Mary’s companioning function strain between the beautiful enthroned woman ushering Dante in the final steps to *Paradiso* to the graphic and palpable image of Mary the single, unwed mother whose son will be executed, an image offered in Pax Christi reflections. Theologian Elizabeth Johnson gives us a creative and thoughtful biblical paradigm in which Mary is partner and companion, comrade and co-disciple (2003: 313). The historical virgin of Nazareth, the theological maternal Theotokos and the psychologically evoked companion crone, ever enfold in our personal and communal imagination.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Pilgrimage](#) [Virgin Mary](#)

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Mary Magdalene

Kathryn Madden

The figure of Mary Magdalene depicted in the New Testament of the Christian tradition was the first witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Specific New Testament references to Mary Magdalene include the Gospel of Luke 8:2–3 in which Mary Magdalene is described as one who ministered to Jesus. This passage also describes an exorcism of demons, which according to current biblical scholarship, may not refer definitely to the Magdalene.

Over the centuries of Christian history and reflection, many scholars have accepted the identification of Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany and with a woman sinner who anointed Jesus' feet. Yet, Eastern Orthodox Christians and the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910 distinguish these women as three different persons. Although, Mary Magdalene has often been claimed to have been a prostitute, there is no specific biblical reference in the New Testament. This misappropriation most likely arises from the town she originated from. Migdal, originally called Magdala, was a fishing town known for women who consorted freely with men.

In the Gospel of Matthew 27:55–56; Mark 15:41; and Luke 23:55, the Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, came to the Jesus' tomb at dawn on the first day of the week to anoint his body with oils and spices. The tomb was empty. The Magdalene ran to tell Simon Peter and another disciple (John 20:1–2). Then she returned to the tomb and, alone, she waited there.

The brief historical evidence we find about the Magdalene paired with poetic imagination and combined with certain concepts of psychodynamic and analytical psychology usher us toward meaning at the most definable

character of essences. Interweaving psychology with scripture, we see in the narrative of the Magdalene a transformed disposition of mind, body and soul animated by spirit in relationship to Jesus Christ. Further, the Magdalene's relationship with Jesus allows us to discern deeper knowledge and insight about the value of symbol and metaphor.

Etymologically, the Hebrew form of the name *Mary*, or *mirjam*, derives from the Egyptian *mr'* (to be loved) and from *rà a*: to see, the seer (Ricci, 1994: 129). Her receptivity to "waiting" at the tomb is analogous to the depth psychological notion of "seeing" and "seeking." Her witness to the Risen Christ represents a transformation of consciousness, profound change inclusive of the notion of re-collected memory at the level of the archetypal and numinous.

The root of the word memory in its most reduced form is *mr*. Closely associated to this root is the Egyptian *mr'*. Imaginatively splitting the *m* and the *r*, and locating the earliest graphic sign for the letter *M* in the image of water, *m-a* also becomes the imitative root for the sound a child makes when it desires the source of its nourishment. The reduplicated form of *mr* is "*murmur*" which can be associated with the sound that water makes (Ricci, 1994: 129). The two roots combined become a metaphor for the source of nurture, a moist, soothing, maternal, watery reality (Dunne, 1988: 116–120).

The letter *R* originally meant "*head*" and is close to the Proto-Indo-European roots *ar-*, *or-*, and *er-*. *Ar-* which means "*to fit together*," gives us the Latin *ordiri*, the root of "*primordial*." *Primordial* refers to the original order of things, at-one-ness, *har mony*. *Primordial* also refers to that which fuels inspiration, what developmental psychologist D. W. Winnicott tells us is the goal of developmental maturity: creativity and *art*.

The basic meaning of *er-* means "*to set in motion*." Also from *er-* comes the Latin *oriri* which means "*to be born*," or "*origin*." If we put the *m* and the *r* together again, we arrive at an image of maternal head-waters giving birth to us, setting us in motion. Psychologically speaking, the transformed Magdalene is analogous to how a mature ego provides a center from which we can generatively unfold, an interior previously unknown or unconscious. This core opens to us in numinous experience, receives us and renews us.

At a deep unconscious level, our "forgotten" or repressed memory strives for *this* source, or perhaps something beyond this foundation. Archetypal spirit – original unity or wholeness – is represented in the first figure a child knows: its mother, or primary caregiver. Developmental child psychologist, D. W. Winnicott reminds us that ideally our biological mother mirrors the

archetypal feminine and imparts to the infant the deep inheritance of the Self. Yet, due to early developmental trauma sometimes what we long for can only be experienced as an absence.

Even if we cannot “re-member” the source of our being because of developmental injury, there is yet a bridging possibility that will restore to us what was lost or dissociated. St. Augustine of Hippo claims that what we yearn for is the soul we have been dissociated from at birth. We remain in this state until God belongs to the soul in totality: “O truth, everywhere” (Chadwick, 1991, *Book Ten* 26:37).

Re-establishing the psychological traces of murmurs in the treasure house of the imagination – what Augustine identified as *memoria*, the infinite halls of the unconscious – we make our way inward into these spacious caverns, seeking to make conscious what is at “the bottom of the trough.” In the process of depth psychoanalysis and various religious practices, we regress and feel as if we are once again “inside of the mother’s body,” or held by spirit, that feeling of oneness we still had as infants. We can locate a new vantage point from which the ego forms a relationship with the archetypal Self of the psyche. Mary Magdalene re-connected to this archetypal Self, which crosses the divide between soul and spirit. She ventured into the depths of memory, mourning, and “*mr.*” Whereas the etymological root of *ma*-resonates with the notion of the archaic maternal, *mr.*, in contrast, leads us to the *ground* level, to the Magdalene and the empty tomb. Here we find psyche and soul rising to greet the source of spirit.

We can only speculate upon the specifics of the Magdalene’s life. In scriptural accounts, there is evidence that something had caused a breakage in her inner world triggering fragmentation for which she sought healing. Whether or not she had been possessed by demons, she had become dispossessed of an authentic self. She needed help to mourn and to remember, to re-collect that part of herself that had fallen away. Jesus offered this relationship. Jesus took root in her psychic soils and led her into the well of her own rich archetypal femininity. In learning to yield to the antinomies within her psyche, fertile soil was prepared for spirit.

Mary Magdalene willingly waited at the tomb. As in the Old-Irish extension of the root *memor*, or *miraim*, which translates as “I remain,” Mary remained, even though the disciples and other women departed. Remaining provides the necessary period of preparation and formation for the depth of interior feelings in relation to spirit to evolve.

At the intersection of mourning and re-membering, a phenomenon emerges where there is a necessary breakthrough to something else, a new sphere of experience

(Haughton, 1981: 18–47). Winnicott speaks of this breakthrough phenomenon as “*indwelling*,” meaning that psyche comes to dwell in the body-soma, which leads to an “integrated unit self.” Receptivity does not preclude suffering. Suffering and brokenness at times of psychological crisis, emptiness, or loss translates as living through the death of the ego in its old form, the space of dead-nothing. The Magdalene entered “the gap,” the dark interval.

The Empty Tomb

In John’s account of the Easter story, (1991, John 20: 1–18), Mary Magdalene arises the day after the Sabbath and comes to the tomb “while it was still dark” to anoint Christ’s body before his burial. After the disciples depart, Mary stands vigil. Jesus’ crucifixion has caused such a profound reaction that the event of his death is experienced as a *void*.

In Winnicott’s terms, one who feels “dead, empty, nothing” has not arrived at the stage of security that he calls the “I am” state of being. Unclaimed and repudiated parts of the self still accompany the individual preventing wholeness because these parts are yet unintegrated bits of being. The ego suffers tremendous anxiety and threat upon nearing integration of these bits, fearing what feels like certain death. To prevent what the ego perceives as its own potential annihilation, it sometimes defends itself by *breaking down or falling into* the gap of madness.

Beneath the defenses of the person is a “something else” which potentially integrates the dissociated aspects of the infantile or child self which, have become split off. These defenses prevent us from experiencing certain intrapsychic dynamics that lead to mature development and the depressive position. The depressive position pertains to overcoming the earlier developmental stage called the paranoid-schizoid position, which is equivalent to a less mature psychological constitution. The depressive position also relates to the capacity to mourn.

In “The Manic Defense” (1935: 134–35), Winnicott speaks of the manic defenses as the way human beings typically defend against the depressive position. These defenses are related to omnipotent fantasies, “flight to external reality, suspension of inner objects, and denial of sensations.” As means of control, these forms of resistance offer us reassurance through external reality. Rather than experience emptiness, we fill ourselves up; instead of being still, we move; we seek to know and to understand instead of entering the unknown. Above all, we deny death as the ultimate fact of life.

They defenses are resilient because they prevent the innocent pre-egoic self from the beginning of life from being overcome by intense affect that an infant cannot yet tolerate such as severe dissociation. These defenses are still active beneath the surface of the adult psyche. The goal of healing is to get to the experience of emptiness and nothingness and to discover the true self which is creatively alive and real in contrast to the false self of defenses and repression. Only by entering into the original anxiety and experiencing the primal agony can we re-collect the missing bits of being and become alive again. Healing entails building belief in good internal objects; lessening the manic defenses, which, in turn, shrinks depressive and persecutory anxieties. We are enabled to link imagination (in contrast to fantasy) to our physical experiences whereby we can create freely from an unlimited imagination, which is preliminary to the evolution of symbolic consciousness. We move beyond shame to healthy guilt.

The Stone Had Been Removed

At the empty tomb, the Magdalene faces dread, emptiness, and non-existence. Fearing that Jesus' body might have been stolen, she turns to external sources. The two disciples she turns to metaphorically represent the false-self reality. The disciple who outruns Peter represents the manic defenses. He runs ahead, but he does not *go in*; he does not enter interiorly. Simon Peter follows the other disciple and goes into the tomb. Yet, both return to their homes. The Magdalene waits.

Woman Why Are You Weeping?

Mary's tears at the empty tomb express grief, loss, and suffering over Jesus' absence. Tears are also a way of seeking, desiring, and restoring. Bending over to look inside, she confronts the darkness. As we enter the empty tomb of our own subjective interior, the ego fears the depths of the unconscious and the death of the false self. Without projections, we feel an acute emptiness.

When She Has Said this, She Turned Around

This phrase represents a first "turning." The first turning still belongs to the transitional arena in which our imagination is churning with new images and feelings. When

we continually long for something, it builds its image into us by depositing "a seed" in our psyche. The seed germinates and grows when it finds itself in a nurturing and moist soil (maternal love, Eros, desire, agape love). When the inspired image is secured internally, eventually something new is born of the two, a living third thing which exists midway between our idealized images and the essence of the thing-in-itself (von Baader, 1850–1860: 8: 96).

In contrast, if an infant is surrounded by an environment in which it does not *see itself being seen* by the mother-mirror, but instead perceives an expressionless canvas, then the looking-glass mother becomes an external thing to be looked at but not to be looked into. A seed does not sprout and take root.

Woman Why Are You Weeping? Whom Are You Looking for?

At this point in the scriptural narrative, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus but she does not recognize him. Jesus asks, "woman why are you weeping, *whom are you looking for?*" In the therapeutic arena, we are often mourning the self we have never known. We struggle to gather up the disparate pieces of self that are dissociated and scattered.

When Jesus asks Mary "*whom are looking for,*" however, this phrase underscores the distinction that for the Magdalene to *re-member* and to re-collect the unity of her self is distinct from *mourning*. To remember has to do with spirit beyond the psyche, yet bridged by the psyche.

The Magdalene first *mourns the dead Christ and seeks "the living among the dead" in order to anoint him*. Only when the Magdalene *waits* by the empty tomb of death and descent and faces its depths is she able "to anoint" the dead Christ. Encountering this space of emptiness, where our own images do not reign, allows something more profound to occur within our psyche. "Anointing" the dead Christ has to do with receiving new life, new possibility in this imageless space. The images emerge from the union of psyche and soul, not solely from our egos, and are now in-fleshed.

Tell Me Where You Have Laid Him and I Will Take Him Away

When she first sees Jesus, the Magdalene thinks he is the gardener. Winnicott (1958: 133) speaks of how some

persons do not recognize that the people who inhabit them psychologically are a part of themselves.

Mary!

When Mary sees Jesus, he *calls her by name*. As Mary is named by Jesus, he endows Mary with an identity specifically her own. As a distinct and separate being, she is able to *respond* and to name Jesus in return. Analogous to a child that separates from the mother at the appropriate stage of its development, Mary can now witness Jesus from her own subjective nature as a separate person. Similarly, a therapist, as a significant other “names” a patient through reliable person-to-person presence, receiving the spontaneous gesture, and allowing for the omnipotent infant self to come forward to achieve the developmental culmination of the early stages of life. A container is provided for spirit to enter and to engage with psyche reminiscent of the image of the well-known attribute of the Magdalene – the alabastron – a symbol in ancient and modern times of the eternal feminine.

She Turned and Said to Him, “Rabbouni”

The scriptural narrative does not indicate that Mary has ever turned away from Jesus in the first place. The *pivotal point* is that when the angels first ask Mary why she is weeping, she cannot recognize Jesus as the risen Christ but only through her own projections, as a gardener. Then, in contrast to a bodily act, when we turn the second time, we come to know that we are separate but related to the *divine* source who meets us in the dark night of the imageless space. There is no one other than God who is capable of being such a reliable and eternal mother-mirror. If we are fully given to this source, we are transformed into the same image. In psychological terms, this moment of self reflection would be an instant when perception gives way to apperception, when “object” turns into a “subject.”

The text of a prayer by St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) grasped this complex transformation when he said of Mary Magdalene that “Christ was *hiding himself from you when you were seeing him and revealed himself to you when you were not seeing him*; until he whom you were seeking, *asked you whom you were seeking and why you were weeping*” he could not be anointed. Only when the risen Christ is present to her *actually*, flesh resurrected in spirit, and *anoints her* does she recognize him.

We can look into the psyche and think we “see him,” but he is hidden from us, for whatever reasons of human defense structures. When Christ does reveal himself, we may *not* “see him” because we are caught in our own projections. The second turning, then, is a profound transfigurative moment for Mary as well as the Risen Christ. We see all essences in their restored, eternal form. It is the eternal essence of the Risen Christ who Mary greets as “Rabbouni.”

Master!

The Magdalene returns to the starting point, – *memor*, – something folding back upon itself. Making conscious the depths of *memoria*, gives us witness to the true source that the Magdalene perceives when she exclaims, “Master.”

Do not Hold on to Me

Jesus is both human and divine, never merely an *image* of God, nor merely a psychic internalization. Yet, his image received and internalized in Mary is a portal to the mysteries of the trinity and a presence that will never leave her. “*From now on you do know him and have seen him*” (John 14: 7). This phrase translated in the *New English Bible* as “do not cling to me,” urges the Magdalene not to cling to old projections, nor to dismiss the efficacy of what she has witnessed thus far.

I Am Ascending to My Father and Your Father, to My God and Your God

Jesus includes Mary Magdalene in his final transformation, indicating the potential for others to become whole selves. The phrase “my father and your father, my God and your God,” infers a specific kind of dependency that is beyond psychological categories and belongs more to the arena of faith.

What the Magdalene experiences is definitively more than the restoration of the lost object in the psyche, more than the integration of psychic contents. In the first turning, she mourns the loss of the idealized object in relationship to the historical person of Jesus. She encounters a *new psychological reality*. In the second turning, she encounters *the spiritual reality* of the Risen Christ in which spirit has bridged psyche and psyche, spirit, making it possible for her to participate in *actual* presence, resurrected presence.

As this love comes back into the world, we find a mother restored. His death becomes our death, his resurrection, our resurrection. Our participation leads us into the maternal headwaters to the mother before the mother, the object behind the object, who becomes a subjective interior reality, as well as a lived, embodied reality. Mary Magdalene re-turns to her community. True to the derivatives of her name, she becomes “rà a,” a seeker and seer of internals and eternal, a woman of multiple realities, one who participates in two worlds, an inner and an outer world which leads her to exclaim:

“I Have Seen the Lord”

The glory of Christ is not visible in itself. Glory is a reality that can be expressed only as recognized by an other, at a juncture where the opposites of otherness are met and suffered. The impact of this notion is that Christ dies and rises in a way that is visible to others, which others can attain.

Mary Magdalene not only witnesses Christ’s second birth, *she rises with him*. As Jesus sheds his burial cloths, the Magdalene sheds the skins of her former self. Jesus gives her everything that is *already* hers. She dies unto him whose body disappears, but rises. In his return, she is born with a physical meaning of her own. Spirit conjoins with flesh, and flesh returns to life and incarnates. Her resurrection is different from his and her response has its own characteristics. Mary, too, has risen.

The redemption of matter might be configured in the psychological arena as two persons in relationship who comprise opposite but complimentary terms. A third constituent arises from the psychic vessel that the two persons create together. The opposites undergo a process of transformation and restoration. As the life-giving essence is restored, a fourth element arises which is spirit-in-matter. This becomes the basis for our wholeness and grounds us in space, time, history (Von Baader, 1851–1860 2:243).

In re-turning, our relationship to material reality changes. We participate in our own freedom and also in a redemptive historical process. As nature is redeemed, so is the creative feminine element, the god-bearer. Mary Magdalene offers an exquisite feminine ground to illustrate the embodiment of a psychological principle: that beyond our internal projections and introjections, beyond history, but in history – *when we mourn, when we remember* – we anoint: *but first we must wait to be anointed*.

See also: ➤ [Archetype](#) ➤ [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#)
➤ [Jesus](#) ➤ [Self](#) ➤ [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Masochism

Jaco J. Hamman

German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing coined the word masochism in 1869 after his reflection on the life of novelist Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (Nacht, 1995). A paraphilia, masochism’s primary context is sexual relationships, describing the experience of an individual receiving erotic satisfaction from real or imagined personal suffering, in being humiliated, and in the relinquishment of power. Masochism is often identified with sadism in sado-masochistic relationships (Loewenstein, 1957).

As self-inflicted suffering, however, masochism can have a moral character as satisfaction is gained by becoming a victim. In religious masochism, the body is hurt for the sake of the soul (Ghent, 1999; Glücklich, 2001). In many western as well as eastern religions, experiencing personal pain becomes sacred as the producer of altered states of consciousness, a pathway to detachment, or an agent of purification.

Psychological understandings of masochism are diverse, ranging from the suppression of inner guilt caused by outward aggressive drives (Freudian) (Freud, 1957); activity of the shadow and the archetypal need to worship (Jung); the persecution of internal objects (Object relations theory) (Berliner, 1995); frustration with a primary, non-nurturing self-object (Self psychology) (Menaker and Barbre, 1995); a disembodied self

(Gestalt theory); or, a significant cognitive distortion (cognitive therapy).

Increasingly and especially in the context of religious experience, the portrayal of masochism in pathological terms is questioned.

See also: [Affect](#) [Altered States of Consciousness](#) [Dissociation](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [God Image](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Job](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#) [Repression](#) [Self Object](#) [Self Psychology](#) [Shadow](#) [Shame and Guilt](#) [Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#)

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Matriarchy

Elizabeth Welsh

The term is defined in three ways. One refers to gynococracy, or a family, group, or nation governed by a dominant woman, and more specifically, a mother who is the head

and ruler of her family and descendants. A second meaning refers to matrilineal organization, or a social system in which descent and inheritance is passed on through the female lineage. A third meaning, matrifocality, refers to the centrality (though not domination) of women, especially mothers.

Gynocentric organization can be found in many non-human populations which are centered around alpha females. Examples include ants, bees, pygmy chimpanzees, elephants, killer whales, spotted hyenas, desert mole rats, and termites. Another notion linked to the hypotheses of matriarchy is parthenogenesis, or asexual reproduction in females which continues to exist in most lower plants as well as in some invertebrates and vertebrates. Parthenogenetic reproduction has been connected to the origin myths circulating among primitive cultures which recognized the role of female primacy in the creation of human societies. The idea of the female primeval creative force could be found in many of the earliest human writings and art forms such as those of Ancient Egypt.

The notion of matriarchy in humans emerged within the field of anthropology in the context of nineteenth century theory of cultural evolution. The latter posited that the human species “advanced” from primitive matriarchal social organization to patriarchal systems at the same time as it progressed from a polytheism that included the worship of multiple great goddess figures to a monotheism centered on a single male divinity. Anthropologists have also hypothesized that patriarchal impositions developed as people realized the link between paternity and pregnancy, however, clear evidence for this theory has been lacking. Nonetheless, in some fields such as comparative religion and archeology the hypothesis of pre-ancient matriarchal systems has continued to be explored and used as basis for various ethnographic theories which have attempted to resurrect the female elements from a misogynistic and sexist cultural history and reestablish gender balance. In spite of the disparity of views regarding the actual gender relations in pre-ancient societies, scholars generally agree that Neolithic societies were more egalitarian than those of later periods.

Currently, most anthropologists concur that there is no evidence for the existence of matriarchal societies in the primary sense of the term, but that matrilineal/matrifocal groups have existed in various places for many centuries. The following are current examples of social structures which have maintained an ancient tradition of passing on of inheritance, name, or group membership through the female line and of giving women central roles in family and community affairs (though religious and

political affairs are still reserved for the male domain): various communities in South India (e.g., in Kerala, Tulu Nadu, Mangalore, Udupi, Tamil Nadu) and Northeastern India (in Meghalaya), the Malikun on Minicoy Island, the Minang communities in West Sumatra, Indonesia, the Masuo people of Southwestern China, the Tuareg communities of Western Sahara, the people of the Huron, Cherokee, and Iroquois Confederacy, the Navajo, Hopi, and Gitksan groups in North America. Furthermore, in Orthodox Judaism, while the laws of inheritance follow the father, the laws of descent are matrilineal.

Theories of matriarchy have received most attention in the field of archeology. The notion of an archaic matriarchy that was subsequently overturned by patriarchal rule was primarily introduced by Johann Jakob Bachofen in his 1861 publication, *Mother Right: An Investigation of the Religious and Juridical Character of Matriarchy in the Ancient World*. A systematic study of myth traditions led Bachofen to propose that the prehistoric civilizations were marked by three stages: in the first hetaeric stage, males had unrestricted access to all females; in the second stage, females overturned this unfavorable arrangement and established monogamous relationships and mother right, or matriarchal groups, along with an extremist variant, the Amazons; in the third stage, matriarchy was permanently ousted by patriarchy with its male-dominated institutions which marked the beginning of women's disenfranchisement.

Although the exact characteristics of these hypothesized archaic matriarchal systems cannot be established with certainty, some general features have been proposed: (1) the female family name is retained; (2) children follow the female line; (3) movable and immovable property remains in the hands of the woman and is inherited by daughters, while sons only receive a dowry; (4) the difference between legitimate and illegitimate birth disappears; (5) the woman becomes the wooer. The least disputed features are those that pertain to matrilineality. Examples include records concerning the prehistoric Lycian people whose families appeared to be organized according to the matrilineal principle, as evidenced in the Herodotus accounts of the Lycians who did not name their children after their fathers like the Hellenes but after their mothers, and the testimony of Nicolaus of Damascus who asserted that only the daughters possessed the right of inheritance, a tradition traced to the Lycian common law.

Other characteristics are not as clear. There are inconsistencies in the delineations of matriarchal features regarding sexual relations. For instance, some scholars like Bachofen, argue that it was through matriarchal rule that monogamous relationships were instated not

through patriarchy. Others say that matriarchy was characterized by promiscuity, that women were having sex indiscriminately and that through patriarchy men established monogamous marriage relationships so as to ensure that their progeny was indeed theirs. In support of this latter thesis, scholars have turned to the patriarchal rhetoric of various Greek myths which contain traces of possible preexisting or contemporary forms of matriarchy. For example, female rule was equated with animal bestiality and promiscuity which patriarchal rule "corrected" by establishing the institution of marriage (one woman for each man) so that men knew who their children were. Greek myths also reveal that underneath various marital conflicts was the male effort to suppress the woman's attempts to overthrow the established male-dominant order and the set up of a bestial, promiscuous, and female dominated arrangement (matriarchy implied). A prominent example is that of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra's reprehensible repudiation of marriage and revenge on her husband for sacrificing their daughter, Iphigenia, were explicitly portrayed as disastrous to cosmic order for the implied reason that her acts were negating the male order and overturning patriarchal institutions and values.

Bachofen's theory has inspired numerous studies as well as controversies regarding the characteristics of such Neolithic matriarchal communities as well as the historical process that led to their development. Many scholars have subsequently argued that the ancient struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal rule is implicit in the rhetoric of numerous Greek myths. However, most of the arguments for the existence of matriarchal societies are based on speculation.

Commentary

The question of the existence of matriarchy poses difficulties for feminists because it is asked within a historical framework that is phallogocentric, or based on the accounts and interpretations of ancient texts and artifacts have been written by males. Recent trends in feminist thought (also named "third wave feminism") have abandoned matriarchal theories and critiqued the notions of any one gender, race, or social group holding power over another. In fact, the very term "matri-archy," or rule by a female/mother implies a notion of power that is more congruent with the misogynist hierarchies of patriarchy than with any form of female social influence that may have characterized the pre-ancient world. Thus, the language itself used in the discussions of matriarchy is

questionable because it emerged within a discourse tainted by oppressive systems of power that were based on exclusion, domination, and violence.

In psychoanalysis also, the question of whether matriarchy ever existed is problematic since from the psychic perspective historical reality is never objective, but it is always an amalgam of actual or imagined events and unconscious fantasies which shape our collective unconscious. The latter is expressed in the myths as well as the interpretive narratives we call “history.” The archaeological examination of ancient myths, art, and artifacts clearly assume the existence of a “matriarchal consciousness” (which may or may not have had a material component) which early civilizations vehemently attempted to exclude and destroy by means of adopting its opposite: the patriarchal male-centered consciousness. From the psychoanalytic perspective, the very rancor of the misogyny in some early cultures, the extreme forms of patriarchy adopted in certain groups, as well as the eventual universality of the patriarchal system point to a violent repression of the generative powers of female sexuality in the ancient world.

Freud recognized the dynamics of the repression of incest love for one’s mother which characterizes identity development, but his phallogocentric interpretations have offered a limited understanding of the patterns of patriarchal oppression of females. A more recent psychoanalytic scholar, Julia Kristeva, explains that the roots of the cultural abjection and fervent efforts to dominate women stem from aspects of the individual’s early psychic processes of separation from the mother. In early infancy, the newborn exists in a state of undifferentiated physical and psychic fusion with the mother. This maternal space in which the baby is immersed is characterized by fluid physical and psychic boundaries as well as undifferentiated emotions and sexual drives. It precedes language it is capable of generating the energy which helps fuel the subject’s meaning-making, or signifying process, which, at this point consists of echolalia, glossolalia, rhythms, and intonations of an infant who does not yet know how to use language to refer to objects. In this early psychic space the infant experiences a wealth of drives (feelings, instincts etc.) that could be extremely disorienting and destructive were it not for the infant’s tactile relation with its mother’s body which provides orientation for the infant’s drives. At the same time as the maternal realm provides emotional exhilaration and jouissance for the infant, it can also become suffocating and stifling as the infant becomes increasingly aware of its separateness from the mother as well as its continued dependence on her. The infant must gradually reject and expel the mother’s realm from which it must emerge and separate in order to develop as an

autonomous subject. The violence of the expulsion attempts reflect the infant’s arduous struggle to resist the powerful pull of fusion with the mother’s body and return to the uterine realm of plentitude. Thus the maternal space represents at once abundance and sufficiency as well as the threat of suffocation and death of the emerging subject. From this perspective, the ancient lure as well as inconceivability of matriarchy and the extreme imposition of patriarchy would seem to have its roots in the psychic rejection of the ever-seductive maternal realm and the idealization of the paternal image in the hope of permanently erasing the threat of undifferentiated/psychotic fusion with the mother. In modern Western consciousness this dynamic seems to have become even more entrenched and solidified during modernity when philosophical rationalism and scientific reasoning led to the conceptualizations of human identity as a rational and carefully-bounded entity that could be studied scientifically.

See also: [Femininity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Great Mother](#) [Mother](#)

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Meaning of Human Existence

Todd DuBose

The question of the meaning of human existence holds the longest running place on the best seller list of vital questions among human beings, and the plethora of answers to this question have been complementary, redundant, and contradictory, and expressed in philosophical

arguments, theological apologetics, literary narratives, and a myriad of expressive arts. The meaning of human existence, though, is found by exploring situations in which, as Joseph Campbell (1904–1987) was apt to say, one is experiencing oneself as alive in meaningful and fulfilling ways. The experience of being alive in meaningful and fulfilling ways, however, is still described in nearly as many diverse ways as there are those asking the question, which is as it should be.

Descriptions of meaningful and fulfilling kinds of existence are plentiful in the history of philosophy and religion. These descriptions include notions of Platonic attainment of the ideal good to Aristotelian practices of the virtuous life, from Epicurean achievement of pleasurable absence from pain and suffering, to Stoic self-control, indifference, and freedom from obsession and compulsion, or the Cynic's self-sufficiency and release from external attractions and controls. For the pragmatist, the meaningful life is one lived with utility and practicality, while the Utilitarian finds meaning in life by submitting to the higher spiritual goal of all actions being done with the intention of achieving the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The existentialist seeks freedom and the transcendent experience of creating one's meaning in life, while the humanist seeks the actualization of one's potential, even to the transhumanist's desire for overcoming all limitation, even death. Logical positivistic meaning is found in objective, empirical verification. The Abrahamic religions find meaning in pleasing and loving the divine, while the Eastern religious traditions include Confucian emphasis on social education and proper relationships, Taoist alignment with the flow of nature, Shinto movement toward collaboration with nature spirits in the path toward immanent immortality, Buddhist awakening from suffering, Hindu liberation from cycles of repetition through alignment of one's soul with the supreme soul, Bahai's spiritual unity of all humankind, to Zoroastrian rewards in blissful life for right actions and avoidance of the hellish life for destructive living.

The history of discovering meaning in existence is not without the challenge of absurdity, meaninglessness, and despair. More formally expressed in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and resurrected more explicitly in postmodernity, nihilism in various forms attempts to deconstruct any conception of transcendent meaning, and most importantly, any meaning deemed static, secure, or eternal. Whether it is a Nietzschean devaluation of all values (Nietzsche, 1967), or Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1962), or the reduction of value to merely exchange value, or the relativism of linguistic meaning, one is left often with the lived

experience of meaninglessness and despair. Yet, the very diversity of meaningful experiences articulated and expressed in history need not nullify the experience of meaning-making as central to human well-being. On the contrary, the diversity of searches and experiences for meaning validates its significance. Sounding somewhat circular, the meaningfulness of the search and expression of meaning in human existence gains its reliability and validity from its inescapable and unavoidable presence across all qualifications of diversity in history, culture, and life span.

Meaning making in psychology finds its most formal handling in depth psychologies of various sorts, including psychoanalysis, Jungian analytic psychology, and a range of existential-phenomenological perspectives. Kegan (1982) has described the process of developmental psychology as a series of meaning-making stages. The most familiar of the approaches to meaning-making is Viktor Frankl's (1905–1997) perspective on meaning in human existence called, logotherapy, as formulated by Frankl under the extreme duress of enduring and surviving a concentration camp (1946/1959). Other explorations of meaning making in psychology would include personal construct theory (Kelly, 1963), and positive psychology (Seligman, 2004) – the latter finding significance in discerning what is satisfying to others.

Commentary

The aforementioned compressed history offers vital themes or questions for further reflection. Is meaning created or found? Is meaning cognitively constructed or existentially lived out? Is meaning found in the absence of suffering, or does meaning arise from the edifying encounters with suffering, conflict, and pain? Is meaning a product of one's neurophysiology? Is it evoked by intimate relationships or the desire for them? Is it found in cultural discourse, symbols, or artifacts? Commentary on a few vital points of consideration may provide answers to these questions.

The experience and hope for freedom is central to most any description of a meaningful and fulfilling life, even though different types of freedom are meaningful to different persons: freedom from suffering and political oppression, from oppressive values, from a cycle of rebirth, from one's bodily existence, from disintegration, alienation, and dualism, from violence, from hegemony of ideas and practices, from illusion, or from limits of any sort. But our desires for freedom from situations is accompanied by desires of freedom toward other possibilities: toward a freedom to act, to connect, to decide, to eternal

life, to purity, to intimacy, to justice, to synchronicity with nature, to a peaceful existence, to overcome evil, to authenticity, to productivity, to actualize one's potential, to truth, to satisfaction, to union with the divine.

Our desire for freedom in its kaleidoscopic manifestations reinforces the conviction that transcendence is at the heart of meaning-making. The experience of transcendence is the *sine qua non* phenomenon that weds psychology and religion, and is the existential life force operative in the formation of *homo religiosus*. Transcendence as freedom, if experienced in the here and now mode of existence, is an immanent experience of actualizing possibilities within one's ways of being-in-the-world. Even for those who seek freedom beyond-the-world, this otherworldliness is existentially experienced at any given moment in this world's modes of existence, and finds pathways and expressions of transcendence in our everydayness.

The cultural expressions of meaning and transcendence in and through cultural artifacts suggest meaning is embedded in the world's webs of significance. In this way, meaning is discovered in an already and always pre-established context in which we find ourselves. Webs of meaning differ given particular multicultural contexts, including economic contexts. For instance, in a capitalist economic system, profit bestows meaning, as does promotion, and other such experiences of ascendancy, in what could be considered a "commodified" experience of existence. In other contexts, the giving of gifts without expectations of remuneration or return or payback shapes and is shaped by what is considered a "gifting" kind of meaningful and fulfilling existence. Conflicts about what is meaningful among individuals are inevitable within and among cultures.

Relational patterns also construct space in which meaning occurs, such as in egalitarian and inclusive communal encounters that offer transcendence from hierarchical oppression and ostracization. For others, though, freedom from sharing, belonging, and difference has led to more exclusive and hierarchical patterns of relating, that, although oppressive for most individuals, is nonetheless meaningful to those in power. Transcendence in this latter situation may be skewed in that freedom is a freedom to control others. But inviting other possibilities of communal liberation freed from commodification and paternalization as prime bestowers of significance ultimately requires starting from an understanding of the significance of control and destruction for those who exact these patterns of being. Inevitably, conflicts of competing contingencies occur between competing enactments of significance, though resolution of conflict is facilitated more readily when mutual, empathic understanding is risked

regarding how the other comes to find his or her respective life patterns meaningful is granted a hearing.

Another point to consider and clarify is that meaning-making is more than cognitive formulations of propositions created by the neo-cortex. Hence, meaning making in existential psychology is often confused with schema formation in the cognitive sciences. Clarifying this distinction is vital. Neuropsychological insights offer us brain mapping of those undergoing experiences of significance, which makes us aware of how embodied meaning-making is, but this process extends beyond the activity of the frontal lobe to other emotional and narrative centers of brain functioning. Helpful as this information may be, it would be a mistake to conclude that the brain "causes" meaning. Critiques of unilinear causality and biological determinism takes us beyond the scope of this entry, but suffice it to note that even within neurophysiology we know that dendritic branching rewires itself in relation to significant experiences in our lives, particularly traumatic ones. Significant experiences are experiences in which we have attributed or found meaning in one way or another, that can "cause" dendritic rewiring as much as be "caused" by it. It would be more appropriate to speak of our bodying forth in meaningful, transcendent possibilities as co-constructed and pre-reflective. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), the French existential-phenomenologist, brought our attention to how meanings are pre-reflective and lived out long before being conceptualized, which corroborates the neuropsychological findings mentioned above (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

The plurality of transcendent possibilities in meaningful and fulfilling modes of existence still leaves us with the specter of nihilism. If everything is meaningful then can anything be meaningful? The counter question is just as fair and perhaps more accurate in its presumptions about existence: If everything is meaningful, how could anything be truly meaningless? It is a mistake to assume meaning-making can be avoided or escaped in existence. Even the apparent absence of meaning is always juxtaposed against an already and always posited presence of meaning. Despair would not be painful were it not for alternative enactments of significance in other desired lifeworld compartments that are absent, lost, or inaccessible for the one in despair. Even in "the pit," despair discloses its own embedded hope for transcendence. In fact, we enact significance every moment of our lives.

See also: [▶ Dark Night of the Soul](#) [▶ Daseinsanalysis](#) [▶ Doubt](#) [▶ Faith](#) [▶ Frankl, Viktor](#) [▶ Hermeneutics](#) [▶ Homo Religiosus](#) [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [▶ Lived Theology](#) [▶ Phenomenological Psychology](#) [▶ Trauma](#)

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Mecca

➤ Hajj ➤ Pilgrimage

Meditation

Trish O'Sullivan

Meditation is a practice wherein active thinking is suspended and mind activity is focused and stilled. There are

three meditation subtypes – concentration, contemplation and mindfulness. Concentration involves focusing the mind on one object; contemplation involves the summoning of an image or thought and then holding or examining it in the mind; and mindfulness is paying complete attention to the here and now including thoughts and feelings without engaging with them. In actuality, these practices are often intermingled. Some religious groups, however, emphasize one or the other e.g., concentration in Zen meditation, mindfulness in Vipassana or insight meditation, contemplation in Christian and Tantric meditation.

Meditation Techniques

Meditation is generally concerned with calming and controlling the mind. There are various techniques for achieving this:

1. mantra is focusing the mind on a thought, word(s), or sounds;
2. breath – focusing the mind on the breath as it enters and leaves the body –(anapanasati)
3. image – a spiritual image is focused on in the mind's eye.
4. guided – a theme or structured map is followed
5. mindfulness – observing thoughts and feelings that arise (vipassana)

Meditation Postures

The most common meditation posture is sitting crosslegged on a cushion with the hands forming a mudra in the lap or on the knees. However, there are various forms of sitting postures, including sitting in a chair. Sitting without moving allows the mind to concentrate fully. Other forms of meditation postures are standing, bowing or walking. Meditation can be continued throughout daily activities through the practice of mantra repetition or mindfulness – present awareness.

Spiritual or Religious Meditation

There are differences between the emphasis, approach and techniques used by various religious traditions. Sometimes the meditation practices are utilized by mystics only or otherwise hidden while some religions consider

meditation to be a central practice for all adherents. Goals of meditation practices also vary and they include contact with the divine, spiritual insight, self-refinement, self-knowledge, purification of consciousness and/or enlightenment. The practice itself is done within each unique religious framework and has that religion's particular emphasis as well as flavor or imprint.

Buddhism

The Buddha attained nirvana or enlightenment by meditating. He then devised the Noble Eightfold Path out of suffering of which correct meditation (concentration or dhyana in Sanskrit) is the eighth practice on this path and mindfulness the seventh. Buddhists strive to purify the heart and mind of greed, hatred, ignorance, fear, envy, jealousy and other attributes of mind that produce suffering as well as to achieve enlightenment by realizing their own true or Buddha Nature.

Although the goals are similar, the practice methods within the major Buddhist traditions differ in emphasis and sometimes overlap. There are three main groupings within the Buddhist meditation tradition:

Zen – emphasis on concentration through the practice of Zazen or sitting meditation. The word *Zen* is a Japanese term which comes from the Chinese ch'an which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term dhyana or meditative absorption.

Vipassana or Insight (Theravada) – the practice of mindfulness and analysis of phenomena to facilitate inquiry into the true nature of things.

Tantric or Tibetan –in addition to concentration and vipassana, the distinctive practices of this branch often include visualization and contemplation of mandalas, deities, etc.

All three of these traditions include Metta or loving kindness practices although in different forms i.e., chanting in Zen, and visualization in Vipassana and Tibetan.

Christianity

Meditation has not been a central spiritual activity for ordinary people within Christianity where the emphasis is more on prayer, although some of the prayers chanted over and over again silently with the aid of rosary beads are like mantras which concentrate the mind. Religious and mystics have and do practice both concentrative and contemplative forms of meditation. The presence of God is the object of Christian contemplation. There is also the objective of

becoming more holy or Christlike. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition there is a practice known as repetition of the "Jesus Prayer." "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." This is similar to a mantra used in the concentrative practices. St. John of the Cross taught silent, imageless meditations not unlike Zen meditation. Similar to Sufism, the basis of Christian meditation is to open one's heart to both human and divine love. In current times, there has been cross-fertilization from East to West and many Christian meditation practices now incorporate Eastern techniques while maintaining the unique Christian perspective.

Hinduism

Most Eastern meditation practices have their roots in ancient India. A classical meditation technique of ancient India is Pranava or the repetition of the sacred sound of AUM. Yoga and Vedanta are the two prominent philosophies of the Indian tradition. With both, the goal of meditation is to lose the subject/object distinction and realize the truth of Ultimate Reality. Meditation is the only way to achieve this goal of Samadhi or blissful super-consciousness. Patanjali (second–third century CE) is clear in his Yoga Sutras [1.2] that the purpose of Yoga is stilling the mind or "restricting the whirls of consciousness" – "*Yogas citta vritti nirodha*". With Vedanta, meditation is seen as purifying the mind through intense mental worship and the goal is union of the individual consciousness with the all-pervading consciousness. This worship entails symbols and images, repetition of a sacred word (*japa*), meditation on the qualities of the divine, and meditation on oneness with the divine. In Tantric Yoga, yantras (geometric designs representing universal forms) are internalized through intense concentration and visualization.

Islam

Sufism, considered the mystical form of Islam, incorporates meditation practice. In Sufism, meditation and contemplation are considered essential for purification of the heart. Remembrance of God is the primary focus. There are many forms of meditation/contemplation including breath control, visualization, chanting the names of God, recollecting verses of the Koran, use of a *zikr* or phrase concentrating on God chanted either silently or out loud, etc. There is also a mindfulness practice wherein one contemplates the self: analyzing weaknesses and negative qualities with the intention of purging them. Freeing oneself from the illusion of separation from nature and

the universe by the suspension of rational thinking in meditation is also a focus.

Judaism

Jewish meditations come from the tradition of Jewish understanding, and include Jewish symbols, words, images and visualization practices. Regardless of the approach, the focus and aim of Jewish meditation is the union of the self with the divine. While some form of Jewish meditation is believed to have existed in ancient times, over time meditative techniques became largely confined to esoteric Kabbalah practices. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the Hasidic movement attempted to bring meditation into the lives of ordinary Jews. They taught prayer as mantra and contemplative forms of meditation aimed at refining character traits and awareness of the divine. This practice consisted mainly of focusing on the letters of the divine name in various combinations; the Tree of Life symbol, a candle flame or chants. Jewish meditation is today making a comeback based on recorded practices from historical Jewish texts including Kabbalah and meditation practices created by Jewish meditation teachers or borrowed from eastern traditions.

Taoism

Taoists believe that mind and body are intimately connected to one another. Therefore, in Taoism, meditation is both for improving and maintaining the health of the body and attaining enlightenment. The focus is on stilling the mind and attaining present awareness by keeping the mind and breath together. This helps to simplify life and increase awareness of the Way. There are many “inner alchemical” practices as well as physical practices such as Tai Chi, for balancing the Yin and Yang energies and the five elements.

Secular Meditation

Within secular society, meditation is sometimes used for self-improvement purposes. This type of meditation is without spiritual goals and is utilized more to obtain good feelings, to improve concentration and performance in some activity, to help solve emotional or mental problems, or to relieve physical and mental stress.

Meditation is said to have physiologic benefits. It helps slow down the impulse to rush into the next

moment and since much stress is caused by anticipation, it reduces stress and promotes a relaxed state. This rested state is believed to have health benefits. Many studies have reported that brain rhythms, heart-beat, blood-pressure, skin resistance, etc. are changed by meditation with resultant health benefits. There are ongoing studies on the beneficial effects of meditation and mindfulness to the mind and body.

Meditation and Psychotherapy

The goals of psychotherapy and spiritual meditation differ in that many types of psychotherapy aim to strengthen the ego and the self with the goal of improving the client’s personal and social functionality while meditation aims to free the individual from own identification with the ego and the self for the purpose of increasing awareness of the self as part of a whole and attaining spiritual realization. They are similar in that with both disciplines the focus is on exploring consciousness both within the self and between the self and the other. With both, the habits of mind are observed with the intention of letting go of illusion, unhappiness, suffering and self-alienation. In both meditation and psychotherapy the process involves freeing the self from illusion and reducing alienation from the self.

Knowledgeable therapists often teach their clients meditation techniques for use outside of the office since the meditation process is an individual internal experience. One of the benefits of meditation for both therapists and clients is the improvement of concentration and mindfulness or the ability to be fully present in the here and now of the psychotherapy session. Mindfulness of both the self and each other is an important aid to the therapeutic process for both the client and therapist.

Self-refinement and personality transformation through meditation are goals in many religious traditions but Buddhism and Yoga both especially emphasize psychology. In both Buddhist and Yoga psychology freeing oneself from the grip of attachments is central to personal growth and development. Both traditions hold that past thoughts form impressions or *samskaras* (skrt) which form habitual patterns of thinking and behavior. Through concentrating the mind in meditation, the unconscious can be penetrated and the *samskaras* loosened, observed and eventually dissipated. The Sufi’s through a similar process, tap into unconscious forces and become aware of and transcend the egoistic *nafses*.

The use of meditation techniques within the therapy or advocacy of meditation for clients should be carefully considered. Many teachers do not advocate meditation

for those who are emotionally or psychologically unstable as both the detachment process and the surfacing of intense emotions can be overwhelming for unstable patients. There is also a phenomena known as “meditation sickness” wherein headaches, chest pain or stomach aches may occur when the beginner practices excessively. This is believed to result from chi or kundalini energy rising too fast.

On the other hand, meditation is said to help patients with objectivity which can increase emotional stability. This skill in observing emotions rather than acting upon them helps to counter impulsive behavior. Self-detachment rests and rejuvenates the mind. Mindfulness practices are sometimes used in psychotherapy to increase the patient’s awareness of their inner state. Dialectical Behavior Therapy, for example, teaches unstable clients mindfulness skills in order to increase their capacity for staying in the moment and balancing the mind. The taking apart of self-concepts in mindfulness meditation allows clients to increase self-knowledge and correct mis-identifications with negative aspects of their personalities. One can train oneself to identify and then relinquish painful mental habits. Meditation is also believed to increase compassion towards others, thus, improving relationships.

Currently in the West, there is an increasing interest in the integration of meditation, specifically Buddhist meditation practices, and psychotherapy.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Mantra](#) [▶ Om](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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Meister Eckhart

Marta Green

Life

Johannes Eckhart (also called Eckhart von Hocheim, also spelled Ekehart) was born around 1260 in Thuringia in what is now Germany. He entered the Dominican priory around 1275. He studied in the University of Paris, receiving his master’s degree in 1302 and the title of Meister meaning Master. In his lifetime he became famous as an administrator, scholar, preacher and spiritual director. In 1323, the Archbishop of Cologne inaugurated proceeding against him for heresy. After publicly declaring that he

had no intent to preach heresy, Eckhart appealed to Pope John XXII but died some time before he was to appear before the Pope in April of 1328. In 1329, the Pope issues a bull condemning 28 of Eckhart's propositions (Smith, 1987: 6–8).

Thought

Meister Eckhart was most concerned with the *union* of the soul to God. Of the birth of the Word in the soul he writes, "What does it avail me if this birth take place unceasingly and yet does not take place within myself?" (Eckhart, 1980: 293–312).

Eckhart is concerned with knowing God, but for him knowledge is in the form of union with God. You know about something by joining with it, the way Adam knew Eve. Knowing God can not be achieved in the outer world, but only by turning inward and experiencing God in the "*Foundation of the Soul*." Eckhart conceived The Foundation of the Soul as a place of pure emptiness and receptivity, unformed, unconditioned. Being that humans are made in the image of God, God also has a *Foundation*, a place Eckhart calls "the desert," "the abyss," where God also purely empty. It is at the Foundation of the Godhead that the Foundation of the Soul finds union with God.

To achieve this place of union individuals must practice *detachment*. We must detach not only from material possessions, relationships, and our sense of who we are as individuals but even our means of experiencing reality: memory, reason, images, sensations, perception. We are to become empty, sounding boards for God (Smith, 1987: 64). Eckhart writes: "Avoid the restlessness of external deeds! Flee and hide yourself before the storm of inner thoughts, for they create a lack of peace! If God therefore is to speak the Word within the soul, the soul must be in peace and at rest" (Fox, 1980: 298).

When one has completely emptied oneself, then one can receive God (The Word) completely without reservation or thought and "*Breakthrough* into the Godhead." Breaking through means that God completely lives in the person so that the life of God becomes the person's life. "The eye with which I see God is the same with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye, and one sight, and one knowledge, and one love" (Fox, 1980: 83–86, Sermon IV). When we are united with God, we can see the world not as creatures, but as God does (Kelley, 1977; Smith, 1987: 65).

There is one more step. Eckhart understands that God does not reside only in God's Foundation but that God flows out into the world. God animates the world by breathing out into it and then withdraws His breath

into the silence and emptiness of His solitude. In doing so God enacts a never-ending eternal process of life and death (Smith 1987: 70). As we are united with God, we also flow out into the world and return back to union with God.

Relationship to Psychotherapy

Although Eckhart's concern is union with God, not the healing of souls, aspects of his thought can inform the practice of psychotherapy, especially if psychotherapy does not limit itself to symptom relief, but is concerned with the development of the inner world of the patient.

One place where the thought of Eckhart and modern psychotherapy meet is in the commitment to radical interiority. Eckhart's insistence on and detachment from all is not dissimilar to the sort of discipline required of those in psychoanalysis. The analysand is asked to examine the inner meaning of outward events; sometimes to such an extent that the events of one's "real life" became nothing more than a screen for one's projected inner contents. This is certainly a process of detachment from the "reality" of every day life. All internal contents are examined for their unconscious symbolic value in a detached manner and interpretations are offered. Eckhart would eschew interpretations and insist on a complete house cleaning, sweeping away all labels and preconceived concepts. Eckhart doesn't even want to label God as "good" for fear that the word would be too confining (Fox 1980: 177–180, Sermon XII).

Meister Eckhart taught a radical presence to God by cultivating a mind completely clean of pre-existing categories. In this his thought is very similar to that of the Easter mystics. The concept of radical emptiness may be of help in the work of psychotherapy. To the extent that therapists are able to become aware of the contents and categories of their minds and detach from them, maintaining an evenly hovering attention, to that extent they are able to be wholly present to their patients. As Eckhart warned about images, so counselors must detach themselves from all images of who they are, of what therapy is and allow each session to come alive in the spontaneity of the moment.

Eckhart's concept of image is also helpful in considering the self-image of the patient or counselor. Patients are people who have become attached to a few very rigid ideas of who they are and what is possible for them: "I am not good enough." "I am no one unless I am loved." They block out much of life returning to their core images (Shainberg, 1983: 11f). Clearly, such individuals can be helped by learning to let go of their grip on such limited

life scripts. Much can be gained by honoring Eckhart's in-depth understanding of detachment from images especially in detaching from self-images in the service of freeing up inner space for the client. The images must be dissolved not to be replaced with other supposedly superior images, but to permanently free up the inner world of the client, enabling them to live spontaneous, less scripted lives.

While the therapist may detach in approaching the patient and in helping the patient let go of inner clutter, for Eckhart, detachment creates a space for God which he defines as The Word entering human life. To experience the, Word Eckhart counsels not-knowing or as his seventeenth sermon is titled: "Letting the Intellect Go and Experiencing Pure Ignorance" (Fox, 1980: 238). Is this not also a useful model for a therapist? Can we likewise practice entering each session without "desire, memory or understanding" as Bion has counseled to await the birth of the one word that needs to be said in that session? The one word that will define and heal and connect the moment. Is that not the point of the session to sit and wait for the one right word to emerge spontaneously, in the session, out of the communion of the unconscious?

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Melancholia

Nathan Carlin

Notes on the Term

The term "melancholia" comes from Greek and literally means "black bile." The condition of melancholia in

ancient times, according to the medical theory of the four humors, was thought to be caused by an excess of black bile in the human body. Since ancient times, we have a great deal of writing on melancholia, including works by such thinkers as the Hippocratics, Rufus of Ephesus, Galen, and Avicenna, to name only a few of the most prominent names (cf. Jackson, 1986). While Robert Burton's (1979) *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621, is generally regarded as the most extensive and detailed treatment of the term, Sigmund Freud's (1963) "Mourning and Melancholia," published in 1917, is perhaps the work most well-known on the issue of melancholia, likely because of Freud's enormous influence on culture in general and because of his impact on the practice of psychiatry in America in the twentieth century in particular. In this essay, Freud gave a psychological or mental, as opposed to a biological, explanation for melancholia in that he argued that mourning and melancholia are two kinds of reactions to losing an object, where mourning represents the normal grieving process and melancholia a pathological response. In melancholia, one is prevented from mourning, Freud argues, because the object is "still in the neighbourhood" but is still nevertheless lost.

The term "melancholy" today is often associated with sadness (a feeling or mood) and depression (a clinical disorder or symptom). In clinical circles, the term melancholia has fallen out of favor, much like the term manic-depression. In *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR*, for example, there is no melancholia diagnosis, but there is a sub-section titled "Melancholic Features Specifier" that is used to help clarify diagnoses of mood disorders, such as Bipolar I and II Disorders. However, melancholia as a term is making a comeback. William Styron (1990) writes in his memoir that

- ▶ "Depression," most people know, used to be termed "melancholia," a word which appears in English as early as the year 1303 and crops up more than once in Chaucer, who in his usage seemed to be aware of its pathological nuances. "Melancholia" would appear to be a far more apt and evocative word for the blacker forms of the disorder, but it was usurped by a noun with a bland tonality and lacking any magisterial presence, used indifferently to describe an economic decline or a rut in the ground, a true wimp of a word for such a major illness (p. 36–37).

Donald Capps and I (2007; cf. Capps, 2005) have endorsed Styron's view in our own writings in the fields of pastoral psychology and psychology of religion. In psychiatric literature, Michael Taylor and Max Fink

(2006) have also endorsed Styron's view, as they quoted this very passage for one of their chapter epigrams, and they argue that melancholia has a more precise meaning than depression in terms of clinical diagnosis (p. 15). In any case, time will tell what the status of melancholia will be in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-V*.

Melancholia and Religion

Historically, melancholia has also had religious significance. Jackson (1986) notes that "Whether the gods, a god, or the God, the supernatural being (or beings) visited the distressing state on the sufferer as punishment for his sin or because of his lack of repentance for his sin" (p. 325). Jackson also notes variations on these themes, that sometimes, for example, it was and is still sometimes believed that God can use mental illness as a means for growth, or that the Devil, too, may be allowed to test God's faithful from time to time, as in the *Book of Job*. Such explanations for melancholia will likely sound offensive to the contemporary reader because these explanations appear to be blaming the victim, rationalizing, trivializing, or romanticizing suffering.

In any case, mental and emotional disorders in general continue to have religious significance today. While psychological insights into religion have not fared well among theologians (cf. Scharfenberg, 1988), Paul Tillich is certainly an exception, and his theological thinking does not blame the victim, rationalize, trivialize, or romanticize suffering. Tillich's project was to correlate the teachings of the church with modern day experience, and so he redefined many traditional theological concepts, like sin. He argued for understanding sin as estrangement from God, others, and self. And he also argued that everything in existence is also in estrangement. Existence, in other words, is estrangement. The upshot here is that, for Tillich, it would be correct to say that mental illness is a manifestation of estrangement or sin, but it would not be correct to say that it is the result of a particular sin. Tillich wrote regularly for the journal *Pastoral Psychology* in its early years, and he (2000) also wrote at length about the religious significance of anxiety and despair. In terms of the religious significance of melancholia today, particularly for men, Donald Capps, whose work I will discuss briefly below, has written prolifically (see, for example, Capps, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007a, and 2007b).

Jackson (1986) also notes Burton's introduction of the term "religious melancholy" in his *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton defined religious melancholy as a kind of

desperation and "sickness of the soul without any hope or expectation of amendment" (quoted in Jackson, 1986: 331; cf. Rubin, 1994). Significantly, then, Capps (2001) has argued for the image of the pastor as an agent of hope (on depression, cf. pp. 101ff.). Depression and melancholia are obviously significant to pastoral care professionals, though mental illness in general receives very little attention in seminary education (Capps, 2005: 1), even while there are excellent books available (Ciarrocchi, 1993; Collins and Culbertson, 2003).

Donald Capps on Male and Female Melancholia

Capps defines male melancholia as a form of religiousness that emerges in men's early childhood through their relationship to their mothers. This male melancholic religion "may or may not manifest itself in religious observances, commitment to spiritual disciplines, or religious participation in social causes or in acts of personal sacrifice" (Capps, 2002: xvi). In fact, it is more often the case that men are *not* religious in these conventional ways but are often religious in experiential (in contrast to institutional) ways (cf. Capps, 2007a: 256). As strange as it might sound, men are often religious in ways that, on the surface, do not resemble religion. But by understanding the origins of male melancholia, one can then see how men are religious in unconventional ways.

When boys emotionally separate from their mothers (normally between ages 3 and 5), they acquire an ambivalent attitude toward their mothers because, even though, or precisely because, she is still around, things are not the same. "Why has mother abandoned me?" the boy asks himself. He also wonders, "Can this loss be reversed? And, if so, what can I do to reverse it?" "[T]he very ambiguity of this situation," Capps writes, "and the anxieties that such ambiguity promotes are of key importance to the emotional separation that occurs between a small boy and his mother, and this separation is reflected in the form and style of men's religious proclivities" (2004: 108). Since all boys separate from their mothers, all men suffer from melancholia, and all men, therefore, are religious in this sense.

Capps suggests that male religiousness takes three forms, which are all directly related to the boy's separation from his mother. The first of men's religious proclivities is the religion of honor. By being a "good boy," men attempt to "win" their mothers back, perhaps by doing well in school, by earning a lot of money, or by achieving remarkable social standing. The second main proclivity is the

religion of hope, and here men attempt to find a replacement for their mothers by finding someone like her or something to replace her. Here men might take interest in literal quests, such as traveling, or the quests can be of a more symbolic nature. The third religious proclivity, which Capps (2002) added in his *Men and Their Religion: Honor, Hope, and Humor*, is the religion of humor, “which stands over against the first two ways of being religious in the sense that it humors them” (2004: 108). This way of being religious asks, “Can one really win mother back, and can one really find a replacement?” It may also ask, “And why would one want to win mother back?” The religions of honor and hope may have their successes, but they have their defeats and disappointments as well, and one way that a man might cope with the latter is to develop a humorous attitude toward the first two ways of being religious. Here men make light of the commitments and efforts that they engender, and by doing so, they save themselves from bitterness and despair. The religion of humor accepts the reality of the loss, yet refuses to be defeated by this loss. If male melancholia has no cure, Capps suggests that humor is a pretty good antibiotic. Put in theological terms, if the religion of honor correlates with what Christian theology calls “works,” and the religion of hope fits with a mystical searching, often marked by tentativeness and doubt, the religion of humor, for Capps, paves the way for the religious notion of grace. The other forms of religion involve doing, whether by working or searching, but the religion of humor is simply being, mocking and relativizing doing. Honor and hope are retained, but in a chastened, relativized form.

But what about women? Where do they fit into Capps’s theory? In *Men and Their Religion*, a sequel to *Men, Religion, and Melancholia*, Capps (2002) notes psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva’s view on the etiology of female melancholia. In *Black Sun*, Capps notes, Kristeva argues that female melancholia “is traceable to the two to three-year-old girl’s need to begin adopting the dominant (‘symbolic’) language of her culture, which is male-oriented, and thus to leave the security of her mother’s language world (which is ‘semiotic’)” (p. 5). Capps notes that Kristeva cites studies that link signs of depression with language acquisition. If this theory is correct, Capps suggests, then “it would follow that boys adapt more naturally to the symbolic language of patriarchal culture and are therefore less subject to lasting melancholia as a consequence of language acquisition” (2002: 5). Capps believes this argument has considerable merit. And it may also explain why more women than men suffer from depression.

In his work on the psychology of men, Capps has been greatly influenced by his mentor James Dittes. On the

differences between boys and girls, men and women, Dittes (1996) writes:

- ▶ Girls have the advantage that their primary caregiver (and life-giver) can be their primary role model. They know they are to grow up female, and to learn how to do that – how to behave and feel and think of themselves as female – they have both model and encouragement at hand in the person they are already closest to and dependent on (p. 24).

“For a boy,” Dittes writes, “it is not that easy. He knows he is to grow up male, and he also recognizes early on that to achieve this he must not honor and strengthen but disrupt the bonds between himself and his primary caregiver, his life-giver” (1996: 24). And so “being male costs a connectedness with life” (1996: 25). If Kristeva is correct, being female also costs a connectedness with life, but this cost is different than the one men pay, and it is one in fact that they would share with their mothers, perhaps even strengthening their bond. For more discussion on melancholia and gender, see Schiesari (1992), and for more of a discussion on mourning and melancholia in light of Kristeva’s work, see Diane Jonte-Pace (2008).

See also: [▶ Depression](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Psychology of Religion](#)

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Merton, Thomas

Fredrica R. Halligan

For Catholics and other Christians, Thomas Merton (1915–1968) has been a role model both for the contemplative life and for openness to the interfaith dialogue, in particular the sharing and learning from Eastern religions. A best-selling author, Merton first became famous for his autobiography *Seven Storey Mountain*, in which he documented his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. Death touched him early: he lost his mother at age six and his father at fifteen. Both his parents had been artists and Protestants. Tom traveled extensively in Europe and was deeply moved by religious art. After he was orphaned, he was raised by his grandfather and attended private school in England, followed by a flamboyant and disastrous year at Cambridge. He returned to the U.S. and attended Columbia where, under the mentoring of Mark Van Doren, he began serious writing. While at

Columbia he also turned to Catholicism, and in 1938 he was baptized a Catholic. Three years later he joined the contemplative Cistercian (Trappist) Abby in Gethemani, Kentucky. He chose the strictest order to do penance for his sins.

Contemplation and Activism

In his twenty-seven years of religious life, Merton struggled with the contrast of strict monastic rule and the role he played in “the world” as he became increasingly popular, writing poetry, fiction, journals and spiritual prose. Among his fellow monks and priests, Merton (who was known there as Fr. Louis) was both fun-loving and deeply serious in this spiritual quest. He became novice master and was much beloved for his wisdom and his wit.

Thomas Merton was highly intelligent, a voracious reader, and deeply interested in all forms of contemplative experience. He corresponded with some of the great spiritual leaders of the East, including Buddhists, Hindus and Moslems. He was spiritually nourished by this correspondence and by his own exploration of the inner life. In 1960 he was granted special permission to spend his days (part-time) as a hermit where, in addition to praying, he joyfully continued to study, write and communicate via letters in a vast and burgeoning interfaith dialogue. The Dalai Lama, for example, treasured Thomas Merton for his intelligence, creativity, wisdom, humor, openness, commitment and religious zeal.

In the 1960s when the Church was changing due to Vatican II and the U.S. was changing due to the civil rights movement and the Viet Nam war protests, Merton became an activist by the “power of his pen.” *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* is an example of this social activism. He wrote passionately about the Christian’s responsibility for humanity, including responsibility to speak up against injustice, prejudice and war. Thomas Merton, the man, knew both pleasure and pain in his life; he shied away from neither. As a monk and writer his genius lay in his capacity to express both intense pleasure and intense suffering, all with a sense for the whole.

Turning Eastward

Merton found in Eastern contemplation the same emphasis he valued from Western monasticism: silence, solitude, simplicity, emptiness, treasuring the sacred in the ordinary, surrender, meditation and prayer. In 1968 he was invited to give two talks at interfaith events in Bangkok and India. In preparing for that journey, he read

extensively in Tibetan Buddhism and Zen, Islam and Sufism, and Vedanta. He wrote a journal during his travels in the East which was published as *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*. In it he reflected on every aspect of his thought and varied experiences. He wrote, for example, about the abiding value of the interreligious dialogue:

- ▶ . . .we can see the special value of dialogue and exchange among those in the various religions who seek to penetrate the ultimate ground of their beliefs by transformation of religious consciousness. We can see the point of sharing in those disciplines which claim to prepare the way for "mystical" self-transcendence. . . . Without asserting that there is complete unity of all religions at the "top," the transcendent or mystical level. . . it is certainly true to say that even where there are irreconcilable differences in doctrine and in formulated belief, there may still be great similarities and analogues in the realm of religious experience. . . . [H]oly men like St. Francis and Ramakrishna (to mention only two) have attained to a level of spiritual fulfillment which is at once universally recognizable and relevant to anyone interested in the religious dimension of existence. Cultural and doctrinal differences must remain, but they do not invalidate a very real quality of existential likeness (Merton, 1975: 311f).

Merton was on the cutting edge of East-West dialogue and he opened the door for believing Christians to follow his footsteps in the dialogic encounter with Eastern thought. In October 1968, just after completing one of his planned talks, he went to his room to shower and rest. He accidentally touched a fan in the bathroom that had faulty wiring and was immediately electrocuted. His death was a blow to all who knew him.

But his death itself gave a final exclamation to his closing offering at the first spiritual summit conference in Calcutta. He so eloquently expressed this prayer which remains as his final wisdom for all spiritual aspirants:

- ▶ Oh God, we are one with You. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being. Our spirit is rooted in Your Spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, until in this one spirit which makes You present in the world, and which makes You witness to the ultimate

reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious. Amen (Merton, 1975: 318f).

See also: [Meditation](#) [Prayer](#)

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Method

Brandon Randolph-Seng

Religion's method is based on faith, while psychology is a science. Therefore, both religion and psychology have a different yet complimentary way of dealing with and understanding existential questions such as the meaning and purpose of life (Greenberg, 2004). For psychology, the scientific method, the research process, and critical thinking are all going to be important. The scientific method is a cyclical process with the scientific cycle of theory building consisting of two complimentary forms of reasoning: induction and deduction. Therefore, factual findings can either contribute to theory development (induction) or theory can serve as a basis for hypotheses that may or may not be verified by factual findings (deduction). Programmatic research is a systematic step-by-step approach to theory development (Randolph-Seng, 2006). In order to make a contribution to the understanding of human thought and behavior, contemporary psychologists must have a program of research in place (Klahr and Simon, 2001). For religion or the religious believer, science-like critical thinking processes are important, but ultimate understanding of self and others must come through a trust and belief in those things that cannot be tested through traditional scientific methods. Evidence for the meaning and purpose of life comes through the fruits (outcomes) of those beliefs (see Matt. 7 King James Version). Religion's method is also a cyclical process with faith and action serving as two complimentary forms of belief. Therefore, the outcome of action based on faith grows into knowledge for the believer. In order for

the religious believer to come to a sense of religious knowledge, faith in those things that are not seen or scientifically testable must come first (see Heb. 11 King James Version).

See also: [Faith](#)

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Midrash

Mark Popovsky

Midrash refers to a genre of classical Jewish biblical interpretation which flourished from the third century through the thirteenth century. The term derives from the Hebrew verb “to pound” – suggesting that midrash *pounds out* meaning from the biblical text. The literary form refrains from determining one interpretation as normative, allowing for multiple and mutually exclusive interpretations of the biblical text to coexist.

Rarely does midrash attempt to comment on an entire biblical passage; rather it almost always focuses on a particular word, phrase, or individual verse. Following an extremely close reading of the biblical text, the interpreter will point out a textual oddity such as an unusual word choice, a variant spelling, or unexpected syntax. Holding the premises that the bible’s author is divine and that the text was composed with ultimate economy, an individual midrash endeavors to show how the apparent error was actually intended by God to teach an additional lesson. The remainder of the midrash will expound that point, often making liberal use of wordplays, puns, and convergences of sounds. Similar to psychoanalysis, the midrashic process seeks to find latent meaning implied in the manifest material of the biblical text. Few Jews composed works of philosophy or systematic theology

prior to the medieval period; midrash serves as the primary window into how the rabbis of the ancient world viewed God, morality, and the world around them.

Midrash can loosely be divided into two categories: narrative (*aggadic*) and legal (*halakhic*). Biblical style is typically laconic. The text provides only flashes of dialog and almost never directly reveals a character’s thoughts or emotions. Narrative midrash attempts to fill these gaps in the text, playfully imagining missing dialog, background stories, and motivations for behavior. One common method is to shift the reader’s point of view, retelling the story from the perspective of a peripheral or altogether invented character. This undermines the reader’s confidence in objective inquiry and directs his or her attention towards the relational field. Like many psychological interventions, the midrashic process provides individuals with license to explore, question and refashion narratives that may initially appear immutable.

Legal midrash purports to deduce practical rules for worship, daily life, and moral behavior from a biblical text which appeared sometimes too vague and sometimes simply outdated to its rabbinic interpreters. For example, the Bible commands that Israelites refrain from work on the Sabbath, but it provides no definition of work. The Sabbath laws observed today by religious Jews develop directly from midrashic efforts to elucidate specific practices relying on subtle clues within the generally silent biblical text.

Midrashic interpretation is traditionally viewed as divine in origin; consequently, rules derived through legal midrash are considered by rabbinic authorities as if they were stated explicitly in the Bible. Midrash served as a tool to connect sometimes radical innovations in religious practice to the biblical text itself, thus maintaining a direct link between devotee and scripture despite significant transformations in normative behavior over time. As Jewish tradition evolved through its encounters with other cultures and new technologies, midrash became the primary means by which rabbis validated these developments as consistent with divine will.

See also: [Jewish Law](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Migration and Religion

Valerie DeMarinis

Introduction

The relationship between and psychological consequences of migration and religion are topics of historically long standing. The age of globalization and patterns of forced migration have brought new attention to this topic. The text is organized into the following sections: cultural function and worldview; voluntary and forced migration; host culture analysis and operant refugee paradigm; and, mental health, religion, and trauma.

Cultural Function and Worldview

To understand the psychological implications of the interaction between migration and religion, the function of religion in cultural context needs to be studied. The pioneering work of Arthur Kleinman in cultural psychiatry (1980) introduced a now internationally used model of the dimensions of culture for analysis of how healthcare systems, types of interaction in healthcare contexts, and patients' cultural understandings of illness and health are constructed. In this model the symbolic dimension, which includes religious elements and rituals, is pivotal for understanding the deepest levels of how concepts of illness and of health are understood in a given cultural context. As illness and health are culturally-influenced constructions, the religious or spiritual way in which these are approached inform the psychosocial and psychoexistential functioning of individuals and groups within the culture. Cultural psychologists Marsella and Yamada (2000) note that culture is a living entity that provides both internal and external artifacts. Included in the external category are societal institutions including religious and healthcare organizations. Included in the internal category are beliefs, rituals, and symbols, including those of a religious or existential nature. A change in one category necessitates attention to the need for change in the other as the internal and external categories are interdependent. The religious or spiritual systems operant in a mono-cultural or stable multi-cultural situation provide a means for creating a functioning worldview in which psychosocial and psycho-cultural understandings and behaviors are contained. Approaching the concept

of worldview as a psychological construct Koltko-Rivera (2004) defines it as a set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behavior. An individual's worldview needs to be studied in relation to personality traits, motivation, affect, cognition, behavior, and culture.

Religious and spiritual beliefs, rituals, and symbols can and very often do function as resources in such mono- or stable multi-cultural contexts. In cultural contexts where political stability, safety, and religious toleration exist, migration of different minority groups representing different religious traditions can have a positive outcome for both minority and majority groups. Perhaps the most salutogenic and health-enabling acculturation process, in such cases, would mean that the migrant minority group members find ways to incorporate aspects of the majority culture's external and internal artifacts while maintaining and developing central resources for their psychosocial health and spiritual resilience originating from their original culture (DeMarinis, 2003). Thus a syncretism of cultural resources would emerge over time, experience, and exposure. Majority culture members would also be a part of the acculturation process, learning from and respecting the resources of the minority groups.

Voluntary and Forced Migration

International migration implies a shift from one cultural context to another. Depending on the differences between the old and new cultural contexts, the role of religion or spirituality can have very different consequences for psychosocial adjustment and development. Migration takes place in both voluntary and forced situations. The term "refugee" denotes an individual who is forced to flee in search of safety, in contrast to someone who chooses of their own volition to relocate. Bascom (2001) provides a helpful overview of the geographical and geopolitical dimensions of refugee (forced) migration patterns.

Migration of any kind can cause a dramatic change in the way in which and means by which a person or a group's religious or spiritual expression may function. The more dramatic and traumatic the situation of migration, the more one may expect situations of dysfunction. As Silove (2005) points out, it is important to pay attention to how changes in existential meaning are being handled, especially in situations of forced migration. Values and belief systems, the inner artifacts of culture, can become dysfunctional leading in extreme cases to alienation and loss. Thus addressing these areas in response to trauma may assist with the move from trauma to survival. It therefore becomes necessary

through both social and psychological interventions to include room for religious and spiritual expression in cultural reconstruction and adaptation processes. Elements of humanistic and existential material need to be included in counseling and psychotherapy.

Host Culture Analysis and Operant Refugee Paradigm

Another important psychosocial aspect regarding migration and religion is the fit between the host culture and the cultures of the migrating groups, with special attention to refugees. This aspect of research has been understudied but is now receiving much-needed attention. One of the central results of a research study on Polish children's attitudes to refugees (DeMarinis, Grzymala-Moszczyńska, and Jablonski, 2001) points to the need for an analysis of functioning religious culture when investigating attitudes of the host culture population. Analysis of this dimension is important when conducting research or designing intervention programs in countries that have a defined religious tradition such as Poland but also as in countries that represent a more secular orientation such as Sweden. Concepts and policies such as religious freedom and tolerance may appear as simple and straightforward on the surface but may be impeded by underlying and underexplored worldview conceptions that often contain suspicious attitudes to certain religious traditions or religious expressions.

Host culture analysis in relation to refugee groups needs to be understood in relation to the operative refugee paradigm. Clearly, a paradigm shift has occurred in international responses to refugees. After September 11, 2001, the *security paradigm* has taken form, where refugees are not infrequently viewed with deep suspicion, and in the extreme as being terrorists (Frelick, 2007). A sign of this paradigm shift is reflected in the decline of asylum applications in the Western industrialized countries. Refugees are often viewed as moral blackmailers, exploiting the goodwill of the host nations (Ingleby, 2005), or as a result of terrorist threats, a major devaluing of refugees among receiving countries has taken place (Frelick, 2007).

In a comparison of European and North American attitudes to immigration (Livi-bacci, 1994), noted that the factors explaining the different immigration policies in North America and Europe are not economic or demographic, but stem rather from history, social structure, the functioning of the labor market and social mobility. European countries tend to perceive themselves as totally formed and not requiring further cultural contribution. Homogeneity in culture, language, and religion

is valued. Finally, in Europe, restrictive policies are in perfect harmony with public opinion.

A study of refugee problems in Europe (Veiter, 1988) points out the large influx of refugees coming from places with other cultural and religious attributes. Accordingly, the Islamic immigrants often declare themselves as political refugees and hope to be acknowledged as such by the receiving state. The fear of the governments and populations of the receiving countries is that it will not be possible to assimilate refugees who do not belong to the Christian culture of Europe (Veiter, 1988).

Mental Health, Religion, and Trauma

Research on mental health and religion has become timelier because of a resurgence of interest in religious belief and practice in many parts of the world, and because of the increased movement of the world's population (Boehnlein, 2006). Mental health providers in developed countries increasingly are treating immigrants and refugees whose backgrounds are much different from their own, so it is important for them to understand cultural belief systems, including religious thought and practice that relate to mental health and illness (Ingleby, 2005; Bhugra, 2004).

During and after traumatic events, individuals frequently report great cognitive dissonance between what they observe and experience in reality and what they previously believed were stable, secure, and predictable relationships, not only with other individuals but also with the supernatural or the metaphysical (Boehnlein, 1987). Incorporating religious and spiritual perspectives in the clinical assessment of patients takes into account the effects of philosophical viewpoints, cultural values, and social attitudes on disease (Fabrega, 1977). Religious teachings recognize the transcendental meaning of suffering and the fact that suffering, such as agony, despair, pain and conflict, belongs to the totality of life (Rhi, 2001; Kirmayer, 2008).

In PTSD recovery, spiritual awakening can play a role in relieving survivor guilt (Khouzam and Kissmeyer, 1997). Traumatic memory and unresolved issues may be helped in psychotherapy through an understanding of and addressing of the rituals of importance to the patient. Working with re-ritualization in the new cultural context, through connection to the patient's religious or meaning making system, may help to create a new perspective and a means of containing painful memory as well as providing a new memory resource (DeMarinis, 1996).

Exposure to inexplicable evil, cruelty, and extreme violation can shake and sometimes shatter the foundations of the survivor's existential worldview. The survivor and the community face crises of trust, faith, and meaning (Silove, 2005).

A very useful conceptual framework for understanding the existential meaning-system in mental health initiatives among refugees in post-conflict societies is the *survival and adaptational model* by Silove (2005). On the level of existential meaning-system, the challenges are to the undermining of cultural and belief systems values. The adaptive responses are existential doubts and the adoption of new/hybrid identities, while the extreme responses are alienation and loss of faith. The social interventions can be made on religious, political, and cultural reconstruction levels. The psychological interventions may include elements of humanistic and existential therapy (Silove, 2005).

Several recent studies in different contexts point to the importance of religious coping strategies and resources in the management of traumatic stress after forced migration: Gozdziaik (2002), Hagan and Ebaugh (2003), Myers (2000), and Shoeb et al. (2007). These and other studies are providing a base for understanding the potential of certain kinds of religious engagement and involvement for identifying resources for coping and moving beyond surviving. However, there is the need for caution in examining these results as so many factors are involved at many different levels. Keeping such cautions in mind, three initial observations can be made. First, that religion and spirituality can be beneficial to people in dealing with the aftermath of trauma. Second, that traumatic experience can lead to a deepening of religion or spirituality. Third, that positive religious coping, religious openness, readiness to face existential questions, religious participation, and intrinsic religiousness are factors that may be associated with posttraumatic growth.

See also: [Cultural Psychology](#) [Syncretism](#)

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Mikveh

Lynn Somerstein

The mikveh, a word denoting “the collection or gathering of water” is a ritual bath used for purification purposes by

women, after their menstrual cycle is completed, or after childbirth, making a woman ready to resume intimate relations with her husband, and by men, to achieve ritual purity. Women also immerse themselves before the day of their wedding. Immersion in the mikveh is part of the conversion experience, too, symbolizing the change from the old identity to the new Jewish identity. Immersion in the mikveh marks an intermediate step towards a new state. The entire body, including the hair on one's head, must be totally immersed in the waters of the mikveh.

The mikveh is a deep pool filled with a mixture of pure spring water or rain water, called living water, and tap water. Tap water alone can not be used because it is pumped. Mikveh water must flow into the pool by natural means, such as gravity, although tap water can be mixed with what is called "living water." The emphasis on the use of "living water" symbolizes water from the earth, like amniotic fluid from mother earth.

The narrow deep pool of water symbolizes the amniotic fluid; the pool itself is like the womb, a return to the mother. A person totally immersed in the mikveh is like a fetus inside the mother's body.

New cooking implements are also immersed in the mikveh to ready them for kosher use.

See also: [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Primordial Waters](#) [▶ Ritual](#)

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Mindfulness

Jo Nash

Historical and Religious Origins of the Term "Mindfulness"

The Buddhist practice of mindfulness is described in detail in the Satipatthana Sutra (*Satipatthana Sutra* is also known as "The Foundations of Mindfulness" translated in Rahula (1959) *What the Buddha Taught*), and also comprises the seventh aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path to end all suffering as explained by Siddhartha Gautama

Buddha. Each aspect of the Eightfold Path is an interdependent principle of Dharma practice, and Right Mindfulness involves cultivating insight into how our minds work, using both the conceptual mind and the direct perceptions of our bodily senses to refine our awareness of how different aspects of the mind and body inform each other, through observation and acceptance of their fluctuating nature. This enables Dharma practitioners to notice the arising and dissolution of changing states of awareness and cultivate an acceptance of the impermanence of bodies, emotions, thoughts and environmental phenomena. This increases equanimity which is a mind free of attachment or aversion to what occurs. Ultimately it prepares the practitioner for the realisation of the peace of Nirvana. Rahula writes, "Right Mindfulness is to be diligently aware, mindful and attentive with regard to (1) the activities of the body, (2) the sensations or feelings, (3) the activities of the mind and (4) ideas, thoughts, conceptions and things" (1959: 48).

Contemporary Psychological Definitions

Mindfulness has now been adopted as a contemporary practice beyond the Buddhist community, used to tackle stress and modify distortions in thinking. It involves paying full attention to the present moment through the direct perceptions of our bodily senses, emotions and thoughts, without judgment. It is understood as the antithesis of time referenced action, where our feelings, thoughts and behavior are rooted in an evaluative assessment of the efficacy of past actions and the anticipation of future consequences, which may be more or less consciously available to us. When practising mindfulness we observe the present moment in all its fullness to access an awareness unencumbered by the distortions of memory or desire. Mindfulness is thereby the opposite of "mindlessness," or a mind susceptible to unconscious feelings and reactive thoughts, leading to automatic, habitual or impulsive actions.

Mindfulness Based Health Interventions

Contemporary health practitioners of various kinds understand the latter to be the root of much stress and psychological distress. Mindfulness techniques are being taught by a range of health education professionals to help cultivate the self management of health problems which may be compounded by the tendency of the mind to react impulsively rather than observe and reflect; from acute stress to chronic pain, substance abuse, and severe, recurring mood disorders.

In more complex cases of recurring major depression, mindfulness techniques have been used as an adjunct to other forms of psychological intervention, primarily in conjunction with cognitive therapy to produce the hybrid “Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy” or MBCT. Recent research has demonstrated that MBCT is especially effective at preventing relapse in patients suffering with a history of three or more episodes of major depression, the most recent of which has not been precipitated by significant life events (Ma and Teasdale, 2004). MBCT helps these patients “. . . learn to be aware of negative thinking patterns reactivated during dysphoria and disengage from those ruminative depressive cycles” (Ma and Teasdale, 2004: 31). It facilitates this by enabling the patient to experience changes in affect and thinking with acceptance, rather than the controlling, clinging mind of aversion or attachment. This cultivates a de-centered approach to fluctuations in emotions and thoughts through an awareness of their impermanence, or ultimately changing nature. It can thereby avert the downward spiral of rumination on previous experiences of feeling “stuck” with negative emotions such as sadness or anger, which has in the past precipitated a depressive mood, and developed into a major depression. In short, the adoption of MBCT techniques enables the patient to choose to observe their ever changing emotions and thoughts rather than become them.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is a more generic form of health care intervention aimed at facilitating the self-management of chronic pain and stress, pioneered by John Kabat Zinn (1990). He describes the practice he teaches his clients at the stress clinic as follows,

- ▶ . . . the essence of mindfulness is paying attention on purpose. [. . .] being awake, owning your moments. As long as you are awake you can be mindful.[. . .] bringing your attention into the present moment [. . .] it [. . .] does not mean ‘thinking about.’ It means directly perceiving what you are attending to. [. . .] direct seeing, direct hearing, direct feeling (1990: 438).

Through the increased awareness of the here and now, we tune into our thoughts, feelings, sensations and those of other people too, so that “we can respond more appropriately to change and to potentially stressful situations, because we are aware of the whole and our relationship to it” (1990: 438). We can make more informed choices about how to act, because we have more information about what is going on inside us and around us, through the cultivation of focused attention on what is there, rather than what we want to be there, or fear may be there. In this way MBSR side steps the stress created by

the limitations of our time referenced mind, which is prone to get stuck in the past or worry about the future, neither of which exist right now.

In summary, mindfulness is an ancient Buddhist contemplative practice that can lead the Dharma practitioner to the fulfillment and peace of Nirvana, as well as having a range of tangible health benefits for the non-Dharma practitioner. In both it requires the sustained cultivation of non-judgemental attention to the present moment, in all its fullness.

See also: [▶ Buddha-Nature](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Meditation](#) [▶ Nirvana](#)

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Miracles

Daniel J. Gaztambide

In philosophy and theology, miracles are wondrous events generally conceived as violations of the immutable laws of nature by divine or supernatural forces such as god/s or other spiritual beings. Depending on one’s philosophical or theological position, they are argued to either be impossible events without any verifiable evidence due to the contradiction inherent in the notion of violating immutable natural laws, or possible events enacted by a deity who has the capacity to momentarily suspend, abrogate, or transform the laws of nature. A psychological approach influenced by this debate over immutable natural laws and the supernatural would be tempted to problematize either party as neurotic and lacking good reality testing, depending again on the philosophical orientation of the psychologist- one who does not believe in miracles might see those who do as irrational and mentally ill and vice-versa. A different psychological approach would be interested not in the particular truth claims of philosophical

inquiry but on the way miracles and miraculous experiences express the deep structure of a person's subjectivity and their relations to personal, communal, and religious experience.

See also: [Myth](#)

Miraj

Ali Kose

Miraj is an Arabic word meaning “ladder, to elevate, or to ascend”. In Islamic literature it is used for the night journey of Prophet Muhammad when he was miraculously taken to the presence of Allah (God) in Heaven. According to the Islamic faith it is one of the major miracles of the Prophet. It happened on the night of the 26th of *Rajab*, the seventh month of the Islamic calendar, in the year 621 AD, which is one year before the Prophet's migration to Medina. How the miraculous journey occurred is a matter of differing opinions among Muslim theologians. Some maintain that, it occurred only spiritually while others assert that it happened both bodily and spiritually.

Stages of Miraj

Miraj happened in two stages. In the first, the Prophet was taken from *Masjid al-Haram*, the mosque which surrounds the *Ka'bah*, in Mecca to *Masjid al-Aqsa*, the mosque just south of the Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem. This stage, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, is named *al-isra*, the night journey (Qur'an 17: 1). In the second stage, the Prophet miraculously ascends from *Masjid al-Aqsa* to God in Heaven. This stage, called *miraj*, is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but it is narrated in detail in various sayings of the Prophet (al-Bukhari, *al-Salat*, 1; al-Muslim, *al-Iman*, 259).

According to the sayings of the Prophet, the Archangel Gabriel took the Prophet to Heaven riding on a mount called *Burak*. He was elevated through seven levels of Heaven where he met seven former prophets; Adam, Jesus, Joseph, Enoch, Aaron, Moses, and Abraham, one at each level respectively. His ascension was accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel until the lotus tree called *sidra al-munteha* in the Seventh Heaven. Then he continued his

journey riding on another mount called *Rafraf* and not accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel until he arrived to God's presence. There, he was given the good news that his people, except those who attribute partners to God, would eventually be allowed into Paradise. It was here where God enjoined five daily prayers. On his descending from Heaven, he rode *Rafraf* until the lotus tree where he took *Burak* again until Jerusalem before returning to Mecca.

While in God's presence, the Prophet was also given the following 12 commandments: (1) Do not worship any God, but Allah, (2) Treat parents well, (3) Lend help to kin, the stranded one, and the poor, (4) Do not be mean and do not waste, (5) Do not kill your child due to the fear of poverty, (6) Do not approach adultery, (7) Do not kill, (8) Do not usurp orphan's belongings, (9) Keep your promise, (10) Do not deal in fraud, (11) Do not follow an idea which you know nothing about, (12) Do not be arrogant.

Reactions of Muslims and Idol-Worshippers

The following day, the Prophet told the Meccans about his journey to Heaven. The idol-worshippers tested him asking questions about a caravan traveling from Jerusalem. His answers were satisfactory, but the idol-worshippers did not believe in him even though they cross-checked all with the members of the arriving caravan. Some idol worshippers went to Abu Bakr, who was one of the first Muslims, saying that Muhammad had gone crazy claiming that he had ascended to Heaven. Abu Bakr surprised them saying that he would believe anything Muhammad had said. After this event Abu Bakr was given the title of “The Trustworthy.” In general, Muslims believe that Miraj is a test of their faith.

Miraj has a symbolic meaning for Muslims. They are supposed to experience the journey of the Prophet in their five-daily prayers feeling themselves in the presence of God as the Prophet did at Miraj. In order of importance of sacred occasions, it is after the Night of Power (*Lailatu'l Qadir*), when the Qur'an is believed to have been revealed.

See also: [Islam](#) [Jerusalem](#) [Qur'an](#)

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Mirroring

Jane Simon

The intrigue with the *mirror* leads down a corridor of a long, variegated history to involve the profound subject of identity. Who are we to self? Who are we to the world? What is reality? What is distortion? How much can we alter our perceptions?

The earliest hominid gazed at his image in the still water following a rainstorm. The question of identity and the soul concerned the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Aztecs. Present-day astronomers turn their big mirrors out toward space and ask “Who are we; what is our place in the universe?”

Uses of the Word “Mirror”

The noun mirror is an object which reflects back to the onlooker a more or less distorted image, most commonly reversing right and left or presenting the onlooker with a “mirror image.” The verb “to mirror” is to offer a verbal feedback, an aspect of the subject “*mirrored*” by an onlooker.

Superstitions and the Mirror

Many people from Europe to Madagascar, and sects of Mohammedans and Jews, cover mirrors in the house after a death because they believe the soul of a living person in the form of his reflection, may be carried off by the ghost of the deceased which hovers around the house until the burial (Goldberg, 1986: 3).

Seven years bad luck to one who breaks a mirror is related to the belief that the image is the soul. Since the mirror supposedly captures the soul, if it breaks, the soul breaks too. British anthropologist, Sir James Frazer, found that the Greeks believed water spirits could drag a person’s reflection under water, leaving him soulless to perish. This superstition explains the myth of Narcissus who perished from the frustration of inordinate love for his mirror image (Goldberg, 1985: 6). Universal mystery of the mirror involves divination, the art which seeks to foretell the future and discover hidden knowledge (1985: 7).

Philosophy and History

Plato argued that it was often impossible to see the idea, just as the true nature of the sun...cannot be viewed

directly...can only be seen imperfectly reflected in a mirror. And by extension, the material world known through our senses, was regarded as a reflection of the “other world,” of ideals which we cannot see, feel, or hear unless possessed of universal wisdom. Socrates and Plato asserted that our illusory reality is only the reflection of a greater, abstract Goodness that lies in a hypothetical upper world beyond the *mirror-like* dome of the sky. Even though he considered this world a mirror-illusion. This Platonic concept prevailed for over fifteen hundred years in Europe, in religion, art and morality (Goldberg, 1985: 114, 115).

Socrates urged his followers to study themselves in mirrors in order to make sure their faces did not reflect dishonorable thoughts or deeds, apparently assuming that they could “monitor their inner reality by their outer appearance” (Pendergrast, 2003: 12).

Seneca, who lived during the time of the Roman Empire (AD 40), thought mirrors were invented so man might gain knowledge of himself and thereby wisdom. With the mirror’s help, the handsome man may avoid infamy; the young man be reminded that youth is a time of learning, and “the old man, set aside actions dishonorable to his gray hair, to think some thoughts about death. This is why nature has given us the opportunity of seeing ourselves” (Goldberg, 1985: 112–113).

The *Book of Wisdom* of the second century BC echoes an aspect of the Platonic mirror. In AD 54, Paul, at the church in Corinth, addressed his Epistle, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in art: then I shall understand fully, even as I have fully understood” (Goldberg, 1985: 115). In the authorized translation: “For now we see through a glass, darkly” (I Corinthians 13:12).

From these beginnings the mirror analogy took on significance in Christian thought. From “spotless mirror” in the *Book of Wisdom* was drawn the attribute of the purity of the Virgin Mary.

The metaphor of the mirror lent itself to the Christian belief that all existence is understood as a relation between paragon and image, between a reality and its innumerable reflections. Contempt for the world of matter and belief in the liberation of the soul through asceticism and mystic revelation made this congenial to many believers. (Goldberg, 1985: 116).

Through the writings of Augustine and others, basic theological mirror analogies were formulated: the mirror of the soul and the mirror of the mind. The mirror of the soul was the image of the ideal, or archetypal idea. This led to mirrors known as compendiums of knowledge and idealized virtues. The mirror of the mind was ambivalent; it reflected the shadow world of the senses

and led to mirrors that warned of the transience and illusiveness of this world. But concerned itself with religious truth. The Holy Scripture was called a mirror from which could be drawn models of holy living either as biography or as religious rule (Goldberg, 1985: 118–119).

In Kabbalistic doctrine the goal is to meditate on the Hebrew letters in order to pass beyond the control of the natural mind, first by means of script and language and then by means of imagination to reach the stage where you can't speak. Through the power of sheer imagination one's inmost being is something outside of self which takes on "the form of a polished mirror" (Scholem, 1995: 154–155).

Shakespeare's Hamlet, Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible, and Jesus of the Greek New Testament, each provide mirrors in which we see ourselves reflected in their faith and in their skepticism, with the ultimate hope for transcendence. Jesus Christ may be seen as "a concave mirror" in which we see the distortions we have become (or a "theological labyrinth") while Yahweh, the Hebrew God is a "mad moralist" (Bloom, 2005: 9).

Like Hamlet, Jesus is a mirror in which we see ourselves. "Endless questing for the historical Jesus has failed, in that fewer than a handful of searchers come up with more than reflections of their own faith or their own skepticism." . . . Jesus is to the Greek New Testament what Yahweh is to the Hebrew Bible, or Hamlet to Shakespeare's play: the vital protagonist, the principle of apotheosis, the hope for transcendence" (Bloom, 2005: 12–13).

History has altered our perceptions and with it perceptions of soul, self, mirror, and mirroring. At first images reflected in water, did not appear to belong to us, but rather to the deities.

During the nineteenth Century, the concept of the double, an alternate version of self, was perceived to turn against self. The Russian symbolist Andrei Bely produced a body of literature in which the reflected image plays a role often portending a tragic end. Gogol in *The Nose* and Dostoyevskii in *The Double* through the use of the mirror, describe the worlds of their characters.

In 1924, Otto Rank a renowned Austrian psychoanalyst, published a psychological treatise *The Double* which theorized that the double or soul and man's need to immortalize himself led to the development of civilization and its spiritual values. Rank shared the preoccupation of the Russian symbolist writers in his observation that the double represented the problems of man's relationship to himself. Both novelists and psychologists were affected by the impact of nineteenth-century science which seemed to destroy the soul. The mirror

became a symbol of man's rejection of materialistic reason in his search to repossess his lost soul (Goldberg, 1985: 242).

When our conception of the universe changed to a more objective view of reality, we were freed of earlier misapprehensions about self, and in turn, our conception of the mirror was altered. Looking outward, the modern mirror contributes to the broadening of scientific and technological horizons. Looking inward, the mirror remains a powerful tool of introspection, a metaphor to help distinguish outward appearance and inner truth.

Poetry

Poet Margaret Atwood writes a powerful poem in which she equates the absence of a mirror to living without the self.

"To live in prison is to live without mirrors. To live without mirrors is to live without the self. She is living selflessly, she finds a hole in the stone wall and on the other side of the wall, a voice. The voice comes through darkness and has no face. This voice becomes her mirror" (Atwood, 1978).

I interpret Atwood's words as an expression of our a human desperation for "mirroring."

Another contemporary poet, *former* laureate, Billy Collins writes about the mirror as an informer in a poem entitled "In the Moment":

▶ As I closed the book on the face
of Thomas Traher and returned to the house
where I lit a flame under a pot
full of floating brown eggs,
and while they cooked in their bubbles,
I stared into a small oval mirror near the sink
To see if that crazy glass
Had anything special to tell me today.

Theoretically the glass "mirrors" back something we know or informs of what is there, but it may surprise us with *something* we haven't seen before.

In the 20th century psychologists became intrigued with the significance of mirroring as a vital process to self *development*. Today 'mirroring neurons' have been anatomically defined and observed in action on a functional magnetic radiological imaging of the living brain.

The study of how mirroring and the activities of mirroring cells affects us has been extended from the major role *they* play during the years of child development to their everyday role in influencing our actions in subtle ways often outside our awareness.

Mirroring and Development

Does the mirror corrupt or enhance a sense of self for a young child? Psychologist Fritz Wittels* found as a boy that the mirror helped identify his ego to himself (Goldberg, 1985: 249; *year of Wittels' writing is not provided).

Child psychiatrist, Robert Coles recognized the role of the mirror in developing a positive self image. He studied American children of well-to-do parents. These children were exposed to many mirrors in their homes, which were used for inspection of their appearance to “insure neatness and cleanliness, and “as a means of nurturing self-esteem.” These children became leaders in society. By contrast, in his study of underprivileged children, Coles found this emphasis lacking (Goldberg, 1985: 250).

Psychology

In the 1970's, psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut described the concept of mirror transference in two seminal books, *The Analysis of the Self* and *Restoration of the Self*.

In Kohut's words, “The genetic matrix of the primary defect-stunted development of the grandiose-exhibitionistic aspects of the self-was insufficient mirroring from the side of the mother. . .” (Kohut, 1977: 7–8).

Margaret Mahler studied the interaction and interrelationship between mother and infant and categorized a variety of mothering styles based on the mother's ability to recognize and mirror the affect, cognition, and behavior of her young child.

The goal for the mother to respond with sufficient accuracy determines the development of a healthy sense of self for the infant. If her mirroring doesn't relate, or approximate the inner feeling state of the infant/child, he develops an inadequate or distorted sense of self.

Mahler cites the example of Charles who could not be alone or in the company of another person for extended periods of time; he had lost his “symbiotic mother” “at a time in his development when this loss was equivalent to losing part of the self.” He tried to learn how to have emotions. . .to maintain a sense of identity by mirroring others (Mahler, 1968: 30–31).

A decade later, child psychiatrist Daniel Stern based much of his study on significant developmental processes of mirroring, attunement, and empathy between infant and caretaker. To a great degree, these processes determine our identity, a sense of who we are and how we interact with others.

Stern elaborates on the development of several forms of the self which are essential for functioning. The self as *agent* grants us ability to perform in the inanimate and social worlds. If this sense is lacking, paralysis may result. The sense of physical cohesion prevents fragmentation with depersonalization, out of body experiences, de-realization. Memory aids a sense of continuity and prevents temporal dissociation which is seen in fugue states and amnesias. An affective sense prevents anhedonia and enables a person to connect to the culture, to socialize and avoid cosmic loneliness.

Kohut, Mahler and Stern all focus on the preverbal self and damage to the sense of self and psychopathology which result from failure of good enough mirroring whether the problem exists in the emotional/affective, cognitive, or behavioral realm.

Used in the clinical theories of Mahler et al. (1975); Kohut (1977), Lacan (1977) reflecting back an infant's inner feeling state, remains a key to the infant's development in learning about his or her own affectivity and sense of self. “Mirroring” then implies that the mother is helping to create something within the infant that was only dimly or partially there until her reflection acted to solidify its existence. Based on these studies, mirroring lies at the basis of healthy development and constitutes the foundation of the authentic self.

Mirror Neurons

In the 1990's, mirror neurons were discovered by an Italian team who happened to be snacking on ice cream cones in front of macaque monkeys. These monkeys imitated the scientists by beginning to eat too.

Mirror neurons are housed in several areas of the brain. One of these, the insula is responsible for social emotions like guilt, shame, pride, embarrassment, disgust and lust.

We humans are “hard-wired” for imitation. Mirror neurons begin working at birth. Watching his mother stick out her tongue, an infant a few days old will imitate her behavior by protruding his own.

Through the operation of mirror neurons we learn many behaviors. Our survival depends on understanding actions, intentions and emotions of others which in turn depends on the existence of mirror neurons.

The function of mirror neurons extends beyond *actions* to involve *intentions* and *emotions* which contribute to make us social animals.

According to researcher Rizzolatti, mirror neurons have been found to mediate a broad range of human experiences that were previously thought too subjective

to be characterized experimentally. Emotions such as empathy, theory of mind (the ability to perceive another person's intent), and even the reaction to a loved one's pain have been characterized at the neuro-anatomical level and appear to involve mirror neurons (Blakeslee, 2006).

Whether a person performs the action, observes the action done by someone else, or hears a sentence describing the action, activates the same mirror regions in the brain which has led researchers to "speculate that syntactic understanding involves mirror regions that are normally associated with action recognition."

Neuroscientist Marco Iacoboni who studies mirroring cells in human brains links empathy with strength of mirror neuron response suggests that the mirror system opens the gate to understand other cultures (Blakeslee, 2006: 4; Hotz, 2007).

A kind of mirroring or mimicry, "a synchronized and usually unconscious give and take of words and gestures" has been found to foster the subtle art of persuasion. Researchers find that when a person's posture and movements are mirrored with a one-to two-second delay, namely, to create an imperfect mirror, they are more receptive to the suggestion to try a new soft drink. Subtle mimicry, perceived as flattery, has the opposite effect of social mimicry which is likely to be perceived as mockery (Carey, 2008).

Biology, Anatomy and Pathology

Humans possess multiple mirror systems located in diverse areas of the brain responsible for language, emotions, and perceptions. Researchers seem to agree there are multiple mirror systems and neurons have connections to thousands of other cells which create intricate constellations of relationships.

Faulty mirroring most likely lies at the root of psychopathology of many diagnoses, perhaps excluding only those which fall primarily in the biochemical realm.

Normal function helps determine what goes wrong in pathological conditions such as autism, a disorder manifested in failure to respond to social cues.

This mirror of neurons may be broken with greater disruption of mirror networks implicated in worse symptoms of autism, that is, more severe impairment of language, behavioral and social skills.

Unresolved as to etiology and now attributed to the realm of the biological is the malady known as Body Dysmorphic Disorder which manifests as faulty, inaccurate thoughts and perceptions about appearance. Variations on distorted body image include anorexics who look into a

mirror and see too much body fat and male bodybuilders who suffer from "bigorexia" a condition in which their mirror image looks too weak.

Many schizophrenics react oddly to mirrors, sometimes staring at them for hours. Curiously, there are no blind schizophrenics, and in the single known case where a long-term schizophrenic went blind, she went into remission within a few days (Pendergrast, 2003: 360).

Astronomy

The use of mirrors extends beyond psychology and religion to astronomy. Astronomers attempt to build the biggest telescope with huge mirrors to learn about the universe and the dark energy that seems to be splitting the universe apart. Patrick McCarthy of the Carnegie Observatories told the group, "The most important tool we take to the observatory is an open mind."

The open mind is a kind of two way mirror: we present (an aspect of) self to the world and the world reflects back. Our chore, with an openness or questioning of self, to what resides within (our thoughts, dreams, fantasies) with what the environment mirrors back to us about the aspects of self we present to the world, is an ongoing dynamic process. Perceptions, like waves of the ocean, can reinforce or interfere/ or negate our self concept.

Although the formation of the self depends on the mirroring process, and since the sense of self varies from culture to culture, characteristics of mirroring also vary. For example, the sense of self in India is intricately woven into the fabric of the family. By contrast the American culture to a large degree focuses on the individual. The process of mirroring is a learning tool. We learn by imitating others, parental figures, mentors both consciously or unconsciously.

And as one would expect, mirroring is culturally conditioned. An involuntary sense of empathy responds differently depending on whether we're looking at someone who shares our culture (Hotz, 2007).

Cultural and Future Implications

Mirroring affects us to the core of our being, yet the major significance is only beginning to be recognized. To a large extent, murderers and lovers are made, not born (unfortunately, not always mutually exclusive). From the above observations, an understanding and acting upon mirroring may be important in the process of establishing world peace. The history and role of the mirror and mirroring over the centuries reflects the human evolution

from placing our Fate in the Deities, to claiming our role of self identity down to the unique sub-molecular composition of each of us and embodies the potential of humans to evolve. Dire world conditions result from the human capacity both to destroy and to re-build, create, and problem-solve. Based on research in writing this article, I am hopeful that we have the biological capacity (some of which lies in our in mirroring neurons) to achieve increasing harmony in the future.

See also: [Kabbalah](#) [Rank, Otto](#) [Virgin Mary](#)

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Monomyth

David A. Leeming

Mythologist Joseph Campbell has demonstrated that when we consider heroes and their myths comparatively we discover a universal hero myth that speaks to us all and addresses our common need to move forward psychologically as individuals and as a species. "The Hero," writes Campbell, "is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" (1949/1972: 19–20). The hero does not stand for the status quo; he or she breaks new ground. The striving hero is our cultural and collective psyche out on the edges of knowledge and existence.

Taking a word coined by James Joyce, Campbell calls the archetypal hero the "monomyth." The hero of the monomyth, our representative of Self, the totality of our individual and collective unconscious and conscious psyches, passes in his "adventures" through a series of transformative thresholds, which are representative of the psychic and, to an extent, the physical life. The middle of the hero's life, mirroring the passage of our conscious search in the conscious life and the progress of the inner psychic journey into the unconscious, a journey undertaken consciously in the process of psychotherapy, is made up of three essential elements: the *Departure* from home (the status quo), the *Adventure* in the unknown world, and the *Return* with some new understanding. These three elements are framed by an appropriately heroic beginning and ending.

The beginning is often a miraculous conception and birth. The Tewa hero, Waterpot Boy, is conceived when a piece of clay enters his mother. The Aztec man-god Quetzalcoatl is conceived when a god breathes on his mother. A Ceramese heroine, Hainuwele, is born of the combination of coconut sap and a drop of blood. Often the hero, the divine child, is born of a virgin. Almost always he or she comes at a time of great need – the darkest night of the cultural year, a time of general suffering, a period representing the darkness and, more often than not, the suffering that exists in our unconscious or subconscious individual and collective selves.

The hero birth is the hope for a new beginning, a ubiquitous hope. He or she is our second chance. The hidden place – the stable, the grove of trees, the cave – where the hero is born and the painful times in which he emerges remind us that even the gods require the

elements associated with the mother – earth, flesh, pain – to enter the world as one of us. The birth also stands for the loneliness and the pain of the beginnings of the psychic journey towards wholeness, or self discovery.

Not surprisingly, the new born hero is almost immediately threatened by the first of the “guardians at the gate” of the status quo, the preconceptions and habits that say “no” to the journey. These guardians are the kings, jealous fathers, or demons who cannot tolerate the presence of a force for new understanding. Thus Herod sends soldiers to kill any child who might be what the magi have called a new king in the Jesus birth myth. And when other magi announce the birth of Zoroaster to King Duransarum, he attempts to stab the child himself. Sigurd and Moses are hidden away for their own protection.

As a child, the hero must somehow prove himself/herself. Signs of the divine essence must shine through. Krishna, the avatar of the god Vishnu, kills a demoness while still in the cradle. The boy Arthur removes the sword from the rock. Theseus retrieves his father’s shoes and sword. The Irish hero Cuchulainn, still a mere boy, kills the giant watchdog of Culann. Jesus amazes the Elders in the Temple. As the young wife of the Pandava brothers in the Indian epic the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi reveals her inner divinity when, through Krishna’s power, the evil Kauravas fail to strip her of her miraculous sari. So it is that as we begin the journey outlined by depth psychology we must confront the obvious barriers to the journey – our own monsters of the status quo.

Once adulthood is achieved, the hero frequently undergoes a preparatory period of isolation before receiving a call to action, which the hero sometimes initially refuses. Moses, the shepherd alone in the fields, is called from the burning bush, and his reluctance must be overcome by Yahweh himself. The Ojibwa Hiawatha prototype Wunzh is called during his lonely vision quest, but before he can begin his adult journey he must wrestle with the corn god, with divinity itself. Jesus must be tempted in the wilderness, and the Buddha must be tempted by the fiend Mara.

All of these events are preparation for the beginning of the hero journey, and our psychic journey. Like Odysseus, who is reluctant to accept the call of the Greeks to leave wife, child, and possessions to fight in Troy, or like Tolkien’s Bilbo and Frodo, who would rather not leave the comforts of Hobbit ways, the hero, must leave home precisely because he must break new ground in the overall human journey. The old ways must be constantly reviewed and new understandings developed. The knights of the Round Table must give up the comforts of

Camelot for adventure, and Gilgamesh must leave home to seek eternal life.

The adventure of the hero is marked by several universal themes. The first of these is the search. Sometimes the questing hero looks for something lost as we do if we journey into our unconscious world. Odysseus’ son Telemachos, Theseus, and Waterpot Boy all search for the Father. Gilgamesh, Jason, the Knights of the Round Table, Moses, seek objects or places – often lost ones – of potential importance to their cultures – the plant of immortality, the Golden Fleece, the Holy Grail, the Land Where the Sun Rises, the Promised Land. More overtly “religious” or philosophical heroes such as the Buddha or Jesus look to less tangible goals: Enlightenment or Nirvana, the Kingdom of God.

The quest always involves difficult trials. There are frightening and dangerous guardians at each threshold the hero must cross – giants, dragons, sorcerers, evil kings. And there are tests. Herakles must perform the 12 labors, the Grail heroes must prove themselves through various deeds and, like heroes of many cultures, are tested by a femme fatale. This enchantress, a particularly popular nemesis of the patriarchal hero – Adam’s Eve, Aeneas’s Dido, Samson’s Delilah – is the archetypal image of the dangerous alternative to the true goal.

Many heroes must die and descend to the place of death itself, sometimes as scapegoats for the mistakes of others. Jesus and Osiris die, as does the Ceramese Hainuwele. In death, the hero is planted in mother earth and during that period, which we recognize as the ultimate “dark night of the soul,” a period of dark gestation, he confronts the most terrifying terrors and demons of the underworld and our own depths.

But the hero returns, usually in the spring. He or she is resurrected, as in the cases of Hainuwele and Jesus. Many returning heroes become material or spiritual food for their people: Osiris emerges from the earth as the god of grain; Hainuwele’s buried limbs become vegetables; numerous Native American corn heroes and heroines become the staple food for their people; for the Christian the resurrected Jesus is the “bread of life.” These are all images of the boon or great gift that the hero or harrowers of the unconscious bring upon returning from the depths of the quest.

As an epilog to the Departure, the Adventure, and the Return, the hero can make a second return, this time to achieve union with the cosmic source of his or her being. Jesus and the Virgin Mary ascend to God, and a legend has it that Abraham did too. The Buddha, King Arthur, and Moses all undergo a kind of apotheosis, a union with the ultimate mystery. Like myths of creation and deities, those

of heroes all seem to lead inevitably to that very strangest and most mystical expression of the human imagination, the concept of union which, depending upon era and tradition, has been called by many names, of which nirvana, enlightenment, the God within, individuation, self-identity, wholeness and Self are a few.

See also: [▶ Campbell, Joseph](#) [▶ Dark Night of the Soul](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Quest](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Monotheism

David A. Leeming

Monotheism is necessarily understood in opposition to polytheism. Do we believe in one god or several gods (or one god more powerful than other gods)? The struggle between monotheism and polytheism can be seen as a metaphorical representation of an essential struggle in the human psyche.

We almost always associate monotheism with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The assumption in these religious traditions is that there is one deity, conceived of as a personality with mind, a deity who acts through history and ultimately rules and controls the universe. Because of the dominance of the three “monotheistic religions” there has been a general assumption in the western world that monotheism is an important part of a general path towards enlightenment. Polytheism is a belief system postulating many gods representing the many facets of creation and is often dismissed by the western mind as a “primitive” phenomenon.

Freud, in his *Moses and Monotheism*, suggested that monotheism originated not in Judaism but in Egypt, in the religion fostered by the pharaoh Amenhotep IV (renamed Akhenaton after the Aton, the sun god he worshipped as the one god or at least the most important god). And it can certainly be argued that Ahura Mazda in Zoroastrianism and the concept of *Brahman* in branches of Hinduism can be understood in terms of the monotheistic paradigm. In short, some humans have long searched for a sense of a unified cosmic power, even as other humans – in ancient cultures such as those of the Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, and animist cultures such as those of Africa and Native America – have been content to see nature and the cosmos reflected in a variety of divine beings.

Psychologically speaking, the belief in monotheism is the result of an archetypal or cultural search for a father – a source of being. This is certainly so of patriarchal cultures, which is to say, most of the world’s cultures.

Mircea Eliade sees the monotheistic god as a sky god, as opposed to an earth god or goddess. In terms of psychic imagery and conception, the sky god is generally visualized as a male who creates ex nihilo – from nothing – that is, not from pre-existing material, but from his mind. And to one degree or another, we are said by the monotheists to have been created in God’s image, that is with something of God’s creative mind, making it possible for us to continue the creative process. In short, monotheism is a metaphor for who we are, for what Carl Jung and others have articulated in the concept of Self or potential wholeness. Monotheism and the concept of Self imply a rational progress toward self-knowledge. But, as world history demonstrates, it can also support tendencies towards exclusivism, intolerance and lack of imagination – in short, lack of creativity. A father god who, through perceived sacred scripture and religious law, prescribes our actions might be seen as limiting our potential for psychological and emotional growth. It is for this reason that religious and psychological scholars such as David Miller and James Hillman have argued for a “new polytheism” that emphasizes more feminine and earth based qualities such as feelings and emotions and intuition rather than obedience and unbridled rationalism. In this sense polytheism stands as a metaphor for a life of many possibilities and perceptions, for tolerance, for freedom from what is seen as a limiting monotheism.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Eliade, Mircea](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism](#) and [Psychology](#) [▶ Polytheism](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Moon and Moon Goddesses

Jeffrey B. Pettis

The Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus (100 CE–178 CE) writes in his *Tetrabiblos* (“Four Books”) how the moon (*selēnē*) gives its effluence (*aporroia*) abundantly upon the earth: “the rivers increase and diminish their streams with her light, the seas turn their own tides with her rising and setting, and plants and animals in whole or in part wax and wane with her” (Ptolemy, 1940 I.2). For Ptolemaeus, the power (*dunameōs*) of the moon consists of humidifying (*tō hugrainein*) and having also the sun’s heat, its action (*diatithēsīn*) for the most part being one of softening and putrefying bodies (1940 I.4). According to Ptolemaeus, the moon is by nature associated with Venus and the person of the mother (*Aphrodītēs tō metrikō*), the sun with Saturn and the person of the father (1940 III.4). In Christian Patristics the moon appears as a symbol of the Church which puts to flight all wintry clouds (Methodius of Philippi, *Symposion*, VIII: 12). In this way she is likened to her spouse who is Christ the Sun who at dawn releases all “evil odors and vapors that infect (*inficientes*) the mind” (von Franz, 2000 *Aurora Consurgens* 4.7–12). She is sister and bride, mother and spouse of the sun, often seen by alchemists as the lover in the Song of Songs. As the vessel and universal receptacle of the sun, she receives and disseminates the powers of heaven. The moon is often a symbol for certain aspects of the unconscious in a man. In females the moon refers to aspects of consciousness and the sun to the unconscious. Jung says this comes from the contrasexual archetype in the unconscious – animus in a woman, anima in a man (Jung, 1963: 135). The ancient notion that the moon promotes all plant-life led alchemists to regard the moon itself as a

plant, having parallels with the “Tree of Eternity” in Hindusim (Easwaran, 1987 *Katha Upanishad* II.3.1), for example, and the divine feminine *Malkhut*, the tenth *sefirot* associated with earth and moon on the Cabalistic tree. Compare mystical reading of the tree of Zacchaeus in Luke 19.1–10 by the Christian Flemish mystic John of Ruysbroeck (1214–1381 CE) in his *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*. The moon occurs in a variety of ways as a goddess symbol. In ancient Greek myth the moon goddess Hekate is the daughter of Gaia and Uranus, Earth and Sky. She is the deity loved most of all by Zeus (Hesiod, 2006: 411f.), and she has special powers given by Zeus to use as she wills. Originally worshipped as a mother goddess in Asia Minor, Hekate eventually is presented as the goddess of sorcery in Ptolemaic Alexandrian culture. Other Greek moon goddesses include Selen, Phoebe, Artemis, Luna, and Rhea. In Zoroastrianism the moon goddess Mah possesses, according to Avestan hymns, wealth, knowledge, and discernment. She is the “queen of the night.” In Hinduism the moon goddess Anumati (“divine favor”) represents spirituality, intellect, children, and prosperity. A variety of masculine moon deities occur in history, including Sin (Arabiatic myth), Jarih (Canaanite myth), and Thoth (Egyptian myth). Compare the Hindu god Chandra, which although male, has masculine-feminine, androgynous qualities.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [Great Mother](#) [Hinduism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Mormonism

Paul Larson

Mormonism is a colloquial term for several Christian denominations which constitute restorationist theology. The two leading groups are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), now known as the Community of Christ. There are several smaller offshoots, including a fundamentalist LDS church, recently in the news from a controversy involving polygamy and marriage of underage girls. All of the Mormon groups claim descent from the teachings of Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–1844), who was the first Prophet, Seer and Revelator of this dispensation.

Restoration theology holds that there have been several “dispensations” of the true religious doctrine and priestly authority to perform sacraments, and within a century or so after the dispensation originated by Jesus Christ, there was a “great apostasy” where doctrine was corrupted and the authority of the priesthood was withdrawn by God because of the falling away from the correct path. The next dispensation began with the first vision of Joseph Smith in 1820 and continued through subsequent angelic visits, including the ones leading to finding a set of golden plates containing writing which he claimed to translate and publish as the *Book of Mormon*. Besides that book, two other books, the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price* are also viewed as canonical scripture, along with the *Bible* (the Protestant version without the Apocrypha). Smith and others founded the LDS church in 1830. Mormons generally claim to have the exclusive truth and authority to conduct the sacraments that result in spiritual growth and ultimately lead to salvation.

Mormon theology rejects many of the doctrines of orthodox Christianity. It does not accept the various creeds propounded by the Ecumenical Church Councils and rejects the validity of Apostolic Succession claimed by both the Roman Catholic, the various Orthodox churches, or the liturgical Protestant churches (Anglican, Lutheran) which uphold the importance of bishops and priestly authority. The basic statement of beliefs is contained in the Articles of Faith, which is now found in the *Pearl of Great Price*.

LDS theology has a particularly American flavor, in that it offers the opportunity of continual evolution and growth. This is best expressed in a couplet articulated by

Lorenzo Snow (nineteenth century/1994), who became the fifth President of the LDS Church, “As man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become” (p. 1). This holds out the possibility of apotheosis as the ultimate goal of spiritual development. When this doctrine is coupled with the doctrine of marriage for time and eternity, rather than till death do us part, then the family can become an eternal unit. The idea that spiritual evolution can lead to become a divinity in one’s own right and create worlds is radically different from mainstream Christian belief.

These teachings, though available in public sources are part of the esoteric part of LDS practice involving temples. These are buildings for special rites that are open only to devote members of the church who received clearance from their religious leaders. The ceremonies conducted in the temples are secret, though documents purporting to be accurate redactions are available on the Internet. The temple endowments and marriage ceremony are held out as the most important parts of religious development, while the ordinary weekly activities of church members are designed to prepare people for those rites and support their continued involvement in church teachings and practices. The endowments and sealing of marriages are done not only for living members of the church, but by proxy for dead ancestors and others, along with proxy baptisms. There has been recent complaints from Jewish groups and others about proxy baptisms.

The public LDS church is organized into local units, known as “wards,” led by a bishop and regional units or “stakes” (these are equivalents to parishes and dioceses in other denominations). In areas where there are fewer members, these are known as missions. There is no professional clergy. Priestly authority is only held by males and is lay, in the sense that all priestly duties are in addition to civil jobs. There are two orders of priesthood, the Aaronic and Melchizadek. Boys age 12 are ordained into the Aaronic priesthood first as deacons, then passing into the quorum of teachers, then priests. Most males are ordained into the Melchizadek priesthood when they are called to go on a 2-year mission for the church at age 19, though sometimes those who do not go on missions are ordained into that level of priesthood in adulthood. The ranks of the Melchizadek priesthood start with the quorum of Elders, then the quorum of Seventies, and the highest order is the quorum of High Priests. Each ward is led by a Bishop and two counselors, the stakes by a President and two counselors. The church as a whole is led by the First Presidency, the Quorum of 12 Apostles, their assistants and other “General Authorities.” The President of the church is deemed the current Prophet, Seer and Revelator and is believed to guide the church’s

activities by divine revelation. The church promulgates changes in policy and conducts major teachings at two semi-annual conferences, usually in April and October.

Members are kept very active in multiple meetings at their local level. Each Sunday, men have weekly meetings of their priesthood quorums, families attend Sunday School and Sacrament meeting. During the week there are meetings of the women's auxiliary, the Relief Society, and youth meetings, Primary for pre-adolescent children, and the Mutual Improvement Associations (MIA) for adolescents and early adults. Various other activities are available, embodying the idea that the church should provide opportunities covering all of life's domains.

Jackson's (2008) book is clearly written by an outsider and from an evangelical Christian point of view, but is relatively accurate and non-judgmental in tone. Mauss's (1994) account is more of an insider's one, though his voice is clearly scholarly and reflective on the religion of his cultural background. The McMurrin books (1959, 1965) are from the standpoint of a professional philosopher within the Mormon tradition and are excellent sources for understanding the ideological context of the Mormon religion.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Smith, Joseph](#)

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Mother

Elizabeth Welsh

The mother is the biological and/or social female parent. From a psychological perspective, the mother is the female caregiver who may or may not be biologically

related to the infant but who assumes the parental role. The mother-infant dyad represents the primary form of human attachment based on physical dependence as well as affection, both of which are vital for survival. The word "mother" is also used in reference to the source or origin of things. In ancient religions, the earth was referred to in feminine terms as "Mother Earth" and represented the divine figure that was the source of all life. In addition, ancient myths included various female divinities that possessed maternal qualities or fulfilled mother roles for other gods or for humans. With the rise of monotheistic religions, however, the divine maternal images were eradicated, but in Western Christianity, the icon of Mary, the Mother of Jesus gradually rose to cult status.

The primary cultural scripts for mothers and motherhood have been shaped heavily by religious discourses or myths, and today, these scripts continue to be reflected in the cultural norms for maternal roles. Although through secularization religion has lost its centrality in society, on the linguistic level, the impact of the religious heritage continues to be felt.

In Western history, until recently, the Judeo-Christian worldview provided the dominant categories for the meaning and role of mothers. However, through the developments in the fields of anthropology and archeology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there has been a renewed interest in studying the ancient cultural myths and religions which in turn have given impetus to a variety of theoretical developments in religious, feminist, and psychoanalytic studies. The foundation of Freudian theory, the Oedipus complex, is based on an ancient Greek myth.

Religious Myths and Legendary Mothers

Ancient myths highlight several legendary mother figures that represent powerful creative forces of fertility as well as social influence. Given the precariousness of life in the ancient world, it may be easy to see why the act of procreation and the bringing forth of life through birthing had such a miraculous and divine significance. In Egypt, Isis, also named "the kingmaker," was the goddess who generated her son, the living king, from the dead body of her brother/husband Orisis. The image of her son's throne as her own lap on which he sat as an infant and suckled was representative of her function as the pharaoh's source of power and influence. Isis was a wifely figure whose nature was centered on maternal devotion but she was also the powerful patron of nature and magic. In Greece, Gaia was the primeval goddess representing the earth, the

Mother Goddess, who birthed Uranus, the sky, through parthenogenesis, and later lay with her son to give birth to a series of other gods including Oceanus, the World-Ocean, as well as the Titan gods. Also in Greece, Demeter was the goddess of fertility as well as a symbol of the mother who fights to protect the bond with her daughter (Persephone who was raped and abducted by Hades) and revolts against the male usurping power of Hades and Zeus. In the Hindu traditions, Parvati was the supreme Divine Mother who was beautiful and gentle but also fearsome. In the ancient Buddhist myths, Queen Maya was said to have become pregnant during a vision in which the divine Buddha reincarnated as a white elephant touched her and she later given birth to Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha-to-be. Scholars have pointed out the similarities between Maya and the Virgin Mary who also becomes pregnant without having intercourse. The mythical models of motherhood in the ancient religions were quite diverse and influential.

In the Abrahamic traditions the pagan goddess cults were eradicated though scholars have pointed out that, while the male monotheistic cult took over, the language used to talk about the divine figure retained some inexplicit but clearly maternal elements such as the images of God nursing, gathering, or holding his people. The female biblical figures that do stand out are several women who were important in the development of the Israelite and Islamic nations. Eve, the first woman created by God and mother of all living, has been a disputed figure in theological debates on prescriptions for women's societal roles because of her depictions in later Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources as a temptress and an archetype of sin. Feminist theologians have attempted to reconceptualize her as a prototype of motherhood pointing out that her name meant "mother of all living" and that, although her role is not described in much detail, she did play a significant role in naming her sons. In the Bible, the most prominent mothers are the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah the wives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob respectively as well as the mothers of the budding Israelite nation. Other biblical female figures such as Deborah are metaphorical representations whose "mothering" provides a model for large-scale leadership in the community which greatly differs from the male style of leadership.

Perhaps the most influential mother figure within the Western religious tradition has been Mary, the young virgin who became the mother of Jesus, and who remained present at significant points in her son's life according to the biblical text. From the fifth century onward, Mary became the subject of much veneration in

the Catholic tradition which has devoted an entire branch to Mariology, or the study of Mary's role and significance within the Christian faith. Catholic theology maintains the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, or the idea that Mary was born without original sin and remained sinless throughout her life. Mary is believed to have conceived Jesus through an act of the Holy Spirit and not through sexual intercourse; this is the doctrine of the "virgin birth." Catholics also maintain that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life and was taken up into heaven upon her death. Orthodox theologies reject the Immaculate Conception but affirm the "virgin birth" and celebrate Mary's "Dormition" (or "falling asleep") and her being taken up into heaven. The Protestant views affirm that Mary was "blessed among women" and a virgin when she conceived Jesus, but do not believe in the veneration of Mary or in her role as mediator between humans and God, pointing out that Mary's role diminished after the birth of Christ. Nonetheless, within traditional Christian discourse, Mary became the antithesis of Eve. The latter was the temptress who was responsible for bringing sin into the world, while the former was a symbol of meekness, holiness, and the way to salvation.

Many scholars have argued that the conceptualization of Eve and Mary within the Western religious tradition has had a strong impact on societal views of women and especially mothers. Feminist critics have pointed out that neither of the two have provided redemptive models for women since they have both been set up to represent two extreme opposites: the one who was deemed responsible for bringing sin into the world versus the asexual, self-abnegating saint. The former represents a condemned view of womanhood, while the other a romantic idealization of motherhood. Most revolutionary feminist thinkers have abandoned the traditional religious motifs of Western Christianity and turned instead to religious themes found in various ancient goddess cults or to their emergence within New Age religions. Revisionist feminist theologians, however, in addition to redeeming these prominent biblical female figures, also attempt to resurrect the feminine and motherly aspects of God which have been traditionally been eclipsed by patriarchal categories within the biblical language of God. According to this view, the language of God is inadequate inasmuch as it does not include equivalent images of God as male and female. For example, it is peculiar that in traditional theology, the speech about God as the origin and caregiver of all things omits, as if by default, the maternal aspect of these images, and attributes them to a paternal relationship, as the opening of the Nicene Creed indicates: "God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and

earth, of all that is seen and unseen. . .”. Since religious myths and traditions have a profound impact on cultural conceptions of motherhood and thus on women’s identities as mothers revisionist feminist theologians want to offer renewed and redemptive perspectives for women and mothers.

The Psychological Perspective

Much of psychoanalytic theory has dealt with the child’s relationship with the mother. Freud posited that at the heart of psychosexual development was the Oedipus complex, or the child’s desire for an incestual relationship with his/her mother. The dynamics of psychic development emerge out of this basic but prohibited desire which the child learns to defend against through various patterns of repression, displacement, sublimation, and other neuroses. Both boys and girls are primordially in love with the maternal parent but Freud believed that for girls this changes when they realize that the mother lacks a penis, at which time they begin to develop sexual desires for their fathers.

In Melanie Klein’s work, the focus shifted to the pre-Oedipal relationship between the infant and the mother, through which the child develops and internalizes a basic psychic structure of object relations. For example, the infant’s sometimes satisfying and sometimes frustrating experiences with the mother’s body become internalized as split-off “part-objects” (“good breast” vs. “bad breast”). Through adequate mothering, the infant can gradually begin to integrate these separate experiences into whole internal representations and learns that the mother who is generally loving and responsive is the same one who is sometimes frustrating and disappointing.

British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott also focused on the primacy of the maternal role in psychic development, coining terms such as “holding environment,” “good-enough mother,” “primary maternal preoccupation,” “subjective omnipotence” and others to describe how the mother’s behavior and state of mind function to help the newborn transition from a terrifying world of disconnected experiences to a progressive internalization of objective reality and development of a cohesive “true self.” Winnicott’s concept of the “good enough mother,” who is neither stiflingly perfect nor abusive and neglectful but who provides an optimal level of frustration, has also served as a model for an effective psychotherapist.

Some psychodynamic frameworks, such as attachment theory, relational psychoanalysis, and intersubjectivity,

have begun to recognize that not only mothers but fathers, grandparents, or other caregivers, insofar as they are intensively involved in providing care, can become primary relational or attachment figures. However, psychoanalytic approaches that have continued to draw from Freudian theories maintain their emphases on the mother’s primordial role in the identity formation of infants.

See also: [Femininity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Great Mother](#) [Mary](#) [Matriarchy](#) [Virgin Mary](#)

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Mountain, The

Thomas C. Putnam

Mountain symbolism occurs throughout history: the peoples of one of the earliest known civilizations, the Sumerians built mountain-like ziggurats in the desert, which they believed to be the dwelling places of the gods; in contemporary times we climb, conquer and marvel at the beauty of natural mountains. Mountains symbolize constancy, eternity, firmness, and stillness. They have been used to represent the state of full consciousness: in Nepal the sacred mountain Everest (“Mother Goddess of the world”) is thought of as the “navel of the water.” The image of the mountain as a *center* is one of the most important and widespread throughout history. Many ancient cultures considered the mountain the “Center of the World.” It often serves as a cosmic axis linking heaven and earth and providing *order* to the universe. Mountains evoke a special sense of awe and power and no single image or meaning can capture or express every facet of its symbolic significance.

Being close to the heavens, the mountain is often the place of revelation, as it was in the epiphany of Moses and the transfiguration of Christ. Jesus retired to the mountains when confronted with a problem that needed reflection. Buddha gave his first significant teaching on the summit of Vulture Peak in India.

Native Americans made frequent pilgrimages to mountains, which they saw as abodes of the Great Spirit. The Elders sent tribal members, who were found guilty of wrongdoing, the mountains to do penance, and to benefit from the healing influence of these surroundings. Many believe that the archetypal container is inherent in the image of the mountain because it is ordered and organized by the laws of nature; it reflects the internal experience of a “parental” container. It is important to note, however, that this image does not imply “paradise” but a *self-regulating* system that provides *continuity of being*. Traversing mountains requires human effort and they mark a place in mythological stories where heroes, after the arduous effort of climbing, gain steadfastness and self-knowledge. Mountain climbing gives the ego something to conquer and to move against, potentially imparting a sense of being capable and self-sufficient.

Mountain imagery also represents the unconscious, the earth, our mother and “mother nature.” We live with these constructs in a “participation-mystique.” It is here that the archetypes live and also where the *instincts* reside. C.A. Meier states, “The wilderness mountain is really the original biotope of the Soul” (Meier, 1985: 13).

Consequently, mountains can be seen as both a desire and an unconscious attempt to reconnect with the archetypal core of the personality, which also offers recovery of the lost capacity for experience and meaning. In sum, the mountain image gives us a sense of relatedness and ontological security by connecting us to the universe.

See also: [▶ Great Mother](#)

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Mu Koan or Joshu's Dog

Paul C. Cooper

Introduction

- ▶ A monk once asked Joshu, ‘Has a dog the Buddha Nature or not?’ Joshu said, ‘Mu!’ (Shibayama, 1974: 19).

The “Mu Koan” or “Joshu’s Dog” introduces the thirteenth century koan collection, *Mumonkan* (Gateless Gate or Gateless Barrier), which was compiled by the Chinese monk Mumon (1183–1260). This terse koan expresses the irresolvable paradox between dualism and non-dualism, which is a common theme throughout the various koan collections. As a basis of practice it serves to cut through all dualities, the most significant of which is that between being and non-being.

Mumon attributes no significance to the order of the koans in *Mumonkan*; however, scholars underline the importance of the koan by its placement as first in the collection. The American Zen master Phillip Kapleau observes that “Even to this day no koan is assigned to novices more often” (1966: 63).

Transcending Dualism and Non-Dualism

For the Zennist, being and non-being are inclusive and intertwined. This seemingly irrational paradox flies in the face of the western positivism that influenced Freud and early psychoanalytic thought. From this perspective, “gate” or “barrier” refers to the discriminating mind which interferes with spiritual freedom. Viewed dualistically as elements, “Buddha nature or not” and “Mu” reflect polarized extremes of affirmation and negation. However, when understood as a whole, the koan serves as an expression of inclusive non-dualism. That is, as a whole, the text of the koan initiates an investigation that induces intuited self-realization. This tactic places total responsibility for spiritual development on the student.

Practice supported by Joshu’s Mu dovetails with the psychoanalytic process of developing autonomy, mature relatedness and accepting personal responsibility for one’s actions. For example, through the psychoanalytic process, the patient will become aware of the irrational hold of infantile wishes, the tendency to blame others for one’s

failures and to establish developmentally more adaptive and constructive forms of human relatedness.

In response to the student's question, Joshu simply says "Mu." Joshu would sometimes say "U" (yes) or remain silent. Joshu's response (Mu, U, or silence) exemplifies the Zen challenge of all reifications and deconstructs all assertions and negations. In this regard Joshu's response is both informative and performative and engenders what Michael Sells (1994) views as a "meaning event," which he describes as the moment when expression and meaning are fused. Similarly, the meaning event is the moment that occurs during psychotherapy when the therapist's comments and the patient's responses are no longer exclusively hypothetical, speculative, informative and based solely on discovered "evidence," and words, but are spontaneously emerging expressions of in the moment emotional truth; deeply felt, lived, experiences that can be transformative for both individuals.

D. T. Suzuki emphasizes this unity and he notes that "Enlightenment was to be found in life itself, in its fuller and freer expressions, and not in its cessation" (1948: 85). The notion of "fuller and freer expression" that Suzuki articulates finds a parallel in Wilfred Bion's work. He notes that as a result of the therapeutic encounter; the patient will display a fuller and wider range of emotional experience and he writes that "'Progress' will be measured by the increased number and variety of moods, ideas and attitudes seen in any given session" (1967: 18).

Alternative Intuitive Model

As an alternative intuitive model the Mu koan can contribute to enriching our understanding, use and further development of psychoanalytic theory and technique. For example, viewed holistically, the Mu koan can serve as a prototype for integrating and synthesizing seemingly contradictory theoretical models and for organizing and articulating the resulting technical implications. For instance, contemporary intersubjectivity theorists have offered cogent and convincing critiques of the tendency in the literature on self psychology and object relations toward reification and personification of the metapsychological concepts of "self" and "object" (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992). As a result, the intersubjectivists completely dismiss basic concepts that are central to object relations theory such as projective identification. From the Zen perspective, as noted above, all reifications are ultimately false and in this respect the intersubjectivists rightfully question the misuse of these important concepts. However, a total dismissal of these concepts reflects an

underlying nihilism, which is also subject to reification. Relatively speaking, as Zennists point out, reification is an active process that functions to defend against existential anxiety. This deeply rooted emotional response to our ultimate insubstantiality can't be worked out simply through new theoretical constructs. The illusion of solidity and separateness holds very real consequences that require intuitive and experiential responses. We can think of Joshu's Mu and the monks' "Buddha nature" as symbolic of this human tendency toward reification and we can also think of intersubjectivity theory and object relations theory as highly rarified and well-thought out theoretical manifestations of these basic human tendencies. However, when considered holistically as differing aspects of one reality, they point to varying aspects of human experience.

See also: [Buddism](#) [Koan](#) [Self](#) [Zen](#)

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Mummification

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Mummification is part of ancient Egyptian religious belief concerning the afterlife. It entails preserving the body of one who has died for his/her journey into the next world. Initially provided for Egyptian Pharaohs, mummification is founded on religious fertility rites and notions of vegetative processes of regeneration. It is understood in relation to the natural ebb and flow of the Nile River agrarian

life cycles. Extant ancient Egyptian instructions held in the Cairo Museum tell of the special care given to the procedures of dissection and embalmment which constitute mummification (Arabic *mūmiyā*) and the process of desiccation. Every part of the body receives a ritual anointing with special oils and plant derivatives. The spine is soaked with oil. The head is twice anointed. The fingernails are gilded, the fingers are wrapped with linen bandages, each of which is attributed to a single god. The entire body is contained in linen wrappings, excluding the inner organs. These are removed (with exception of the heart) due to the rapidity of decay, and held in funerary vases called canopic jars. The jars are a sign of physical immortality and set (with other possessions of the deceased) alongside the mummy in the tomb. In later times, the organs were wrapped in linen cloth and set back into the body. The mummification ritual evidences what is perceived to be the deification of the corpse, and connects with the myth of the god Osiris who dies and is brought back to life by the queen goddess Isis. Resurrected, Osiris becomes the god of “the things in heaven and in the lower world” (Plutarch, 1936 *Isis and Osiris* 61E). The soul (Ba) of the deceased journeys in order to enter into eternal life – the field of reeds. It must pass through seven gates to obtain lasting union with the sun-god Ra. The names of demons, shades, gods, and monsters encountered on the journey, along with magical formulae to disarm them, are provided to the deceased in such funerary “handbooks” as the *Coffin Texts* (ca. 2000 BCE), the *Pyramid Texts* (ca. 2600 BCE–ca. 2300 BCE), and *Book of the Dead* (sixteenth century BCE). The funerary text is placed between the wrapped hands of the mummy for the journey of the soul which occurs in the “light of day,” so that the journeyer has consciousness while passing through the land of the dark (unconscious) world. Egyptians placed wheat grains and flower bulbs inside the wrappings of mummies, watering the seeds and watching for growth as a sign of resurrection. The mummification practice is perceived this way to involve an inseparable connection between matter and spirit. Resurrection occurs through and from the old body, which itself contains the mystery of the new life. In one Coffin text the deceased declares: “I live, I die. . . . I live in wheat, I grow in wheat which the gods sow, hidden in Geb [the earth].” In Egyptian myth Osiris himself is referred to as wheat and barley. The first century CE alchemical text entitled “Isis to Horus” says how “nature delights (*pereptai*) in nature, and nature overcomes (*nika*) nature” (7). *Mumia* is thought to have contained medicinal value in European pharmacy, and the German-Swiss physician and alchemist Paracelsus (d. 1541) refers to it as having elixir potency (Jung, 1963: 391). The preparation of the body with cloth

wrappings and plant derivatives referenced in the New Testament gospels (e.g., Mark 15.42–47) may be representative of ancient Egyptian mummification practices (cf. John 12.24). Origen of Alexandria speaks of the old body as *seminarium*, seed-plot from which springs new life (Jerome’s *Epistle to Pammachius* IV, 38).

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#) [Ritual](#) [Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#)

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Music and Religion

Laurence de Rosen

Since the dawn of time, music has been man’s medium of communication with its divinity/divinities. Views of the origin of both religion and music swing between two poles: the belief in a reality that is essential and independent of an observer and a view that neither music nor religion exist on its own, challenging their independent existence. Both views address the question, did music and religion exist prior to our having discovered them or did they exist all along, whether we knew them or not? In modern psychology Jung answered this by positing that the world comes into its being when man discovers it.

In monotheism, Music and religion are means of accessing the invisible, unseen, and untouchable, what is beyond what man can comprehend. They both refer to the Almighty God, the Divine, the One which is called in religion and psychology the Numinous, holy, and tremendous. Their common ground is archetypal and relates to the experience of loss through rituals of death and rebirth. The relationship between religion and music can be coined as the “spirit” of the “sound.” Both provide a means of transcending human existence. In polytheism, syncretic

religions, and animism, there is no need to reach out the invisible in a way the spirit is present and embodied. Immanence represents the other side of the dichotomy transcendence (monotheism) – immanence (polytheism).

The archetypal ground of music and religion:

- Reflects an ordering principle that brings in music, harmony out of chaos, and dissonance and rituals and pilgrimages in religion. This principle moves from fragmentation toward a human need for wholeness. There is an expression of this universal human need in Chinese literature, the *I Ching or Book of Change* (see Chapter 16: Religion and Music).
- Refers to memory: music and religion are intimately entwined with memory. Western mythology encapsulates this through the figures of the muses, daughters of Mnemosyne, goddess of memory. The oral tradition is still very much alive in the non-Western and Native American worlds, depends on memory, and stimulates it through repetition that is rhythmic and that is built into the body. In the Western world, this tradition is represented primarily by Homer. The oral tradition experiences time, essential in music as well as in religion, as circular, while the written tradition perceives it as linear.
- Embraces a dichotomy, identified at a collective level with the dualities of the Western/Eastern, and the Apollonian/Dionysian, as well as in the individual level as an inner struggle such as experienced by Mozart, in which Salzburg came to symbolize sacred music, and Vienna secular. Tension and release, dissonance and consonance, silence and chant, are the kinds of opposites that express the energy carried by music and religion that eventually may find transformation through these channels.
- Holds the experience of mystery, whose Greek root means “to close, to have a mouth and the eyes closed,” probably coming from the onomatopoeia *mu*, symbol of inarticulate sound. There is an intimate relationship between music and faith across all civilizations.
- Appeals to irrational, emotional, and instinctive processes. Because of their archetypal nature, no scientific approach can capture them in their entirety. Indeed, a large part of our understanding of both comes from a place before words. The body, with its taboos and shadows, is the main channel through which music and religion express themselves, by means of voice and dance. In ancient Greece, the secret of the Eleusian Mysteries could be more readily revealed by dancing than by speaking.

In ancient times, the oral tradition was predominant in both music (poetry) and religion (chant and dance). The

figure of the shaman seems to be the oldest to embody the convergence of music and religion. The English word shaman (cf. Eliade, Frazer, Levi Straus) comes from the Tungusic language of Siberia – saman – broadly meaning “mastery over fire,” “magical flight,” and “communion with spirit.” With his ritual of dance, chant, and musical instrument (drums and rattle) the shaman was and still is a healer. Among the 17,000-year-old cave painting at Les Trois Frères in France, we see a shaman playing a resonating musical bow.

With the development of consciousness, music and religion which were combined in the figure of the shaman, began to differentiate, mythos and Eros giving way to logos. According to tradition, Orpheus, grandson of Mnemosyne, came out of the shamanic mists, stepping into the fifth century, a period of great changes in the Greek world. Built on the older form of the shaman, the figure of Orpheus stands as the medial term between the Apollonian and the Dionysian modes of thought, holding the tension, pre-figuring the dualities of Christianity.

With the emergence of patriarchy, as music and religion became separated and differentiated, oppositions arose: spirit/matter (e.g., Hildegard von Bingen), male/female (e.g., castrato), lyric/melody (e.g., Querelle de Bouffons, in France), and so on. Figures, which had combined the agencies of music, religion, and healing, in the past began to specialize. For example, in the Celtic tradition, the roles of the shaman were split into the druid, who accessed the spiritual and healing realm, and the bard, artist, poet, musician. Under Christianity, a polarization between external/internal, physical/spiritual, emotion/thought, and text/context increased in music as well as in religion, separating one from the other.

In all cultures, a tension between text and music exists in the most primitive as well as most sophisticated forms. On the one hand, chant, a codification or an amplification of words from a litany, represented by the monosyllabic song of the Greek tragedies to the psalmodies of the Buddhist monks. On the other, the enjoyment of singing, independent of text: melisma, “bel canto,” and ornamentation can be found in a Gregorian Alleluia, in Islamic and Spanish chant, and in the Messiah of Handel.

Judaism

For over 3,000 years Jewish people have come together to worship by way of songs. “Man is like a ram’s horn. The only sound he makes is that which is blown through him,” said a Chassidic master. The horn of ram is the oldest Jewish musical instrument, the shofar, with an extremely profound symbolic, religious, and spiritual significance.

Judaism developed an ancient and annotated system (called *trope*) for chanting the Bible, with particular scales and melodies for each book and musical modes (called *musah ha-tefillah*) for every category of prayer and for different holidays, passed on to observant Jews through oral tradition. The rich garden of mystical tradition known as the Kabbalah states, “Come, I will show you a new way to the Lord, not with words but with song.” (Chassidic masters)

Christianity

The Christian tradition, while recognizing the great psychological value of Music, has seldom used it for esoteric or initiatory purpose. Like other religions, it experiences the opposition between words and music. Early in Christian history, Saint Augustine declared that “To sing is to pray twice” and sung prayers have always been central. Christian forms of chant wear many faces from Gregorian chant to the African drums and rhythms of the monks in Senegal, from stately Lutheran hymns to gospel music. Among these practices, Gregorian chant is unique in providing an unbroken link not only to the prayers of early Christians, but also to the Jewish tradition of chanting texts more than 3,000 years ago. The Bible is full of musical references, particularly in the Psalms, in the Songs of the Songs, and in the Lamentation of Jeremiah. The oldest instrument in the Bible is an organ originally made of pipes. In the New Testament, Paul instructs the Ephesians “to sing and psalmodize to the Lord with your heart and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord.” The Christian monastic tradition represents the combined heritage of religious life and music (Gregorian chants), including the practice of medicine (culture of medicinal herbs). Bach, recognized as one of the greatest composers in Western history, was also a devout Christian and understood the profound meaning of the texts he set to music. The text of the Cantata BWV 20 is amazingly close to the number 16 of the *I Ching*: “O Eternity, you word of thunder. . .”

Islam

The Prophet Muhammad is said to have recited the Qur’an, whose root means *to[recite]*. Therefore Imams are not selected for their musical abilities. Although Islamic tradition in general frowns upon instrumental music and music in general as a sensual distraction from a devout life, there exists a rich tradition of chanting Qur’an and intoning prayers. The Sama is a practice

of mystical listening. While orthodox Muslims have an uncanny relationship to music, most Sufis, a mystical branch of Islam, embrace it (e.g., dervishes).

African

While chants have been orally passed down from generation to generation since the dawn of history, individuals are also free to improvise and express their own unique style and personality. Drumming uplifts the Spirit of African chant on a tide of rhythm more sophisticated than almost anywhere else in the world. And where there are drums playing, bodies start to move. Chanting is always done in groups, rarely, if ever, alone.

Hinduism

All forms of yoga make use of chant. The word *yoga* means “yoke” or union with God and the purpose of these practices and Sanskrit chanting is to become One with God, the *Atman*, our own inner Self. Of all the religious traditions there is none in which chant and dance play a more central role than Hindu/Vedic culture.

Buddhism

The word *Buddha* comes from Sanskrit word meaning literally “to wake up.” This is the true message of Buddhism. In Buddhism the chant is a tool for awakening consciousness. Originating in India, Buddhism shares with Hinduism use of Sanskrit and the practice of chanting mantram. Many Buddhist monks practice visualizations and sacred hand gestures, called *mudras*, while chanting. Tibetan monks produce unique deep-throated vocal tones with such powerful harmonics that each voice is able to sound three separate notes at the same time. The overtones that emanate from their voices are extraordinary phenomenon of sound, generating a high level of scientific interest and research. There are many faces and many voices of Buddhist chant. It invokes the clarity, emptiness, and compassion of the Buddha’s teaching. Buddhist chant is slow, meditative, and dispassionate, a far cry from the ecstatic devotional chant practices of Hinduism or the sensual rhythms of Africans.

In psychoanalysis, the relation between music and religion remains relatively untrodden territory. The analytical approach, influenced by its fathers, swings between suppression and repression. Freud was very sensitive to

music and could not bear the amount of affect triggered by anything musical, from a singing voice to a performed piece of music. Yiddish and Czech, languages of religious songs and feelings dominated his early childhood in Freiberg. Music drew him irresistibly closer to his mother and grandmother, symbol of incestual love, object of repression. While son of a protestant minister, Jung was not a musician, as he explicitly said and wrote. Jung emphasized the visual image.

See also: [Crucifixion](#) [Dalai Lama](#) [Eleusinian Mysteries](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Lacan, Jacques](#) [Mantra](#) [Psalms](#) [Rank, Otto](#) [Rumi, Celaladin](#)

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Music Thanatology

Meg Bowles

Definition

Thanatology, from the Greek word “*thanatos*,” meaning death, refers to the study of the death and dying process from various interdisciplinary perspectives including physiology, psychology, and spirituality. Music thanatology is a contemplative practice within the field of thanatology, where prescriptive music, usually via the medium of harp and voice, is delivered live in clinical settings as a form of palliative medicine for patients who are dying.

While there is little doubt that many forms of live and pre-recorded music delivered to an audience can be experienced as profoundly healing, prescriptive music differs in that it is intentionally delivered solely for the dying patient. The practitioner of music thanatology uses her instrument in a way that attunes to the dying person's unique and individual needs from moment to moment, as opposed to a performing musician who delivers a preset program which is informed and shaped in advance by the energies of desire.

Origins

Although the field of music thanatology in its contemporary form originates from the visionary opus of harpist, musicologist, and clinician Therese Schroeder-Sheker (Founder and Director of the Chalice of Repose Project™ and Dean of the Chalice of Repose School of Music Thanatology, which has offered a highly specialized and rigorous graduate program in the field for decades), its ancestral roots stretch back to the monastic medicine practiced in the eleventh century Benedictine monastery of Cluny in Burgundy, France. At Cluny, rituals of prayer and what became known as “infirmary music” were used in bedside vigils to attend to the physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering of the dying. The relief of pain in both body and soul was considered essential for the experience of a peaceful and blessed death. The seeds of this holistic philosophy continue to bear fruit today, in the many different branches of modern palliative care. While the field of music thanatology does not seek to replicate the Benedictine approach to serving the dying, it deeply embraces the cultivation of a vital inner life through a contemplative spiritual practice, as an essential companion to doing clinical work.

Comparison with Music Therapy

Music thanatology shares much in common with music therapy in that both disciplines work intimately and powerfully with the healing potential of sound. However, music therapy differs in one important respect in that usually the therapeutic process assumes the presence of, and then harnesses, an innate capacity in the patient to be an active participant in the session. The music therapist, in collaboration with the patient, chooses the specific musical interventions which tend to elicit the physiological and emotional responses that are desired. Even during altered states involving deep relaxation or cathartic release, the patient usually has access to an observing ego and can process the experience with the therapist afterwards so that the material can be integrated into consciousness. A music thanatologist, on the other hand, is usually invited to work with a patient in the active phase dying. The patient may be agitated and in pain, or comatose, or pulled in and out of various altered states of consciousness, or otherwise unable to communicate. As the patient moves more deeply into the territory of a liminal world between life and death, she is in a sacred state of extraordinary vulnerability which needs to be supported as the natural “unbinding” processes in the

body and the psyche take hold. Where there is resistance and struggle, carefully chosen prescriptive music will help the patient’s connections with this world to be softened and loosened gently so that the energies moving her towards death and beyond may do so unimpeded.

In order to support a patient’s physical and spiritual transition, or “transitus,” (from the Latin *transire*, to cross over) into the territory of death and beyond, a practitioner of music thanatology allows herself to be guided both internally and externally by experiences of attunement and entrainment which mysteriously arise in the vibrational field between the practitioner and patient. The word “entrain” means “to pull or draw along after itself.” Entrainment is a universal phenomenon appearing in nature, where two oscillating bodies begin to vibrate together, in harmony, due to their mutual influence upon each other. Engaging in a process of nonverbal attunement similar to what occurs between mother and infant, the practitioner gradually synchronizes the music to the patient’s physiology. For example, as the practitioner adjusts the meter and phrasing to mirror the breathing patterns she observes, the patient, whose body is literally absorbing and responding to the music, will often begin to “vibrate” at a frequency of greater relaxation and peace. The breathing slows and eases. This musical flexibility which also includes an adept use of the power of silence and rest, tends to draw one into the more fluid, non-ordinary soul-space of *kairos* time, as opposed to the linear, precisely metered *chronos* time which can bind one to ordinary reality.

Conclusion

The practitioner of music thanatology (whether male or female) functions as a spiritual midwife and a comforting maternal presence. Perhaps she (along with the harp, which has a mythology of its own) also carries a bit of an angelic or shamanic projection as well. There is little doubt that the beauty in the music itself, expressed through the exquisitely refined craft of a skilled, trained instrumentalist, and mediated by the humble, compassionate presence of a fellow human being who is called to serve, has the potential to create and hold a space for an experience of the transcendent. Although the delivery of prescriptive music is not designed to cure, it does heal by supporting the patient to release her engagement with life in this linear time-space dimension so that ultimately her consciousness and spirit as we know it can become gathered back into the Greater Mystery.

See also: [Healing](#) [Music and Religion](#) [Thanatos](#)

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Mystery Religions

Jeffrey B. Pettis

Mystery religions flourished in the Hellenistic world. They centered around deities including Mithras (Persia), Atargatis (Syria), Dionysos, Demeter and Core (Greece), Meter, (Anatolia) and Isis (Egypt). Most of the deities associated with these cults have their beginning as agricultural fertility gods and the notion of the great divine Mother who begets and receives life force. The word “mystery” comes from the Greek *muein*, “to initiate.” Membership in the Mysteries occurred on an individual and voluntary basis. Ritual practices, worship, and “inner” teachings were privy only to cult members – this contributing to the prestige of the cult. Subsequently, little is known about worship and the Mysteries. Apuleius (Lucius Apuleius Platonicus ca. 123/125 CE–ca. 180 CE), in his *Metamorphoses* provides a glimpse into the nature of the Isis cult in second century CE. He explains how he was directed in a night dream by Isis “the mother of the universe” to become an initiate (1989, XI.5), and how he undergoes purification rituals, observes ten days of celibacy and fasting from meat and wine, and receives secret instructions (1989, XI.23). At the culmination of the rite he emerges from the inner sanctuary reborn in “the likeness of the sun” (1989, XI.24). He writes how he came to the boundary of death and . . . traveled through all the elements. . . and in the middle of the night came face to face with the gods below and the gods above” (XI.23). Plato also refers to ecstatic experience and the Mysteries in the *Phaedrus*, where he says one who is taken up with True Beauty (*kallōs tou alēthous*) cannot help but be euphoric – something the common world sees as madness

(*parakinōn*) not knowing it to be inspiration (*enthousiazōn*) (249D). Plato says that the soul forms wings (*pterōtai*), and that it “throbs and palpitates. . . it is feverish and uncomfortable and itches when they [wings] begin to grow” (251C). The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 CE), a stoic philosopher, writes how the Mysteries place one between dream visions and miraculous healings, suggesting some kind of psyche-soma, liminal experience. In this state of disorientation the initiate may undergo an altered state of consciousness. Dramatic rituals involving strong contrast between light and dark, and movement through interior and exterior spaces become part of a rebirth experience. Initiates of the Anatolian Mysteries of Kybele and Attis enter into the sacred wedding chamber to experience the Great Mother. Fanatical members of this cult flagellate themselves to the point of bleeding, sprinkling their blood across the sanctuary altar. Members of the Mithras cult worship in subterranean caves before a graphic depiction of Mithras slaying the bull. The Mother Goddess Cult of Meter includes self-castrating priests (*galloi*), and from the second century CE on drenched initiates in the blood of a slaughtered bull. The notion of ascending also occurs as a quality of the Mysteries. Apuleius speaks of traveling through “all the elements” (*omnia elementa*) (1989, XI.23), and Plato speaks of the chariot of the soul rising into the region above the heavens (*hyperouranion topon*) which have a colorless, formless, and intangible essence (1914, *Phaedrus* 247C). The Mithras Liturgy found in the ancient source called the Great Magical Papyri of Paris tells of the ascent through seven levels which include the lower powers of the air, Aion and his powers, Helios, and Mithras (751–834). The Mysteries can be understood then as cults which make conscious the symbols and movements of the unconscious and processes these in the formation of rituals as part of religious experience. Not being self-sufficient, the Mysteries diminish with the demise of the ancient world upon which they depend. Following the imperial decrees of 391/92 CE against all pagan cults they suddenly and permanently disappear.

See also: [Eleusinian Mysteries](#) [Great Mother](#) [Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#) [Ritual](#)

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Mysticism and Psychoanalysis

Alan Roland

Introduction

In the last 30 years, two broad attempts have been made to challenge the classical Freudian psychoanalytic narrative on mysticism in which spiritual experiences and practices have been viewed as regressive and/or psychopathological, personified by Jeffrey Masson (1976, 1980), noted Sanskritist turned psychoanalyst. The first attempt centered on South Asian studies, particularly but not exclusively on major Hindu spiritual figures, similar to Masson. Methodologically, it uses applied psychoanalysis involving textual analyses and ethnographic interviews. Those who have contributed most directly to this new psychoanalytic perspective are the Indian psychoanalyst, Sudhir Kakar, psychoanalytically-oriented professors of religion, Jeffrey Kripal and William Parsons, and the anthropologist, Gananath Obeyesekere. The second movement involves psychoanalysts (Nina Coltart, Paul Cooper, Michael Eigen, Alan Roland, and Jeffrey Rubin among others), who are involved in one or another spiritual practice, overwhelmingly but not exclusively Buddhist, and who work psychoanalytically with some patients seriously involved in their own spiritual disciplines. This movement is thus more clinically and experientially oriented than the applied psychoanalysis of the first group.

In the first group, almost all are in agreement that there needs to be a seismic shift from what they view as a highly pejorative and reductionistic Freudian psychoanalytic rendering of religious experiences and practices. Kakar (1978, 1991) is the first Freudian psychoanalyst to openly challenge the psychoanalytic establishment to accord the mystic a similar respect to that given the artist in the West. They all agree that religious experiences are valid in and of themselves but all assert that these experiences can at least be partially if not fully explained by psychoanalytic considerations. It is to this inherent tension between the spiritual experience being considered sui

generis and their psychoanalytic explanations of it that shall be addressed in this section of the chapter. With the exception of Obeyesekere, and to some extent Kripal, they rely on more current Freudian psychoanalytic theorists than classical Freudian theory. Thus Wilfred Bion, Heinz Kohut, Jacques Lacan, Anna Maria Rizzuto, and D. W. Winnicott are cited for a new psychoanalytic rendering of mysticism.

Sudhir Kakar

This chapter shall address what is problematic in this new Freudian psychoanalytic discourse on mysticism before advancing the other perspective. It shall critique Sudhir Kakar as he has greatly influenced the others through writing extensively on the subject of psychoanalysis and mysticism, beginning with his analysis of Swami Vivekananda in *The Inner World* (1978), then on Gandhi in *Intimate Relations* (1989), and finally on Ramakrishna in *The Analyst and the Mystic* (1991). Kakar is to be applauded for his courage in the Freudian psychoanalytic world for advocating for a radical reconsideration of the mystic. His description of the lives of Vivekananda, Gandhi, and Ramakrishna are very well done in his gifted style of writing. But what happens when he actually applies his psychoanalytic understanding to these three spiritual figures? His analyses are as fully reductionistic as those of Jeffrey Masson. This chapter shall cite just one of what could be many examples.

After disavowing the pathographic approach (1978: 164), Kakar cites the following:

- ▶ With the advent of adolescence... he (Vivekananda) found he could not always cope with the claims of archaic grandiosity and the anxiety and guilt associated with its breakthrough. Increasingly, he experienced periods of hypomanic excitement; once... when he was fifteen... Narendra 'spied a large bee-hive in the cleft of a giant cliff and suddenly his mind was filled with awe and reverence for the Divine Providence. He lost outer consciousness and lay thus in the cart for a long time' (1978: 178–179).

Thus, Kakar equates Vivekananda's spiritual experience with archaic grandiosity and hypomanic excitement.

This stems in good part from the second problem in his work, his theoretical understanding of mysticism from a psychoanalytic standpoint. In *The Inner World*, Kakar states "real knowledge is only attainable through direct primary-process thinking and perception..." (1978: 107).

- ▶ In the Hindu ideal, reality is not primarily mediated through the conscious and preconscious perceptions,

unconscious defenses, and logical rational thought processes that make up the ego; it emanates from the deeper and phylogenetically older structural layer of personality – the id, the mental representation of the organism’s instinctual drives. Reality, according to Hindu belief, can be apprehended or known only through those archaic, unconscious, preverbal processes of sensing and feeling (Kakar, 1978: 20).

To what extent primary-process thinking and the id constitute spiritual knowing is highly questionable to say the least. The primary process, perhaps Freud’s most original discovery, constitutes certain mechanisms (condensation, displacement, symbol formation, dramatization, and such), symbolic processes essential in dreams, symptoms, and in certain ways in artistic creativity. In Freud’s view, they give disguised expression to the instinctual wishes; in later contributions (Deri 1984; Noy 1969; Roland 1972), they also give excellent metaphorical expression to various facets of the self. In *The Inner World* it is Kakar’s inaccurate use of Freudian psychoanalytic concepts such as the primary process and the id as a Procrustean Bed to encompass psychological processes involved in spiritual realization that results in his reverting to traditional psychoanalytic reductionism in his analyses of mystics.

His theoretical understanding of mysticism shifts from the use of the primary process and the id in *The Inner World* to current psychoanalytic relational theories in *The Analyst and the Mystic*. Kakar in this latter work fully accepts the reductionistic psychoanalytic premise that spiritual experiences and motivation are essentially a regression to the preverbal, symbiotic experiences of the mother-child relationship.

- ▶ The vicissitudes of separation have been, of course, at the heart of psychoanalytic theorizing on mysticism. The yearning to be reunited with a perfect, omnipotent being, the longing for the blissful soothing and nursing associated with the mother of earliest infancy. . . has been consensually deemed the core of mystical motivation (Kakar, 1991: 29).

Only Kakar puts a more positive spin on this regression than do the classical Freudian analysts, in as much as he sees the mystic as able to effect a deeper regression than that which occurs in psychoanalysis to repair what Kakar deems is the essential depressive core of life; and in Winnicottian terms, the mystic is involved in a creative experiencing through this regression to infancy. Again, it is highly questionable whether spiritual aspirations, practices, and experiences essentially involve regression.

Psychoanalytic Therapy with Indian and American Mystics

From those psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic therapists who have worked with patients deeply involved in spiritual disciplines, and who are themselves practicing meditation, a newer narrative has emerged on psychoanalysis and mysticism. Or perhaps more accurately, on psychoanalysis and mystics. In general, the spiritual self of the mystic and psychopathology/normality are seen on two separate continua. Thus, a mystic, even an advanced one, can range from being mentally healthy to having various kinds of psychopathology. Conversely, mentally healthy and mature persons can range from not being in the least interested in a spiritual quest to being very involved. The same is true of persons who are emotionally disturbed.

Correspondingly, the spiritual self of the mystic cannot be reduced to any psychoanalytic theory with the possible exception of Wilfred Bion’s concept of “O.” Both Kakar (1991) and Parsons (1999) cite Lacan’s theory of the Real but according to a recognized Lacanian authority, Paola Mieli, they misunderstand the meaning of the Real (Personal communication).

Similarly, attempts to link spiritual experiences with various developmental stages are seen by this group as being highly reductionistic: whether it is Freud’s primary narcissism of infantile merger with the mother, or a Winnicottian creative experiencing of a transitional space between mother and child, or Rizzuto’s god-images from different developmental stages, or Kurtz’s (1992) concept of later childhood merger with the extended family. These views simply do not take sufficiently into account the existential nature of spiritual experiences. Nor can these experiences be categorized by regression of one sort or another, or to one or another stage of development, or to one or another kind of inner representation of either the mother or father. If anything, clinical experience indicates that spiritual practices and experiences are a strong counterpoint to regression and childhood merger experiences with the mother.

If psychopathology does not enter into spiritual experiences, where does psychoanalysis fruitfully enter the picture with mystics? First and foremost, it is in their relationships with others, often love relationships affected by earlier difficult family relationships, but also friends and work relationships, any or all of which can sometimes be truly problematic, and also to their everyday sense of self. Psychoanalytic therapy with those patients who are mystics is often of considerable help in their functioning much better in their relationships while simultaneously freeing them to be more involved on a spiritual path.

How then does unconscious motivation and psychopathology enter into a mystic's spiritual practices? Two women in psychoanalysis with highly distressful love relationships were first drawn to Vipassana meditation, which helped them attain an inner calm. On the other hand, an advanced mystic like Shakuntala (Roland, 1988) began having spontaneous, intense spiritual experiences by age fourteen while on a family pilgrimage to a shrine of a goddess. Other persons with a spiritual inclination may be drawn to spiritual disciplines out of defensive needs to resolve some kind of psychopathology (Coltart, 1996), while still others may become openly psychotic if they have a psychotic core. One patient was attracted to an ashram and guru known for both its spiritual powers and its sexual licentiousness. While progressing there on her spiritual path, she unconsciously repeated the childhood sexual abuse she had once experienced. The decision to embark on a spiritual quest may sometimes result from some of the hard knocks of life, but not always. Even then, the person must be strongly inwardly inclined in this direction for it is still a rare pursuit.

A psychoanalytic discourse on mystics can fruitfully comment on that which has only been minimally discussed, the guru or teacher-disciple relationship. Besides the important teachings that are conveyed by a suitable teacher, there can also be multiple transferences from both the disciple and the teacher, depending on the individual personality. Rubin (1996) has commented on this at length.

To what extent can spiritual practices alleviate emotional problems? While most agree they can be helpful, it is generally considered that they cannot resolve deep-seated psychopathology. Coltart (1996) noted that some people who seek out spiritual practices to resolve their emotional problems would do much better being in psychotherapy. On the other hand, these psychoanalysts have noted that patients involved in spiritual disciplines can usually tolerate a greater degree of anxiety in facing inner conflicts and/or deficits in the psychoanalytic process.

See also: [Bion, Wilfred Ruprecht](#), and ["O"](#) [Lacan, Jacques](#) [Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Mysticism and Psychotherapy

Anthony Badalamenti

The goal of psychotherapy is either to relieve distressing symptoms such as anxiety, depression, phobias and so on, or to enable a person to better manage his or her life. These two goals usually overlap and this fact is a key to

understanding the general principle by which psychotherapy works. Whatever the issue that brings a person to therapy, the therapist sees the desired improvements as the natural expression of a needed form of personal growth. The work to create this growth uses a person's perceptual and cognitive powers to bring about a change that takes place mostly in the emotional system.

A major difference between emotional and cognitive processing is the degree of automatism versus choice in each. Most people can call upon their ability to understand something by an act of will, that is, by the wish to have the given understanding. This is rarely true of the emotional system, which tends to be evoked involuntarily by perceptions arising either from within a person or from the person's environment. It is the lack of conscious control over emotional responses that troubles people with emotional problems because the wish to be free of a symptom has little or no effect on it. One of the main characteristics of an emotionally healthy person is that his or her emotional responses tend to be adaptive, and therefore welcome, with respect to what provokes them. This is why spontaneity is often taken as a sign of emotional health, where it is assumed that the spontaneous response is appropriate. In this framework the general goal of psychotherapy is to create a fitting spontaneous response to certain parts of the subject's life. This involves taking measures to realize the potential within the subject to become what is needed to be free of the distressing symptom or presenting complaint. It is this relationship of potential to actual that begins a natural relationship between mysticism and psychotherapy.

The general goal of mysticism is to achieve ever-increasing levels of awareness of the cosmos. This involves training exercises in attitudes and orientations toward the self and the world that promote the emergence of another level of awareness. This other level is best understood as experiential rather than cognitive or emotional or even intuitive, although it is important to note that the experiential level of understanding includes all of these three. Achieving this experiential level of understanding enters a domain where words, emotions and even intuition can no longer be used to communicate what is apprehended. Here the way cosmic reality is apprehended is neither by words nor by emotions but by a direct experience of the continuity of the psyche with the cosmos.

This mode of knowing and being presupposes a kind of human potential and here the connecting link to psychotherapy again surfaces. Within psychotherapy the desired growth, or realization of potential, is located in the emotional system and to a lesser degree in the cognitive system. Within mysticism, the desired growth refers

to the entire person. In this sense the goal of mysticism is a generalization of the goal of psychotherapy. The idea that mysticism subsumes psychotherapy is not new and has long been a familiar to mystics of all traditions. Before the nineteenth century mystics did not frame this idea in terms of psychology, as now understood, but in more home-spun terms such as growing up, carrying one's cross, coming into one's own and so on. When psychotherapy emerged, adepts in mysticism were quick to see that their tradition was a generalization of the psychological one.

Psychotherapy has a variety of tools, all accessing the emotional and cognitive powers, to use to stimulate needed growth. Mysticism also has tools to achieve its ends but here the two part ways in a paradoxical manner that also brings them back together. Since the object of mysticism is accessed outside feeling and rational knowing, the training for this goal involves weaning a person away from his or her familiar reliance on feeling, thinking and choosing. A redirection of attention takes place, usually involving long and diligent training before first fruits appear. One of the major tools in all mystical traditions is the koan.

A koan is a riddle presented as if solvable by using cognitive or emotional intelligence. For example, "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" or "what did you look like before your parents were born?" The koan is meant to be vexing because its purpose is to bring the subject to see that rational processing cannot be of service in certain parts of life. This is a first step, usually under the direction of a spiritual director, toward disengaging attention from its ordinary use. The long-term goal of the exercises is to get attention off of any one thing, a state usually termed "letting go and letting be." The major reason for this goal is that the more a person holds on to any one state, the more the person interferes with the inflow and creation of more of the psyche. This is another connection with psychotherapy.

One of the major obstacles to successful psychotherapy is the subject's unwillingness to release former ways of living and adapting. As a rule new and better ways cannot be evolved except by also clearing behaviors that stand in the way. Thus, the idea of letting go and letting be enters psychotherapy at the level of emotional, and to some degree, cognitive processing. Within psychotherapy one lets go of behaviors that either do not work well enough or that do harm in favor of growing new behaviors that make for a better adaptation. The goals of mysticism include a sound adaptation but this is more of a starting point for what mysticism aims at and here the idea that mysticism subsumes psychotherapy enters in a natural way.

The goal of mysticism is to directly experience the cosmos, an event whose higher levels are outside the

domain of words, thoughts, feelings and images. The onset of mystical experience takes place with the emergence of new perceptual powers in the psyche. The first experiences along these lines involve the intuition of being in which a person begins to experience the “isness” of things. It is very important for the subject to train in moving attention away from emotional, cognitive and other familiar modes of knowing and adapting for this to take place. The intuition of being is usually the very first of a sequence of experiences that build to mystical experience. The mystical experience proper is more an event of growth than of a new kind of perception, but it is the case that the growth precedes and enables the perception. This kind of perception is an experience outside of and different from all the subject’s prior modes of knowing and apprehending, a thing suggested by the need for some prerequisite growth of the psyche to first take place. This is parallel to many therapeutic events.

Within psychotherapy a person first realizes a needed potential to live and adapt in a new way before the person becomes able to see what it means. This actualization process is what extinguishes the distressing symptoms and the more willing the subject is to release the prior way of adapting, the quicker this takes place. In the mystical experience, the more the subject has learned to release prior attachments of *all* kinds, the more quickly the growth needed for the next level of mystical experience takes place. Here again the idea that mystical experience is a generalization of the therapeutic experience presents itself.

The goal of psychotherapy is to increase the “isness” of the subject in the affective or emotional domain, and to some degree in the cognitive domain also. This has traditionally been regarded as the event of turning potential into actual, where the “isness” of the potential is already in place and the therapeutic process results in the “isness” of its actual form. The outcome, in practical terms, is that the subject feels and functions better as a result of the leap from potential to actual in target areas. In mystical terms, the subject’s ontology has increased and the subject is literally more than he or she was before the realization of potential took place. Put differently, the subject’s powers to adapt increase.

The ontological increases in mystical experience include the issue of here and now adaptation because the entire psyche increases as a result. That is, the mystical experience is enabled by the growth of new psychic capacity whose object is to engage the cosmos itself. However, the psyche is itself an expression of the cosmos and therefore any increase in the psyche affects the person’s relationship to all parts of life, simply because all events take place in the cosmos. What this means in practical terms is that the subject’s emotional life is not only enriched for adaptation in the usual sense, but more, the emotional system begins to respond to the

new life in the psyche that has the capacity to directly experience the cosmos in ways that are outside the reach of the emotional, rational and intuitive domains. The emotions of awe and trust take on new meanings as the mystical experience develops, just as these same emotions take on fresh meaning as a person grows new here-and-now adaptive powers within psychotherapy.

In sum, the goals of mysticism may be regarded as a generalization of those of psychotherapy, or those of psychotherapy may be regarded as a specialization of those of mysticism. One major difference between the two is that mysticism results in the emergence of another way of becoming and knowing not achievable by the emotional and cognitive systems alone. One major parallel between the two is that both require the releasing of former ways of living and being, this release being a completely general one in mysticism and a more particular one in psychotherapy. Both mysticism and psychotherapy address the realization of potential, and both regard potential as unlimited, but what potential refers to is man’s relation to all things in the first and man’s relation to matters of love and work in the second. This too fits the idea that mysticism is a generalization of psychotherapy.

See also: [Biblical Psychology](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [Mindfulness](#)

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Myth

Lee W. Bailey

The study of myth is an ancient topic that has expanded greatly in the last 200 years. The foci of studies are commonly: *literary* – clarifying texts, translating, categorizing [Greek myths, Irish myths], or *religious* – labeling other culture’s religions as false [pagan, heathen, primitive]

while typically preserving the truth value of one's own religion, or *psychological* – exploring the psychological themes expressed in myths [Freudian, Jungian], or *socio-logical/anthropological/political* – bringing out the ideological symbols of social structures such as class, nation, patriotism, and similar themes in myths [Marxist, capitalist], or *philosophical* – efforts to determine the truth or reality of mythic accounts, historical or imaginative [Plato, deconstructionists]. Some theories of myth focus on stories accepted as myth, others point to mythic themes in unexpected places. Some combine various methods. The emergence of depth psychology gave a new prominence and new important methodology for interpreting myth and religions.

Many theories of interpreting myths see “*mythos* as inferior to *logos*.” But the theory that myth is simply an archaic literary genre or social ideology replaced by modern rational thought has been radically questioned by the development of depth psychology. Its opening to the unconscious soul and intuitive blend with reasoning now lets us see “*mythos* dancing poetically with *logos*.” In the psychology of religion, the approach to myth depends less on rational, conscious, historical, factual *logos* to establish truth, but rather moves in the realm of poetic, metaphoric symbolic language – *mythos*, a different kind of truth that still interacts significantly with *logos*, open to unconscious dynamics. Myth is not a literary museum of a consciousness outdated by rational science, but a living symbolic language of a continuing consciousness important to understand. Oedipus, the cowboy, the king, the prophet, and the astronaut, whether or not they have a historical background, have far broader horizons than any factual basis, guiding the soul through collective unconscious paths of tragic, comic, transforming, saving, and heroic journeys. The mythic narratives of historical figures may be far more significant than the bare factual bones of the biographies.

Myths still need to be distinguished from factual knowledge, as in propaganda or ideology. Myths cannot provide a reliable basis for deductions about historical facts, such as facts about Santa Claus. Yet, myth is indispensable, for it symbolizes the soul's desires, positive and negative. Myths are living, powerful stories, although sometimes unacknowledged and unconscious, articulating essential meanings (Bailey). Awareness of them can prevent disaster and soothe the soul. The modern turning point came with Freud.

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the Viennese physician turned psychotherapist, made the major leap out of *logos*

rationalism and materialism in psychology by showing the reality and symbolic meaningfulness of the unconscious mind for medical treatment by taking seriously its languages, such as dreams, errors and symptoms. He saw the unconscious mind as largely composed of repressed desires. Freud used some myths in his exploration of the unconscious, notably Oedipus, Narcissus, Moses, Eros and Thanatos. He elevated the Oedipus complex to be the foundation of most all neurosis, myth, art, religion, and therapy. This gave a new, powerful methodology for interpreting myths as expressions of the unconscious mind.

Freud's elevation of the Oedipus myth was part of the end of the Victorian era, but finally was too narrow. He universalized his love for his mother and jealousy of his father into the Oedipus complex, which he found to be basic to his patients' neuroses. This was part of Freud's strong emphasis on the centrality of sexuality as the main dynamic of the psyche. He was widely reviled for this during the closing years of the Victorian era in Europe, which stifled sexuality [in public, anyway], but his work actually contributed to the spreading collapse of strict Victorian sexual customs, along with the development of contraceptives and women's education by the 1920s. Openness to sexuality can lead to openness to the unconscious and its mythic expressions.

Freud's residual nineteenth-century materialism prevented him from allowing non-pathological truths to be seen as true in the mythic expressions of the unconscious mind. Rather, he let conscious reason be the final arbiter of truth, which conflicted with his readings of mythic material. In his 1927 *Future of an Illusion*, he argued that religion is a universal neurosis founded on ignorance and weakness. It is an illusion of wish-fulfillment, he envisioned, a consolation for fate, and an effort to exorcize the terrors of nature with faith. God is an infantile neurosis, a dreaded yet trusted mythic figure carried over from infancy that maintains the believers' helplessness. A secular ethics is workable and science has no illusions, since conscious knowledge can purge itself of unconscious errors, Freud fervently believed. Uncovering the powerful unconscious mind, Freud kept it in the realm of the pathological, so neither myth nor religion could be allowed to carry much truth-value. “Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father” (1927/1961: 70–71).

The follower of Freud who made the most out of certain types of myths was Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990), who wrote *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* in 1975. He defined myths as stories that are pessimistic and superhuman (such as Oedipus), fables

as moralistic and cautionary (such as the Ant and the Grasshopper), and fairy tales as optimistic, taking place in the ordinary world, for children and guides to growing up (such as the Three Little Pigs). His Freudian analysis was tinged with the existential principle that fairy tales help children find hopeful meanings and moral education as they grow up. At their best fairy tales take children's predicaments seriously and provide confidence that they can be overcome. They relieve unconscious pressures and strengthen the child's growing ego. Such problems include narcissistic disappointments, Oedipal dilemmas, sibling rivalries, gaining independence from parents, increasing a sense of self-worth and a sense of moral obligations. Fairy tales help release repressed dark feelings, and help overcome fears that they present, such as abandonment. They simplify but do not suppress evil. Bethlehem believes that fairy tales should not be prettified, for that makes them too shallow to solve the real problems that monsters and fearful plots present.

Fairy tales offer valuable heroes for children to identify with in combating fears and strengthening their blossoming egos. Fairy tales should not be mis-interpreted as neurotic symptoms, Bettelheim stresses, but be seen as positive guides to growth because they help the child feel understood and offer hope for overcoming anxieties. Nor should they be taken as guides to behavior in the external world; they are symbolic expressions of deep unconscious childhood processes. Religious themes in fairy tales are common, such as references to Islam in *The Thousand and One Nights*, (Tales, 1975) and the references to God and the Virgin Mary in original Grimm's tales, which are often edited out in modern versions. Unlike moralistic biblical tales, fairy tales allow more expression of dark feelings – monsters, beasts, big bad wolves – and more psychological solutions than divine interference.

Carl Jung

Carl Jung (1875–1961) was the Swiss psychologist who provided the strongest theory of myth for understanding religion positively. His major theoretical foundation is the archetype: innumerable unconscious, collective, psychological patterns or instincts, positive and negative. An archetype is an invisible [inaccessible in itself] pattern that appears in numerous images. They appear worldwide in myths and dreams, shaped by local cultures.

Unlike Freud, Jung does not see the unconscious as primarily repressed desires, but as far more complex archetypal patterns. Myth functions to reveal the unconscious to consciousness and to guide the conscious ego's relation to it by showing its typical patterns. Myth is neither

indispensable nor sufficient for the psyche. The unconscious must co-operate with the conscious ego's guidance also. Unlike many Eastern religions, the ego is not meant to dissolve into the unconscious. While uncovering valuable mythic guides, psychotherapy can provide more functions, such as seeing the symbolism of dreams, symptoms, or myths, and integrating these meanings into life.

Jung focuses on the archetypal images of the ego/hero (such as Odysseus), the shadow (such as the Devil), the anima/animus contrasexual lover images in each person (such as Tristan and Iseult), the child (such as Cinderella), the trickster (such as Hermes), the wise old man or woman (such as Merlin), the dual mother (wicked stepmother), and the Self (such as God). The Self is the central guiding, healing archetype for Jung, perhaps the center of the mandala image, that regulates and balances the dynamics of the numerous archetypal patterns that emerge in the psyche. The challenge of psychotherapeutic healing is to identify one's influencing archetypes, become aware of their dynamics and influences on feeling and behavior, help the ego and Self control shadows, and strengthen the positive aspects.

An important part of Jung's archetypal theory is that each archetype has a shadow. Even the Self, paradigm of divinity, has a shadow in doubts, demon figures, and limits to divine power in the world. Jung pioneered the elaboration of the introvert/extravert pattern in his theory of psychological types, and this pattern was widely adopted. The extreme introvert is shy, quiet, socially inept, inward, intuitive, and isolated. The extreme extravert is socially adept, outspoken, concerned with what others think of him/her, often a performer anxious for approval, or a conformist. One-sided people may see the other side as a shadow figure to be fought in outward life. However, the ideal is to balance the two in one's life, so the advantages of each side of the continuum are available to consciousness.

Jung and Freud became close collaborators between 1907 and 1913. Freud hoped that the younger Jung would become his successor, but Jung developed key disagreements with Freud. His theory of archetypes saw myths as more important collective symbols of many archetypes, as opposed to Freud's central Oedipus theory. He also rejected Freud's emphasis on sexuality as the major psychological dynamic, and came to regard religion far more positively as psychological events than Freud, who dismissed it as illusory. Nor did Jung accept Freud's causal-reductive method by which he reduced unconscious images to his theoretical framework, mainly the Oedipal drama. Rather, Jung saw a purposeful dynamic in each archetypal pattern [especially the Self], a teleology of

sorts that could point the ego in healing directions, even a transcendent quest for the divine.

The divine Jung sees not just in narrow biblical terms, but also as a global phenomenon that appears in endless symbols in dreams, literature, art, and myth. He stresses that he speaks as a psychologist describing a psychological phenomenon, not a metaphysical one, which he said he leaves to the theologians. This wide variety of images of the divine is an important theme for Jung's impact on culture, because it throws open the door to seeing the divine symbolized in many ways – from non-anthropomorphic stones, waterfalls and cosmic phenomena to anthropomorphic prophets and gurus. This supports the field of comparative and phenomenological studies of religions worldwide, as well as the growing feminist quest to positively re-evaluate the goddesses.

Jung's view of the collective archetypal unconscious explains the arising of mythic themes around the world without recourse to the theory of diffusion from an original source. Although some myths can be traced along a trail of diffusion [such as Cinderella coming from China to Europe], other themes such as virgin births in the Americas can be explained as archetypal images emerging completely independent of parallel themes on other continents [such as the Aztec virgin birth story].

Jung's view of religion is rooted in his Swiss Protestant emphasis not on formal and textual doctrines, but on personal experiences of the divine. He was frustrated with the lack of this authentic religious experience and came to see psychotherapy as a way out of superficial, even infantile dogmatism, into a genuine experience and deep understanding of divinity in its many expressions. The psyche, Jung stresses, has a natural religious function, an ability to experience the sacred or numinous. Myth can be seen as symbolic expressions of archetypal powers, real as such, and thus authentic, so changing religion need rely less on historical facts than on informed archetypal experiences. The hero, the savior, the father, mother, guru, etc. are active collectively and "within" – not merely historical figures of the past or of metaphysical constructs. This does not make Jungian "analytical" or "archetypal" therapy a religion, but it is more open to the reality of spiritual experiences. Against Freud, Jung argued that it is not the presence of religious images in the psyche, but their absence and lack of conscious respect for them that lead to neurosis.

As Jung's thought developed, he came to see divinity as a union of opposites, a totality of good and evil, masculine and feminine, and spirit and body, that he had discovered in his clinical and comparative cultural research, pictured in images of the Self. In his important lectures on "Psychology

and Religion" in 1937 (1953–1979, *CW* 11), Jung clarified that we cannot know metaphysical entities such as God in themselves. We can only know the psychic images of them that we experience. "Withdrawing projections" from enemies, lovers, or priests also helps uncover deeper truths about one's experience of divinity. The goal of therapy is not perfection or salvation, but completeness, finding the most refined way of integrating unions of opposites, often symbolized by mandalas. This is all essential in a time when industrial society has challenged and weakened the traditional authority of conventional religions.

After 1938, Jung also studied Eastern religions and traveled to India. One theme that emerged from this period was Jung's view that Christ is an inadequate image of divinity because he is one-sidedly good, masculine and spiritual. A more adequate image would include evil, the feminine, and the body (1953–1979, *CW* 9,ii). For him evil is real, and not just Augustine's *privatio boni*, or lack of goodness. Jung saw this also in his *Answer to Job* (1953–1979, *CW* 11:553–758). Christ's incarnation did not solve the problem of one-sidedness, and Jung explores figures such as Sophia, then proposes that Mary complete God's image by becoming the fourth member of the incomplete Trinity, to add femininity and body to God's masculinity and spirituality (1953–1979, *CW* 11:122–127).

Jung's challenge, particularly in view of his near-death experience in 1944 (Jung, 1961 MDR: 289ff), is this: "The decisive question for a [person] is: is he [/she] related to something infinite or not?" (1961, MDR: 300). Mere mortals may err by falling into one of two camps: by reifying parochial beliefs [such as patriarchy or our version of God] into metaphysical universals or "archetypes," or, at another extreme, rationalistic scientism's omni-competent claim to be the only valid method of knowledge.

In the late twentieth century, the major overlapping schools of Jungian psychotherapy emerged: the Classical, the Archetypal, and the Developmental (Samuels).

Jung's fertile thought on religion and myth has continued and is being expanded by numerous successors such as Aniela Jaffé (Jung's biography), Marie-Louise von Franz (folktales), Edward Edinger (the ego-Self axis), Victor White (Jung and religion), Sylvia Brinton Perera (the scapegoat, gods and goddesses), Edward Whitmont (symbolic quest), (Jean Bolen (Greek goddesses), John Dourley, Ann Ulanov (Jung and Christianity), James Hillman (many radical revisions), David L. Miller (polytheism), Thomas Moore (soul and re-enchantment), Clarissa Pinkola Estés, (*Women who Run With the Wolves*), and Joseph Campbell (*Hero with a Thousand Faces*). Jung's archetypal theory has made its way into numerous approaches to myth and religion, whether acknowledged or not.

See also: [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Myths and Dreams](#)

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Myths and Dreams

Lee W. Bailey

The Common Well

Dreams and myths have striking parallels. They are different, of course, in that dreams are personal and raw products of the unconscious. Myths, on the other hand, may have dream backgrounds, but are the product of sometimes elaborate artistic narrative shaping by consciousness. They develop variants and historical associations with collectives, such as religious texts, rituals, literature, or national legends with political purposes, such as the national hero or goddess. But dreams and myths are both rooted in unconscious depths, the well of the soul, and thus have parallels. Carl Jung made the strongest connection between them. Jungian analyst Marie von Franz saw fairy tales as in-between – less influenced by cultural elaboration than myths, thus closer to their unconscious source: “Fairy tales are the purest and simplest expression of collective and unconscious psychic processes” (von Franz 1970: 40). Many later Jungians, such as Andrew Samuels and Jean Shinola Bolen, have emphasized that mythic images are not just a list of images to be checked off from a mental distance, but are pervasive themes in everyday life. James Hillman emphasizes that soul is also in the world, anthropomorphized and personified, and mythic images can help us descend into these depths. It is blindness to identify completely with images in dreams, fairy tales or myths, but, conversely, over-intellectualizing not to feel them at all. Keeping the dreaminess in myths helps prevent over-systematizing and rationalizing them.

The modern connection between myth and dream was articulated by Sigmund Freud, who saw myths as dream-like events. He saw them as distorted wish-fulfillments of whole nations rooted in the unconscious. Otto Rank and Karl Abraham said the same. These Freudians saw an infantile element in myths. Abraham said: “The myth is therefore a fragment preserved from the infantile psychic

life of the race, and dreams are the myths of the individual” (Abraham, 1913: 36, 72). It is useful to contrast the personal and the mythic amplifications of a dream, but not by labeling them “subjective” and “objective.” These labels place the process in the scientific metaphysic that overall strives to deny the meaningfulness of dreams.

Carl Jung also saw the myth-dream connection rooted in the unconscious: “myths are dreamlike structures” (Jung, *CW V*: para. 28). But Jung rejected the Freudian emphasis on wish-fulfillment and the infantile nature of myths. He saw myths as the most mature product of early humanity, and a continuing important expression of civilization’s collective unconscious (Jung, *CW V*: 28–29). Jungian analysts methodically use myths to amplify clients’ dreams, bringing out unsuspected unconscious meanings. Myths echo individual dreams, both emerging from the collective unconscious. Joseph Campbell put it in a nutshell: “Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream” (1949: 19).

A Prom Night Dream

An example of this correlation, that Jung would call a “big” dream, is a college student’s dream reported to me that echoes the mythic text of an ancient goddess.

- ▶ In 1980 this girl wrote that she dreamed that when she was getting ready for her high school prom dance, she grew curious about her home’s basement. She crept down the stairs and came to a door at first hard to open, but she pushed again and it flew open into a dark room. She fell inside and caught her shawl on a nail. Curious, she left behind the shawl and entered another dark room. She saw another door that was also stuck at first, but soon opened easily. She tripped and lost a shoe, which she left behind. She saw a third door, which was already open. She walked through it and removed her second shoe. Everything was dark and dirty. She found a fourth door, at first locked, but when she pushed again, it also opened. Suddenly a gold necklace she was wearing fell down from her neck and she left it, planning to pick it up on her way back. She looked around and found a fifth door, dirty and slimy. She decided to wipe off the doorknob with her dress, then she took off the now dirty dress. She then spied a sixth door in the dark room that was slightly ajar. She passed through it, but caught her panties on a nail, and they ripped and fell off. She was naked, and slowly lifted her head; she was horrified.
- ▶ She saw heaps of dead and decaying animals, covered with mud and dust. An old decrepit man was sitting atop

of a pile. But it could have been a male/female figure. The door slammed shut, and she was trapped, frightened, and naked in this dark, smelly, hellish place. She was stuck there for what seemed forever, though it was actually a few months. She ate the dust and mud just as the old woman/man did.

- ▶ Back home upstairs, everyone became sick. Her father wondered what had happened to her, and recalled her interest in the basement, so he went down the same stairs and followed her trail of dropped clothing through the six doors. As he entered the last door, he too was horrified, for his daughter had become just as decrepit as the old woman/man, in this hellish place. Her father fought with the androgynous beast as he tried to reach her, and he finally won. He put his arms around her and took her back through the six doors. She collected her clothes and dressed. They slowly mounted the stairs, and as they reached the top, she suddenly became radiant and everything became well.

The Ishtar Myth

Struck by the parallels, I showed this dreamer the text of “Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World” in James Pritchard’s classic *The Ancient Near East* (Pritchard, 1958, I: 80–85). She said that she had never heard this story. Indeed it was an obscure scholarly text at the time. She agreed with my suggestion that her dream, which on the surface had nothing to do with her personal experiences, was obviously connected with the ancient religious myth. She gave me permission to publish it. Over twenty years later, I found her online and asked her if she recalled the dream. She did not, but told me that she had become a successful business woman, married, and a mother, but was not interested in exploring much further personal information.

I described the correlation to a noted Jungian analyst, Sylvia Brinton Perera, author of *Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women*, which analyzes in detail the Inanna-Ishtar myth. She replied that the dream-myth parallel frequently appears for Jungian analysts. In analysis, she added, of course much more personal information would also be explored. Also in therapy the ego-consciousness may well need to stand back and make discriminations and judgments about both dreams and myths. Both may have shadowy beasts or seductive lovers, for example, projected onto real-world figures that need to be re-interpreted or disconnected.

Pritchard’s text has subsequently been amplified in later scholarship by others, notably Samuel Kramer and

Diane Wolkstein. This literature reveals fascinating connections with the dream. The Akkadian goddess Ishtar is closely related to the Sumerian Inanna, both early cultures that emerged into Babylonia, now Iraq. Pritchard's text, translated from ancient clay tablets, can be summarized:

- ▶ Ishtar, queen of life, set her mind to go down to the dark underworld abode of Irkalla, the realm of her sister Ereshkigal, queen of the dead. Hers is the dreadful dark realm from which no one returns, "Where dust is their fare and clay their food . . . (And where) over door and bolt is spread dust" (lines 8–11). When Ishtar reached the front gate of the Land of no Return, she imperiously demanded that the gatekeeper open the gate, threatening to smash the gate and raise the dead. The humble gatekeeper ran off to his queen announcing Ishtar's arrival. Ereshkigal angrily, cruelly replied, "What drove her heart to me? . . . Should I bemoan the maidens who were wrenched from the laps of their lovers? Or should I bemoan the tender little one who was sent off before his time? Go, gatekeeper, open the gate for her, Treat her in accordance with the ancient rules" (lines 31–38).
- ▶ The gatekeeper welcomed her to enter, but at each of seven gates, he stripped away one of her royal garments: her great crown, her earrings, her necklaces, her breast ornaments, her birthstone belt, her wrist and ankle ornaments, and finally her dress. At each gate she ritually asked: "Why, O gatekeeper, didst thou take the great crown on my head?" To which the gatekeeper replied: "Enter, my lady, thus are the rules of the Mistress of the Nether World" (lines 42–66).
- ▶ The goddesses of life finally stood before the goddess of death and angrily flew at her. But Ereshkigal responded by giving orders to release the forces of death against her: "Go, Namtar, lock [her] up [in] my [palace]! Release against her, [against] Ishtar, the sixty mis[eries]" (lines 64–69). When this happened, the energies of reproduction in the world above ceased: "The bull springs not upon the cow, [the ass impregnates not the jenny], In the street [the man impregnates not] the maiden" (lines 71–81). Then the advisor to the great god Ea goes to him and bemoans the lack of the life-force on earth, repeating ritually the above impregnation chorus. Ea responded by sending a eunuch to journey to the underworld, who somehow manipulated Ereshkigal into sprinkling the water of life on Ishtar. The queen then returns above, passing through the same seven gates, and at each one her discarded royal clothes and ornaments are ritually returned to her by the gatekeeper for her to wear.

- ▶ The text ends with obscure hints. Ereshkigal apparently says: "If she does not give thee the ransom price, bring her back" (line 51), and . . . "On the day when Tammuz (lover of Ishtar) comes up to me, When with him the lapis flute (and) the carnelian ring up to me, When with him the wailing men and the wailing women come up to me, May the reed rise and smell the incense" (lines 61–66) (Pritchard, 1958: 80–85).

While the Sumerian and Babylonian versions are very similar, there are important differences between them. In one version, Inanna is hanged on a hook on the wall, like a piece of meat (Wolkstein and Kramer, 60). But these differences have little effect the thematic similarities with the contemporary dream, which sounds more like the Babylonian Ishtar's myth.

The more recent work of Kramer and Wolkstein, collecting and assembling tablet fragments, has added new versions and details to the myth. Inanna's text comes from the older Sumerian culture, dating as far back as about 4000 BCE. The Sumerians apparently invented cuneiform writing and built the first ziggurats. The majority of the fragments of Inanna's ancient Sumerian tale were first unearthed in the ruins of the city of Nippur, Sumer's spiritual and cultural center, by a University of Pennsylvania archaeological dig in 1889 and 1890. The Babylonians began invading Mesopotamia with their Semitic language about 2000 BCE, and absorbed much of the earlier Sumerian and Akkadian language and mythology. So the later Babylonian Ishtar's story is not surprisingly similar to the earlier Sumerian Inanna's. For example, On Inanna's way back to the earthly realm, the Annuna, the judges of the underworld, seized her. They said: "No one ascends from the underworld so unmarked. If Inanna wishes to return from the underworld, she must provide someone in her place." They sent merciless demons above that passed by those on earth who humbled themselves, but they took Dumuzi, Inanna's husband, who had too proudly usurped the throne. He escaped the demons for a while by turning into a serpent or a gazelle, but ended up in the underworld of the dead (Wolkstein and Kramer, 1983: 52–73).

The layers of symbolism are many, as Perera shows, but the themes, some in remarkable detail, paralleled in, the modern girl's dream, are evident: A woman descends to a dark, unconscious underworld, where "over door and bolt is spread dust." She passes through six or seven doors, and at each door an item of clothing or jewelry is removed, until she stands, naked as she was born, before a scene of death and a powerful ruling figure. She is held captive among the dead, "Where dust is their fare and clay

their food.” While she is captive in the land of the dead, life is interrupted above. She is finally rescued by a person from above who wrestles with the master of the dead and succeeds in leading her out of that hell. As they return through each doorway, she regains her clothing. The myth has far more collective and religious themes – the queens of life and death, love and grief, the royal clothing and ornaments, the rescuer sent by a god, the obscure ending hinting at the need for a ransom for her return, and a general resurrection.

The dream is more personal and modern, centered on a teen-aged girl, on the eve of her ritual prom dance, signifying passage into adulthood, encountering the dark mysteries of the collective unconscious, nakedness and fertility, where passionate love helps overcome horrifying death, and comforting family – her rescue by her personal father. Freud would stress the Oedipal father-daughter erotic overtones, and Jung the archetypal collective life-death struggle, androgyny, and initiation. The myth is more collective, ritualized, and religious, with feminine images of life and death and their struggle. The seven gates image may be rooted in the seven stars visible to the unaided eye, seen as gates of a cosmic journey through the ancient cosmological image of seven heavenly spheres below the disc-like earth. The theme of a ransom echoes later in the theology of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice demanded by a god, and the resurrection expresses the general return from the dead in Western traditions of dying and rising gods. These parallel images arise in both this contemporary personal dream and the 4,000-year old ritualized, religious myth, indicating the ancient dream-myth connection and the modern mind’s astonishing well of archaic

images, bursting up with sparkling, age-old, deep, mysteriously meaningful images, as fearful as death, as beautiful as love.

See also: [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Dying and Rising Gods](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Myth](#)

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N

Narcissism

Ann Gleig

Narcissism played a key role in the development of psychoanalysis and has been pivotal to contemporary revisionings of psychoanalytic theory and technique. Freud discussed narcissism in a number of texts including *Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood* (1910/1975), *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914/1975b), *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1915/1975a) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923/1960) yet his writings are inconsistent and have been subject to different interpretations. There are disputes on the exact relationship between primary narcissism and autoeroticism; on whether the state of primary narcissism is free of object relations or contains primitive object relations; and on whether primary narcissism is experienced as a prenatal state, by the infant at the breast, or both.

In his first systematic discussion of narcissism, Freud (1905/1975a) distinguishes between primary narcissism and secondary or pathological narcissism. Defining primary narcissism as “the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation,” (1915: 73–74) Freud states it is a normal developmental state during which the infant takes its own ego as a libidinal object, thereby experiencing the self as perfect and omnipotent. During this stage the infant does not differentiate between self and object but with the emerging experience of, and attachment to, the primary caretaker, usually the mother, libido is transformed and redirected from the pleasurable and self-sufficient narcissistic stage to the need-satisfying object. Freud called this outward directed libido “object libido,” and claimed that there was an inverse relationship between object libido and inwardly invested “ego libido.”

The departure from primary narcissism leaves the individual with a desire to recover narcissistic perfection. One way this is recovered is through the cathexis of an ideal ego – an idealized projected image of the self formed from the internalized demands and restrictions of authoritative

figures (a concept which later develops into the superego)– which replaces the actual ego as the object of primary narcissism. Other attempts at recovery include a narcissistic object choice in which the object resembles the subject’s idealized self-image as opposed to the anaclitic object choice in which the object resembles the primary caretaker.

Like object libido, narcissistic libido can suffer from fixation and become pathological. Freud observed that in a variety of traumatic situations – including organic diseases such as schizophrenia-object libido is withdrawn from objects and reinvested in the ego. This renewal of libidinal investment in the ego is “secondary or pathological narcissism,” a regressive state experienced as a grandiosity and omnipotence of the self.

The concept of secondary narcissism has been utilized to interpret a range of religious phenomena including animism, magic, psychologized spirituality, and mysticism. In *Totem and Taboo*, (1913/1950), Freud discusses narcissism in relation to omnipotence, claiming that primitives who believed that external events occurred because of the magical power of their own thought processes were suffering from pathological narcissism. More influentially, in *Civilization and its Discontents*, (1930/1975), Freud explained the “oceanic feeling” of unity experienced in mysticism as the preservation of and return to the stage of primary narcissism in which boundaries between self and other are undifferentiated. This established the classic reductive psychoanalytic view of mysticism as narcissistic, regressive and pathological as illustrated by early studies such as Morel’s *Essai Sur l’Introversion Mystique* (1918) and Theodore Schroeder’s *Prenatal Psychisms and Mystical Pantheism* (1922) and the more recent work of Jeffrey Masson (1974, 1980).

The use of narcissism to explain certain types of religion is also found in the work of the Norwegian brothers Harald and Kristian Schjelderup (1932). On the basis of both contemporary and historical evidence, they identify three main types of religious experience: father religion, mother religion and self-religion each of which corresponds to a different stage of childhood development. Self-religion, such as Zen Buddhism and yoga, is marked by a quest for and fantasies of self-deification which is a

result of narcissistic withdrawal of libido from external objects and a regression to infantile self-grandiosity.

The Schjelderup's analysis anticipates psychoanalytic readings of contemporary forms of self-spirituality, such as the New Age and the human potential movement, which have also been interpreted as narcissistic. M. D. Faber (1996) argues that New Age thinking is a regression to primary narcissism in which the adult is returned to an infantile state of omnipotence, magical wish fulfillment and merger with the mother. While Christopher Lasch's influential *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) explains the rise of the new psychospiritual therapies and their quest for self-realization as being both a product and perpetuation of a narcissistic personality structure that because of recent socio-cultural changes has become the predominant psychopathology of contemporary life. To counter this narcissism, Lasch suggests a return to and renewal of Christian commitment and ethics. However this assumes Christianity is immune from narcissism, an assumption undermined by Paul Pruyser's (1978) targeting of the narcissistic strands within evangelical Christianity. He claims the evangelic practices of witnessing and testifying are often beset by "reflective narcissism" the need to have one's own self-love mirrored back in the affirmation and admiration of others. However, unlike self-spirituality, Pruyser argues that Christianity contains abundant resources to counter such narcissistic trends. For example, the story of Paradise in the book of Genesis rejects the desire to become omnipotent and omniscient like God – which Pruyser interprets as a mythic expression of primary narcissism-as the root of original sin.

Interpretations of religious phenomena, therefore, that utilize Freud's understanding of narcissism are unremittingly negative; focusing on its regressive, defensive and grandiose nature. However, Heinz Kohut's (1971, 1977) highly influential psychoanalytic revisioning of narcissism has opened up a much more positive dialog between narcissism and religion. Kohut believed that the pejorative classical Freudian evaluation of narcissism which cast it in an inverse relationship to object love reflected an intrusion of western altruistic cultural values into psychoanalysis. While accepting Freud's stage of primary narcissism, Kohut claimed that narcissism followed its own developmental line in which the two primary archaic configurations of narcissism-the grandiose self and the idealized parent imago-had the potential to transform respectively into a cohesive sense of self with healthy self-esteem and a set of mature goals, values and ideals. Crucial to this transformation was the ability of the primary caretakers to act as selfobjects. Kohut coined the term selfobject to describe how an infant's earliest experience of the other is

not as a separate object but as part of oneself. Parents are the earliest selfobjects and they perform crucial psychological functions which the child's own psychic structure will later transmute into internal structures. However, if caretakers fail to respond empathetically to the child's experience, or if the child is subject to premature or traumatic separation, the integration of archaic narcissism is disturbed and the repressed strands emerge unresolved in later life; in a clinical condition designated as the narcissistic personality disorder. This is characterized by states of emptiness and despair, feelings of unreality, excessive self-consciousness, oscillation between experiences of inferiority and grandiosity, an intense desire to merge with an idealized other, uncontrollable rage and an absence of empathy.

Unlike Freud, however, Kohut believed that narcissistic disturbances could be rectified through the establishment of empathetic communication in the analytic relationship which enabled the working through of traumatic failures of early selfobjects and a more conscious negotiation of legitimate narcissistic needs. Kohut claimed that a mature ego had the capacity to tame and employ narcissistic cathexes for its highest developmental aims, namely; creativity, empathy, contemplation of ones own impermanence, a sense of humor and wisdom.

Moreover, Kohut saw mysticism as engaging the developmental line of narcissism and affecting a transformation of the narcissistic elements of one's personality into the higher religio-ethical goal of what he termed, "cosmic narcissism." This is the transformation of narcissism into a type of mature, state-like mysticism in which the subject participates in a supraindividual and timeless existence. Although rooted in the mother-child symbiosis, this differs from the transient oceanic feeling of unitive mysticism which Kohut reads as the preservation of the early mother-child unity. Neither transient nor unitive, cosmic narcissism is an ethical and existential developmental achievement of an autonomous ego. Kohut hoped that the transformation of narcissism into cosmic narcissism would signal the emergence of a new unchurched tradition of mystical rationality which would replace traditional religions and rejuvenate the west (Parsons, 1999).

Following Kohut, Peter Homans (1979) has claimed that unchurched psychologized religiosity, such as that of Carl Jung, displays an authentic engagement with narcissism. Homans argues that due to secularization traditional religion lost its ability to organize personal and social life and this has resulted in the emergence of a diffuse and heightened form of self-consciousness in which legitimate narcissistic needs are now satisfied primarily in the context of personal and psychological experience. Hence, while psychologized spirituality, with its themes of unity,

wholeness, self-actualization and individuation, is indeed reflective of the contemporary emergence of narcissistic disorders it is also an authentic attempt to maturely heal and transform them.

The German theologian Hans-Gunter Heimbrock (1977) has applied Kohut's revisioning of narcissism to Christianity, claiming that the biblical image of God has advanced along the very lines laid down by Kohut's analysis of transformed narcissism. Heimbrock reads the omnipotent and moralistic God of the Hebrew Bible as an example of archaic narcissism and self-grandiosity. However, through Jesus' crucifixion and suffering, the New Testament God renounces self-grandiosity and frees the individual from the need to shore up the weak self through an omnipotent self-ideal. The suffering of God enables a person to empathize with the suffering of others and to accept one's own finitude both of which represent a mature and creative transformation of narcissism.

Other writers have drawn on Kohut's concept of the selfobject to interpret and legitimate religious phenomena. Robert Fuller (1989) claims that New Age healers act as mature selfobject for clients and analyst Sudhir Kakar (1991) has argued that the Indian guru is the primary cultural selfobject experience for adults in Hindu tradition and society. Such work demonstrates that narcissism in both classical and contemporary psychoanalytic theoretical formations continues to play an important role in the psychological interpretation of and dialog with religion.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#)

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Narrative Therapy

Thomas St. James O'Connor

Introduction and Assumptions

Narrative therapy is more of an approach than a defined theory (O'Connor, Meakes, Pickering, and Schuman, 1997). This approach works from the premise that each person's life is a series of stories on many levels similar to a novel with many chapters. Stories are used to make meaning of a situation and to make sense of one's life. Some of these stories and chapters are given to the person by family, context, culture, religion, gender, etc. One of the key aspects of narrative is to re-author one's own story so that one is not living a story that does not fit with one's identity. In narrative therapy, a person and/or

family seek therapy when there is a problem that cannot be fixed. In fact, there is a story around a problem that oppresses the family. This story about the problem also fits into the larger stories about oneself.

In terms of its philosophical underpinnings, narrative therapy is a post modern approach (White and Epston, 1990; White, 2007). Stories are socially constructed and are not objective truth. They are interpretations of experience and narrative is a hermeneutical project. This hermeneutical understanding challenges the notion of objective truth and diagnosis based on norms. In this post modern view, the categories of the DSM IV are viewed as social constructions and not as objective truth.

The most prominent writer in narrative therapy is Michael White, an Australian therapist who with David Epston wrote *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* in 1990. Other names associated with narrative are K. Thomm (1989), J. Freedman and G. Combs (1996) and H. Andersen and H. Goolishian (1988). In the field of theology and spirituality, Charles Gerkin (1982) and Thomas St. James O'Connor (1998, 1999; Bloos & O'Connor, 2002) have also made contributions using a narrative perspective in theology and spirituality. Since the early 1990s Michael White's work has grown in popularity in the field of family therapy.

Michael White and Key Ideas

In examining the work of Michael White a number of points stand out. White uses the philosophy of Michel Foucault and the anthropology of Jerome Bruner and Gregory Bateson in developing his view of narrative therapy (White and Epston, 1990; White, 2007). Drawing on Foucault, White believes that knowledge is power and within society there are dominant narratives that privilege certain groups and oppress others. The notion of the dominant narrative is a key idea. In therapy, there is a problem that has developed an oppressive narrative and dominates the thinking of the individual and family. In the midst of this narrative there is an alternative narrative that has moments when the family and/or individual have overcome the problem. These are called unique outcomes. However, the power of the dominant narrative of the problem is so strong that it often robs the person of memory of the alternative narrative. The work of narrative therapy is to facilitate the client in uncovering these unique outcomes and developing them into an alternative narrative.

Another key idea is separating the problem from the person. White believes that the person is not the problem; the problem is the problem. Narrative therapy externalizes

the problem and takes it out of the person and moves it into the external world. This is done through the use of language. Narrative therapy uses active verbs and not being verbs. Instead of saying the client is depressed, the narrative therapist might say that 'depression pushes against John or oppresses John at times or jumps all over Mary or kidnaps Mary.' This externalization of the problem, i.e., putting the problem on the outside separates the person from the problem and moves it from the intrapsychic to the interpersonal. This separation of the problem from the person using active verbs is known as an externalizing conversation. The narrative therapist also seeks to map the influence of the problem on the individual and family. When did depression start pushing against John?

Another key idea is widening the audience for change. White (2007) also describes this as developing witnesses. Narrative therapy seeks to include other people in helping the person re-story the problem. These witnesses often include a team observing the session with the client behind a one-way mirror. This group is called the reflecting team. Reflecting teams offer reflections to the clients on the problem as well as commenting on family members and friends or anyone significantly involved in the story of the problem. This audience is meant to be supportive and to work with the client in reducing the problem. The audience for change or witnesses emphasizes team work which is very important to help make the change. Narrative therapy seeks to develop a team of people (audience or witness) who work together against the problem and not against the client. The client is a main person on the team.

Another aspect of narrative therapy that stands out is the facilitation of personal agency. Some of the research clearly indicates that narrative therapy is very helpful in reducing the presenting problem. Personal agency is facilitated by the therapist working with the client(s) in developing an understanding of the problem and its effects on the persons involved, drawing on key metaphors of the problem that can be developed into an externalizing conversation and searching for unique outcomes to the problem that are developed into an alternative narrative. Crucial to facilitating personal agency is the involvement of the client. The therapist does not work out of an expert position with special knowledge but rather views the client as the expert on the experience of the problem with a belief that the client already has resources to help with the problem. Here, the therapist works from a position of not knowing and curiosity and follows the maps of the client.

Narrative therapy as constructed by White and Epston (1990) also uses letters and certificates. These are sent or

given to clients. The letters most often underline the client's strengths and pose some wonderings about possible directions and are sent by the therapist after a session or sessions. Similar to solution focused therapy, narrative therapy emphasizes the strengths of the client especially in dealing with challenging problems. It uses scaling questions that put the problem or its effects on a scale of 1–10. The scale is meant to gauge the progress of clients in dealing with their problems. Certificates are used to celebrate the growth of clients. For example, a child who has progressed in terms of management of angry outbursts could be given a certificate celebrating that he/she is now a “temper buster.”

Research on Narrative

The research on narrative therapy is at the beginning. Published research involves qualitative and case studies. O'Connor, et al. (1997) found that in a qualitative study of 8 clients that narrative therapy significantly reduced the presenting problem. Smith, et al. (1992) and Sells, et al. (1994) using qualitative research found reflecting teams used in narrative therapy for the most part to be effective. Coulehan, Freilander and Heatherington (1998) used grounded theory in interviewing 8 clients of Carlos Sluzki who is a narrative therapist about how they changed their views of the problem construction. Results were mixed. Four clients thought that they could see the problem in a more helpful way and four did not. O'Connor, et al. (2004) examined therapists' experiences of using narrative therapy utilizing an ethnographic research design. This research indicated that therapists found narrative therapy helpful in reducing the presenting problem and also reported some limitations of narrative therapy. There have been a few qualitative studies of children and narrative therapy (Focht and Beardslee, 1996; Lerner, 1996; Weston, Boxer and Heatherington, 1998). All of these qualitative studies found narrative therapy helpful to children. In the area of teaching, Morrison, et al. (1997) found in a qualitative study that students reported positive learning in narrative therapy.

Case studies on narrative include Kogan and Gale (1997) who did a study of a videotape of Michael White with a client. They examined how White managed talk in the session and used the metaphor of “de-centring.” Kahle and Robbins describe a case study of a family where success over the problem is externalized. Michael White has provided numerous case studies outlining the effectiveness of narrative therapy with a wide range of clients.

Little has been written on spirituality and narrative therapy. However, narrative therapy has many commonalities with Judeo-Christian spiritualities. O'Connor (1999) notes the similarities and differences between Dante's *Purgatio* and narrative therapy. O'Connor argues that Dante's notion of the cure of souls that takes place through climbing mount Purgatory has many similarities in narrative therapy. In particular, the externalizing conversation, the separation of the problem from the person and the development of personal agency based on strengths is similar to sin as object and the work of grace. Bloos and O'Connor (2002) also examine the use of the labyrinth as a spiritual experience that has similarities to the experience of narrative therapy.

Charles Gerkin (1982) describes a narrative hermeneutical theory of practical theology. Gerkin's understanding of narrative has many similarities to White's notions as well as difference. For Gerkin, theology is described in many narratives. Working from a Christian standpoint, Gerkin believes that the Christian narrative of creation, sin, redemption is what gives Christians a sense of identity and is the lens through which one interprets and makes meaning of experience. Gerkin believes in this meta-narrative and argues that identity is rooted in the meta-narratives. Certainly, there are many narratives in one's life. Like White, Gerkin believes that there are a multitude of chapters in our stories. Gerkin's narrative hermeneutical theory of practical theology can be divided into four elements (O'Connor, 1998): (1) rooted in the Christian heritage; (2) uses a multi-disciplinary approach; (3) based in practical theology and the practices of ministry; (4) and uses the hermeneutical and narrative theory of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer.

See also: [🔗 Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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of a messianic figure is most usually phenomenal of a general movement to revitalize the oppressed society, which may seek to restore its integrity and sense of autonomy by: comprehensively rejecting the alien culture, while reviving or recalibrating traditional institutions, practices and values; or incorporating elements of the oppressive alien culture into a new foundational vision.

The literature, ethnographic and anthropological, points to revitalization impulses in the way of apocalyptic expectations at work in many quarters of the Americas well before encounters with white culture. And of prophetic movements among indigenous Americans, it has been suggested that nascent messianic impulses in the visionary programs of communities already in crisis may have been ripe for taking a decisive shape and energy from first contact with Christian Europeans, while owing nothing to Christian theology.

Because of the rapid growth and domination of Christian European culture in the Americas after the late fifteenth century, there has, indeed, been debate about the likelihood of messianism in some Northern Native American enclaves being unique and organic. However, cases of messianic movements in Central and South America that clearly pre-date native first contact with Christianity (e.g., Tupinamba migrations of Brazil searching for the “Land of Immortality and Perpetual Rest”) support arguments in favor of Northern American instances independent of European influences. Of religious and psychological importance is that even where elements of Christianity are identified in an otherwise nativistic movement, selective recourse to the person of a messiah by primal Americans (to someone who straddles the gap between time and eternity, who corrects severe psychosocial imbalance in the subjective field of history) supports the universality of a human capacity to envision engagement with transcendent reality and its association to a concept of absolute justice.

Messiahs and messianic solutions to oppression can be seen as a natural outgrowth of the prophetic and shamanic domains of tribal structure. Even where the prophet who launched a given movement is not ascribed personal divinity, there seems to be a template for the process by which he arrived at his charismatic influence and the strategy that promised to liberate his people: He received a vision of high detail about why misfortune had befallen his people and what they must do to restore social equilibrium. Often the prophet or shaman was beset by a near-death illness (likely, a somatization of the collective plight) before this presentment, and emerged physically and spiritually revitalized himself. He began to evangelize, and followers experienced an ecstatic charge from him similar to his own from the supernatural sponsor of his

Native American Messianism

Meredith Lisagor

The envisioning of a radical change in world order through the leadership of a divinely-informed prophet or actual messiah is a response to similar spiritual and psychosocial stressors wherever it is found – across cultures, and from primal to post-industrialized societies. The empirical needs that occasion a collective readiness to receive divine intervention usually relate to the intensity of exploitation a society perceives itself to have suffered from a hegemonic alien culture. And the anticipation

vision. The message of salvation was similar from visionary to visionary, frequently demanding the end of inter- and intra-tribal strife, exogamy, any sort of dishonesty, and the drinking of alcohol, (which had quickly become a scourge to indigenous Americans). It alternately encouraged co-existence with enemies, ensured their surrender, or guaranteed apocalyptic destruction of them; sometimes it promised a welcome return of the dead.

More usual in South America was the prophet's announcement that he was a divine hero or god (often the creator or law-giver, as with the Latin American prophets called *pagé*), who had returned to bestow eternal life on the faithful. Generally, South American movements sought an earthly paradise and the patently supernatural benefit of eternal youth, like the Tupis' ongoing pursuits of the alternatively-called "Land without Evil." And while a more religio-political movement, like that of the early nineteenth century Incan Tupac Amuru, looked forward to a cosmic cataclysm from which a new world order could spring, native millenarianism of Paraguay and Brazil outside the context of messianism could be merely terrifying: In contemporary literature about the Brazilian Nāndeva-Guanari, where this kind of mythology conflated with Christian teachings about the Day of Judgment, a fear of returning dead bent on vengeance has been associated with collective depression and suicidality into the twentieth century.

In both Americas, movements that sought to reinstate, reinforce or perpetuate native culture tended to arise during earlier stages of European impingement and were marked by revolutionary aggression. Those that could tolerate syncretism of European tradition and indigenous beliefs developed later, and/or where social cohesion had become profoundly eroded.

The former type of movement is exemplified by the holy wars of the Pueblo Indians at Taos Mexico in 1680 under the leadership of the messianic Popé, which exterminated hundreds of Spanish settlers, and of the Delaware Indians under a nameless prophet from Michigan, whose 1762 movement aimed to do away with every European influence on tribal culture in the Great Lakes area – and doomed its success by restricting its weapons to bows and arrows against colonial fire power.

An exemplar of syncretistic movements is that of Handsome Lake, a Seneca, whose visions occurred after the American Revolution, a time of deep internal discord, economic collapse, and moral indifference for the Iroquois confederacy as a whole. Although he made no claim to divinity, his visions began after an illness from which he was thought to have died and returned. They instructed him in a new religion of the "Good Message" that borrowed from Quakerism to renovate native

religion, retaining what had well-served social and spiritual stability, eliminating contaminants like alcohol, abortion, and witchcraft. It emphasized marriage, adoption of orphans, and care for the aged. It also crafted a social model for the disenfranchised trader-hunter-warrior who would otherwise have been emasculated by cultivation of the land, which was now a necessity.

Still, syncretism could signal intractable defiance to white culture, as with the "Dreamers" cult of Northwestern America, ca. 1870. Its founder Catholic-educated Smohalla was believed to have died and been resurrected. In his trances or "dreams," the Great Spirit censured his people for apostasy from native ways. Smohalla instituted religion with Roman Catholic trappings, but doctrine that held whites to be inferior creations and Indians alone to have rights to the land – cultivation of which, as ordered by the whites, was violation of Mother Earth from whose bosom the Indian dead would one day rise. The "Dreamers" cult would be the basis of two armed insurrections near the end of the century.

By far the best-known Native American messianic movements are the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890. They arose in a family of movements that employed lengthy, repetitive, communal dance to effect the prophetic vision – which varied with different tribes' adoption, but held close to the original script everywhere on the restoration of lands and game to the Indians and, most importantly, on the return to life of their dead. During a period of rapid depopulation, Wodziwob the Paviotso prophet of the 1870 Ghost Dance foresaw the return of the ancestors via train with concomitant destruction of the whites – in which, however, the tools of their culture would be left behind for Indian use. Though variations anticipated rapprochement with whites, when neither had occurred, and social and political traumata continued, the movement died out.

In 1890, the prophet Wovoka claimed to be the messiah awaited by the Mormons (some of whom had joined the original Ghost cult). This time the movement spread widely with magical details, such as belief in an immunity to the white man's bullets, that would have disastrous consequences for 350 Sioux prisoners at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. It was not long before the movement died again. The Kiowa of the Southwest would revive the Ghost Dance in 1894 and sustain its practice until 1916; but resurrection failing to occur, the focus of the dance became the trance state achieved by participants and the opportunity thence to communicate immediately with ancestors.

Ascending gradually (even before the advent of the Ghost Dance) as a psycho-spiritual tool in the Native American struggle to resist assimilation was the ritual

ingestion of the vision-producing *peyote*. While the Peyote Cult may not always be classed with messianism, as a medium of personal emancipation in the collective setting of what has become the Native American Church, the drug by all reports is salvational. As dancing was used in the cults of the latter nineteenth century and early twentieth for crossing the barrier to the divine realm, so peyote has been used to this day. Parallels to both practices are found universally, as in the dances of the South-African Bushmen or the use of *soma* by the ancient Hindus.

The Native American response to the encroachment of Europeans, whose policies in the encounter amounted to ethnic and political castration, can easily be said to model Freud's theory for the etiology of religion. With or without messianic leadership, the renewal movements of the fifteenth to twentieth centuries were driven in classical psychoanalytic terms by anxiety over murder of the primal father as described by Freud in *Totem and Taboo* (and developed further in *Moses and Monotheism*). Under the coercive advances of white settlers, memory traces of a primal conflict had been aroused, and the tribal psyche returned to the repressed trauma of the original sons' dispatch of a father who stood between them and the object of their Oedipal desire, i.e., the mother – indeed, barely disguised here as Mother Earth. Where a charismatic leader arose we would observe the tribe's correlative longing for the return of that father whom it had vanquished. And where a redeemer figure was said to have had a near-death experience or could claim to have died and returned, we would note both an atonement for the ancient murder and full emulation of the father through which the new leader would unconsciously be received as his replacement.

The significance of this kind of person to society, however, should not be dismissed as a mere artifact of psychosocial regression. As the Oedipal drama leads to development of the individual's super-ego, its recapitulation at the social level under the influence of a great leader is the origin of a culture's super-ego (*Civilization and Its Discontents*). So we may liken the movement of Handsome Lake (or even Smohalla) to the ethical monotheism developed by the Jews under Moses.

Nevertheless, confining messianism to the Oedipal context is relegating it to social order-keeping – making the revival of movements that clearly failed to eliminate exogenous stressors amount to little more than corporate repetition compulsion. To typify these movements as compulsions to repeat is to miss the ways in which they succeeded in counterbalancing the psychosocial problems of forced acculturation. For instance, through the filter of Self Psychology, we recognize in almost all instances attempts to revitalize an *idealized values system*. And movements carried by a charismatic leader demonstrate

the collective compensatory activation of an *idealized parent imago*, which, along with an agenda to foster family cohesiveness, is the basis of a society prepared to adjust to any environmental changes.

Implicit in the foregoing is the fact that what compels a people to accept an individual as messiah or charismatic leader rests on the extent to which the person addresses the deepest unconscious needs and wishes of the believers, Oedipal or otherwise. Additionally, it can be said that the degree of a leader's charisma relates to the level of the group's sense of desperation. One pre-condition for desperation would be the deep cleft indigenous people came to feel between themselves and nature. Erich Fromm who sees the messianic age as a human achievement (not the product of divine intervention) locates the existential problem it is meant to end in the individual's sense of estrangement from him- or herself and nature. It is essentially a problem of *splitting* – here, meaning the dichotomy between one's animal and transcendent natures – and is resolved when one (with one's society) can command reason, love, truth, and justice well enough to attain harmony. The actualization of Fromm's messianic age can be said to have been consistently pushed farther from the grasp of indigenous peoples, each time reason, love, truth, and justice were transgressed from the outside.

What we may conjecture to be the intra-psychoic result of such transgressions is social regression to a pre-Oedipal stage. Borrowing from Object-Relations, where relationships are severely disrupted, there is risk of regression to the *schizoid position*, a psychic space of womblike safety but indifference to relationships – between internal and external objects, or self and nature. To defend against what the conscious mind would experience as intolerable loss, the individual or social group could instead withdraw to the *paranoid* or *depressive position*. Messianism animated by paranoia, with fantasies of persecution projected onto neutral as well as persecutory external realities, would resemble some of the millenarian Tupi quests for paradise, or the early dance movements that promoted emancipation through violence; while regressions to the depressive position (and its remorse) would be characteristic of movements that associated liberation with renovation of social morality, or later dance movements distinguished by some tolerance of acculturation. The choice would depend on a kind of tribal personality style.

Later Ghost Dances invite further Object-Relational review. In the language of D.W. Winnicott, the dance was manifest *potential space*, or that hypothetical realm between internal and external realities in which the psyche both creates and finds play, art, or religion. The shift from a hopeless expectation for the return of the dead to trance-encounters with them connotes the ghost-dancers'

creative enlistment of their deceased as revivals of *transitional objects* to reconnect the community with a sense of, at least, its cultural environment's reliability.

From the Analytical Psychology perspective, a messianic movement as a symptom of cultural crisis would be teleological, pointing to, in fact representing, its own solution. A leader who experienced a rebirth or became divine, would be symbolic of the *Self*, archetype of wholeness, which for the individual or the collective is “an image of the goal of life, spontaneously produced by the unconscious, irrespective of the wishes and fears of the conscious mind” (Jung, 1989: 459). Rituals like the Ghost Dance and peyote use would be media through which members of the community participated in the kind of encounter with objective (i.e., transcendent) reality to which their messiah laid claim through near-death experiences and visions. And whatever the cause of disturbance in the tribal psyche, any socio-spiritual programs stipulating endogamy, marital fidelity, and eradication of practices (such as alcohol consumption) that effected schizoid retreats or the ego's collapse into the unconscious, would be expressions of the integrative drives that gave rise to the messianic movement. Messianic moral prescriptions, then, would betoken progressive rather than regressive tendencies. By this interpretation, retreats to pre-Oedipal positions or abandonment of a movement suggests either psychic unreadiness for a major emergence of deep psychic contents or merely a phase of the regressive struggle that normally accompanies such emergence.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Archetype](#) [Depression](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Self](#) [Self Psychology](#) [Super-Ego](#) [Transitional Object](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Nazism

Daniel Burston

The Menace of Modernity

After the Reformation, the development that shaped European civilization the most was the Age of Enlightenment, which began around 1720, and culminated shortly after the American Revolution in 1776. The Enlightenment rejected supernaturalism, the divinity of Jesus and

the authority of the Church. Nevertheless, they said, there is a natural or built in *telos* to historical development, called “Progress” – a slow but inexorable process that, through the dissemination of science and literacy, would eventually envelope the whole planet. Among the moral and material benefits “Progress” would presumably confer is a much greater degree of human equality.

Though it is hard to credit nowadays, many religious people were utterly opposed to the Enlightenment’s promotion of reason and human equality. Medieval Christians believed that all believers are equally important in the eyes of God, and that on the Day of Judgment, God will judge each personal impartially, ignoring their worldly status and accomplishments. In the meantime, they said, as far as *this* world goes, it is sinful to question the feudal hierarchy. Individuals can “progress” in their moral or spiritual growth, in their relationship with God. But that is an individual, not a societal affair. Medieval minds dismissed the idea of collective human emancipation, fostered by the growth of literacy and the dissemination of reason, because since the Fall, humankind is enmeshed in a world of suffering and woe, and attempts to improve our earthly condition through “works,” or our own worldly efforts – including science and technology – are sinful, and distract us from our true spiritual vocation.

Nevertheless, in the eighteenth century, Deists and free thinkers began to make human equality a political norm or ideal, which meant translating the old belief in equality before God on Judgment Day into a political reality in *this* world. The growing demand for equality took several forms. The first was equality before the law, creating one system of justice, one law for the rich and the poor, commoners and the aristocracy, and increasingly, for Catholics and Protestants as well. In time, this emphasis on equality was extended to *all* religious creeds, including Jews. A second form the call for equality took was in terms of equality of access or opportunity, which required that the state provide free public education so that members of all social classes would have the chance to improve and to prosper. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Western European (and British and American) Jews benefited enormously from access to public education, and this is a feature of modernity that anti-Semites rejected. From the 1860s onwards, anti-Semites all across Europe, Britain and the United States argued that Jews *still* belong at the bottom of the social ladder, as in medieval days, and that their current prosperity was a symptom of a widespread social disorder. Indeed, if they will not return to their “natural” place in the social order, Jews should be intimidated, harassed and if need be, slaughtered *en masse*.

Nazism, Mysticism and the Occult

Given this background, the Nazi Party was not some weird aberration that sprang up overnight. The Treaty of Versailles made conditions for the spread of anti-Semitism in German speaking countries more favorable, but in the end, Nazism was a continuation of the older anti-Semitism, albeit with a fierce anti-Christian component that was well hidden from the rank and file. It also had an occult dimension. Much as they feared and detested them, the Nazis emulated the Masons in several respects, and borrowed some racist ideas from the Theosophical Society of Madame Helena Blavatsky, a Russian medium, who introduced the Swastika, an ancient Asian symbol, into Western occultist circles. They also had contact with Gregory Ivanovich Gurdjieff, another Russian mystic, and studied Anthroposophy, Sufism, Kundalini yoga, Zen Buddhism and so on. Most of these eclectic explorations in mysticism, meditation and the occult were carried on in the SS, under Himmler’s oversight.

Having said that, many occult and spiritual practices the Nazi elite embraced were associated with movements and teachers who were not particularly racist, and whose overall objectives focused on individual development, rather than world domination or genocide. So to insure that these occult techniques were practiced in the proper spirit, the Nazis borrowed even more heavily from ultranationalist German or Austrian occultists and neo-pagans. One was the Austrian writer Guido von List (1848–1919). List founded an “Armanist” Brotherhood of Wotan worshippers who were obsessed with racial purity. In 1911, List codified a set of racial and marriage laws that bear an uncanny resemblance to the Nuremberg racial laws, that he claimed would be enacted in 1932. (He wasn’t far off!)

Another important influence was Lanz von Liebenfels, a former Cistercian monk who founded the *Ordo Novi Templi*, or The New Templar Order, in 1907. Lanz was the editor of *Ostara*, a journal read by future Nazi stalwarts like Alfred Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler, Julius Streicher and Rudolph Hess long before Hitler became leader of the Nazi Party. As Morris Berman points out: “Castration, sterilization and extermination of ‘inferior’ races are all present in *Ostara*. Subsidies for ‘blond marriages’ made available by Hitler in Norway and Holland during the war are advocated, as well as a ban on interracial ones” (Berman, 1989: 265).

Another important influence on the Nazis was Rudolf von Sebottendorf. Sebottendorf studied Islamic mysticism in Turkey and Egypt, and by his own admission, was strongly influenced by List and Lanz. In 1917, as Germany slouched towards defeat, Sebottendorf founded the

Thule Society – a violently anti-Semitic, ultra-nationalist group whose newspaper, *The Munich Observer*, attracted the aristocratic Dietrich Eckart and the lesser known Anton Drexler, a railroad mechanic who founded the ultra-Right wing German Workers Party. Drexler persuaded Sebottendorf and Eckart that it was time to turn the Thule Society into a mass movement. And when Adolf Hitler wrested control of The German Workers Party from Drexler, and renamed it the National Socialist Workers Party, *The Munich Observer* became the official organ of the Nazi organization.

And what about Hitler himself? What did he study? As far as we know, Hitler never belonged to any secret society, but was personally coached by his mentor Dietrich Eckart. Just what Eckart taught Hitler is not known, though it is the subject of some lively scholarly conjecture. In any case, the real inspiration for Hitler's occult leanings may have been more chemical than personal in nature. While serving as a soldier, Hitler was hit by British mustard gas on October 15th, 1918, and became blind. As he was recovering in hospital in Pasewalk, north of Berlin, his vision was gradually restored, until November, when he learned that Germany had been declared a Republic, which caused him to relapse completely. Whilst lying on his cot in despair, Hitler experienced as a call "from the other world" naming him the savior of the German people. After that, he started back on the road to recovery, and as they say, found "his voice." Thus a failed artist and a brain injured veteran was transformed into a charismatic political speaker, who transfixed the entire German people, putting them into a collective trance. The Nazi elite were as transfixed as the general population by Hitler's hate filled rants. The main difference between the elite and the rank and file was that the elite were never taken in by Hitler's public professions of support for Christianity. They knew that Hitler aimed to replace Christianity with an improvised pastiche of Wotanist and occultist beliefs and rituals in the fullness of time.

Hitler: The Aryan Messiah

Critics and supporters of the Enlightenment have noted that the modern myth of progress is a kind of secularized Messianism, in which the era of universal brotherhood, peace and prosperity is brought on, not by a divine messenger or intercessor, but by the growth of reason, science and technology. Viewed through the lenses of a secular, scientific mindset, the Nazi elite's involvement with the occult represents no more than a foolish reversion to magic and superstition – a puzzling anomaly,

given that they were enthusiastic promoters of science and technology. But the tendency to oppose magic and superstition to scientific method is a product of a modern mindset, and the Nazis were at war with modernity. Indeed, their hatred of Jews and of modernity were inseparably linked. They blamed Jews for the twin evils of modernity – capitalism and communism – and depicted them as incorrigibly materialistic, opposed to every noble, spiritual tendency in the "Aryan" psyche, which is inherently hierarchical in outlook.

So when all was said and done, Nazism embraced modern science and technology, but rejected modernity's characteristic emphasis on human equality, and the modern separation of the sacred and the secular in the political arena. In its place, they created a neo-feudal system based on hereditary rank and privilege, and sought to fuse the sacred and the secular in their political ideology. But instead of reviving the Church, they sought to destroy it, and to replace Christianity with a cult of the Fuehrer. As Morris Berman points out, the cult of the Fuehrer was much more than a political movement. It was a state religion. Berman writes:

- ▶ At the Nazi rally in Nuremberg in September of 1937, a huge photo of Hitler was displayed with the inscription beneath it: 'IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD...' William Teeling, who visited Germany in the late thirties, was told by the Mayor of Hamburg: We need no priests or parsons. We communicate directly with God through Adolph Hitler. Dorothy Thompson, writing in the December 1934 issue of Harper's Magazine (Good Bye To Germany) told the following story: 'At Garmisch I met an American from Chicago. He had been at the Oberammergau to see the Passion Play. "These people are all crazy," he said. "This is not a revolution, it is a revival. They think Hitler is God. Believe it or not, A German woman sitting next to me at the Passion Play and when they hoisted Jesus on the Cross, she said: 'There he is. That is our Fuehrer, our Hitler.'" And when they paid out the thirty pieces of silver to Judas, she said: "That is Roehm, who betrayed the Leader"' (pp. 277–278).

Berman gives more examples, but there is no need to belabor the issue. Nazi propaganda *deliberately* displaced Jesus with Hitler at every opportunity, because the German populace wanted a *savior*. Hitler and his followers discerned this (largely unconscious) desire, and used techniques culled from black magic and modern advertising techniques to create a demonic new race-based religion of state.

Why then, beginning in 1935, did Hitler suppress all secret societies – even the Thule Society, and other racist

ones that were precursors to his movement? Hitler aimed to create a complete police state – one which would harness people’s yearning for a savior and for a sense of belonging to something bigger, something powerful and spiritual. In Hitler’s utopia, no one would belong to any organization that harbored secrets from the state, or nourished competing loyalties or differences of opinion with Hitler – on any subject pertaining to spirituality. For a brief period of time, Hitler was a kind of Emperor and demonic Pope rolled into one – the final authority on all matters temporal and spiritual. His authority was beyond question, and brooked no challenges. The brief but astonishing career of Adolf Hitler, and the lingering appeal of Nazism to this day are potent reminders of the limits of progress. As we enter our present “postmodern” historical era, science and technology develop apace, but genuine equality, brotherhood and peace are as elusive as ever.

See also: [▶ Anti-Semitism](#) [▶ Theosophy](#)

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New Age Movement

Ann Gleig

The New Age burst into public consciousness in a buzz of media attention around crystals, reincarnation, and channeling in the 1980s, but it has its immediate roots in the 1960s and 1970s counterculture. Tracing this history, Wouter Hanegraaff (1998) and Steven Sutcliff, (2003) have delineated two understandings of the New Age: the New Age in the Strict Sense and the New Age in the General Sense. The Strict Sense New Age refers to an apocalyptic/millennial movement that emerged in the 1940s and 1950s when a number of Anglo-American groups announced they were receiving messages from intelligent beings from other planets who were coming to bring a New Age to the Earth. These groups believed there would be an apocalyptic catastrophe followed by a new era of spiritual evolution, peace, and prosperity with only those attuned to “new age” consciousness surviving. Predominantly populated by white, middle-aged, and

elderly adherents and characterized by a culture of austerity and morality that emphasized community and service, these groups reflected a strong British influence.

In response to the absence of an actual apocalypse, the Strict Sense New Age underwent a radical shift, internalizing the apocalyptic narrative and relocating the New Age to the inner psychospiritual landscape. Hence, from the 1970s onwards, the New Age was revisioned as the replacement of an old, rationalistic, negative mind-set with a radically new state of human consciousness – famously characterized as the “Age of Aquarius.” Now promoting a constructive and participatory attitude, these Utopian communities and discourses were assimilated into the wider counterculture identified by sociologist Colin Campbell (1972) as the “cultic milieu.” This refers to a plethora of diverse new religious movements ranging from those stable entities with definite organizational structures, doctrines and rules of conduct, to much more fluid, inclusive and undemanding groups. Attracting individuals who are dissatisfied with mainstream options, cultic groups are often in flux and members may participate in more than one group. According to Hanegraaff, it was when the cultural milieu became conscious of itself in the late 1970s as constituting a more or less unified movement that the New Age Movement in the general and popular sense was born.

The General Sense New Age has a dominant American influence, from New Thought to the more recent human potential movement, and has significantly assimilated Asian religions. Adherents tend to be middle class, mostly Caucasian, and value emotional expressiveness, body awareness, and the belief that world transformation is dependent upon individual transformation. Classic texts include David Spangler’s *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age* (1976), Marilyn Ferguson’s *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980’s* (1979), Shirley MacLaine’s, *Out on a Limb* (1986), and James Redfield’s, *The Celestine Prophecy* (1995).

Having no founder, no set canon, binding creed or definite organization structure, the General New Age is broader and more diverse than what is normally understood as a religious tradition, yet one can still identify a number of shared themes/beliefs, practices and general characteristics. Hanegraaff names one of the defining marks of the New Age as “the psychologization of religion and the sacralization of psychology,” in which personal growth and religious salvation merge to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish between the psychological and spiritual. He delineates two major lineages for this occurrence: American metaphysical movements and Carl Gustav Jung. The American lineage is divided into two

separate but related streams. The first, the metaphysical movements, includes Mesmerism, Mind-Cure, the New Thought movement, and positive thinking/self-help popular psychology. The second, functionalist psychology, embraces William James, Carl Rogers, and humanistic psychology.

The second major source is Jung who Hanegraaff sees as the link between traditional esotericism, Naturphilosophie, Romanticism, and the New Age. Jung both psychologized esotericism by presenting an esoteric worldview in psychological term and providing a scientific alternative to occultism and sacralized psychology by filling it with the contents (e.g., archetypes, the transcendent function, and individuation) of esoteric speculation rather than empirical realities. The result was a theory which allowed people to talk simultaneously about God and the psyche, thus anticipating and producing the major themes of the New Age.

Fundamental to these themes is a “metaphysics of mind,” a philosophical idealism in which the distinction between mind and matter and subjective and objective reality is undermined. With mind or consciousness as the ultimate reality, the psychological takes on an unprecedented importance; the psyche is celebrated as the locus of the sacred and reality is seen as created by the mind. This leads to a sacralization of the Self, not the conventional individual ego, but rather an inner divinity, a Higher Self which is the source of all value and meaning. Unlike Asian monistic mysticism which aims at the dissolution of individual consciousness in the universal, impersonal consciousness of the Self, the New Age champions the infinite evolution of a unique individual soul/Self. A core mythology of the New Age is the journey of the Self through many incarnations towards increasing levels of spiritual knowledge with the world being embraced as a school for spiritual growth and life situations framed as being pre-chosen by the Self according to the lessons it needs to learn.

The basic ontology in the New Age is a Neoplatonic model of a hierarchical cosmos with a myriad number of spiritual beings existing on ascending planes of existence, each corresponding to progressively higher levels of spiritual development and culminating in an impersonal monistic Absolute. Pantheism; the concept that the Absolute is identical with the natural universe and Panentheism; the belief that the Absolute contains but is not reducible to the natural world are also popular models. Most importantly, the New Age rejects dualistic and materialist ontologies in favor of holistic and interdependent models.

In terms of practices, Hanegraaff has helpfully grouped an incredibly broad range of activities, from aromatherapy

to astral projection to channeling to various forms of “energy work,” into four major streams: channeling, healing and personal growth, New Age science, and New Age Neopaganism. Particularly significant to psychology is healing and personal growth. Hanegraaff has divided the wide array of alternative therapies falling under the broad rubric of healing and personal growth into two main currents: the holistic health movement and the human potential movement. Mention should also be made of “prosperity consciousness,” those American healing systems that claim the full attainment of health and spiritual wellbeing includes material prosperity and utilize positive thinking and affirmation techniques to this end. Many of these systems and texts fall under the rubric of “popular psychology,” with a classic example being Norman Vince Peale’s bestseller, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952/1990).

Fundamental to the holistic health movement is the belief that that each human being is a unique, holistic, interdependent, relationship of body, mind, and spirit and that healing is achieved through an alignment with the underlying power of the universe. It stresses the central role the mind plays in healing, believing that psychological conditions can both cause and cure physical illness. Hence, the individual is challenged to discover and take responsibility for the deeper meaning of his/her illness and use it as an instrument for inner growth. Varieties of holistic healing include acupuncture, biofeedback, kinesiology, homeopathy, iridology, reflexology, massage and bodywork.

Utilizing a range of therapies such as Holotropic breathing, encounter groups, gestalt therapy, Neo-Reichian bodywork, Bioenergetics, and shamanic consciousness, the basic goal of the human potential movement is to help people connect with and integrate suppressed and alienated parts of the self in order to develop their full human potential. It is strongly associated with Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology with its self-actualization needs and promotion of B-values such as wholeness, aliveness and uniqueness. With the increasingly assimilation of Asian mysticism, the movement has shifted more and more into the spiritual sphere, reflected in the establishment, in 1969, by Abraham Maslow and Anthony Sutich, of the “fourth force” of psychology, transpersonal psychology, in order to scientifically investigate altered states of consciousness, such as unitive consciousness, peak experiences, mystical experiences, self-transcendence and cosmic awareness. Seeing western psychology as only addressing the lower levels of the psyche and being inadequate for dealing with the higher or transpersonal levels which have traditionally been the province of spiritual traditions, particularly Asian ones, transpersonal psychology aims for a more integrated

approach to the human being through a synthesis of western psychology and Asian spirituality.

It should be noted, however, that although transpersonal psychology is commonly associated with the New Age and while they share many overlapping themes, transpersonalists have distanced themselves from the New Age. This is because transpersonal psychology is primarily an academic discipline (recognized by the British Psychological Society but not yet the American Psychological Association) rather than a spiritual movement, and many transpersonal psychologists have critiqued what they perceive as a superficiality and lack of rigor within the New Age movement.

Some general characteristics, mirroring the themes outlined above, have also been identified across the New Age. First, the General Sense New Age tends to be highly *individualistic* where each person is seen as the highest authority for themselves and as the final arbiter of truth and *experiential* with personal experience valued above tradition or dogma. Second, New Age practice tends, at least on the surface, to embrace a *democratic* position that rejects, or is highly suspicious of, various forms of authority; with most New Age practice claiming to be available for all individuals. Third, the New Age tends towards the *relativistic*, where contrasting claims about ultimate reality are seen as “different,” rather than “better or worse” or “true and false.” This relativism legitimates the incredible diversity and *syncretic/eclectic* nature of the New Age, whereby elements from different traditions may be simultaneously embraced and/or combined into new and innovative forms of spiritual activity. Finally, this eclecticism exists hand in hand with *perennialism*, where all spiritual traditions are seen as being paths to and manifestation of a common sacred Absolute.

The New Age has come under increasing scholarly attention with a growing number of sociological, anthropological and historical academic studies produced. In a groundbreaking sociological study Paul Heelas (1996) describes the New Age as Self-Spirituality: a spiritualized form of humanism that sacralizes the modern values of freedom, authenticity, equality, and the uniqueness and goodness of the individual. From a history of religions perspective, Hanegraaff’s (1998) seminal study of the New Age identifies it as “secularized esotericism”; the transformation of traditional esotericism as it adapted to a modern, scientific and disenchanted world. He identifies four mirrors of secular thought through which traditional esotericism was refracted: scientific materialism and positivism; the comparative study of religion; evolution; and modern psychology. In a later analysis, he draws attention to the impact of the capitalist market economy on spirituality during the 1980s and 1990s which has created a “spiritual

supermarket,” where religious consumers pick and choose those spiritual products which suit their own needs.

There have also been a number of attempts at psychological profiles of New Agers. These are helpfully summarized by Daren Kemp (2004) in his meticulously researched overview of different etic and emic approaches to the New Age. The most prominent psychological claim is that New Age thinking is regressive and narcissistic. Christopher Lasch (1987) states that the New Age attempts to restore the symbiotic state of primary narcissism by denying the reality of the differentiated material world. Similarly, M. D. Faber (1996) argues that New Age thinking is a regression to primary narcissism in which the adult is returned to an infantile state of omnipotence, magical wish fulfillment and merger with the pre-Oedipal mother. Leading transpersonal theorist, Ken Wilber has described the type of argument employed by Lasch and Faber as examples of the “pre/trans fallacy,” in which pre-personal (narcissistic) and transpersonal (genuinely transcendent) experience is conflated. However, Wilber (1991) himself estimates that four-fifths of the New Age is prepersonal and only one fifth is transpersonal.

In conclusion, due to its associations with commercialism and predominantly negative media attention, the term “New Age” itself has fallen out of favor. This is reflected in both the academic and commercial worlds: “alternative spirituality” is becoming the preferred term in scholarship, and it is more common in bookstores to see sections marked as “Spirituality,” or “Mind-Body-Spirit” than “New Age.” At the same time, practices and themes associated with the New Age are gaining in their mainstream acceptance and integration into existing social and religious structures (for example, the growing attention to “holistic” practices in mainstream medicine or the increasing use of Asian meditation in various forms of Christian practice). From this perspective, there is little evidence that the practices and concerns of the General Sense New Age are diminishing; indeed, if anything, the movements and practices that fall under the rubric of the New Age are growing and seem sure to shape future religious landscapes.

See also: [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Self](#)

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New Religions

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The Phenomenon

Right now, there may be more than 10,000 living religions in the world, each promoting a separate belief system and having its own organizational structure. What makes a religious group unique are its own distinct beliefs, practices, authority structure, and leadership. Quite often the group's history starts with a new claim to authority on the part of a new leader.

As used here, the term new religions, or new religious movements (NRMs) refers to groups founded after the year 1750. In recent years, such movements have been examined under the rubrics of religious experimentation, marginal religions, or oppositionist religions.

Quite interestingly, most of the religions that have ever been in existence were founded after 1750. The modern age, while being marked by secularization, is also marked by the appearance (and disappearance) of thousands of new religious movements. This may actually be directly related to secularization and the decline in the authority and political power of major historical religions. Democracy and the idea of freedom in religion and political expression create a free market for religious entrepreneurs. While declaring oneself to be in possession of a new religious truth was, in most parts of the world, quite risky or fatal 300 years ago, it carries little risk in the modern world.

In looking at any new religion, we should focus on the most important thing in forming its unique identity, and that is its beliefs. A belief system makes a movement distinct, and these beliefs change little over time, as opposed to other aspects of a group's history, which are likely to change, such as organizational structure. Many aspects of a group's history may be in dispute. Such facts as membership numbers are changing and often impossible to determine. Members of new religious movements, which are historically and developmentally young, show high levels of involvement and commitment, unlike many in the "old," historical, religions, and this attracts much attention. Some groups have received much media attention around scandals and crimes. This is because many of these groups deliberately and explicitly challenge existing traditions.

Looking at a particular religious group, our diagnostic and predictive efforts are severely hampered by the complexity of interactions between beliefs, individual members, leadership, and the surrounding environment. A new group's claim to originality and uniqueness in its beliefs may lead to what the world around it perceives as deviance, leading to friction and arousing resistance. What we have learned over the years is that predicting the future fate or development of a religious movement is impossible. Groups that today seem marginal may rise to prominence, while groups which are at the moment well-known decline into obscurity. The history of new religious movements is replete with such cases. Developments in religion today are not just international but global, and belief systems cross borders easily. A little known group in South America or Africa may gain followers in Europe or the United States.

Research on NRMs

Some NRMs have attracted the attention of researchers in psychology. Such was the case of the group described by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter, in *When Prophecy Fails*

(1956). The group was founded by a woman named Marian Keech in the study, claimed to have received messages from a space being named Sananda, a source that was both extraterrestrial (i.e., outer space) and divine (Jesus in Christian tradition) about the coming end of the world. On a specified date, which she announced to the world, all of humanity would perish, save the group membership, who would be taken away in a spaceship. This date was announced (December 1953), and group members expected the end of the world, and their own salvation by a spaceship sent by Sananda. After the prophecy failed, some of the group members maintained their faith. The group did not survive this crisis, but its disintegration was not immediate. Actually, the disconfirmation caused some committed members to proclaim their faith even more vigorously by proselytizing.

Mrs. Martin claimed that the world was saved by their full faith. She also made additional predictions about various disasters, which also failed to materialize. These events took place in Chicago in late 1953, but the leader continued her activities into the 1980s.

There are cases where prophecy failures have not led to a visible crisis or collapse, possibly because the prophecies are only subject to disconfirmation in terms of timing. Thus, a prediction about the coming end of the world in 1984 may be re-interpreted as true in principle, and only temporarily delayed by other events. A belief system may be flexible enough to accommodate such failures. Some groups have survived disconfirmation through some effort, but in other cases a direct disconfirmation of claims leads to crisis and sometimes decline or disintegration.

New religions in Western societies, often subject to external opposition, are mostly unstable groups with unstable members, which need extraordinary luck and leadership to survive and prosper. NRMs suffer from high rates of defection, and many religious movements have been started through schisms in existing groups.

We should pay attention to the special situation of NRMs as belief minorities in modern society, which dictates certain behaviors to the groups and their members. This means that NRMs are sometimes not completely truthful about their doctrines or practices, out of concern for possible majority reactions. At other times, deception in fund raising, practiced by some groups, may be justified in religious terms. New religious movements (NRMs) are groups in which membership in most cases, is achieved, rather than ascribed, through voluntary conversion and recruitment.

Numerous examples of millennial movements which followed on the heels of social dislocations, catastrophes, plagues, famines, and massacres, are known.

In pre-industrial societies, NRMs in recent times have been known as “crisis cults”, including so-called Cargo Cults and Ghost Dances. Cargo cults and ghost dances represent desperate efforts to cope with terrible realities. The Sabbatian movement in the seventeenth century is another example. It was a messianic upheaval unprecedented in Jewish history, which engulfed the whole Jewish world at the time. A crisis may sometimes lead to a complete surrender, and religious movements may express resignation and hopelessness. Some religious movements are attempts to respond to crisis by revitalizing collective faiths. An example of a successful revitalization movement is the case of the Seneca tribe in North America, suffering every possible disaster since 1650, and a total disintegration at the end of the eighteenth century, which was reborn in the nineteenth century thanks to a religious vision.

When religious renewal movements appear in modern societies, and attract individuals who are sometimes quite well off, their growth has been interpreted as a response to what has been called ethical and psychic deprivations. In modern society, joining an NRM has been interpreted as a response to crisis situations and individual alienation, relieved in the religious group setting with its promise of salvation.

Among historical cases of crisis religions in modern society, we should mention those in the United States in the nineteenth century, with a wealth of private and collective salvation movements, the rise of Spiritualism, and the founding of so many new religions (e.g., Christian Science, Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventists, Theosophy), and the United States in the 1960s, another Great Awakening of salvation movements.

When dealing with NRMs, we have to explain not only recruitment and growth, but also disaffection and failure, which are quite common. New religious movements in modern societies receive much attention, which is out of all proportion to their success in recruiting members or their overall growth. Many religious groups fail to grow because of their opposition to society around them, which leads to their encapsulation. They are able to survive, but not grow. Another problem NRMs face is that the number of seekers, motivated or open to identity change in any society, is limited, for social and psychological reasons. There are cases where joining an NRM will lead to improved individual functioning and the group environment is clearly therapeutic. There are also opposite cases of deterioration and pathology in individuals and groups where there is clear evidence of destructive and self-destructive behavior.

NRMs are often highly vulnerable, always struggling, and seeking legitimacy, while internally preoccupied with

issues of authority, leadership, and identity. New religions face both internal and external tensions as they struggle to achieve survival and stability in an environment that is often or always indifferent and non-supportive, and sometimes hostile. This struggle, often marked by desperation as outside pressures mount, colors the psychological development of both the group in its members in most new religions. What defines the dynamics of many NRMs is the actual presence of the founder or founders and the founding generation of members. Most groups are relatively small and so relationships and activities are more intense and personal. Because many members in NRMs are converts and the group relatively young, we can observe high levels of ego involvement, which do not characterize most members of historically established religions. While in “old” religions personal involvement takes the form of an identity label and often little else, in NRMs belonging is central and salient in terms of identity and action, and members typically devote much of their energy, time, and money to the group.

Charisma in NRMs

In terms of their organizational character, NRMs are based on charisma rather than any routinization or evolved hierarchy. In many new religions, leadership is personal and charismatic. Charisma is something that we may find hard to predict, but easy to recognize. It is needed to attract new recruits to a small group and keep them, and maintain the leader’s authority. In most cases, founders of NRMs have sufficient charisma to attract relatively the numbers of followers necessary to keep the group alive. An effective leader, in this case and in others, creates a mutually empowering relationship with his followers, at least for a while.

The charismatic and direct nature of leadership, in the absence of articulated structures involving multiple levels of hierarchy, will lead to internal tensions. The idea that leaders are chosen through the power of revelation or religious creativity legitimizes schisms. Being a successful leader facing both internal tensions and a hostile environment is a challenge rarely met. It requires creativity in the midst of competition and resistance, but some leaders, and some groups, have shown remarkable resilience.

One of the more interesting cases of leadership in a new religious movement in the face of adversity and opposition involves the tragic early history of the Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), informally known as Mormons, and sometimes as LDS, “Latter-day Saints” or

“Saints.” This Christian-polytheistic millenarian group was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844) in 1830 in northern New York State. At age 14 Joseph Smith declared he had spoken with God. Later he had other visions, during some of which, he claimed, an ancient book, written on four tablets, was given to him. This text has become known as *The Book of Mormon* and has given its name to the Church.

Smith announced to the world that he was “seer, translator, prophet, apostle of Jesus Christ, and elder of the church.” According to some reports, Smith was crowned as a king in 1844. In 1835 12 apostles were appointed and sent to gain converts in the United States. In 1835 Joseph Smith also prophesied the Second Coming. In 1837 the first Mormon missionaries arrived in Britain, and met some success, as well as some prejudice.

In its early years, the movement encountered much violence because of its unconventional beliefs and its advocacy of polygamy, which was first renounced in 1890 and then rescinded in 1904. Opposition forced the group to move first to Ohio, then to Missouri, and then to Illinois, where the city of Nauvoo was founded in 1840. In 1844 Joseph Smith and his brother were killed by a mob there. Again the members embarked on a long voyage away from the Eastern United States, led by Brigham Young (1801–1877) and settled in Salt Lake City. In 1850 Brigham Young became the first governor of the territory of Utah, which became a state in 1895.

Over the past few decades, much attention has been given to tragic cases of violence in NRMs, including the murders and terrorist attacks by Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, and mass killings in the Peoples Temple, the Branch Davidians, the Solar Temple, and Heaven’s Gate. The victims often included dependents of group members, and not just members. Deviant and destructive groups such as Aum Shinrykio and the Order of the Solar Temple must be viewed against a background of severe personal and social pathology, related to histories of vulnerability and deprivation among members. When it comes to evaluating the leaders in these cases, using the psychological (hypothetical) systems of individual personality and individual psychopathology in which we analyze our observations, one prominent issue is that of the limitations psychopathology puts on performance. Pathology must limit the ability to carry out complicated acts of destruction, or self-destruction, must be limited. Still, we see cases of religious leaders where presumed insanity still leaves much room for successful leadership and organizational talent, as well as fairly sophisticated acts of violence, which involve planning and preparation.

Summary

The impact of NRMs is much narrower than often perceived. They are small and marginal, and touch the lives of fewer than 1% of all religious believers. Most are so unstable as to be ephemeral. A look at the history of twentieth century NRMs is quite sobering in this respect. Movements that once seemed on the verge of becoming global powers are now remembered only by historians. Moral Rearmament (the “Oxford Group Movement”), the best known NRM of the 1930s in Britain and the United States, is today totally forgotten. The Jesus Movement of the early 1970s in the United States, with its hundreds of communes in major US cities, has similarly disappeared. It seems that high utopian excitement cannot be maintained for long, and that adolescence is more of a factor than is often realized. When enthusiastic members get older, commitment wanes in favor of more conventional pursuits. Nevertheless, like the phenomenon of conversion, NRMs deserve, and get, attention, just because of their rarity and intensity.

See also: [▶ Conversion](#) [▶ Prophets](#)

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New Testament

Jeffrey B. Pettis

The New Testament consists of 27 writings representative of various cultural and socio-political backgrounds. As canonical texts they represent only a portion of early Christian scriptures and were frequently used in preaching, teaching and worship. The Pauline letters constitute the earliest material, written in the middle of the first century CE. These include 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philemon, and Romans. Scholars are more divided on the authorship of

Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians, which are attributed to Paul, although probably written near the end of the first century. The remaining writings attributed to Paul and known traditionally as the Pastoral Epistles were probably written early in the second century. These include 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. The Pauline corpus as a whole evidences the processing of some significant and deeply felt religious experience by Paul. This processing (something Jung might refer to as the reforming of an *a priori* archetype, *Aion* pars. 73) includes the translating and re-presenting of what is understood to be the meaning of that experience by Paul, as well as the way(s) that experience both forms and is shaped by later Christian communities. Paul offers little detail with regard to his conversion (see Gal. 1.13–17; Rom. 1.1) suggesting the ineffable nature of the encounter. Several decades later the author of Luke-Acts presents a dramatic account of the event, giving nuances and psyche-soma movements to detail the encounter (Acts 9.1–22). These include Paul’s being acted upon by what is perceived to be a divine presence, heightened auditory and ocular sensory awareness and disorientation, and a definitive shift of consciousness as one being “set apart (*aphōrizmenos*) for the gospel of God” (1 Cor. 1.1). The experience orients Paul toward a new understanding with regard to the meaning and significance of the life, death and post-mortal accounts of Jesus, whom Paul understands to be *Iēsous Christos*, the “Anointed One” (1 Cor. 3.11). Religious experience occurs as a foundation for other writings within the NT canon. The author of Mark (ca. 70 CE) presents Jesus baptized in the Jordan River as the heavens split, a voice is heard, and a dove descends (Mark 1.4–13). Immediately Jesus is driven into a wilderness encounter with Satan amidst wild animals and angels (1.12–13). The author of Matthew (ca. 90 CE) roots the birth of the “Messiah” in a series of dreams (Matt. 1.18–2.23) which occur within a cosmic orientation and the coming of Magi from the East to worship the child. The author of Luke mixes angelic visitations and the pregnancies of Elizabeth and Mary in an elaborate birth narrative (Luke 1.5–2.20), while the school of John speaks of the “Word become flesh” (*logos sarx egeneto*, John 1.14), and tells of what appears to be a numinous encounter involving touch, hearing and sight (1 John 1.1–4). This notion of incarnation – inter-relating and inter-mixing earth and heaven – occurs as real, re-orienting, and efficacious event for the writers of the gospel narratives who tell in declarative story form (*euaggelion*) the Jesus event. For all these writers the relationship between the human and the divine must be negotiated. This includes the *Book of Revelation*, which as *apokalupsis* (“revealing”) literature having to do with

divine intervening and judgment (“a new heaven and a new earth”), gives especial focus to divinity definitively encountering the material realm. For none of the writings, apart from Paul, are scholars certain about historical authorship; rather, observations about religious, cultural, and socio-political biases and interests of authorship can be made. The Hellenistic orientation of the Gospel of Luke points toward a Gentile author writing for a Gentile audience. The heightened, visual, and urgent language in the *Book of Revelation* points toward an author connected with a community threatened by and/or suffering some kind of religious persecution. Later writings in the NT tend to emphasize the practice (*praxis*) of Christian faith. First Timothy 2.8–15, for example, has as its focus codes of Christian behavior (see also Eph. 5.22–33; Col. 3.18ff.; 1 Pet. 3.1–7), and the pseudonymous second century Letter of James is actually an extended parenthesis on moral behavior and how it is a Christian community should live. Other examples include the ritual instituting of Christian baptism (1 Pet. 1.3, 23; 2.2; 3.2), the development of church government (1 John and 2 John), and the Luke-Acts narrative presentation of the emerging church establishing itself in the Greco-Roman world.

See also: [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Christianity](#)

Nietzsche, Friedrich

[▶ Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism](#)

Night Journey

[▶ Miraj](#)

Nirvana

James H. Stover

Nirvana (Sanskrit) or *nibbana* (Pali) literally means “extinction” or “blow out.” Negatively articulated, it is

detachment from the cycle of death and rebirth (*samsara*) and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*). Positively articulated, it may be rendered as a transcendent, blissful mode of existence. To this extent, it is associated with both liberation and enlightenment and is the goal of Buddhism.

Siddhartha Gautama is said to have experienced two kinds of nirvana. The first nirvana was experienced at the moment of his awakening (*bodhi*) when he was meditating under the Bodhi Tree and actually became a Buddha. Subsequently, no longer bound by ignorance or the desires of this world, he carried on his earthly ministry for the next 45 years in this enlightened state of nirvana. His teaching (*dharma*) was that one could experience awakening or nirvana by practicing the Eightfold Path, a synergism of moral conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. The second nirvana was that which Siddhartha Gautama (now the Buddha) experienced at death. This *parinirvana* is the doing away with the personality and all links to the phenomenal world. It is the ultimate state or final nirvana. Having an ineffable character, it cannot be adequately conveyed with words.

Since Buddhism includes a variety of systems, it is not surprising that nirvana takes on various inflections. In Theravada Buddhism, which focuses on individual liberation, it is the *arhat* (literally, “worthy one”) that experiences nirvana for himself. Non-monks do not experience nirvana, but are inspired by the idea that they may some day, perhaps after many reincarnations, become an arhat. Theravada also reflects the idea of two nirvanas (see above). The first is nirvana with residue. It is experienced in this life, and results from the overcoming (or extinguishing) of desire, hatred, and delusion. Here, although enlightened, one is still experiencing the limitations of the personality: form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. The second is nirvana without residue, which is a complete break from the world of death and rebirth, i.e., *samsara*.

In Mahayana Buddhism we see the development of the *bodhisattva* ideal rather than the more narrow and so-called selfish perspective of the arhat. The bodhisattva, motivated by compassion, forgoes nirvana until others experience it first. Everyone is a candidate for nirvana, not just certain monks, since everyone possesses buddha-nature. In various groups of Mahayana Buddhism the nirvana/samsara dichotomy is deemphasized. These concepts are perceived more as a matter of spiritual perspective than a polarization of opposites. Hence, nirvana and *samsara* are both identified with emptiness (*sunyata*). They are best described as interdependent rather than self-existent. Thus, the strict boundary separating nirvana

and samsara is removed. This is seen in Zen where nirvana is not only revealed in meditation, but through such common activities as eating, drinking, and washing dishes. On the contrary, one Mahayana tradition denies the possibility of experiencing nirvana in this corrupt world altogether. Here, individuals, assisted by Buddhas or Bodhisattvas are reborn in a Pure Land, which provides the ideal setting for attaining nirvana.

Although nirvana is generally thought of as a Buddhist concept, its later Hindu understanding is associated with the realization that the soul (*atman*) is one with Brahman – ultimate or absolute reality. Typically Hinduism uses the term *moksa* rather than nirvana. In Jainism, nirvana may be attained by the most accomplished yogis at death. This is an eternal state in which suffering is absent. It is preceded by the continual reduction of life's activity and many reincarnations.

Commentary

Jung often stressed the differences between the psychologies of East and West and warned against problems resulting from Western people participating in Eastern practices. Nevertheless, he immersed himself in the study of Asian perspectives and found its rich symbolism provided many helpful parallels, such as nirvana. From a Jungian perspective nirvana symbolizes the mature unification process of individuation. It is the reconciliation of opposites through transcendence, which is indicative of self-realization. Here the symbols of the unconscious are appropriated by consciousness and the ego. Although the ego previously held the central place of the psyche, it now gives way to the Self – that archetype of wholeness which reconciles consciousness with unconsciousness. Just as nirvana in Buddhism is not annihilation, but reconciliation, so too is the process of individuation and the discovery of the Self.

Freud, less immersed in Asian psychology than his former student, indirectly engages this concept by borrowing Barbara Low's term "nirvana principle." For Freud, the nirvana principle is ultimately affiliated with the death instinct, which he juxtaposes with the libidinal life instincts. As an unconscious propensity away from the activity of life, the nirvana principle shows itself in such activities as rest, sleep, and even suicide. This retreat from the exasperating striving for life is a natural response and ultimate goal for a return to inactivity, ultimately transforming life back to its previous inorganic state. With the nirvana principle, Eros confronts Thanatos, destruction engages construction. Both Eros and Thanatos are helpful

aspects of life as they provide a necessary balance for activity. Trouble often ensues if they become imbalanced.

See also: [▶ Amita Buddha](#) [▶ Arhat](#) [▶ Atman](#) [▶ Bodhisattva](#) [▶ Bodhi Tree](#) [▶ Buddha-Nature](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [▶ Samsara and Nirvana](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Sunyata](#) [▶ Thanatos](#) [▶ Transcendence](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Nonduality

Hillary S. Webb

While "duality" as an ontological construct refers to a philosophical system in which existence is believed to consist of two equally real and essential substances (such as mind and matter) and/or categories (such as "being" and "nonbeing," "good" and "bad," "subject" and "object"), philosophies of "nonduality" emphasize the fundamental nature of reality as being a single, undifferentiated essence or consciousness. Although the term "nonduality" comes

from the Sanskrit word *advaita*, meaning, “not two,” forms of nondual philosophies have found articulation in a number of spiritual traditions around the world, including Christian and Jewish mysticism, Sufism, Taoism, Madhyamika Buddhism, and various branches of Hinduism. Certain Western theologians and philosophers (among them Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, and G. W. F. Hegel, to name a few) have also embraced forms of nondualism as being representative of ultimate reality.

It is, of course, important to point out that while a belief system may be identified as “nondual,” the various systems are not necessarily identical to one another. Despite sharing a similar ontological basis, nondual philosophies can be quite different in their particular perspectives and practices. For example, the extent to which each tradition rejects the reality or importance of the material world varies. Some nondual systems deny the ultimate reality of the phenomenal world to such an extent that all “knowledge” attained through the physical and mental senses is seen as being more or less empty of absolute value (e.g., Advaita Vedanta Hinduism). Others, while ultimately nondual, place greater value on the material realm, considering it to be the means by which one can come to understand the ultimately singular nature of reality (e.g., many of the Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana Schools of Buddhism).

For the purposes of this article, the term “nonduality” will be used as a way of describing spiritual systems based on the underlying presumption that the phenomenal world of forms is an illusion – albeit perhaps a *necessary* illusion – and that through making shifts in consciousness one can escape the delusion of separation and distinction created by the dualizing mind (perhaps most importantly and most challengingly, that of having a separate “I” self) and achieve what Evelyn Underhill (1911/2002) described as, “that perfect unity of consciousness, that utter concentration on an experience of love, which excludes all conceptual and analytic acts” (p. 371).

From Wholeness to Separation

In his book *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, author David Loy (1988) provides an interesting deconstruction of what has been suggested are the three stages that the mind passes through in its transition from an initial non-dual, undifferentiated state of consciousness, to that of a dualistic, ego-identified awareness (that is, one in which the “I-self” becomes dis-identified from all other aspects of existence).

To begin, one’s attention is drawn toward a stimulus. In this, nondual state of awareness, there is a split-second

of “being with” the object or sensation in its “bare existence,” during which time it is unnamed and undistinguished. The object of attention just is what it is, without judgment or distinction. This non-dualistic way of knowing is “unassociated with name,” “undifferentiated,” and “non-relational.” It is “immediate apprehension” and “direct sense experience” (Loy, 1988). This initial, often unconscious, state of awareness is followed by a second, in which what was initially perceived as a “pure concept” is now identified and made determinate by giving it a linguistic label. The original, undifferentiated stimulus becomes identified as, say, “cat.” The third and final stage in this process is what Loy describes as “an occasion for entrancement.” While in the first stage, I experience the initial, nondual sensation of a stimulus, and in the second I identify the stimulus and give it the linguistic label of “cat,” in this third stage, an emotional and/or intellectual response based on memory of past experiences attaches itself to the object of attention. For example, I see “my cat” and I imagine him sitting in my lap, purring, and I desire to pick him up. Or, I remember finding a dead chipmunk in my closet the night before and I am angry and shoo him away.

Falsely believing the conceptualizations created by language, memory, and emotion to be reflective of ultimate reality itself, pure consciousness moves deeper and deeper into a self-created illusion, until the world we experience becomes no more than a projection, a habitual fiction of our minds. With the world split up into a multiplicity of forms, linguistic labels, and emotional conceptualizations, life becomes a never-ending struggle between that which is considered to be “good” and therefore desirable and that which is “bad” and to be avoided. The aim of many of the nondual traditions is, therefore, to help the individual return to the initial, *spontaneous* stage of pure awareness that occurs just before the conceptualization process begins. By returning to a nondual state of awareness – one in which no distinctions exist between things (including the self) – the individual will cease to desire one thing over the other, and, in doing so, will cease to suffer.

Nondual Psychologies

What have emerged out of the nondual philosophies’ goal of complete liberation from suffering through achieving a state of “pure perception” (Loy, 1988) are psychological approaches to dealing with the human condition. This is especially evident when compared with the more mechanistic and behaviorally oriented perspectives of traditional Western psychologies, which originally emerged out of a scientific worldview based on the assumption that all

human functioning is the result of material causes. Given this ontological presumption that all things can be reduced to the material, some early pioneers in Western psychology (e.g., behaviorists John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner) denied consciousness as a thing in and of itself, believing all psychological states to be products of behavior. Others (e.g., Sigmund Freud) acknowledged the existence of consciousness but attributed mental states to be ultimately rooted in physical and/or external influences such as social environment, biochemical or evolutionary processes, personal history, and so on. In cases such as these, with biological and/or social elements seen as constituting the “first cause” of human suffering, the human psyche becomes entrapped in a kind of psychological determinism based on the assumption that the individual is unable to escape his or her history and/or biology unless some secondary factors are introduced. In contrast, however, within the context of several of the nondual traditions (e.g., Advaita Vedanta Hinduism, Madhyamika Buddhism), cause and effect are considered ultimately illusory. Rather than being a product of his or her environment, biology, or past history, nondual psychologies maintain that suffering originates within the consciousness of the individual, and that the answer to suffering lies in making shifts in one’s consciousness to return to a pure, undifferentiated state. Once the individual’s thinking changes, the outer world in which he or she exists will shift to an equal degree (Loy, 1988).

And, yet, even this notion of “change” may be considered illusory within the nondual context. While some psycho-therapeutic systems seek to first identify deficiencies or distortions in the psyche and then alter the mental behavior seen as responsible for these dysfunctions, nondual thinkers assert that attempts to “fix” ourselves only trap us deeper into our suffering, for to “fix” something implies a distinction between a desired state and an undesired state. But because from the nondual point of view all things are considered to be ultimately singular and undifferentiated, no one need “become” anything (Ajaya, 1983; Prendergast, Fenner, and Krystal, 2003).

As is said in the *Katha Upanishad*, “What is within us is also without. What is without is also within. He who sees difference between what is within and what is without remains trapped in the drama of struggling unceasingly to find that which is already within” (as cited in Ajaya, 1983: 66).

“Trying to transcend our human shortcomings and imperfections, our ‘sins and defilements,’ does not liberate them,” notes John Welwood (2003) in his essay *Double Vision: Duality and Nonduality in Human Experience*. Rather, he claims, “Only entering into them and suffering them consciously allows us to exhaust their momentum, move through them, and be done with them” (p. 159).

With this in mind, within the nondual framework, “problems” or “dysfunctions” are not considered negative events that must be resolved or avoided, but rather are seen as tools to lead one towards greater awareness of the true nature of the self. Instead of trying to alter one’s mental state, these systems suggest that one just “be with” phenomenal experience without judgment or attachment to outcome (Prendergast, Fenner, and Krystal, 2003).

What may perhaps be the most distinctive, and most challenging feature of nondual psychologies is what Underhill (1911/2002) calls the “last and drastic purgation” (p. 396), that is, the individual’s attempt to “dis-identify” with the illusion of having a separate ego or I-self. The goal of both nondual psychologies and the more materially/behaviorally based Western psychologies is to help the individual to “know” him or herself, and yet each does so from a very different frame of reference. While certain branches of Western psychology (e.g., various psychoanalytic schools) focuses on helping the individual become *more* identified with the ego (thereby establishing a stronger and more distinctive sense of self) as part of the development of the personality, many nondual traditions (e.g., Advaita Vedanta Hinduism, Madhyamika Buddhism, as well as many of the theist mystical traditions) assert that this reinforcement of the ego’s separateness from the rest of existence reinforces duality and leads to further isolation, anxiety, and, ultimately, suffering. In order for suffering to cease, absolutely and completely, only a total dissolution of ego-hood and return to a state of undifferentiated awareness will suffice. Nondual practices therefore seek to dissolve the individual’s sense of having a separate “I-hood” so that the individual can come to identify with his or her more true nature as pure consciousness (Ajaya, 1983).

Says the Hindu sage, Shankara (1978), “[The ego] robs you of peace and joy. . . By identifying yourself with it, you have fallen into the snare of the world – the miseries of birth, decay, and death” (p. 83).

For obvious reasons, the separation between the individual ego self and the unified, non-dual self is the hardest division of all to reconcile, for it requires that the individual surrender all that he or she identifies with as “I.” Through the various meditative and/or ascetic practices, a more comprehensive center of consciousness develops within the psyche of the individual. Subject-object, I-thou distinctions begin to dissolve, until the practitioner experiences a state of consciousness in which all conceptual distinctions disappear. This is the Buddhist awakening experience of *nirvana* or *satori*, or Hinduism’s liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth through *moksha*. It has been equated with the *illumination* experience described

by Christian mystics, as well as the experience of *ein sof* of Jewish mysticism and *fanaa* of Sufism, to name a few. Descriptions of this ineffable state of “no-self” vary from tradition to tradition, but is most consistently described as a state of being in which all multiplicity and distinction dissolve and the finite and differentiated I-self enters into divine union with the infinite Oneness of all existence. It is said that one who has achieved this state of consciousness still exists in and interacts with the phenomenal world, but now does not attach him/herself to the superimpositions created by the multiplicity of forms (Loy, 1988).

Says John Predergast, “When we awaken from the sense of personal identity, we also awaken from all our role identities, even as these roles continue. We are like the actor who snaps out of his trance while onstage and suddenly realizes that he had lost himself in his role. . . . Freed of the role identity, we are more authentic, transparent, available, and creative in the moment” (Predergast, 2003: 6–7).

While many of the beliefs and practices of nondual psychologies may seem irrational or even insane by nondual standards, nondual psychologies have, over the years, had a profound influence on the more human-centered Western psychotherapeutic practices, particularly within the field of transpersonal psychology. More recently, an emerging discipline of psychotherapeutic practice called “nondual therapy” has begun to emerge, one that seeks to integrate the philosophies and practices of nondual psychologies within the consciousness of a Western clientele (Predergast, Fenner, and Krystal, 2003).

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See also: [Buddhism](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Hinduism](#)

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Numinosum

Ann Casement

Numinosum is the term Jung appropriated from Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*, produced during the First World War. It is a philosophical work showing the influence of Schleiermacher, Marett, Husserl, and Neo-Kantianism but the central experience depicted in it, referred to as the *numinous*, particularly attracted Jung's attention. Otto adopted the term from a word coined from the Latin *numen* defined in the Oxford Dictionary as a presiding deity or spirit. The Latin dictionary further defines *numen* as “nod” or “will” both of which are important in Jung's usage of the term numinous. For instance, he often refers to a numinous experience as a “hint” that there are greater powers in the psyche than ego is conscious of. He was also influenced by Schopenhauer's use of the term “will” which derived from the numinous depths of the psyche. “Hence it is that we can often give no account of the origin of our deepest thoughts. They are the birth of our mysterious inner life” (Schopenhauer, 1883: 328).

Otto was a theologian who traveled widely in the West (Europe and the United States), the Middle-East (Palestine and Egypt), and the East (India, China and Japan). As the sub-title of the book shows, Otto pointed to the need to keep the rational and non-rational in some kind of relationship when dealing with religious matters. Furthermore, he depicted the *numinous* as both attractive and repellent in giving rise to feelings of supreme fascination and tremendous mystery, of nameless dread and fear, and of submergence and personal nothingness before the awe-inspiring directly experienced object, the numinous raw material for the feeling of religious humility. Otto quotes from the philosopher, William James, as follows: “The perfect stillness of the night was thrilled by a more

solemn silence. The darkness held a presence that was all the more felt because it was not seen. I could not any more have doubted that *He* was there than that I was. Indeed, I felt myself to be, if possible, the less real of the two” (Otto, 1923: 22).

Otto’s influence on Jung is to be found in frequent references to the numinous in the latter’s work from the mid 1930s on though Jung adapted this to fit with his empirical psychological approach to religious issues. For instance, he states it would be a regrettable mistake to assume from archetypal God-images that they prove the existence of God. Instead, they are “. . .the most we can assert about God psychologically.” But “. . .since experience of this archetype has the quality of numinosity, often in very high degree, it comes into the category of religious experiences” (Jung, 1958a: 59). Both writers draw on the *Book of Job* from the *Old Testament* but here again Jung’s focus is on the “psychic nature and effects” of “the extraordinary numinosity” of the God-images (Jung, 1958b: 363).

The Numinous Mystery of “I”-ness

The central place of the numinous in Otto’s theological reflections and Jung’s psychology has inspired a recent book, *The Idea of the Numinous*, from which the following extracts are taken.

The psychoanalyst, James Grotstein’s *Foreword* shows the close connection between Jung and Bion’s later work in their approach to numinosity. This is in sharp contrast to Freud as Grotstein makes clear in the following statement: “The concept of the numinous offers a dimension to our unconscious lives that is utterly missing in Freud” (Grotstein, 2006: xiv). As David Tacey says: “Jung does not challenge us with sexuality, but with something equally primary and perhaps more terrifying; the reality of the *numinous*” (Tacey, 2006: 219). Similarly, Grotstein points to the psychoanalytic realization of the primacy of affects rather than the primacy of the instinctual drives arising from the postmodern trend towards subjectivity and intersubjectivity where they “begin to approximate the numinous because they are, originally, infinite in nature – and numinosity does seem to constitute an expression of affect, all be it, an affect of a very particular and ineffably distinctive nature” (Grotstein, 2006: xii). Furthermore “Jung’s allusions to the numinous are many, and most often concern the emotional, affective experience of the unconscious. . .” (Huskinson, 2006: 202).

References from other contributors to the book underline Grotstein’s statement as follows: “Jung. . .personally engaged the ‘God within’ in a wholly psychological manner, and while he related to the *imago Dei* with the same passion and feeling for its mystery and awesome emotional power as did Otto, he related to it psychologically” (Stein, 2006: 43). “For Jung, God seemed to be both divine and, in a terrible way, anything but divine. . . ‘on the one hand a bloody struggle, on the other supreme ecstasy’” (Bishop, 2006: 120). “. . .archetypal representations referring to Apollo and Dionysus. . .show how they seem to be pointing at underlying psychic structures which are involved in the experience of that emotionally charged and consciousness-transforming *mysterium tremendum* which Otto named ‘numinous’” (Giaccardi, 2006: 138). “What Jung calls ‘the numinous’ and Derrida the ‘sublime’. . .engages the passions of . . .the struggle between the logos god and eros goddess. . .wrestling for the soul of modernity” (Rowland, 2006: 116). “The numinous affects what is uncontrolled in people and so can let loose dangerous psychic reactions in the public” (Main, 2006: 159).

Numinosity and the Alchemy of Individuating

Jung’s writings often demonstrate his psychological approach to analysis centered on the numinous as follows: “. . .the main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous” (Jung, 1973: Vol. 1, 377). The following writers acknowledge this as in Murray Stein statement: “The individuation process. . .typically includes experiences of a numinous nature” (Stein 2006: 34). John Dourley says: “Jung’s equation of therapy with the experience of the numinous and with religious conversion has little or nothing to do with religion as commonly understood” (Dourley, 2006: 172). “The psychological reality of Christ is the numinous experience of the self becoming incarnate in consciousness” (Dourley, 2006: 181). And Lucy Huskinson writes: “The numinous object cannot be forced or summoned into consciousness; it is not subject to the ego’s control. Rather, the numinous object is discovered in its autonomous manifestation where it calls the ego into response” (Huskinson, 2006: 200). As Edward Edinger says about Job in his inspiring “little” book *Encounter with the Self*: “If he were to decide that his misfortunes were all his own fault he would preclude the possibility of a manifestation of the *numinosum*. The

ego-vessel would be broken, would lose its integrity, and could have no divine manifestation poured into it. By holding fast to its own experience as an authentic center (*sic*) of being, the Job-ego brings about the visible manifestation of the ‘other,’ the transpersonal center” (Edinger, 1986: 43).

Jung says, archetypes possess a certain numinosity so that “(i)t is a psychological rule that when an archetype. . .becomes identified with the conscious mind of the individual. . .(it) produces an inflation of the subject” (Jung, 1958c: 315). “I think that Genesis is right in so far as every step towards greater consciousness is a kind of Promethean guilt: through knowledge, the gods are as it were robbed of their fire, that is, something that was the property of the unconscious powers is torn out of its natural context and subordinated to the whims of the conscious mind” (Jung, 1953: 156). The knowledge meant here is that of greater consciousness which leads to an enlargement or inflation of the ego. This is an inevitable part of the individuating process but not without its dangers as the ego that remains identified with “unconscious powers” may become grandiose. It is this grandiosity that can be punctured and bring the person crashing down to earth.

The Concept of Dread

At the time of the Enlightenment, the contents of the Bible, in particular the myth of the fall of Adam and Eve, came under fresh scrutiny depicting as it does the numinous conflict between good and evil. “Our angst-ridden age was heralded by Kierkegaard’s *The Concept of Dread*, which postulates that dread is a *prelude* to sin not its *sequel* and may precede a shift from a state of ignorance to attainment of new awareness” (Casement, 1998: 70) (Original italics.) Adam is forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but he cannot understand this for the distinction between the two would only follow as a result of his eating the fruit. “Thus Adam is in a state of ignorance when the voice of prohibition awakens in him a new set of possibilities, including the possibility of disobedience” (Casement, 1998: 70). Thus dread is a prelude to sin which precedes the attainment of new awareness, therefore, it follows logically on that dread is prospective.

This prospective component of numinous dread is akin to Jung’s thinking on the prospective or purposive nature of unconscious psychic contents. Huskinson contrasts Otto’s non-purposive interpretation of Job’s

numinous encounter with God with the purposive orientation of the “Jungian psyche” stating the latter is grounded in the *holy* as “that which instils meaning and content in the *tremendum* . . .(as the wrath of God). . .Without such mediation, we are unable to make sense of, and thus utilize, the creative energies unleashed in the numinous experience” (Huskinson, 2006: 208).

Bishop, in his turn, points to Goethe’s “. . .the Numinous, in the sense of the Monstrous” which links to “analogous experiences in the case of C. G. Jung” and back to the Goethe quotation in Otto’s work: “When our own eyes have glimpsed a monstrous act” (Bishop, 2006: 118). It is this monstrous core of the numinous that “shows” (from the Latin *monstrare* to show) ego consciousness the way towards what Jung terms individuation and the fateful transformations that are encountered by any individual journeying along that path. It is in this way that the Jungian psyche relates to the numinous.

See also: [▶ Apollo](#) [▶ Bion, Wilfred Ruprecht, and “O”](#) [▶ Dionysos](#) [▶ Job](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#)

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Object Relations Theory

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The concept of “Object relations” in psychoanalytic writings means relations with significant others and their internal representations, starting with infancy and the mother (“object” in psychoanalytic writings always refers to another person). Primitive, early, object relations are the starting point for personality development. Whereas, for Freud, the drive-based quest for sensuous gratification conditions the structure of the personality, object relations theorists argued that the individual seeks relationships before seeking gratification. The pattern taken by the individual’s relationship with others, internalized during early childhood, structures the adult personality as well as adult spirituality.

What is known as psychoanalytic object-relations theory represents the psychoanalytic study of the nature and origins of interpersonal relations, and, more significantly, of the nature and origins of internal, unconscious, structures deriving from interpersonal contacts and experiences. Present interpersonal relationships are regarded as the reactivation of past internalized relations with others. Psychoanalytic object-relations theory focuses upon the internalization of interpersonal relations, their contribution to normal and pathological personality development, and the mutual influences of internal fantasies and the reality of interpersonal relations.

Individual personality is formed through object relations patterns which are set up in early childhood, become stable in later childhood and adolescence, and then are fixed during adult life. The functioning of the adult personality depends on the maturity of one’s object relations. Object relations theorists propose that the ego, which is the center of the personality, seeks objects, and this is the basic drive animating the human personality. The role played by the mother’s constant presence during the first

stages of life makes it the factor around which personality is organized. The mode by which one manages one’s dependence on and differentiation from the mother is the structuring force of the individual mind. Psychoses and neuroses are accounted for by the complications of parental care rather than by eruptions of repressed desire.

Motivations experienced by the individual’s body alone are thus deemphasized, and, correspondingly, the formative significance of relating to others is played up. Sexuality is demoted to a secondary role. It may complicate the relationship with the object, but it does not by itself constitute that relationship. Body sensations carry messages, but are not equivalent to the contents of these messages. Communication is channeled through the surface of the body, the sensitivity of which intensifies with the child’s age. At all stages, bodily sensation is a means rather than an end of communication.

While classical psychoanalytic theory viewed the personality as an information processing system, in touch (or out of touch) with reality, in object relations theory the emphasis is on internalized and projected ideas, leading to a total distortion of reality. Compared to classical approaches, object relations theory is even more pessimistic. It views personality as less reality-oriented, and its structure as determined earlier in life. While in Freud’s version the “critical period” in personality development is the Oedipal stage, years 3–6 of life, here it is during the first year that object relations patterns are determined.

The common core of classical psychoanalytic theory and object relations theory can be summarized in the two concepts of a search (for an object or for instinctual gratification), and an experienced distance from the object. Both approaches agree that it all starts with the young child and its understanding of sex, birth, and family relations, with the inevitable results in the form of confused and confusing ideas that stay with us for life. Object relations theory claims that the process all starts very early, which means that the cognitive confusion is greater and deeper.

Donald W. Winnicott asserted that at the original point from which all humans start there is already a relationship. The baby is an aggregate of sensations and



body parts without an organizing principle, which may only be provided by the parent “who is holding the child” physically, and whose presence functions as an external perimeter that contains the various stimuli and so orders them into a meaningful whole. Thus, relationship precedes individuality. There is no such thing as a baby, because there is always, attached to it, someone caring for the baby. The lack of individual separateness in the initial stages of life goes beyond the fact of physical dependence. It involves the absence of inner cohesion.

At this point the child creates what Winnicott calls the transitional object. This object appears when the reassuring internal representation of the mother is projected onto a tangible item, such as a blanket or a soft toy, which the child invests with special meaning and identity. The transitional object helps the child bridge the frustration of parental unavailability. That object is simultaneously internal and external: it carries a subjective meaning, but, being tangible, it is also objectively perceived. In later life the soft toy or blanket is substituted by games, artistic creativity and intellectual discussion. Such activities provide individuals with spaces where they can externalize their internal images. Winnicott’s concept of transitional states and transitional objects has been applied to religious ritual and belief, assuming that religion tries to elaborate an experiential space between the self and reality.

Regarding religious beliefs, most object relations theorists follow Sigmund Freud in viewing any religious belief system as based on projections. While Freud emphasized the projection of the father, the so-called Oedipal object, object relations theory suggests that what is projected is the maternal image, formed earlier in the child’s development. The objective existence of the caring figure, without whom the infant would not survive is the source of fantasies about caring spirits, who promise eternal love and boundless happiness. As the developing child internalizes hope and trust he comes to live within an inner psychic universe of unseen, but providential presences. When he is subsequently introduced to supernaturalist beliefs through cultural experience (God, angels), he takes to it naturally.

Cultural fantasies expressed in so-called mystical experiences reflect an attempt to recreate the mother-child symbiotic encounter. The early experience of creating a substitute for the mother, known as the transitional object is the model for cultural rituals and beliefs. This experience is one case of transitional states, where a real stimulus near the person starts a fantasy process in which object relations are projected on it. This “substance of illusion,” as Winnicott described it, is the starting point for the creation of art and religion. The behavior in an

individual of turning to “spiritual search” is most likely to be caused by a loss of a significant other or a significant relationship. This search makes possible an imaginary contact with the lost object. Loss or absence in the child’s relations with parental figures may lead to the appearance of religious experiences.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Objective Psyche

Michael Conforti

In 1633, Galileo Galilei was forced to his knees by the Catholic Church, and with his hands on the Bible, demanded to retract his comments that the earth was not the center of the universe. Drawing on his years of scientific inquiry, he found that it was the *earth* which rotated around the sun and not the other way around. His was a heliocentric view of the universe, not a geocentric approach. Perhaps using science to refute religious dogma was not the best approach in the 1600s, but Galileo’s search for truth knew no limits. Those near him during the inquisition heard him whisper under his breath the words, *eppure si muove* (and yet it moves), as he completed his testimony to the Papal See.

Eppure si muove speaks to the issue of relative and fixed space and movement. The Church needed to see the earth as center of the universe to justify its position of moral and spiritual supremacy. However, his utterance that “the earth moves” urges us to re-consider the relationship between relative and objective meaning. This theme remains crucial to our understanding not only of the world, but also the human psyche and in many ways has influenced the practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Jung's discovery of the Objective Psyche closely parallels Galileo's findings, in that the ego, like the earth, was not to be viewed as the center of the personality. For Jung, the objective psyche allows us to determine the distinction between a relative and subjectively derived meaning from what is objective and invariant. While in relation to the ego, the matrix for this objective psyche exists independently of the conscious mind, and its contents are not acquired through personal experience. Like a compass pointing due north or a bird's innate capacity for building intricate nests and traveling thousands of miles during its migratory journeys, there is an internal wisdom and directionality within the psyche - a psychic "due north."

Like his mentor Freud, Jung sought to understand the workings of a personal unconscious. Our personal history clearly shapes our experience of the world. Freud's theory of the unconscious evolved into a topological model, comprised of a number of invariants, such as the *id*, *ego* and *superego*. While these can be viewed as inherent, universal components within the psyche, existing much like our biological inheritance, Freud tended to stress the personal aspects of each. On the contrary, Jung's discoveries identified the existence of non-personally derived, archetypal substrata inherent within the psyche, which continued to shape and effect the personality even without the conscious awareness of the individual.

Analogous to the workings of the biological unfolding of human life, we see that individual form is directly influenced by our genetic, personally acquired inheritance – blue eyes, brown hair, etc. However, prior to the emergence of these individual features, they exist *in potential* until a series of pre-figured, morphogenetically determined processes unfold.

Developmental biologists have discovered that fetuses develop in highly characteristic ways, according to a seemingly pre-determined schedule. At about eight weeks the heart beat can be heard. At different stages other features appear, as if by magic, in virtually the same sequence as all other babies since the beginning of humanity.

This unfolding of specificity in human form occurs against the backdrop of a set of universal, objective processes encoded within the body. The human psyche also follows a deeply etched riverbed traversed by humanity since the beginning of time. What are these silent codes that guide the development of our physical, psychological and spiritual life? The plethora of books available on infant and child development informs us about these "predictable," highly patterned processes.

While the emotions and perceptions of the ego and personal unconscious are influenced by experience and subjective reactions, the matrix from which the objective

psyche gathers its impressions and information exists independent of individual experience.

With the eye of a scientist and the heart of a mystic, Jung sought to understand these other influences shape human experience. Familiar with the Freudian ethos, he realized that drive theory did explain the commonality of experience found throughout our collective history. Freud looked to drives, especially sexuality, as the primary mover of human experience. Jung understood the limitations of these ideas. Through many years studying different cultures and religions, he posited the existence of a set of universals within the human psyche. This point was especially evident in one of Jung's last recorded interviews, *Face to Face* (BBC Interview with John Freeman, October 22, 1959). Jung was asked if he believed in God. He smiled and said that he did not *believe* in a God, but *knew* there was a God. Belief, he explained, relied on faith, while knowing is arrived at through direct experience. He explained that every culture throughout history has some form of a God as a central component of their world. The constancy and universality of this *image* of a God suggests that a God or "God concept" exists as a living entity and an objective fact within the psyche.

The extensive body of Jung's writing details those universal portals which every individual must traverse, and a methodology for distilling an objective, ontological truth from the Scylla and Charybdis of bias and personal opinion. Like Galileo and the biologists who came after him, Jung demonstrated the effects of these objective aspects of life on individual development. He suggests that the Objective Psyche functions much like a magnet, constantly oriented towards true north. Consciousness, on the other hand, functions all too often as a faulty compass creating due north wherever one chooses to point it. Truth, meaning, and spirit, become relative terms, shaped by the individual's needs. One can take an objective fact, for instance entrance into mid-life, and create one's own meaning of it. For instance one can say, "I don't feel any different" and "I can do almost all of the things I did in my forties." Or, "I feel so much older and more worn out," and on and on. Clearly each of us will experience mid-life in our own way. The point here is that no matter how we subject this stage of life to the Procrustean Bed of personal opinion, there remains an objective fact - namely that one is at the mid-point of life.

Religious traditions have provided a rich body of literature regarding the universal features of these stages of life, and an awareness of the deep psychological and spiritual needs related to each stage. Mid-life requires us to attend to a particular set of issues that were not part of our concerns during the first half of life.

The existence of an “objective,” ontologically based psychology is now supported by discoveries in the sciences, which address the concept of self-organizing systems. The self-regulatory functioning of the body is one illustration of such tendencies. For example, our blood sugar levels are governed by the presence of what are called *periodic attractors*. Like a pendulum moving 30 degrees to the right or to the left, biological rhythms are governed by an innate ordering principle, which serves to maintain our metabolic reactions within a certain, pre-determined range.

Jung’s (1969) work on the symbolism in the Mass provides a compelling illustration of the objective psyche. In his essay, “*Transformation Symbolism in the Mass*,” he looks beyond individual experience to the ontological, symbolic meaning of the Mass. Writing of its psychological significance, Jung states:

- ▶ ...human consciousness (represented by the priest and congregation) is confronted with an autonomous event which is taking place on a “divine” and “timeless” plane transcending consciousness, is in now way dependent on human action, but which impels man to act by seizing upon him as an instrument and making him the exponent of a “divine” happening. In the ritual action, man places himself at the disposal of an autonomous and “eternal” agency operating outside the categories of human consciousness. . . . It is something outside, something autonomous which seizes and moves him (1969: 249–250, 379).

Jung takes a similar approach to symbolic imagery found in dreams, fantasies and hallucinations. Traditional psychotherapeutic approaches seek to understand symbols through clients’ associations. Jung looked to the inherent, innate and universal meaning of these symbols. This approach is illustrated in the following analysis of a dream.

Dream

- ▶ I am visiting Florida during a March vacation. I go to the beach on a lovely sunny day, and suddenly see baby turtles emerging from a mound in the sand. Hundreds of them are emerging from the sand, and moving towards the sea. It is such a beautiful sight, that I am moved to tears.

While it is essential to ask for the client’s associations and feelings about the dream, for this example, I will present the approach used in working with the Objective Psyche in clinical material.

Since this dream presents the motif of turtles hatching, we need to enter the “field” (Conforti, 2004) of turtles born on Florida beaches in March. While it is possible for the patient and analyst to have

impressionistic or circumstantial information about this topic, it is important to seek out objective and accurate details about the birth of turtles and the conditions required to insure successful completion of the gestation period. In this dream the turtles hatch in March. However, turtles actually *lay their eggs* in March, and they lay burrowed in the sand as a protection against the hot Florida sun. We also learn that predation results in only 1 out of 10,000 hatchlings ever surviving to maturity. Now with these objective facts, we are prepared to work with this dream.

The material provided by our specialist, enables us to see that something within the patient’s psyche, and perhaps also within the analysis, is occurring out of sequence. What has just begun its gestation is now hatching, during a time when prospects for reaching maturation are minimal, at best. The requisite incubation period was, for some reason, interrupted, thus jeopardizing what was seeking expression within the patient.

Let’s now explore the image of the turtle. One of the most salient features of turtles is their shell. Their protection is external, whereas with humans and most other mammals the protective skeletal structure is internal. In many earlier life forms, protective defenses remained external. So the turtle’s ecto-skeletal make up may symbolize an early and somewhat primitive system of defense, which is also very vulnerable. In the dream, what is attempting to born is a somewhat primitive and necessary system of defense, but one that will in all probability, not survive.

Recent studies have found that our conscious mind generally perceives only 7.4% of the information available in our field of data. Translated, this means that the ego is aware of only a small portion of its experiences. Jung’s discovery of the objective psyche encourages us to look beyond the confines of what we generally perceive, thus allowing for a wisdom far greater than that derived from our conscious minds.

Religious traditions and the world’s great spiritual teachers have always spoken about a world far wiser than the one we habitually inhabit. Spirituality is an accessing of the transcendent. In virtually every religious tradition, one has to undergo a series of rituals meant to lessen the hold of conscious reality, to allow for the unknown to enter. Meister Eckart echoes this point: “All the different religions traditions can be traced back to the experience of communion with the Ultimate. . . (with) the one and the same mystical core-experiences of the sense of ultimate belonging” (Fitz-Gibbon: 2008: 196).

Our wisdom traditions seek to move beyond the veil of conscious reality a greater knowledge for our understanding about life. This point is beautifully made in *Saul Lieberman: Talmudic Scholar and Classicist* (2002).

Discussing Rabbi Lieberman's approach to reading a sacred text we find him suggesting that:

- ▶ (...) We are always on safer ground when the reading is sure, and all that remains for us to do is to explain it. Of course a scholar's understanding of a given text depends on what he brings to it: the more he knows the less likely he is to engage in conjectures not justified by the facts; the less likely he is to doctor a text that should be left alone, the less likely he is to offer a labored, intricate explanation, when he should be saying; "I don't know." On the other hand, the more he knows, the more likely he is to select the correct meaning and when necessary, amend one that has been corrupted in transmission (2002: 4/5).

In summation, Jung's discovery of the Objective Psyche follows in the rich traditions of scientists, theologians, mystics and investigators of the human mind, whose search for knowledge about the psyche brought them into dialog with the eternal wisdom traditions, which have shaped personal and spiritual development throughout human history.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God Image](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Meister Eckart](#) [▶ Personal Unconscious](#)

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Occultism

Paul Larson

The term "occult" means hidden and has been used for over two centuries to describe a variety of esoteric

philosophies grounded in the Western philosophical tradition. Esoteric doctrines are passed among a smaller group of people than the outer more public, or exoteric forms of spirituality and philosophy. The word "occult" and its derivatives are often used in a pejorative way by religious conservatives who view the wide range of views subsumed under this label as evil and involving devil worship. Rejection of esoteric forms occurs in many religious traditions, but has an especially violent history in the Christian tradition.

Occult philosophy, or the western esoteric tradition (WET) is thoroughly syncretic, blending ideas, practices, and symbols of the divine from several streams. Western culture incorporates elements from both classical Greece and Rome, with ideas and practices taken from Judaism. Christianity represents a fusion of Judaic roots and Greco-Roman philosophy. Into this mix is poured ample elements of eastern thought and practice. Religious syncretism characterizes the Western esoteric tradition.

From the Greek inheritance comes the font of much Western magic with Pythagoras (ca. 582–507 BCE). He first used the five-pointed star which has now been adopted by Wiccans and other pagans as a religious symbol. Among the oldest of sources, we have less of his thought preserved. He was insightful and skilled in mathematics, his theorem on right angled triangles is the contribution for which he is best known, but he also saw the relationship between length of string and pitch, another aspect of mathematics. He founded the first Western mystery school in Croton, Italy.

The mystery religions of classical Greece, the Eluesian mysteries, those of Dionysos and the Orphic mysteries were a major counter-current to the exoteric worship of the Olympian deities. Other mystery religions in Egypt (Isis) and the Levant (Cybelle and Attis) came to be very influential in Roman times as well as Mithraism which incorporated much of the earlier Persian dualistic religious stream from Zoroastrianism. By the time of the late Hellenistic world and the advent of Rome as the dominant political force in the Mediterranean, all these stream flowed together and mixed. From this the broader streams of Hermetic philosophy and Gnosticism emerged as traditions that would be passed on to the West after the rise of Christianity and the fall of Rome.

Plato's thought tended to dominate the world of Hermetic philosophy through a series of great teachers who were prominent Neo-Platonists. The first important figure was Plotinus (205–270 CE) whose cosmology of emanations was carried on by his students. Porphyry (233–309 CE) and Iamblichus (245–325) were among the followers of Plotinus whose work became the basis of later



medieval esoteric philosophy. Iamblichus brought in expertise in ritual to a tradition that had been mostly contemplative, the philosophical Neo-Platonists. Their influence on occult philosophy is significant. The divine is unitary and ineffable, all other forms of spirit are emanations of the One. The creator God, or demiurge is different from the One. From that creator god other spiritual beings emanate, and ultimately the material world and all its creatures are formed. In Iamblichus this evolutionary path was expressed by way of a mathematical analogy, unity, dyad, triad and hebdomad (group of seven). It was also expressed philosophically as *nous* (unity, mind), *psyche* (duality, subject/object). The goal of life is re-unification with the divine, Porphyry believed this could be accomplished through contemplation, but Iamblichus held that ritual (theurgy) is needed. He contrasted theurgy with thaumaturgy, the working of ordinary magic for such mundane things as love, health and wealth. These were and remain the staples of common esoteric practices. But theurgy, or the divine work, has always been held out to be the loftiest ambition.

There is a strong dualistic trend in Neo-Platonism; the realm of spirit, of Platonic forms has a fundamental reality and goodness that the material world lacks. Indeed, the body-mind dualism that permeates much Western thought shows the influence of Plato and his later followers. This dualistic trend found favor with early Christian mystics in the rejection of the temptations of the flesh in favor of ascetic practices. Christians, both orthodox and heretical, as in the gnostics, were influenced by the heightened dichotomy of self-mortification for achieving spiritual growth.

Another stream from classical antiquity feeding into modern occult philosophy is the Hermetic Corpus, or group of writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, or thrice-great Hermes; especially important is the dictum from the *Emerald Tablet*, “as above, so below.” This references the basic tenet of magic that action on either the spiritual or material plane can influence the other; this belief underlies the theory of efficacy of both prayer, ritual invocation or evocation, and divination. Gnosticism is a more specific stream within this broad area of occult philosophy, and includes Christian as well as non-Christian versions.

The hermetic tradition became influential in the Renaissance. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) translated Plato into Latin and wrote on astrology, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1499) translated the Hermetic Corpus and works of the classical Neo-Platonists into Latin. Finally, Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) went too far and was burned at the stake for his promotion of hermetic ideas.

Alchemy was a practical as well as an esoteric discipline and one of its leading exponents, Paracelsus (1493–1541) influenced Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) in the development of what is now known as hypnosis. The Elizabethan magicians John Dee (1527–1608) and Edward Kelley (1555–1597) are important figures as well. But the leading theoretician was Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) whose *Three books on occult philosophy* (1531–1533) remains a much reprinted classic. Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) is a key figure in the recovery of the status of imagination. His principle of “*verum factum*” holds that truth is established when an idea is able to bring forth some sort of concrete manifestation or invention. Ideas help create new realities.

In the seventeenth century, the Rosicrucian manifestos stimulated a lot of interest in occult philosophy, though the origins of those documents has never been completely determined. The alleged secret college of adepts sent teachings to benefit humans. Whatever one makes of their foundational mythos, the Rosicrucian documents circulated widely and would later find echoes in any sort of claim of communications from higher spiritual forces or entities, including the Theosophic movement and many modern authors who channel dictated material, (e.g., the Seth material etc.)

The modern occult movement begins in earnest in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with such figures as Allesandro di Cagliostro (1743–1795) and Francis Barrett (ca. 1770–1780) who wrote *The Magus* in 1801. Albert Louis Constant who wrote under the name Papus was another early figure in nineteenth century occultism and his work on the Tarot remains a classic.

But by far the most important developments occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century when a variety of movements including Theosophy and the Golden Dawn were started. It was in this late Victorian era that modern occultism got a big boost in popularity. In mid to late 1800s the spiritualist movement reached its zenith and the use of mediums to contact spirits of the dead was relatively common, which encouraged many charlatans to practice as well as more sincere believers. Theosophy was a spiritual movement started by Elena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891). She is the first of the modern mediums who writings claim to be received or channeled from Eastern “ascended masters.” Her co-founder Col Henry Olcott (1832–1907) helped spur on a revival of Buddhism and was among the first Westerners to adopt Buddhism. He even designed the Buddhist flag. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a group of ceremonial magicians centered around the figure of

MacGregor Mathers (1854–1918). In Bavaria, Adam Weisthaupf (1748–1830) formed an occult group known as the Illuminati. All sorts of conspiracy theorists now use this group as a starting point for their worries. The New Thought movement of Phineas Quimby (1802–1866) sparked a whole host of esoteric schools, including Christian Science.

Of all the psychologists and psychiatrists, Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) has been the most favorable in his assessment of the value of occult philosophy, or the western esoteric tradition (WET). He made the detailed links between personal unconscious processes and the wealth of cultural symbolism that has been handed down across time and culture. Myth is a primary medium for conveying symbolic meanings in the collective or cultural unconscious. He wrote about how alchemy is an apt metaphor for the transformations of personality than can occur in analysis or psychotherapy.

Witchcraft was revived, reconstructed or brought out into the open in the early twentieth century, depending on how you view the likelihood of a continuous tradition as Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) claimed. His lineage survives as do numerous off shoots as well as some others who have announced their teachings. By the 1960s and 1970s a widespread interest in the occult led to a flowering of all sorts of new amalgams of ancient lore. Some sought to reconstruct the ancient pre-Christian pagan religions of Europe, others sought to come up with their own blends of traditions and new age thought.

See also: [Gnosticism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Ritual](#) [Wicca](#) [Witchcraft](#) [Zoroastrianism](#)

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Oedipus Complex

Robert Quackenbush

Oedipus Complex, in psychoanalytic theory, is based on the premise of incestuous fantasy in which a child desires the parent of the opposite sex. Sigmund Freud (1921/1955), the father of psychoanalysis, held that children pass through a stage from about ages three to six in which they develop a lively curiosity about sex. The son desires his mother and wants the father dead. The daughter wants sex with the father and hates the mother. (“Electra Complex” may be used to label the girl’s feelings.) Freud believed that many adult neuroses originate with the Oedipus Complex. He derived his theory from the Oedipus myth revealed in the oracles of ancient Greece.

The tragic story of Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King) has been told many times through the ages in literature and plays. According to the fifth-century BC play by Socrates, an oracle tells King Laius and Queen Jocasta of Thebes that a son will be born to them who will kill the king and marry the queen. When the son is born, the king and queen order a trusted slave to take the infant to the mountains to die. The slave takes pity on the infant and gives him to a childless royal couple in Corinth who name him Oedipus. When Oedipus grows into young manhood he goes on a journey to Delphi and meets an oracle who tells him that he will kill his father and marry his mother. Knowing this, he is afraid to return to Corinth and goes on to Thebes. At the crossroads between Corinth, Delphi and Thebes, he gets into a quarrel with an old man in a chariot who pushes him aside to go past him on the road. The old man attacks Oedipus with his long scepter. Oedipus grabs the scepter and kills the old man. Still at the crossroads, Oedipus is confronted by Sphinx who demands that he solve a riddle of what walks on four legs in the morning, what walks on two legs in the afternoon, and what walks on three legs in the afternoon. Oedipus guesses the right answer, which is a man (baby – adult – old person), and Sphinx leaps to her death over a cliff. His trails over, Oedipus goes on to Thebes and receives a hero’s welcome for saving the city from Sphinx. He is crowned the new king to replace the old king who has just died. At the same time he marries the widowed Queen Jocasta. They have a happy life together and produce four children. Years later, a plague strikes Thebes. Oedipus learns that the Gods are angry and brought forth the plague because the murder of King Laius has not been avenged. He goes on a quest



to find the murderer and discovers that the old man he killed at the crossroads was King Laius, his father, and that he has married his mother, Queen Jocasta. The terrible news reaches the castle and the queen hangs herself in the bedroom she has shared with her son and Oedipus's father. Oedipus is so horrified by what he has done that he pokes out his eyes with a pin from her body. Blinded, he goes into exile and mysteriously dies in Athens. Thus ends the myth of Oedipus, who brought about the very prophecy he had been trying to escape from all his life.

Freud (1927/1955) extended the Oedipus Complex into his theories about religion. He called religion "the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus Complex, out of the relation to the father." Ernest Jones (1953) wrote that Freud "grew up devoid of any belief in a God or Immortality, and does not appear ever to have felt the need of it." Thus, Freud looked at all religions with a jaundiced eye. Based on his theory (1923/1955) of the ego, the id, and the super-ego, he called God the super ego. To him the super ego is ever observing of the contact between the ego and the id and intervenes when necessary to impose rules and regulations that were learned by every person from their early caretakers during their formative years. The id is our basic needs for survival and comfort and wants what it wants when it wants it. The word "no" is not in id's vocabulary. The ego helps the id to get what it wants in an appropriate manner. Freud's theory places the super ego in the role of a father who supervises the interaction between the id and ego.

The theory of the presence of oedipal phenomenon in religious ideation has not been accepted as a universal construct and has been argued since its inception. Some of Freud's followers, including Otto Rank, Alfred Adler, and C. G. Jung, broke away from Freud and went on to form their own schools based on their own philosophies. Rank (1929) elevated the maternal role at the expense of the paternal by arguing that the experience of birth is the primary psychological event. Adler (1948) explored non-sexual reasons for neurosis, in particular the role of inferiority feelings. Contrary to Freud's emphasis on the sex drive, Adler believed strivings for social success and power as fundamental in human motivation. Jung (1906) did not support Freud's ideas of infant sexuality and went on to develop his own theories about the psyche, which he called the Self. He said, "as for Freud's therapy, it is at best one of several possible methods and perhaps does not always offer in practice what one expects from it in theory." Freud (1914/1955) responded by saying, "All the changes that Jung has proposed to make in psycho-analysis flow from his intention to eliminate

what is objectionable to the family-complexes, so as not to find it again in religion and ethics." He explains that to Jung "the Oedipal Complex has a merely 'symbolic' meaning: the mother in it means the unattainable, which must be renounced in the interests of civilization; the father who is killed in the Oedipus myth is the 'inner' father, from whom one must set oneself free in order to become independent."

The debate between psychology and religion over Freud's Oedipus Complex theory has been ongoing for over a hundred years. On the religious side of the debate some analysts and theologians have called for an abandonment of the oedipal theory. Brothers and Lewinberg (1999) argue that "so-called oedipal passions" result when children, forced to dissociate aspects of themselves as gendered, find these aspects of their self-experience embodied in caretakers. They go on to say, "In light of recent advances in theory and research that starkly reveal the shortcomings of oedipal theory, we ask the reader to consider laying Oedipus to rest once and for all." They also question the Oedipus myth by calling attention to Kohut (1981) and his last paper in which he argued that analysts have "reversed their usual stance as regards King Oedipus by taking the manifest content – father, murder, incest – as the essence." Kohut believed the story's "most significant genetic dynamic feature" is that "oedipus was a rejected child" and that a replacement is needed for the Oedipus myth.

In keeping with the thoughts of Brothers and Lewinberg (1999), Judith Van Herik (1983) suggests that Freud's psychology and his theories about religion "are about patriarchal culture, and therefore about mental expression and reproduction of gender asymmetry." She states that Freud's oedipal theory acts as a constraint that has the same psychical structure as religious attachment to the father. Freud's psychology, says Van Herik, "is primarily about the socialized son and secondarily about the socialized daughter in a situation where father-son dynamics are primary." More directly, Gary Ahlskog (2001) says that he is not sure there is even one piece of Freudian theory so sacrosanct that it deserves allegiance and discipleship, which "proper" therapists are supposed to endorse. He goes on to say, "Nominating the Oedipus Complex won't do because of the need to specify 'which Oedipus Complex?' – an indefinite and endless task, since variations of sexual, aggressive, social, and inter-generational conflict are as innumerable as there are individuals on the planet." On a positive side, Esther Menaker (1995) says that the individual self is structured by the internalization of emotional experience with significant others – preferable with those who we have admired and to whom we have been attached and that the "other"

lives on – is immortalized – within ourselves. Theologian Paul Tillich (1956) confirms this by stating simply that it is “the activity of God *within man* that grounds and makes possible the experience of God *beyond man*.”

Today many caregivers in the mental health field do not believe as Freud did and include spirituality with psychotherapy. Hyman Spotnitz, M.D. (1985), for one. He is a pioneer of group therapy and founder of Modern Psychoanalysis that addresses the treatment of traumas incurred from infancy to the Oedipal stage that Freud did not believe were treatable. He believes that Freud was wrong in calling God the super-ego. To Spotnitz (1990) religion and going to church is ego supportive and a strong ego is what enables a person to tolerate all their impulses, all of their thoughts, all of their feelings, and what everybody else is doing to them.

The debate over Freud’s Oedipus Complex is never-ending. Through it all, as Spotnitz, Tillich, and others have maintained, every school of thought works in psychology and religion when it is ego enhancing and helps people to find their way in life and to realize their full potentials and to form meaningful, lasting relationships. This is confirmed in a forward Erik H. Erikson (1963) wrote for his book *Childhood and Society*. He says that Freud was once asked what he thought a normal person should be able to do well. Freud is reported to have said: “Lieben und arbeiten” (“To love and to work”).

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Oedipus Myth

James Markel Furniss

The Myth

Oedipus is a mythic Greek character thought to originate in Mycenaean folklore. His story is cited by Homer and was central in the lost Theban cycle of post-Homeric epics, before becoming a subject in tragedies written for the Festival of Dionysius in fifth-century BC. Athens, most notably in the three Theban plays by Sophocles. Sophocles’ plays provide the best-known modern version of the myth, though the story differs to varying degrees in works by Aeschylus and Euripides as well as in the epics and in the original folklore.

The first of Sophocles’ Theban plays in story chronology (though second in order of composition) is *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The play begins as Oedipus, King of Thebes, is asked by his subjects to rescue the city from a devastating plague. Brother-in-law Creon brings news from Apollo’s oracle at Delphi that the murderer of previous Theban king (and former husband of Oedipus’s wife Jocasta), Laius, must be destroyed before the plague can end. In the course of the ensuing investigation we learn the back-story of Sophocles’ drama.

Laius and Jocasta, King and Queen of Thebes, have been warned by an oracle that Laius would die at the hands of his own child. (One reason offered for this



terrible fate, found in other mythic sources, is Laius' former kidnaping and rape of the boy Chrysippus.) When a male child is born to the couple, they send him off to be abandoned on Mt. Cithaeron. The servant charged with the task, however, takes pity on baby Oedipus and gives him to a shepherd, who then delivers the infant to childless Corinthian King Polybus and Queen Merope. They raise Oedipus as their own. When, as an adult, Oedipus hears a prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother, he leaves Corinth to escape the dire prediction but on the road argues with and kills another traveler, who (unbeknownst to Oedipus) is his real father, Laius. Oedipus proceeds to Thebes, where he answers the riddle of the Sphinx, thereby freeing the city of this monster's murderous siege and winning the hand of Queen Jocasta.

Sophocles has Oedipus conduct a determined murder investigation, which reveals the facts of his past one by one. By the play's end Jocasta has committed suicide and Oedipus has both blinded himself and insisted to new king Creon that he be exiled from Thebes.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, last in composition and second in story order, we meet Oedipus some twenty years after his exile from Thebes; he is a blind old man being guided by daughter Antigone. When they reach the village of Colonus, Oedipus discovers that he is in a grove sacred to the Eumenides. Here, he claims, Apollo's oracle has foretold his life's journey will end and the hosts of his burial ground will be blessed.

Oedipus's other daughter, Ismene, arrives with news about his sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, and Creon, all of whom have heard oracles about the significance of Oedipus's burial site and who want control of that site for various reasons. King Theseus of Athens then arrives, hears Oedipus's story, and gives his sanction to Oedipus for burial in the holy grove, for which Athens will be blessed in future conflict with Thebes.

Later in the play Oedipus bitterly denies the entreaties of Creon (who attempts to compel Oedipus to come with him and must be thwarted by Theseus) and Polyneices, who – like his uncle/great-uncle – wants to avoid the consequences of Oedipus's burial in a foreign land. Oedipus proclaims his innocence of responsibility for his terrible fate and denounces both Creon and his sons for maintaining his banishment before they knew of his new favor with Apollo. Oedipus condemns both sons to die in the assault on Thebes Polyneices is about to launch. Zeus's thunder signals Oedipus that his time has come to die. Theseus alone is allowed to see the place of Oedipus's death, for its blessing on Athens depends upon its secrecy.

Oedipus is present in *Antigone* (composed first though last in story chronology) as the spirit of the curse which has been fulfilled in the deaths of his sons in their battle for control of Thebes before the tragedy begins. The play tells the story of Antigone's refusal to accept Creon's decree that Polyneices be denied burial because he had led the attack on Thebes. Their conflict of wills results in the deaths of Antigone, Haemon (Antigone's fiancé and Creon's son), and Eurydice (Haemon's mother and Creon's wife), as well as Creon's ruin by the play's conclusion.

Oedipus and Freud

The Oedipus myth, particularly *Oedipus Tyrannus*, has had an enduring fascination for western audiences and readers, as evidenced by many retellings of the story and perennial production of Sophocles' original. Sigmund Freud was both exemplar and student of that fascination when he proposed that the Oedipus story – specifically, patricide and mating with one's mother – depicts a universal stage of human development. This proposal occurred as Freud formulated his theories of psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Freud's Oedipal theories begin in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), although there is preliminary mention of them in earlier letters. Freud claims that there exists an Oedipal relationship between all children and their parents in early childhood.

- ▶ According to my already extensive experience, parents play a leading part in the infantile psychology of all persons who subsequently become psychoneurotics. Falling in love with one parent and hating the other forms part of the permanent stock of the psychic impulses which arise in early childhood, and are of such importance as the material of the subsequent neurosis. But I do not believe that psychoneurotics are to be sharply distinguished in this respect from other persons who remain normal. . . . [they] do no more than reveal to us, by magnification, something that occurs less markedly and intensively in the minds of the majority of children. Antiquity has furnished us with legendary matter which corroborates this belief, and the profound and universal validity of the old legends is explicable only by an equally universal validity of the above-mentioned hypothesis of infantile psychology.

I am referring to the legend of King Oedipus and the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles.

Freud supports his idea that the story depicts a universal psychic reality by emphasizing the uniquely enduring power of the Oedipus myth to move audiences:

- ▶ If the *Oedipus Rex* is capable of moving a modern reader or playgoer no less powerfully than it moved the contemporary Greeks, the only possible explanation is that the effect of the Greek tragedy does not depend upon the conflict between fate and human will, but upon the peculiar nature of the material by which this conflict is revealed. There must be a voice within us which is prepared to acknowledge the compelling power of fate in the Oedipus, while we are able to condemn the situations occurring in . . . other tragedies of fate as arbitrary inventions (Brill, 1995: 274–276).

Over time Freud's Oedipus theories became a crux of his construct for human psychosexual development and crucial in his understanding of neurosis. He also attributed the development of such superego constructs as religion to repression of the Oedipal drives. In the third stage of development ("phallic," age 3–6), children experience the Oedipal "complex," which involves erotic attraction toward the opposite-sex parent and jealousy toward the same-sex parent. In normal development a "dissolution" of the Oedipus complex takes place when fear of castration by the father (or, for girls, envy of the father's penis together with a belief that castration has already been brought about by their mothers) causes children to repress their incestuous desires. This results in the beginning formation of superego, Freud's conception of an unconscious psychic component which enforces the father's/culture's prohibitions. Freud also suggested that the individual psychic process of the Oedipus conflict and its dissolution originally played out collectively in history. He first addresses this theory in the final section of *Totem and Taboo* (1913), "The Return of Totemism in Childhood." In this passage Freud imagines a "primal horde," Darwin's speculative idea of an early human society, in which a group of brothers have banded together and killed their father, who had banished them from the social group to deny their lust for their mother, his mate.

- ▶ We need only assume that the group of brothers banded together were dominated by the same contradictory feelings towards the father which we can demonstrate as the content of ambivalence of the father complex in all our children and in neurotics. They hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power, but they also loved and

admired him. After they had satisfied their hate by his removal and had carried out their wish for identification with him, the suppressed tender impulses had to assert themselves. This took place in the form of remorse, a sense of guilt was formed which coincided here with the remorse generally felt. The dead now became stronger than the living had been, even as we observe it today in the destinies of men. What the fathers' presence had formerly prevented they themselves now prohibited in the psychic situation of "subsequent obedience" which we know so well from psychoanalysis. They undid their deed by declaring that the killing of the father substitute, the totem, was not allowed, and renounced the fruits of their deed by denying themselves the liberated women. Thus they created two fundamental taboos of totemism out of *the sense of guilt of the son*, and for this very reason these had to correspond with the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex. Whoever disobeyed became guilty of the two only crimes which troubled primitive society (Brill, 1995: 884–885).

Freud ends this imagined scenario with his "conclusion that the beginnings of religion, ethics, society and art meet in the Oedipus complex" (Brill, 1995: 895).

Oedipus After Freud

Freud's linkage of myth with psychic processes has had a profound impact on subsequent psychology as well as on western culture generally. Over the last century a great number of thinkers in diverse disciplines have responded to Freud's Oedipal theories either to confirm, deny, or retool to fit their own purposes. Oedipus has also become, post-Freud, an even more pervasive presence in literature, the fine arts, and popular culture.

One important effect of Freud's Oedipal theories has been their impact on the interface between psychology and religion. The idea that a myth could depict a universal psychic reality raised the possibility that individual psyches are retellings of a greater, mythic reality, where – by searching, interrogating, recognizing – human beings can find their place in a coherent whole. James Hillman remarks, "What holds us to Freud. . . is not the science in the theory but the myth in the science," and also, "Freud brought in myths and myth brings in God" (1995: 102, 124).

For some in psychology – behaviorists, for example – myth and gods are not objective enough means or content for the conduct of scientific inquiry. Others, however,

who share some of Freud's basic ideas (such as the importance of the unconscious), have continued and expanded what the Oedipal theory began in what is broadly referred to as Depth Psychology. The central early figure in this endeavor was Carl Jung, a one-time disciple/colleague of Freud, who split with his mentor over a fundamental difference in their concepts of human nature.

Jung expanded upon Freud's recognition of the universality of Oedipus in his idea of a "collective unconscious," where primal forms (archetypes) of all human experience exist in a subliminal reservoir, from which individual psyches draw guidance and energy as they seek to realize the potential of their own natures. While Freud implies that the Oedipus myth is a later, cultural construct representing the historical experience of certain instinctive sexual drives, Jung's collective unconscious suggests a more complex origin for myth. In a manner similar to dreams for an individual, myth emerges into consciousness out of the collective unconscious, from whose mysterious depths it derives symbolic content implying a natural teleology not limited to physical evolution of the species. Jung claimed, for instance, that myth and dream contain evidence for the existence of Self, an archetype of the collective unconscious which is the universal potential for human beings: a perfect merger of individual and the whole of creation, a concept analogous to God.

Jung's extension of the Oedipal theories to the collective unconscious and to his study of world myth and symbology can be cited as having a seminal influence on the development of later twentieth-century psychological fields that emphasize human spirituality over instinct, such as Transpersonal Psychology and Archetypal Psychology. Broadly speaking, these may be thought of as religious psychologies in that they premise a link between individuals and enduring, perhaps timeless, forms. In such approaches to psychology, the entire body of human myth – including all the stories of Oedipus – is a context in which the stories of individual lives declare their meaning.

Also, Freud's Oedipal explanation for the origins of religion instigated reactions and accelerated the development of the Psychology of Religion, a field to which such figures as Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm have made significant contributions. Among contributors to this field are psychoanalytical theoreticians who revise founder Freud's Oedipal theories and – instead of regarding religion as a neurosis to be outgrown – propose a newly harmonious relationship between psychoanalytic theory and religious thought.

See also: [Collective Unconscious](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Dreams](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Oedipus Complex](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Self](#)

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Om

Fredrica R. Halligan

In the Eastern religions, which grew out of the Vedic tradition, sound vibrations are thought to have great power in both the spiritual and physical domains. *Om* is believed to be the first sound of the universe, the creative power from which all else emerged. Pronounced A-U-M (Ah-oo-mm), all sounds are believed to be contained in this *Prandava* or primal sound. A favorite mantra (chant) in Hinduism and Buddhism, *Om* is believed to be the Name – the very Presence – of the Absolute. Many individual or communal rituals begin or end with the chanting of *Om*.

In psychotherapy, if meditation is recommended, the practice of mantra meditation may be very calming and/or uplifting for the client. *Om* is an appropriate mantra for many clients. An alternative sacred word for meditation in the Judeo-Christian tradition is "Shalom" which ends with the same sound vibrations.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Hinduism](#) [Mantra](#) [Meditation](#) [Psychotherapy](#)

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Omega Point

Fredrica R. Halligan

The forthcoming unity of all humanity was defined as the “Omega Point” by Jesuit paleontologist and mystic, Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. (q.v.) In most mystical traditions, the idea of union with God is preceded by the experiential recognition of loving unity with all humanity. Sai Baba (q.v.), for example, recently has stated that:

- ▶ All the resources of nature like air are available to all irrespective of nationality or creed or race. This is the unity in diversity that has to be realized. . . . All should seek to live as brothers and sisters. No one should criticize any nation, faith or culture. When you cultivate this broad outlook, your culture will be respected by others. It is this spirit of unity that the world needs today (Sai Baba, 1995: 214).

In medieval times, the Sufi mystic Ibn al-‘Arabi (q.v.) wrote of similar, cross-cultural breadth of love:

- ▶ My heart has become capable of every form:
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the Pilgrim’s Ka’ba
And the tables of the Tora and the book of the Qur’an.
I follow the religion of Love; Whatever way Love’s camels
take,
That is my religion and my faith (cited in Halligan, 2003: 1).

With the rapid advance of globalization, our society is currently undergoing many challenges related to the interface of various cultures, both those within our midst and those external to our borders. Psychotherapy frequently deals with relationship issues that are tinged by cultural differences. When the therapist maintains a broad, accepting perspective she or he can more readily facilitate resolution to the interpersonal and group struggles that are inevitable as we try to unite into one world.

See also: [▶ Ibn al-‘Arabi](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#) [▶ Teilhard de Chardin](#)

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Oracles

Paul Larson

The term “oracle” can refer to a specific person who practices divination or to the mechanism used to read the portents (e.g., cards, trance possession, reflecting bowl of water, etc.). The oracle is the medium either as person who channels the guidance from the spiritual realm, or who interprets the display pattern of some physical oracle device.

Two important personal oracles have received some broad public attention. The oracle of Apollo at Delphi is perhaps the most famous oracle, but that position has been vacant since the Christian Church persuaded the Roman emperor Theodosius I to close pagan temples in 393 CE. The oracle, known as the Pythia, had provided guidance to both persons and city states since the eighth century BCE., so it represents a very long standing social and spiritual tradition. One of the most famous sayings from classical Greek antiquity was reputed to have been inscribed on the lintel to the temple of Apollo at Mt. Parnassus, where the oracle resided. “Gnothi seauton,” or “know thyself” echoes across the ages as surely sage advice.

The service (Gk. chresmos) provided was “gnosis,” or knowledge (Burkert, 1985). There was an implicit assumption that a special type of knowledge was needed to resolve a troubling circumstance in the individual. This shows the therapeutic effect of knowledge, an idea which continued throughout the gnostic traditions of the mystery religions and early Christian heresy. It is also the basis upon which reason was used in philosophy, there is something corrective about knowing the truth, whether it is in abstract matters or mundane affairs needing decision. Healing is a special type of gnosis, it involves two aspects, diagnosis and treatment. The diagnostic phase is easily seen as open to oracular spirituality. The means of healing can be prescribed in dreams as will be described below.

There are many theories about how the oracle entered into an altered state of consciousness. Some speculated that the temple lay upon a fissure where intoxicating fumes emerged. The priestess would sit over the fumes. Others speculate that the intoxicant was some psychoactive plant, cannabis or opium being common and known for their psychotropic properties. But evidence remains mixed and more speculative than consistent. Without reference to intoxicants, there is clear evidence of human ability to enter into trance and perform oracular functions, so the specific details are less important.



The Pythia illustrates one type of oracle, a localized connection between earth and spirit. This oracle remained at Delphi and was indeed part of the sacredness of Delphi. At the very heart of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, where the Pythia made her pronouncements was the Omphalos, a large stone believed to be the navel of the world. This anchored the place at a spiritual level dating back to animistic times, well before the classical polytheisms. Because of this, those that seek advice must come from afar, this creates a link to the act of pilgrimage as a motive force in human spiritual psychology. The record of the pronouncement mostly concerns the issues of important people, Alexander the Great consulted the Pythia, or affairs of state. He also later consulted the older oracle of Amun at the Siwa oasis in Egypt. Little remains of the pronouncements for more mundane querants.

Healing also was a possible focus as in the case of the temples of Asklepios where the oracular function came to the querant themselves in dreams and the divination in the exegesis given by the priest upon awakening in the morning (Kerenyi, 1959). Epidauros was the main site for the cult of Asklepios, though the practical advantages of a dispersed expertise in healing led his cult to spread more widely in the Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean. The island of Kos had a sanctuary and in the heart of Rome on an island in the Tiber River the temple of Asklepios, Latinized as Asklepios, was established. Asklepiian dream incubation illustrates an interesting variation on the oracular process. In most instances the divine speaks through the seer, but in this case it comes to the seeker by night. Part of the ritual was entering into sleep with a group of fellow seekers.

An oracle who is still practicing, is the Nechung oracle. He is the state oracle of Tibet and serves the court of the Dalai Lama as leader of the Tibetan people in exile (http://www.tibet.com/Buddhism/nechung_hh.html). The movies *Kundun* and *Seven years in Tibet* portray this figure. Like many oracular experiences, the film portrays a fairly active trance state with convulsive movements and guttural vocalizations. Like many senior Tibetan religious officials he is considered a tulku that is a continued stream of incarnated lamas, or teachers. Since oracular traditions in this region date back to the aboriginal Bon religion, we can see in this instance a layered texture to the spiritual experience. The Vajrayana Buddhism overlays an earlier animistic spirituality. The modern form of spirituality was influenced by a degree of formalism, yet more archaic forms such as spirit possession are retained and shaped by the newer world view of Tantric or esoteric Buddhism.

In modern revival/recreation of Norse religion, the oracular “seidh” ceremony is used to offer advice on

personal decisions. The deities that possess the oracle in Seidh, of course, are Norse or Germanic in mythic frame, Odin, for example. The same basic formula of spirit possession serves to channel spiritual advice and guidance. The time of spirit possession is a liminal one; the oracle is physically present in the mundane world, but is mentally and spiritually engaged in the realm of the spirit and literally sees and hears things from beyond the veil. Indeed, the physical use of a veil to cover the head is a fairly common physical prop for the performance. In the seidh, one person allows him or herself to become possessed for the duration of the ceremony and enters into a trance state for the pronouncements.

There is a formal process of querants coming forth and asking specific questions. As with all divination, this is a dialectical process, that is, one governed by the formal social and communicational properties of question and response. The advice of the oracle is couched to be responsive to the needs of the querant, yet bringing in an outside perspective on the decision or trajectory about which the querant seeks guidance. The advice is also vague enough to leave a number of things unclear. This adds a degree of openness to unfolding possibilities that makes the divination of an oracle a flexible guide rather than a deterministic or fatalistic prediction.

See also: [▶ Apollo](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Divination](#) [▶ Esoteric Buddhism](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Tulku](#)

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Original Sin

Clodagh Weldon

Original sin is the Christian doctrine which says that because of the sin of Adam and Eve, original innocence is lost and all subsequent human beings are born into a state of sinfulness. The doctrine states that human beings do not commit this sin but rather contract it from the Fall

of Adam and Eve (CCC: 404). In other words, original sin is an inherited condition.

The doctrine of original sin was most famously formulated by North African theologian St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) following his conversion to Christianity (Augustine, *Confessions* 8:12). His theology was deeply influenced by Plato's separation of the body and soul, a dualistic vision in which the pure and immutable soul is trapped in the prison house of a corruptible body. Upon his conversion to Christianity, Augustine renounced all pleasures of the flesh and, embracing the spiritual world, chose the celibate life. But he soon realized that the mind could not suppress the desires of the body, and concluded from this that there must be some defect in human nature. That defect, he argued, came from original sin.

Although the words "original sin" do not appear in the Bible, the doctrine of original sin is implicit in the writings of the apostle Paul. In his letter to the Romans, Paul says that it is by one man that sin entered the world (Romans 5:12) and that by one man's disobedience all were made sinners (Romans 5:19). Central to Augustine's argument is the premise that all of humanity was summed up in Adam. Thus when Adam disobeyed God by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was not just Adam who sinned but all of human nature that sinned. Augustine argued that original sin was transmitted through concupiscence, an idea affirmed by the Council of Trent (1545–1563). As a result of original sin, humanity is condemned. Hope for redemption comes with the death of the second Adam, Jesus, who atones for the sins of humanity. Participation in his death by baptism washes away the stain of original sin (Romans 6:3–11).

Not all agreed with Augustine in his day. Most notable was a British monk by the name of Pelagius. He argued that human beings sin not because they are predisposed to do so due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve, but because they utilize free will and choose to imitate bad example. He was condemned by the Church at the Council of Orange (529 AD), and it was Augustine's view that prevailed. Some believers today, most notably the Disciples of Christ and Mormons, side with Pelagius in rejecting the doctrine of original sin as unbiblical. They argue that human beings are only responsible for the sins that they commit, and not the sins of the fathers (see for example Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:20; Jer. 31:29–30).

Commentary

From Freud's perspective, original sin has a parallel in the guilt of oedipal transference, an idea he articulates in his

Totem and Taboo. Here Freud argues that the killing of the primal father creates man's sense of guilt. In "Our Attitude to Death" (14: 292–293), Freud argues that the Christian doctrine of original sin further allows us to deduce the nature of this primal guilt. If humanity, he argues, is redeemed from original sin by the sacrifice of Jesus, then by implication there must have been a murder. Freud therefore concludes that original sin is the primal crime of the killing of the primal father.

Jung was deeply critical of the traditional Christian doctrine of original sin, his principle critique being that it implied that man rather than God is responsible for evil. However, he thought that if psychologically interpreted, it is "...of profound therapeutic significance" (Jung 16 § 186), particularly if understood as an expression of the archetype of the shadow.

See also: [▶ Adam and Eve](#) [▶ Augustine](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Genesis](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Plato on the Soul](#) [▶ Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#)

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Orpheus and Orphism

Mark Greene

The image of Orpheus as a semi-divine mythological being and perhaps an actual person has inspired countless



works of art for well over two and half millennia. Within the domains of myth and art, he is primarily associated with his renowned abilities as poet and musician. Many versions of his story describe the captivating power his music exerted over anyone or thing near him while he played his cithara. Equally compelling is the story of the death of his newlywed bride, Eurydice, and his journey to the underworld to attempt her retrieval. He also plays a crucial role aboard the *Argos* accompanying Jason and fellow Argonauts on the quest for the Golden Fleece. Perhaps most intriguing, from the perspective of religious studies, is his purported role as the founder of a non-Hellenic renunciation cult called Orphism that condemned animal sacrifice and produced a large body of works describing a cosmogony and eschatology that stand in sharp contrast to those described in Homer and Hesiod.

The Orphic doctrine views all of humanity as semi-divine in origin due to our having sprung from the ashes of the Titans after they had tricked, killed and then eaten the infant Dionysos, the divine ruler of the universe. In retribution, Zeus immolated the Titans but only after the infant god had been ingested. Those calling themselves followers of Orpheus based their belief system upon this divine somatic origin myth. Accordingly, the Orphic believer was asked to renounce the mundane and concentrate on cleansing himself of his Titanic ancestry through purification rituals and certain life-style choices. Such precepts included vegetarianism and the prohibition from using any sort of animal product, including wool, as it was believed the animal's soul could actually be human and that shearing it could cause the soul harm. The initiate was told of the possibility that several incarnations would be necessary as preparation for his eventual apotheosis. These followers of the priest-initiate Orpheus are also believed to have propagated the literature that scholars nowadays refer to as the *Orphica*. These unearthed texts describe the worshippers' insistence on bodily purification so that the soul could be deemed worthy of returning to its original divine state in the afterworld.

The figure of Orpheus with his lyre first appears in the early to mid-sixth century BCE. on the metopes of the Sikyonian *monopteros* at Delphi, although his name is spelled Orphas (ORΦΑΣ). In Greek literature towards the middle of the same century, he is referred to as "famous Orpheus" by the poet Ibykos. Also beginning at this time his image is often depicted on vase paintings. No mention of Orpheus is made anywhere in Homer or Hesiod, those two poets whose works provide us with the earliest recorded Greek myths. This is probably due to the rapid southward movement and re-popularization of the cult of Dionysos which occurs less than two centuries after the written appearance of Hesiod's *Theogony* and Homer's

epics. It is from Dionysos' legendary birthplace of Thrace – a territory considered wild by the Greeks and on the fringes of the geographical domain encompassed by the principal Hellenic cults of worship – that Orpheus is also said to have come.

Whether a historical figure named Orpheus actually lived and delivered the mysteries, or *teletae*, which are said to reside at the ritual heart of such Orphic beliefs is an open question.

Commentary

Thematically, Orpheus occupies an intermediary position between the Dionysian (earth, moon, body) and Apollonic (sky, sun, spirit) forms of worship. Indeed, most versions of the myths recounting his story acknowledge these contrasting influences upon him in their attribution of paternity to Apollo and his death by dismemberment at the hands of the Maenads (female worshippers of Dionysos). Originally a worshipper of Dionysos, Orpheus travels a narrative arc from the chthonic, earthy domain of Dionysos to the rarefied heights of Apollonian worship.

Images of Christ as Orpheus appear frequently during early Christianity, examples of which can be seen in the catacombs of Peter and Marcellus in Rome and in the catacomb of Domitilla. In most cases, Orpheus is seen holding his lyre surrounded by animals that sit calmly at his feet. Arguably, there are many thematic parallels between Orpheus' life and those of the life of Christ. Although Orpheus communicated his message in song and word and Christ just with words, the results were captivating for all those within earshot and highlighted by accounts of miracles surrounding their actions. Both were said to have ventured to the underworld and both died violent deaths on behalf of the salvation of their respective believers.

Viewing the story of Orpheus psychoanalytically reveals a fixation based on the unsuccessful resolution of psychodynamic conflicts experienced during the Oedipal stage of psychosexual development. The death of Eurydice on their wedding day may indicate a son who is still sexually fascinated with the mother and for whom the wife's image carries no potency. The hero's descent into Hades where he converses with the King and Queen of the underworld represents the ego's attempt to negotiate with the subconscious aspects of the parental images that comprise his superego. The warning to not turn back and look at Eurydice as he leads her to the upper world is reminiscent of the incest taboo. That Orpheus does indeed turn to look back at Eurydice suggests an attempt to resolve his Oedipal anxiety by actually violating the taboo. His losing his wife a second time causes him to suffer a great depression.

The Orphic doctrine's primary tenet of repeated reincarnation with an eventual return to godliness stated as a goal appears an attempt to reduce the individual's anxiety over dying. The image of returning to a divine state functions as compensation for life's mundane qualities and the individual's limitations, especially mortality. Curiously, Orpheus establishes a cult of renunciation. In Freudian terms this is reminiscent of the child's attempts to manipulate the parent by controlling the amount and types of food ingested. This behavior indicates further regression to the anal and oral stages.

From the point of view of Jungian psychology, Orpheus is a hero who conquers his desire to return to the mother and thus provides a template for the successful canalization of libido that is necessary for the individual's individuation. In the case of Orpheus, the obstacle to the flow of libido is represented by Eurydice's death on their wedding day. Her death by snakebite indicates that the complexes awakened in Orpheus are from those domains occupied by images of both the father and the mother. These constellate on the son's wedding day and propel the narrative forward until resolution is achieved at the threshold between the lower and upper worlds when Orpheus looks back at Eurydice. That this look back prevents Eurydice from joining Orpheus in life can be seen to represent his failure to integrate the anima's position into consciousness. Still, as a variation on the night sea journey motif, Orpheus' journey to the underworld does result in the tempering of his soul. In accordance with the motif of the hero's journey, Orpheus is ultimately reborn as the head of a mystery cult. In this sense he successfully canalizes the blocked libido by sublimating it to a higher cultural purpose.

The figure of Orpheus the poet/musician distinguishes himself from other Greek heroes in that he feels compelled to transcend the boundary between the upper and lower worlds for love. In some versions of the myth, he undertakes this journey for the love of his wife. In others, he descends to the underworld to secure special consideration by Persephone for his followers upon their entry into Hades. In both of these examples, Orpheus transcends the physical boundary defined by death in an attempt to intercede for the benefit of others. Perhaps for this reason, and coupled with his reputation as a poet and a musician, his image is often co-opted as an emblem of romantic creativity and inspiration, two qualities revered and required by all artists.

In modern interpretations of the myth, a rich panoply of images emerge depicting other, hybrid modes of masculinity – characterized by corporeal depth and spiritual inspiration – that manifest themselves as amalgams of solar (traditionally masculine) and lunar (traditionally

feminine) aspects of psyche. Indeed, the image of Orpheus brandishing a musical instrument instead of a sword to overcome the obstacles he encounters is emblematic of a form of masculinity that successfully integrates these two poles. In this view, Orpheus' look back to Eurydice is an act that follows conscious deliberation, an act that paradoxically results from and causes an integration of unconscious elements into consciousness. Here Orpheus is now privy to the secrets of the underworld and understands that Eurydice's death is part of her own process within a larger framework. His look back allows her to return to her path, although the cost to him is great. Sacrificing his personal wishes propels Orpheus fully onto his path of individuation, or self-actualization, in that he finds his true calling as the founder of a mystery cult with the image of Eurydice and her assumed eventual apotheosis functioning as an inspiration.

See also: [▶ Apollo](#) [▶ Apollonian and Dionysian](#) [▶ Apotheosis and Return](#) [▶ Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Dionysos](#)

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Orthodoxy

Elisa Bernal Corley

“Orthodoxy” means “right belief.” The term comes from the combined Greek words *orthos*, meaning “right, true, straight,” and *doxa*, meaning “praise.” In early Christian history, it was used in contrast with heresy, which literally



means “choice.” The classical view of orthodoxy refers to the right belief that Jesus taught his disciples and handed down by them to the leaders of the Christian church. Its most basic form is found in the creedal statements adopted by the four ecumenical councils of the early Church and held by the majority of the believers in early Christian period.

In the history of Christianity, belief in Orthodoxy is tied with the idea of primacy or originality. Early Christian theologians emphasized the view that orthodoxy is *primary* and heresies are deviations and corruptions of the original and pure orthodoxy. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (263–339 CE) established this view of orthodoxy during the time of Emperor Constantine (c. 275–337). The former is considered the most influential proponent of the standard that orthodoxy is primary and innovation is heresy. Other prominent Church Fathers like Irenaeus (c. 130–200) and Tertullian (c. 155–222) expressed the same opinions regarding the opposition between orthodoxy and heresy.

Orthodox Sunnis of Islam and Neo-Confucian scholars also tie orthodoxy with the idea of primacy and early origins. Orthodox Sunnis represent their faith as pure and primary because it has remained unchanged from the beginning. For Sunni Islam, ideal faith meant adherence to the time-honored practice of the tribe and clan. In fact, the word *Sunna*, means, “beaten path or standard practice of the Prophet.” Thus, orthodox faith is one that is free from any historical developments or innovations. Any innovation or change to the primal path established by the Prophet is heretical. This tradition of Sunni Orthodoxy emerged during the latter half of the ninth century.

The Neo-Confucian scholars of the Sung dynasty (960–1279) also affirm the primacy of Confucianism in the world. Chu-Hsi (1130–1200), who synthesized Buddhist teachings with Confucianism, designated the “transmission of the Way” as the core concept of *Tao* Learning. He gave it the name *Tao-T’ung*. The *Tao-T’ung* is understood to have been transmitted from the ancient sage kings to Confucius and his original heirs. The works of the Sung thinkers who inherited this philosophical tradition were deemed orthodox in contrast with the writings of their rivals. The principal Neo-Confucian scholar of the modern times, Mou Tsung-san (1909–1995) formulated a new version of the *Tao-T’ung*, but continued to highlight the importance of traditional Chinese philosophical lineage in establishing orthodoxy.

Thus, for early Christians, Orthodox Sunnis, and Neo-Confucians, any claim to primacy of teaching must be authenticated by the manner of transmission, which assumes the direct contact between the master-teacher

and his disciples. The idea of chain of transmission or chain of traditions validates the truth of orthodoxy. Modern ideologies and scientific history also reveals the pursuit of the same standard of transmission.

In addition to the notions of primacy and fidelity, a third feature, unity, was essential to the establishment of Christian and Sunni Islam orthodoxy. In early Christianity, unity of faith and practice was contrasted with the multiplicity that characterized heretical groups and their teachings. Similarly, in Sunni Islam, the concept of *ijma’* or consensus, became a central pillar of orthodoxy. In their writings, Sunni scholars are known to diminish the sectarian controversies plaguing the early history of Islam, in order to promote a more harmonious picture of Islamic faith and tradition.

Commentary

Since beliefs are often translated into some form of social behavior, concern for tradition, fidelity, and unity within religious orthodoxy remains relevant to identity-formation and social adaptation. Studies have shown a positive correlation between religion and life-satisfaction, revealing that a person’s quest for the meaning of life is strongly associated with psychological well-being. Current research also demonstrates that religion plays a role in the development of a person’s meaning-system, which in turn allows the believer to weave a coherent life-story. In other words, religious tradition helps individuals construct their own sense of order as well as find meaning out of life’s failures and achievements.

Devotion to religious orthodoxy, coupled with personal faith and church involvement is important to the formation of a person’s identity. As part of the religious community, people can learn about who or what they are. Such religious identification influences how they interpret the world. Studies reveal that those who consider themselves as having more orthodox religious beliefs have no problem attributing life events to divine intervention. They are willing to give up total control, believing that with denouncement of the self comes greater mastery of life. In addition, as people root their own personal experiences within a fixed and broader narrative, community teachings and practices become part of the person’s orienting system for relating to the world. Thus, they are able to face personal limitations and move beyond themselves to find solutions for life’s problems and crises. Worldly cares and troubles do not threaten their unity, fidelity, and commitment to faith. In a sense, religious truth becomes a most powerful

coping and defense mechanism for the preservation of one's self.

Nevertheless, external forces can challenge the potency of religious orthodoxy as a coping mechanism. Although many studies found that orthodox beliefs help individual attain psychological well-being, there are also those that find religious orthodoxy, in the Fundamentalist form, to be more authoritarian and dogmatic, and more racially prejudiced.

When a believer is intent on preserving religious orthodoxy, like the attempt of early Christians to rid the Church of heretics and infidels, an inflexible and rigid personality may develop. Such inflexible and rigid personalities seem to be more common among the Christian Fundamentalist groups, for example. Research has implicated the latter with prejudice and more discriminatory attitudes towards blacks, women, and homosexuals. Personal rigidity leaves a Fundamentalist susceptible to prejudice when responding to peoples and perspectives perceived as threats to religious traditions.

When people are unwilling to question what is believed to be true teachings about God and humanity, and to discard an inherited set of life's practices, they become vulnerable to the rapidly changing and diverse world. They can acquire "closed minds" and develop a defensive constricted personality generally linked with a religiously orthodox upbringing. In the attempt to protect what is considered the greatest significance to the individual, ideological self-identifications may flourish among the religious orthodox and conservatives.

See also: [➤ Christianity](#) [➤ Confucianism](#) [➤ Faith](#) [➤ Fundamentalism](#) [➤ Heresy](#) [➤ Islam](#) [➤ Meaning of Human Existence](#) [➤ Prejudice](#) [➤ Prophets](#) [➤ Purpose in Life](#) [➤ Religion](#)

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Osiris and the Egyptian Religion

Alane Sauder-MacGuire

Although the Osiris story represents only one stream of a complex and multifaceted ancient Egyptian religion, the story is perhaps the Egyptian myth that most permeates later religions, alchemy and the psychology of Carl Jung.

The cosmology in which Osiris originated was located at Heliopolis. There the followers of the creator god, Ra, first achieved the unification of upper and lower Egypt and set up a capital which remained the major theological and academic center through many dynasties.

The creation of the world in this cosmology began with the masturbation of Ra or Atum. From his seed Shu, the air, and, his sister, Tefnut, the moisture, were created. They were the first couple. They, in turn, gave birth to Geb, the earth, and his sister, Nut, the sky. Geb and Nut bore Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. Osiris married his sister, Isis, and his younger brother, Set their sister, Nephthys.

Osiris and Isis were the parents of Horus. In one version of the myth, Isis and Osiris fell in love in the womb of Nut and produced Horus in utero.

Osiris was a talented musician who came to rule an Egyptian land afflicted by cannibalism and other ills. He converted the Egyptian people into civilized ways not by force, but by persuasion and by his music.

After he had brought civilization to Egypt, he left the lands of Egypt under the rule of his sister-wife, Isis to continue the spread civilization throughout the world. His brother, Set, coveting both Isis and the kingship, devised a plan to murder Osiris. He lured him into a box that he then cast into the sea.

Isis and Nephthys searched for Osiris and saved him, but the frustrated and vicious Set the again captured Osiris and this time cut him into pieces that he scattered throughout Egypt. A grieving and sorrowful Isis collected the scattered limbs of his body and bathed them with her tears.

However, she could not find the phallus so she fashioned one out of wood. Although she could not revive Osiris to the state of living, she was able to vivify him sufficiently as to impregnate herself.

In this version of the myth, Horus was born of Isis's efforts and he avenged his father and fought the forces of



chaos represented by a battle with his evil uncle, Set. In the Egyptian mythology the soul resided in the eye and Osiris was said to be located in Horus's eye. The struggle between Set and Horus was prolonged and both suffered grave wounds. Eventually a council of the gods declared Horus the victor. Thus, order was restored.

After Isis impregnated herself, Osiris descended into the underworld and became its god. Through this mythic understanding of Osiris's death and resurrection as the god of the underworld, the Egyptians explained the path of the sun and its renewal from its setting in the evening to its rising in the morning.

It was believed the evening sun penetrated a cave in the west, and over a period of twelve hours passed through the underworld from which it emerges the next morning, regenerated. At midcourse the sun met Osiris and drew the energy from him for its renewal.

Also in his role as ruler of the underworld, Osiris was thought of as the judge who allows or disallows the dead the passage into the rebirth of an idealized afterlife.

Philosophically, the Egyptian religion professed the belief that the gods had laid down universal laws of order and justice (*maat*) at the moment of creation. The conflict between the forces of evil or chaos as represented by Set and Osiris represented the disruption of this order, the redemption by Horus, the restoration of it. This also provided a way of understanding the chaos that at times affected the Egyptian political system.

The Egyptian political system itself was based on an identification between the rulers and the Osiris/Horus myth. The Egyptians believed their pharaoh to be both human and divine. Horus was the chief god of the upper world and became the symbol of kingship with which the living pharaohs identified with. Osiris who resided in the underworld was identified with the living pharaoh's deceased father.

The pharaoh was assimilated into Osiris in the afterlife. The process was dynamic with the living king understood as Horus in life and then Osiris after death. Most Pharaoh's coffins were fashioned in the shape and pose of Osiris with his distinctive flail and crook held in arms crossed at his chest as a symbolic representation of this transition. It was from this relationship between the upper world and the underworld that the pharaoh derived his power and wisdom in the Egyptian imagination.

In classical antiquity Osiris's fame spread outside of Egypt through the writings of Plutarch and Apuleius among others. In fact, the myth of Osiris became the basis of a religion of salvation widely practiced in the ancient world.

Commentary

The mystique of the Egyptian kingship exemplified for Jung, the force of the archetype in creating a symbolic image that can channel human experience. An archetype can be defined, as a predisposition to experience and the symbolic image it creates is the best possible description of that experience. In the case of the Egyptian kingship this would be the experience of the mysterious incarnation of the divine within.

In this mystique of kingship, Horus incarnated in the form of the pharaoh and then at his mortal death the Pharaoh was reincarnated into the eternal realm of all pharaohs past held in the image of Osiris.

Thus creating a mythic picture and explanation of the soul's experience of eternity.

Because of this move from eternal being into mortality and then to immortality, Osiris acts as an archetypal image for the human experience of having an eternal soul within a mortal body. His story creates a philosophical metaphor for this human experience that defeats rational understanding. In other words, it creates, in a mythic form accessible to the individual psyche, a way of reconciling the experience of being alive with the knowledge of physical death.

Important, too, for the myth's psychological power is the fact that good eventually outweighs evil – meaningfulness prevails over meaninglessness. The archetypal battle of good and evil so much a part of the Christian era was arguably missing from the Hellenistic world, the Christian era's closer ancestor.

Osiris was originally the good divine king of the upper world who kept the cosmos in order. He was also fertility god associated with the force that generated the growth and life of crops. His brother, Seth, represented the forces of chaos and was associated with the desert, which for the ancient Egyptian was associated with all manner of evil.

To understand the importance of Osiris/Set/Horus myth as an archetypal image to the ancient Egyptians, it is helpful to take into consideration just how perilous the climate and conditions they lived under were.

For the Egyptian the sun was a destructive as well as creative force. To produce crops, the rains had to come and the Nile had to flood. This allowed the land which every summer the relentless sun turned into desert to flood and be saturated, restoring its fertility. This usually happened, but frequently enough it did not and the result was disorder and famine.

Thus, the Egyptians had much less faith in the cycle of nature than the Europeans did. The sun, without

adequate rainfall to produce the floods, turned the fertile land into a dead zone indistinguishable from the surrounding desert. The myth of Osiris, his destruction by Seth, and the redemption of Set's evil by Horus as described above invested a meaning to the cycles experienced by the ancient Egyptian. The drama of the two brothers, Osiris and Seth provided a mythic understanding of the perilous fertility cycle which was at times disrupted by disorder as it held the hope of a reordering in the eventual dominance of Horus.

Jung believes that the Christian era itself owes its significance, in part, to this archetypal form of kingship and the antique god-man mystery that has its roots in the story of the Osiris–Horus myth.

There is in the relationship between Horus and Osiris a symbolic equivalency to Christ and God the father. In Genesis, the Judeo-Christian god created an order, which became disrupted by Satan, an equivalent of Seth, and was then to be restored by the birth of Christ. The Christian story like the Egyptian myth represents the idea of the good god restoring the original order of creation after it is disrupted by an evil divinity.

From another perspective, Osiris, himself, represents, as did Christ, the god who incarnates and then dies a brutal death to be reborn back into immortality.

Unlike the other Egyptian gods, Osiris shows vulnerability. Though not as immanent as Jesus because Osiris was always god, he shows pathos. He alone of the Egyptian gods does not transcend the vicissitudes of human existence – specifically death. He, in fact, seems completely defenseless against his evil brother, Set, and without the intervention of Isis would have been completely destroyed.

At the same time, Osiris represented fertility and life. Therefore, even as he was dead Osiris was the source of life. The ancient Egyptians believed he was the source

of growth and reproduction for all animals and plants. He was both dead and the source of life.

As such, Osiris can be understood as a vivid and complex achievement of the Egyptian imagination. He answered the psychological paradox and dilemma of grappling with death even as an eternal life force is experienced.

In sum, the ancient Egyptian imagination created in the archetypal image of Osiris a symbol that explained not only the experience of their particular existence, but also the universal experience of humanity in reconciling the immortal experience of soul with the knowledge of physical death. It also provided a mythic carrier for the archetypal battle between good and evil.

See also: [▶ Astrology and Alchemy](#) [▶ Dying and Rising Gods](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Otherworld

[▶ Heaven and Hell](#)



P

Paganism

David Waldron

The Origins of the Term Paganism

The term Pagan etymologically derives from the Latin adjective *Paganus* which, typically is taken to mean of the rural countryside. It is also a term which has been used pejoratively from its inception as uncivilized, uncouth and rustic. However, this interpretation has come under criticism by historians Robin Lane Fox and Pierre Chauvin due to the term being utilized widely in Early Christian Rome when the bulk of the urban population remained Pagan in today's terms. Like Chauvin, Ronald Hutton proposes that a more accurate meaning of the term in antiquity is that of followers of the customs and religions of locality (i.e., *Pagus*) rather than one of the many cosmopolitan, universalist and transcendent faiths of the early Christian period (Hutton, 1993).

Paganism and the Countryside

The perceived high prevalence of localized pre-Christian customs, idolatry and ritual surviving in the countryside led to the association of the *Paganus* with the uncivilized and rural. This distinction between rural and urban religious practices also links closely with the intensely urban and cosmopolitan demography of early Christianity. In the early Christian era the term Pagan came to represent those who still practiced the predominantly rural and localized expressions of pre-Christian belief in contrast to the predominantly urban and educated Christianity of the middle ages. In this sense western thought has typically presented a universal divide between Christianity and, by association, the other Abrahamic faiths of Islam and Judaism, and that of the incredibly diverse and wide ranging other faiths of antiquity, indigenous cultures and contemporary

pagan revivals. The adoption of this dualist distinction by cotemporary pagan revivalists has led to numerous conflicts between western pagan revivalists, eager to integrate traditional pre-Christian religious practices with pagan revivals, and members of indigenous cultures and non-Christian religions (Mulcock, 1998, 2001).

Paganism and the Abrahamic Faiths in Antiquity

With regards to interpretations of the Paganism of antiquity, the central distinction that can be made with the Abrahamic faiths is that of locality and cultural pluralism. This distinction is pointed out by Martin Bernal in his discussion of the rise of the transcendent monotheistic and dualist cosmopolitan religions of the second and third centuries C.E., particularly in Egypt, the supposed heartland of the Temple based urban paganism of antiquity. He argues that by the third century the breakdown of traditional local structures of social and religious practice combined with rising urban cosmopolitanism placed enormous pressures on the localized basis of the traditional pagan religious institutions. These pressures were linked to long term class and social tensions that gave Christianity and other universalist faiths, such as Manichaeism, an appeal when linked with Hellenic philosophy, with which the traditional localized temple religions could not compete. This in turn led to class prejudice and hostility to the old pagan religious practices that were inevitably strongest in the rural sector where traditional structures of community, folklore and religion held sway and the localized ethnic identity of the religions of the *Pagus* held more significance than in the cosmopolitan urban sectors (Bernal, 1991).

This construction of a duality between Christianity (or more broadly Abrahamic faiths) and Paganism and its pejorative use against non-Christian peoples, customs and faiths came to dominate perceptions of religious diversity in Western thought. A vast array of divergent religious practices, customs and folklore were linked together by association as the antithesis of Christian values, culture and ideals. Even

where Pagan writers were rehabilitated by the intelligentsia, as with the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets such as Virgil, Aristotle and Plato, the re-appropriation of pagan writers was carefully constructed within a dualist world view of Christian and Pagan. In this sense the term Pagan was reconstructed as the shadow side of Christian civilization with the term applied indiscriminately to disparate religious traditions. The notion of the Pagan also came to serve as a crucible of symbolic and psychological projections of varying constructions of Christianity. These ranged from demonized images of traditional societies and non-Christian civilizations such as the Norse, to extensively idealized representations of Pagan Greece and Rome.

Paganism as a Pejorative and Reactionary Term

In this sense, as well as becoming a pejorative construction of anti-Christianity, ironically enough utilized by Protestants in their criticism of Catholicism as “Pagan”, Paganism also came to represent a symbolic construction for people’s frustration and dissatisfaction with what they perceived as the ills of Christian society. If Christianity, and by association Western civilization, was intolerant, destructive, patriarchal and rapacious, Paganism could then be perceived in antithesis as matriarchal, tolerant and living in harmony with natural world and society. This particular construction of Paganism came to pre-dominance during the massive social upheavals of the nineteenth century and the rise of the Romantic movement in literature and philosophy. Even as early as the seventeenth century there were prominent cultural trends that described the Noble Savage as evidence of the innate goodness of man in his perceived natural state. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century writers such as Gabriel de Foigny, Jonathon Swift, Denis Diderot and Jean-Jaques Rousseau commonly utilized primitivist and utopian notions of “natural man” based on the descriptions of “pagan societies” living close to the earth and following nature. These “neo-Pagan” movements served to connect an idealized past to the present through ritual, symbolism and aesthetics, constructing an alternative vision for society and an alternative struggle for cultural and social renewal. This construct attempted to ground itself in notions of historical and cultural authenticity and autonomy as set over and against the repressive and destructive aspects of western modernity, caricatured as universalist reason or an irrational, violent and patriarchal Christianity.

Neo-Paganism and the Contemporary Pagan Revival

The term neo-Pagan appeared in the late nineteenth century and was used to refer to Romantic discourses that supported the ideal of a Pagan revival as an antidote to the ills of industrialization and the perceived restrictive nature of conservative Christian morality. During this period a plethora of new movements arose seeking to reclaim the past as a means of transcending the social ills, conflicts and destructive aspects of the tumultuous present. These ranged from extensive searches for a historical authentic pagan religious practice to searches for Pagan survivals in the present. There was also widespread embracing of the religious practices of indigenous peoples perceived to offer an antidote to the ills of Christianity and industrialism. Perhaps the most famous of these new movements was Gerald Gardner’s Wiccan movement founded in the 1950s which came to be the foundation of the later pagan revival in the 1960s and 1970s. Central to these movements was the sense of looking back to an idealized past as a means of shaping the future and transcending the ills of the techno-centric or Christo-centric present. Whilst a full discussion of the myriad movements and versions of neo-Paganism is beyond the scope of this entry there are four main approaches to the past, to symbolism and to symbolic constructions of identity in neo-Pagan movements (Waldron, 2000).

Reconstructionist: Those groups who rely on traditional historiography and empirical veracity in defining their historical legitimacy and socio-cultural identity. Also included in this grouping are the various national and ethnic groups such as Odinist, Celtic or Creole based practitioners who utilize the recreation of magical ritual as a means of defining a national cultural identity in the confines of traditional historiography.

Traditionalist: These groups derived from ritual magic intensive witchcraft such as Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca. These groups tend to be more concerned with the precision of ritual activity and magical practice than the veracity of their historical claims. Some people have used the term “Traditionalist” to describe those claiming to have a hereditary or pre-industrial background to their witchcraft beliefs.

New Age/Eclectic: These groups are heavily reliant on the work of Carl Jung and his theory of the collective unconscious. New Age/Eclectic neo-pagans are particularly concerned with the psychological impact and universality of symbols. They posit the psychic truth of symbolic representations manifested in history and other cultures

as the ultimate source of authenticity in ritual opposed to the empirical veracity of truth claims.

Eco-feminist: Those groups that are particularly concerned with the plight of women and utilize the symbol of the witch as an ultimate expression of the persecution of women within patriarchal culture and society. These movements typically focus on the capacity of ritual and historical reclamation to empower women to deal with the social and environmental ills created by patriarchal forms of social control.

While these four models of neo-Pagan approaches to symbolism and historicity have different structures for legitimating historical interpretation and ideological/cultural perspectives, there are several elements which link them together. The first is a belief that the application of the enlightenment and industrialization represent a distancing of humanity from its more authentic and natural existence uncorrupted by the influence of western civilization. Secondly, the neo-pagan movement is generally unanimous in the belief that western Christianity is guilty of suppressing much of what is free, creative and autonomous in human nature – in support of a static oppressive patriarchal system of morality and social control. Thirdly, the witch crazes of the early modern period are taken as representative of a conscious attempt to oppress and destroy the vestiges of pre-Christian nature religions. And finally, the reclaiming and recreating of the pre-Christian agrarian past is perceived as the best way for contemporary society to evolve in such a way as to transcend the ills caused by the oppressive aspects of Christianity, the enlightenment and western modernity.

Whilst most of the neo-Pagan movement's attempted initially to ground themselves in claims to empirical historical authenticity, recent historical findings led to the collapse of many of the arguments upon which the movements were based. Most notable of these was the almost complete collapse of Margaret Murray's thesis of the witch persecutions of Early Modern Europe being an attempt by the Catholic church to stamp out surviving pagan practices (Ankarloo and Henningsen, 1990) and (Ginzberg, 1992). In the aftermath of this collapse, many neo-Pagans have abandoned empirical history as the basis of religious legitimacy and shifted onus for perceived veracity of ritual and symbolism in the psychological impact of the symbolism and ritual as archetypal forms. Often this approach quite consciously embraces the analytical psychology of Carl Jung (Waldron and Waldron, 2004). Perhaps the most recognizable exponent of this is Wiccan author Vivian Crowley, author of *The Old Religion in the New Age* (1998). This approach tends to

focus on the psychological power of ritual and symbolism to evoke psychological truths whilst utilizing post modern critiques of positivism to critique empirical constructions of the past by professional historians. Similarly, Michael York in "Defining Paganism" argues that definition rooted in the cultural forms and rituals of a particular movement is impossible. Instead he argues that what links neo-Pagan movements together is their shared attitude towards culture, nature and spirituality, defined as "an affirmation of interactive and polymorphic sacred relationships, by individuals or communities, with the tangible, sentient and/or non empirical" (York, 2000).

Paganism Old and New

This particular approach illustrates just how far the original distinction between the religions of the *pagus* or locality and the Christian or monotheistic has shifted in terms of defining what Paganism means. It also illustrates just how far many schools of Pagan thought have shifted from ritual, philosophical and symbolic legitimacy rooted in historicity and ethnicity. That being said, it is worth noting that this approach is largely rejected by reconstructionist neo-Pagans who immerse themselves in the material culture of the various Paganisms of antiquity. These movements are typically closely attached to empirical forms of historical legitimation as both an expression of religious belief and ethnic identity, albeit often a reclaimed version.

The primary ideological basis of neo-Pagan is the belief that it is necessary to gaze inwards and to appropriate images from the past to find forms of identity and symbols of meaning perceived as natural, culturally authentic and in opposition to the forces of the enlightenment and industrialism. Conversely, this also involves a belief in the veracity of symbols, images and feelings over empirical experience and logic and thus emphasises the feminine aspects of the psyche over the masculine. Like much of western romantic literature, neo-paganism is fundamentally dominated by a reification of beliefs and images. Quintessentially modern ideological and symbolic socio-cultural formations are reinforced by interpretations of a past that is dogmatically protected as a particular symbolic construction that is defined as authentic. Similarly, neo-paganism and romanticism both share a focus on the new and the modern. Whilst neo-paganism and romanticism gaze into representations of the past for symbols of authenticity and meaning, they are far more than simply a reaction of traditionalism

against industrialization and the objectification of society. What they represent is a search for cultural authenticity and creative autonomy and a redefinition of the modern as a search for that which is creative, authentic and autonomous.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Islam](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Polytheism](#) [Wicca](#)

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Pan

Sukey Fontelieu

The goat god Pan was a god of flocks and shepherds in ancient Greece. His cult began in Arcadia and was elevated from its rustic status after the Battle of Marathon when the Athenians, out of gratitude for Pan's help in their victory, dedicated a cave, Long Cliffs, to Pan beneath the city of Athens (Herodotus, 1992). His cult took root and rapidly spread through the Mediterranean basin.

Pan was above all a chthonic nature god. His body was half divine and half goat. He lived outside of the civilized world, sometimes near its borders in huts or hidden, shady glens, but also dwelled in the wilderness in dark caves and on mountain peaks. He was a solitary and rustic god. From his earliest origins he was expected to induce fertility. Pan is an archetypal image of nature's cornucopia of sexual heat, which ensures life will endure. In character, locales, and functions Pan is seen in service to nature.

Fear and Panic

Pan is associated with panic and all its legion of psychological burdens. Panic is with him from the moment of his birth when his mother took one look at him and, as told in the Homeric hymn “sprang up and fled” (1976: 63). Pan suffered the loss of his mother because his body was monstrous (even Hephaestus with his broken body could still count on his mother's love), which led to a recurring motif for Pan of unrequited love for the feminine. Paradoxically, Pan was the beloved of the gods. In the Homeric hymn Pan's father, Hermes, wrapped him in the pelt of a hare and carried him up to Mt. Olympus where he charmed the Olympians with his laughter and was named Pan, which the hymn tells us meant “all.”

But the themes of panic and a lack of self-control dogged Pan throughout his myths. His unbridled sexuality created panic in the objects of his desire. Yet panic is also a tool that Pan skillfully wields in his role in battle, where he found victory without the aid of his keen eyed marksmanship, but rather by instilling fear and confusion in the hearts of the enemies of his friends. Pan did not instigate wars or fight for his own gain, but his role as an arouser of fear naturally led him to the battlefield. As well as his intervention at the battle of Marathon, he was also present during Zeus' rise to power and assisted him in his battle with the Typhoeus (or Typhon) (Kerenyi, 1998), was a general in Dionysus' army in his invasion of India (Polyaenus, 1994), and Pausanias reported Pan's aid in a battle with the Gauls. He caused panic to enter the hearts of the Gauls so they could no longer understand their mother tongue and killed each other instead of the Greeks (1935/1961 [VIII: xxiii]).

Pan and the Nymphs

Pan was said to have caused *panolepsy*, a seizure that brought laughter and ecstatic rapture. They nymphs

were also, and more commonly, associated with inducing altered states in humans. Both *panolepsy* and *nympholepsy* were believed to be gifts that inspire. But these healing trances were also feared because they were thought to sometimes cause a person to be carried off by Pan or a nymph. Untimely deaths were attributed to them (Borgeaud, 1979/1988). A recurrent theme, linking danger and ecstasy with Pan, echoes through his stories. Pan's intensity, often dangerous, is a touchstone for the life force. It is associated in different myths with creativity, fertility, and survival.

Pan played his pipes at the center of the nymph's dances, yet even then was not allowed to touch them. The nymphs, besides representing the freedom of feminine sexual expression, were nurses and mothers to Greek gods and heroes. They were a soothing balm, a natural force that emitted from thousands of springs, rivers, trees, and knolls. These healers were also associated with the power to engender metamorphosis and served as a balance or an antidote to the over reaching excesses of Pan. His self absorbed sexual intensity is feared by them, and yet he is the one they run to in the evenings when he returns from his day's hunt, joyfully dancing to the strains of his pipe. The nymphs are near to Pan, but untouchable, even though they are all divinities of fertility.

Pan's myths recount his overwhelming sexual desire and consequent pursuit of many nymphs. The extant primary sources, from Pindar, c. 522–433 BCE (1997a, 1997b) and Apollodorus, second century BCE (1997) to Nonnus in the early fifth century (1940/1962), do not report any stories where Pan actually rapes the nymph he is chasing after. The pattern in the myths follows this recurring storyline: he chases a nymph and out of fear she asks for help and is metamorphosed. She is still alive but in a different form, transformed by the interaction. Her new form has less of its own power of volition. For Pan, his chases turned up empty. Yet, rapist is a common epithet today for Pan (Hillman, 1988) and is perhaps the way he is most often considered.

Geneology

In genealogy the Greeks were less inclined to insist on historical veracity than is the prevailing sentiment today, since their tendency to imagine numerous sets of parents for their gods and goddesses occurs frequently. Pan is a case in point and is a god with more sets of mothers and fathers than most (Nonnus, 1940/1962). A popular version of Pan's birth in ancient texts named Penelope, the reserved wife of long-suffering Odysseus, as his mother.

She is best known for the subtle wiles with which she handled her suitors while she waited and waited for her husband's return from Troy. Her history with Hermes and Pan is less known, though well recorded by the ancients. The historian Herodotus, b. c. 484 BCE, is the oldest source. His histories (1921/1960) makes reference to "Pan, the son of Penelope (for according to the Greeks Penelope and Hermes were the parents of Pan)" (p. 453 [II. 145]).

Squilling Ritual

Pan Agreus (the hunter) was invoked when the Arcadians needed to find game to supplement their sparse agricultural returns. If the kill was small and so meat on the table was sparse, or the hunters returned empty handed, then the young men of the village would perform a ritual called *squilling* (Edmonds, 1912/1977). This involved a ceremonially circumambulation of a statue of the god while whipping him around the genitals and shoulders with large onions still attached to their stalks. The onions, squills, were believed to be a healing agent, and were used to ward off evil spirits, to promote growth, and, like nettles, were an irritant to the skin (Dioscorides, 1934/1959).

The Death of Pan

Plutarch, a Greek scholar and priest of Delphi, in 83 or 84 CE, recorded the legend of the death of Pan (1936/2003). He told of a group traveling by ship who heard a voice call out that the "Great Pan is dead!" and that the ship's helmsman was to sail north and call out these same words when they reached Palodes. He did so and his call was met with a "a great cry of lamentation, not of one person, but of many" (1936/2003: 403 [419D]). This story is an anomaly in Greek theology, since the gods were believed to be immortal (Borgeaud, 1983).

On the one hand, the story of the death of Pan had no verifiable impact on the cults of Pan, which are known to have continued to thrive (Pausanias, 1935/1961). On the other, the legend's historical context places it in close proximity to Jesus' crucifixion. Both happened during Tiberius Caesar's short reign. The juxtaposition of these two events led to speculation and conjectures about Pan by early Christian writers such as Eusebius in the third century and in medieval times by Rabelais, to a fascination with Pan among the Romantics (Russell, 1993), and even today we can witness Pan's reemergence in modern

stories such as the film *Pan's Labyrinth* (Navarro, Cuoron, Terresblanco and Augustin, 2006).

Pan and Christ are associated with each other by some of these thinkers. Both were thought of as shepherds, both offered their bodies as sacrifice, and both were thought of as containers of “all” to their worshippers. Pan has also been associated with the Christian devil, both in countenance and in spirit.

The death of Pan would not be worth noting as anything more than one of the historical record's many oddities except that, over the centuries, it has obstinately continued to linger; it has been used to argue positions diametrically opposed to one another. The fascination with his death indicates that the story has an archetypal nature because it refuses to die.

See also: [Chthonic Deities](#) [Circumambulation](#)

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Panaceas and Placebos

David Berman

Of the two terms in the title of this article, panacea is probably the clearer and least equivocal. By panacea is meant a medicine, treatment or therapy that can cure or alleviate all illnesses. From that definition it is clear that any alleged panacea must work, according to present-day scientific thinking, at least partly as a placebo. A placebo (Latin for “I will please”) can be defined as a medical treatment that works (satisfies the patient) not through its apparent agency, but by the belief in its efficacy. And since no medical scientist of repute would seriously hold that there is any one medical treatment that can relieve every known illness, it follows that if a treatment appears to be working universally, or even widely, it must be doing so at least partly as a placebo, by virtue of the belief in it.

Yet panaceas have been proposed in the past. Here I look at two panaceas, arguably the two most serious and instructive of the past 300 years. The first was proposed by George Berkeley, now best-known as the philosopher, the father of idealism, who denied the existence of matter. But in his lifetime, Berkeley was better known for his advocacy of tar-water as a universal medicine, which he published in *Siris* (1744). The other panacea was developed by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, who published her treatment for all illnesses in *Science and Health* (1903).

Berkeley's Tar-Water

Tar-water is made by mixing wood tar with cold water and allowing the tar to settle, after which the clear infused water can be decanted and drunk. In *Siris*, sect. 71,

Berkeley (1744) says that “there will not perhaps be found any medicine more general in its use, or more salutary in its effects,” than tar-water, and catalogues the many illnesses it has cured. But he stops short of saying directly that it is a panacea. However, in his later *Letter to Prior* (1744), sect. 11, he is prepared to “speak out”: “I freely own that I suspect tar-water is a panacea.” And in the pamphlet’s next section, he says: “Having frankly owned the charge, I must explain . . . that by a panacea is not meant a medicine which cures all individuals (this consists not with mortality) but a medicine that cures or relieves all different species of distempers.”

Berkeley had two justifications for this claim: one theoretical, the other empirical. The theoretical reason is complex, involving chemistry, botany, physics, philosophy, theology and Scripture. But, as I have suggested elsewhere, the main idea is that tar-water is the closest natural, ingestible thing to fire; and as fire, Berkeley believes, is the natural substance closest in nature to God, it follows that tar-water is drinkable spirit or God, and that is why it is so efficacious as a medicine. Berkeley’s empirical justification was the experiments on tar-water which he carried out on himself, his family, his neighbors, as well as the cures that were gathered by his friend Prior from those who had benefitted from his medicine.

Eddy’s Christian Science

If anything, Eddy’s panacea was and is even more ambitious than Berkeley’s. For not only did she believe that Christian Science could cure all physical ills, but she also believed that it was effective even against death itself. And one main way that Christian Science works is by bringing its subjects to the truth that matter is an illusion. This follows largely from the principle that God is a perfect, infinite spiritual being, the creator of this world; so everything in this world is perfect. Therefore since matter and illness are imperfect, it follows that they do not exist. Hence, for the Christian Scientist, whole-heartedly embracing these truths about matter and God is the way to health and immortality. But there is also a third key element in Eddy’s cure, which is what gives it its name. This is the role played by Jesus Christ, who showed how apparent illness and death in the world can be overcome by the belief or faith of the sufferers. In short, Jesus found a way to eliminate the illusion of illness and death. Christ was a scientist. What he discovered was essentially Christian Science, which was lost until it was re-discovered by Mrs Eddy.

Placebos and Panaceas

We now need to look at the two panaceas from the perspective of medical science in order to see how far they must be considered placebos.

The judgement of medical science on tar-water, briefly, is that it can be useful externally against certain skin diseases and internally against chronic coughs and chest-diseases; but as one medical writer put it, its “therapeutic properties are, however, too limited to account for more than a small proportion of the diseases given by Berkeley and Prior” (Bell, 1933).

So, the inference is that the great majority of cures must have been brought about by placebo action. But if medical science judges that tar-water was partly a placebo, its verdict on Christian Science must be that it is a pure placebo, since it does not use any physical agency.

That tar-water worked largely as an impure placebo would not have been welcome to Berkeley, even though he believed that ultimately the only real cause is mental or spiritual, in fact God. But his argument in *Siris* is that tar-water works not by any actual physical agency it possesses, but only because its observable, sensory properties are followed unerringly by observable physical cures, whose explanation lies in the laws of nature established by God. So, despite Berkeley’s positive attitude to mental agency, he shows no sign of appreciating placebo action either in *Siris* or any other work. Probably the main reason for this is his sensitivity to the criticism that his idealist philosophy seems to break down the hallowed distinction between reality and appearance. Hence Berkeley is reluctant to recognize the power of the human mind in affecting the physical world. Berkeley is prepared to acknowledge that we have agency, but only over our thoughts or mental images, not the sense data which for Berkeley constitute the physical world.

Another way that Berkeley’s concern for keeping the objective, physical realm safe from human agency comes out in his attitude to miracles. As an Anglican clergyman, Berkeley does not deny that there have been miracles, and he believes that God did in the past sanction those of Moses but especially those of Jesus Christ and his disciples. But for Berkeley, miracles ended in the first century AD, one reason being that their continuing occurrence would undermine our confidence in the objective or natural realm, upon which we depend.

Christian Scientists have an entirely different attitude to what are called miracles, placebos and faith healing. But here, especially, we need to recognize the equivocal nature of these terms and put aside their negative connotations. If a putative placebo does actually work by the action of

mind or spirit, then I think a Christian Scientist could agree that placebo action is an acceptable description, although for her a more accurate description would be cures resulting from Divine Truth and Science.

Of course, for medical science this is all perfect nonsense. Illness and disease as material conditions can only be cured by material agents. Miracles and faith healing are superstitions. Here the issue becomes complicated, because we are getting into a deeper debate, where materialistic or natural science itself has to be— at least for the purpose of this debate— called into question. If that is not done, then this ceases to be a debate and becomes a begging of the question; which, no doubt, most scientists would say is entirely appropriate.

Material Versus Mental Agency

Yet where the naturalistic attitude of science becomes doubtful is just in the area of placebos, which seem to work not by material but by mental causation, by belief. This suggests that the human mind can bring about cures that appear miraculous. And although this is denied by medical science, it does seem that the mind can, working through belief, cause certain observable physical changes in the body. This was dramatically demonstrated to the first important champion of placebos, H. K. Beecher— best known as the author of the influential 1955 article, “The Powerful Placebo”— when he was working as a medic during World War II. On one occasion, there was no morphine to give a soldier who required a major operation. In a moment of inspiration or craziness, a nurse injected the soldier with a harmless water solution, which amazingly produced virtually the same effect on him as morphine. This converted Beecher to the power of placebos.

This crux comes out in a related way in probably the second most important medical article on placebos, that by Levine, et al., published in 1978. Levine’s team administered a placebo and found, as expected, that it produced a decrease in pain in their subjects, as well as increasing their endorphins, the body’s natural morphine. Going further, however, Levine and his colleagues then injected the subjects with nolahine, which works against morphine. The result was that the subjects’s pain returned. The conclusion, which was hailed as an important step towards discovering the mechanisms of placebos, was that the endorphins were the physical agents producing the placebo effect. So the endorphins, it was hoped, would be the beginning of the trail leading to the chemical agents that work directly on illnesses responsive to placebos.

What appears to have passed unnoticed, however, is that, *prima facie*, the endorphins came into being directly from mind action— from belief. But if so, then why, in principle, couldn’t the agency that works DIRECTLY on the illness also be belief or some other form of mind agency?

For Berkeley, all power or agency in the physical world is mental, namely God’s; but God produces the train of sensory data in accordance with His laws of nature; hence physical cures must be brought about in this indirect, law-abiding way. To be sure, God could allow a change or violation in these laws, thereby permitting a human agent to effect a cure more directly, as with Jesus’s miracles, but He doesn’t now, as that dispensation ended with Jesus’s disciples.

Most natural scientists, especially nowadays, would take a far harder line on this, holding that there is no such spiritual agency and hence no way that that the natural laws and processes can be contravened even for such good ends as cures. Thus in his helpful book *Placebos* (2003), Dylan Evans, speaking for natural science, tells us that “We know now that the processes of thinking and wishing that Descartes ascribed to the ethereal, invisible mind are, in fact, complex patterns of electro-chemical activity that swirl around in the lump of fatty tissue we call the brain” (p. xi). So for Evans, materialism has been proved to be true and dualism and idealism false. Hence there MUST have been something material operating in the belief of Beecher’s soldier which caused his body to behave as though it had been given morphine. This material something, which we know introspectively as belief, must have been the actual cause of the numbing of his pain and the endorphines which Levine’s team discovered in the placebo effect. But so far no scientist has found this material stuff, either in the brain or anywhere else, which we, in our quaint folk-psychological way, identify as belief. Hence what Evans and other materialists take to be proven science is in fact an article of faith.

Indeed, I think we can go further and say that materialism and medical science can themselves be described as placebo sciences in the same way as they would describe Christian Science as a placebo science— given, that is, one important condition being fulfilled. The condition is that idealism should prove true. If that were the case, then matter and hence material medicines would be placebos, as things that do not exist, but which are vitally practical to believe in, as enabling us to live in and make sense of the apparent or sensory world. And, in the final analysis, that is what Berkeley held.

See also: [▶ Body and Spirituality](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Healing](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Pantheism

Paul Larson

Pantheism is the religious doctrine that the divine is infused within all existent beings. The phrase “the divine” is used as a short-hand label for both theistic (personal) and non-theistic (impersonal) definitions of the sacred ground of being. Virtually all pantheistic thought involves a belief in the immanence of the divine, though the doctrines are distinguishable. In many forms of immanence, particularly within theistic traditions, the deity is not limited to being infused into the material world, it can be beyond it as well. In the case of pantheism, however, there is an identity between the phenomenal world and the divine. God is the natural world personified.

A distinction needs to be made between true pantheism, which equates the divine with the totality of the natural world and panentheism with accepts that idea but adds that the divine is both immanent in the world yet still somehow transcendent in some manner. This view allows some “otherness” to god beyond his or her presence within the natural world. In panentheism god suffuses the world but is not exhausted by the immanence in the world. There is a sense in which the fullness of god goes beyond the material world of nature.

Pantheism is also contrasted with the view of strict creationism, which holds that the divine is the source of, but cannot be identified with the natural world. God, being eternal and infinite, cannot be limited by being part of his own creation. He stands over it as ruler and Lord. In western monotheisms (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) creationism is a foundational doctrine rooted in

Biblical and Q’uranic texts. But God is not the same as his creation.

True pantheism, as distinguished from panentheism, is found in only a few positions, as it requires exclusion of the concept of transcendence and confines understanding of the divine to the totality of existent and experienced objects in the world. The identification of the natural world with the divine is appealing to secular thinkers who still have a sense of awe at the majesty of the created world, including life and consciousness.

It is not surprising then, that early in the Enlightenment when secular thought was emerging, a pantheistic school emerged. Deism, the is a spiritual philosophy which fairly clearly identified the divine with nature. The God of the Deists creates and sets in motion the world and its deterministic causal mechanisms and laws, but does not actively intervene in human history. A Deist who coined the term pantheism was John Toland (1670–1722). His views on both politics and religion were quite radical for his day. But he sought to keep a religious sentiment based in nature and aided by reason as opposed to based in obedience to and faith in established authorities. He founded the Ancient Druid Order, so his views would today be closer to the sort of Gaian nature spirituality of neo-Pagans.

Among those philosophers who are clearly pantheists and who Toland refers back to would be Spinoza and Leibniz. Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) was born to Portuguese Jews, though he spent most of his life in the Netherlands. His religious ideas were far enough outside the Judaism of his own day that he was excommunicated from the synagogue in Amsterdam. He rejected Descartes dualism and held instead a type of naturalistic monism, where all the world in its diversity was nonetheless dependent on one substance behind the variety of manifest beings and objects.

Such a comprehensive and abstract concept is, of course, difficult to hold on to so the experience of pantheism is generally fleeting and imperfect. Humans have found the metaphor and primary cognitive structure of personhood to be more compelling and so theistic spirituality and religious formations have predominated throughout history. The pantheistic vision is a heady one and not shared by most exoteric religious forms and expressions, which are decidedly personalistic.

The philosophic concepts involved in defining pantheism as well as its alternatives requires a discussion of primary theological distinctions, whether there is a divine realm of being or not, and if so, what is its nature. The empirical study of the variety of comparative world religions suggests that the primary boundary is between the

sacred and divine, on the one hand, and the secular or mundane, on the other. If we look at the variety of world views held by most people this primary distinction can be sustained a major dividing point. But within those who espouse one or another of the spiritual world view, the next division of ideas is between those who espouse the existence of personal or impersonal basic natures of the divine.

The impersonal nature of the divine is found in such concepts as “chi,” “ki,” “prana,” “pneuma” and other labels. Those terms comes from Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Greek cultural spheres, respectively. These embody a force which was also described by Newton and the other formative thinkers in the modern scientific world view. Indeed, the very nature of the modern scientific world view is the metaphysical existence of impersonal forces which determine the manifestation we experience as the phenomenal world. So the spiritual philosophies which incorporate an impersonal force as a significant concept are part of a pantheistic tradition. In Christianity, by counter example, the role of the impersonal force in traditional eastern and pagan western philosophies has been replaced by the person of the Holy Ghost as the third person in the orthodox definition of the Christian trinity of Godhood.

Theistic religions see the divine as manifested in the form of persons. These are the one God in monotheistic traditions and the family of gods in the polytheistic traditions. From a psychological perspective, theism is quite understandable. We understand our selves as persons, which means we experience our ability to create and govern, rule and determine. These are the qualities we project onto the divine and transcendent realm and whatever quality it has. As human beings we can only relate to the greatest concept of existence beyond our self and other than our self as if they were like us, as sentient, active agentic persons. But that very ability to experience the divine as other as person requires an accommodation with the experience of the divine as immanent.

In theism, pantheism is generally thought of as the suffusion of the divine spirit within creation, including human beings. The classical example comes from Hinduism where the seed or “atman” of Brahman, the divine ground of being, is implanted in each individual human soul. This provides the motive force for the individual to seek reunion with the divine through the course of spiritual evolution across many lifetimes via reincarnation (Daniélou, 1964). The mystic vision of the unity of all things can be seen as the experiential side of the idea of pantheism.

A related idea is panpsychism, which holds that every thing in the universe has some form of consciousness or mind. The early psychologist, Gustav Fechner (1801–1887) held this belief. Edwards (1967) quotes him directly in a rapturous meditation on a water-lily during which he accepted the possibility of a mental or psychological life in some manner for lower orders of animate beings. Panpsychism is the chief assumption of animism as a world view (Pepper, 1942). All things are alive and have or are spirits in their essential nature, including things science and common sense deems inanimate.

See also: [▶ Animism](#) [▶ Atman](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Immanence](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Paganism](#)

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Paracelsus

Paul Larson

Paracelsus is the professional name of Theophrastus Phillipus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1531), a German alchemist, physician and occultist. The professional name was a reference back in time to the Roman physician Celsus (ca. 25 BCE–50 CE). He adopted much of the previous theories of magic passed on from classical antiquity in the writings of the Hermetic corpus and Neo-Platonic thought. He wrote at a time when alchemists were beginning extensive studies with metals and he sought to propagate a theory metallic magic to supplement or supplant the older magic which concentrated on empirical herbal lore and angelic or spiritual manifestations. In addition to his own work on the newly discovered property of magnetism, he served as an influence for Franz Anton Mesmer’s (1734–1815) dissertation

for the doctor of medicine degree. Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism served as the initial basis of the psychological technique now known as hypnosis.

See also: [Astrology and Alchemy](#)

Paranormal Experience

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Although the word itself did not come into common usage until at least 1920 (from the Latin *para*: counter, against) the cluster of phenomena generally agreed upon as being “paranormal” have appeared in every culture, age and era of which we have written record. As is the case in every historical excavation, one must take note of the fact that the taxonomies used are indeed our own, and in the particular case of this category, entirely new. What we, in the modern age consider outside or next to the limen of experience, other cultures included with the mysteries of the circulation of the blood and the wind, harsh demarcations being the province of the modern age. Generally speaking however, the paranormal is an umbrella term used to describe unusual experiences or events that resist scientific explanation. The term is frequently found in conjunction with parapsychology, the scientific field dedicated to the gathering and analysis of paranormal data, under which the following are generally categorized: telepathy, extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, ghosts, hauntings, spirit possession, xenoglossia, angel hair, cryptozoology, paracryptozoology, materialization, UFOlogy, automatic writing, channeling, telepathy, spirit photography, spirit possession, medical intuition, psychic surgery, lycanthropy, and some, such as ball lightning, which have recently been empirically confirmed.

The investigation into the paranormal has taken many forms, from the stringently scientific, to the Fortean practice of gathering anomalous anecdotal evidence. The difficulty lies in winnowing away what is (not) to be included in the study as well as what lens should be used. As a recent Gallup poll (2005) indicates, among ten listed paranormal phenomena, 73% of people believed in at least one, while only 1% believed in all. Obviously, there is little consensus – even within the religious and psychological communities – as to what warrants actual investigation. And certainly efforts at debunking paranormal claims have exposed

many charlatans, leading many in the scientific community to summarily dismiss the entire project.

Collective perceptions of the origin, manifestation, and even veracity of these wide-ranging phenomena are intimately dependent on the socio-cultural ecologies within which they occur and arguably determine the very possibility of the event in question. The literatures of ethnopyschology are replete with examples of paranormal “afflictions” that manifest in one culture, but not in any others (e.g., Windigo). Still others, such as the “night mare” appear to arise cross-culturally, though not by diffusion, lending the interpretation that these “events” may be rooted in physiological, rather than in esoteric, processes – or of course, in the night mare herself.

Several theoretical orientations are possible when apprehending the paranormal.

The Orthodox Approach

These are the “traditional” explanations as they surface from culture to culture. An example, in the Christian tradition, is the interpretation of possession as not being caused by unresolved psychosexual suppression, but by the actual presence of a discrete demonic entity in the body of an individual. Different religious systems offer different explanations of paranormal events. Whereas Sai Baba's ability to materialize objects is understood in Hinduism to be a result of a perfected understanding of the intrinsic unreality of whatever it is he is materializing – and as evidence of *siddhis*, or yogic powers – other religious systems might see this as evidence of Satanic intervention or, less spectacularly, simple chicanery.

The Bicameral Mind

A novel theory that seeks to understand the origin and persistence of clairvoyant phenomena by right-hemispheric dominance in the brains of those genetically predisposed to this type of experience. More finely nuanced depictions of neurological correlations to paranormal phenomena will undoubtedly be revealed as the fledgling field of neurotheology experimentally matures.

The Pluralist/Inclusivist Approach

This approach aligns itself with the constructivist tendency to view language as the arbiter of what is real. In this model of culturally dependent ontologies, certain phenomena exist because there are certain *words* that circumscribe their manifestations.

The Psychoanalytic Approach

The hermeneutic of suspicion. A powerful tool for the exploration of the underlying neurotic conflicts and wish-fulfillment fantasies seen by this school as the actual bases for all events erroneously perceived to be paranormal. This approach is related to other psychological theories that ground belief in the paranormal as evidence of psychopathologies such as Schizotypal Personality Disorder or Schizophrenia.

Progressive Paradigms

When viewed from within the cause-and-effect-bound Newtonian cosmology, these phenomena simply don't seem to "fit;" they are *para*, in every sense of the prefix. With the advent of Quantum Theory, however, the mystery becomes, not why these events happen, but why they don't happen more often. A science of possibilities, quantum mechanics allows for what once was once seen as *para*, to fit snugly within the realm of the expected.

Commentary

If taken seriously, the claims of paranormal research impact every domain of human knowledge and experience, challenging us to expand our notions of the body, the mind, and indeed the universe itself, beyond our linear geometries; from the relationship of man and machine (see Pears), to occult influences on evolution (see Noetic Institute), investigation into the paranormal is becoming increasingly integral to evolving understandings of consciousness itself, as well as understandings of the chimerical helices of matter and mind.

Psychology and Religion

With the advent of The Fourth Force in psychology (the previous three being Behaviorism, Psychodynamism, and Humanistic psychology) the inclusion of the transpersonal has been taken seriously for the first time in the discipline's history. Whereas psychoanalytic theory offers richly nuanced and psychologically mature analyses of the paranormal, it is reductive none-the-less, while the other two simply do not deign to discuss it. Transpersonal psychology allows for the existence of the "paranormal" as standing outside the limen of egoic experience – in other words, outside the "visible" bands of the spectrum of consciousness. Whether they be unconscious projections of the lower spectra (as may be the case with

possession) or transrational transmissions of higher states of being, or simply transmissions from higher beings themselves, transpersonal cartographies of consciousness are theoretical maps of the intersection of psychology and religion that describe, in Wilber's famous phrase, the marriage of sense and soul.

For psychology, the resuscitation and integration of the paranormal from out of the pseudoscientific hinterlands, demands radical reformulation of the psyche. One might even argue that the "repression" of this dimension of experience has returned as any number of "disorders of the spirit" – addiction, narcissism, etc (see Hillman).

For religion, an honest understanding and inclusion of the aforementioned demands both self-reflection and eventually change – self-reflection in the sense that there must be more to the human condition than dreamt of in their philosophies, and change, in the sense of expanding theological purviews to include the possibility of multiple truths.

And as for where they intersect, both religion and psychology are potentially transformative in their respective understandings of the paranormal, psychology lending academic rigor and a scientific orientation to its study, while religion a sensitivity to the subtleties of spirit.

Perhaps the most pragmatic approach is to use a theoretical "toolbox." Are Yeti sightings to be lumped with those of UFO's – or do they mean different things and require different lenses? A psychoanalytic approach might make sense for a poltergeist or channeling (reference) but not for remote viewing or spirit photography. And of course, the question becomes then, is a psychoanalytic reading as reductive as it sounds? Or does a truly comprehensive estimation have room for this perspective as well as something else? Whatever hermeneutic one employs to read it will certainly color the *way* it is read; which is why, if anything, a perpspectival plurality should be conscientiously employed when doing so.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Hinduism](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Psychology as Religion](#)

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Participation Mystique

John Ryan Haule

Mode of Thinking

“Mystical participation” is an idea introduced by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in 1910 to identify what it is about the mentality of so-called primitives that makes them understand

things differently from Westerners. Lévy-Bruhl began his lifework as a professional philosopher in search of “unimpeachable truths” that would be universally human in their validity. To escape his own cultural limitations, he began studying the reports of missionaries and colonialists working among pre-literate peoples in Africa, Australia, the Americas, and Oceania – all baffled by what they took to be absurd beliefs on the part of the natives. Finding the same sorts of “absurdities” in all parts of the world, Lévy-Bruhl proposed that, while Europeans find meaning in events by looking for causal, empirical theories to explain what made them happen, “primitives” find meaning by seeing empirical events as “participating” in a larger, invisible reality – something on the order of myth, made up of what he called “collective representations” – very similar to Jung’s idea of archetypal images. By 1927 he had identified the powerful emotions that accompany mystical participation as the crucial factor in “primitive mentality.” He argued that *participation mystique* is in some ways superior to our European way of thinking, insofar as it gives natives’ experience a greater depth and meaningfulness than our materialistic empiricism allows us.

Shared Identity

C. G. Jung borrowed the term for his psychology and expanded its meaning, although he was aware of what a controversial figure Lévy-Bruhl had become – unjustly burdened with a racist reputation for having described “primitive mentality” as “inferior” to the European sort. In Jung’s hands, participation mystique came to mean, not only “mythic thinking,” but also the partial loss of individuality that people commonly suffer in crowds, tribes and families, usually without knowing it. Jung found participation mystique to be characteristic of all human psychology, modern Westerners included.

Most frequently, when used in a Jungian context, participation mystique refers to a regrettable state of unconsciousness: as when parents cannot appreciate the individuality of their children but see them primarily as advertisements for their own honor or shame, or when an analyst becomes so unconsciously identified with an analysand as to lose the capacity for objective critique. In truth, however, every interpersonal relationship has elements of participation mystique in it; and when one recognizes this element and makes use of it, a higher level of consciousness can be attained. A state of participation mystique between mother and infant is an essential part of the bonding between

them, and it is the platform of trust and immediate understanding which makes their emotional/gestural communications possible and effective. The infant is socialized and begins to learn language within a cocoon of participation mystique.

Similarly, the rapport or transference relationship between analyst and analysand inevitably involves mystical participation. Whether one thinks in terms of empathy (literally, “feeling into” another person’s state of mind) or of an “interpersonal field” of mutuality, there is always a background condition in which the distinction between “me” and “you” is greatly diminished. By directing attention to the background state of participation mystique, an analyst is able to gain access to the analysand’s condition and by articulating it raise consciousness. Toward the end of his life, Jung often spoke of this participation mystique based transference relationship in terms of a two-million-year-old man, the personification of the collective unconscious, who brings to the analytic meeting the wisdom of the human race. The mutual field becomes an age-old source of insights relevant to both parties.

Society and Myth

Every society that shares a mythic narrative which gives meaning and shape to its communal life inhabits a world of participation mystique in both senses of the term: (1) the members share a mutual identity to a greater or lesser degree and (2) they make sense of their communal life and the events they experience by reference to “collective representations” derived from their myth. Meditative states of consciousness are more easily and dependably achieved in ashrams and monasteries where all participate in the same rituals and practices, because the communal activities build a participation mystique with a character that supports those states. Shamans exploit the background state of participation mystique when they make visionary journeys on behalf of a patient, to diagnose an illness or to seek out and retrieve a lost soul. Yogis and Sufi masters confer meditative powers upon their disciples by *shaktipat* (Sanskrit, “transmission of psycho-spiritual energy”), which is a form of participation mystique.

See also: [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ Communal and Personal Identity](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Meditation](#) [▶ Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Mysticism and](#)

[Psychotherapy](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Shamans and Shamanism](#) [▶ Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Pastoral Counseling

Don Allen, Jr.

Over the centuries pastoral counseling has been one of the main responsibilities of pastors throughout the church. Jesus provided pastoral counseling to his disciples and to the crowds that followed Him. He talked regularly with those who were physically sick and emotionally hurting. The Apostle Paul also gave pastoral counseling to his young students and preachers such as Timothy and Titus. He also gave pastoral counseling through his letter to Philemon to address the issue of Onesimus returning home. He even gave pastoral counsel to Peter as he attempted to correct the issues facing the church in book of Acts.

Throughout all church history, pastoral counselors have been the foundational and focal point of helping people deal with all sorts of issues and problems. Pastors are frequently the first person church members will seek help from when dealing with grief and death issues, crisis situations, marriage struggles, family issues, health problems, job-related problems, etc.

The goals of pastoral counseling are really quite simple:

- (1) To develop a relationship based on trust that supports the person seeking help.
- (2) To provide wise Biblical counseling and spiritual resources for church members and others seeking help.
- (3) To provide a safe environment offering confidentiality to people dealing with problems and issues.

Pastoral is defined as “Relating to the care of souls, or to the pastor of a church; as, pastoral duties; a pastoral letter” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pastoral>).

Counseling is defined as “professional guidance of the individual by utilizing psychological methods especially in collecting case history data, using various techniques of the personal interview, and testing interests and aptitudes” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counselor>).

According to American Association of Pastoral Counselors, “Pastoral Counseling is a unique form of psychotherapy which uses spiritual resources as well as psychological understanding for healing and growth” (<http://www.aapc.org/about.cfm#intro>).

When you combine the two words you have a pastor (shepherd) caring for the souls (members) of his/her congregation by providing a listening ear, guidance, prayer, hope and wisdom in how deal with crisis, family issues, spiritual dilemmas, etc.

It is recommended that we give the same consideration to people with emotional/mental health issues that we do when we help individuals deal with physical problems (such as a physical illness). Just as pastors refer people to seek appropriate medical care, we need to refer people to seek appropriate help to deal with issues of mental illness. As pastors, it is important to understand that unless we have had specific training in the field of mental health it is dangerous (and, in some cases, criminal) to deal with mental health issues as well. Over the years there have been a number of cases where churches and pastors have be sued and lost because of the information and advice they provided to someone dealing with a mental health problem.

Another essential area of pastoral counseling is hospital and nursing home ministry. Pastors are generally the first ones called to come and minister to a patient just before a surgery. Pastors are summoned to comfort the sick and dying. He/she will address fears and spiritual conditions and provide comfort from a spiritual perspective. Pastoral counselors often deal with the aftermath of a patient’s hospital admittance or the grief of a family mourning the death of a loved one.

Pastoral counselors are also often called upon to minister in the prisons. He/she is asked to provide wisdom, comfort, hope and Biblical outlook for the inmate and the suffering family on the outside. The word chaplain refers to that person who feels a special call to minister in jails, hospitals, military bases and workplaces. The chaplain’s role is to provide support, encouragement, spiritual perspective and Biblical guidance in their place of ministry.

A relatively new and developing part of Pastoral Counseling is the professional Pastoral Counselor. This individual often has a Practice of Pastoral Counseling, which is not only their ministry, but also their employment. A professional Pastoral Counselor is often employed by the local church or social agencies that specialize in helping Christians or other religious groups address their issues in an office setting. The professional Pastoral Counselor studies counseling from a Christian or Biblical view and challenges clients to seek out answers and spiritual truth. Many states require that Pastoral Counselors be certified or licensed just as other professional counselors. A few states even offer credentials for those serving in the developing field of Pastoral Counselors.

Education Requirements

There is a wide range of education and training available for pastoral counselors, including seminars, workshops, distant learning programs and college level programs covering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. Many major Christian universities and seminaries offer degree programs in Pastoral Counseling or Christian Psychology. It is very important to review the college or seminary’s accreditations and to understand the state laws regarding licensure of pastoral counseling within the local church and at private agencies.

Types of Counseling Performed

The content and practice of pastoral counseling is as diverse as psychology. There are generally three distinct groups: The first group is typically referred to as “Bible Only.” This group uses the Scripture as their only tool for counseling. A foundational verse for this is “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). The Bible is their main authority and they feel that one can find all the answers to life’s questions within the context of Scripture. The second group believes it is appropriate to take from both the Bible and the scientific discipline of psychology to help people address the problems they are dealing with. This group has no conflict using cognitive therapy to help individuals address substance abuse problems or Gestalt therapy to address an individual’s personal decisions in seeking direction for their lives. The third point of view is that a counselor should only use only proven psychological

methods to treat mental/emotional problems. This group and views pastoral counseling as only an extension (not an integral treatment partner) of the mental health community.

Several therapies are commonly used by pastors when they provide pastoral counseling. Some of those therapies include:

- Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapies
- Solution Focus or Brief Therapies
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Person Centered Counseling
- Gestalt therapy
- Behavior Therapy and
- Reality Therapy

There are also several professional organizations for pastoral counselors:

- American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
- Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)
- Association of Professional Chaplains
- American Association of Christian Counselor
- National Association of Nouthetic Counselor (NANC)
- Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC) and
- National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

Professional Journals of interest in the field of Pastoral Counseling include:

- The Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc. (JPCP)
- The Journal of Pastoral Counseling
- The Journal of Pastoral Theology
- The Journal of Biblical Counseling and
- Christian Counseling Today

See also: [♦ Jesus](#) [♦ Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Patriarchy

[♦ Father](#)

Persona

Ann Casement

Persona is the term Jung used to denote the outer face that is presented to the world which he appropriated from the word for the mask worn by actors in antiquity to indicate the roles they played. Jung conceived of it as an archetype meaning that it is universal and it is the archetypal core of persona that facilitates the relating that has evolved as an integral part of humans as social beings. Different cultures and different historical times give rise to different outer personas as do different life stages and events in an individual's development. However, the archetypal core gives the persona its powerful religious dimension that raises it from the banal, workaday outer vestment of an individual via its connection to the depths of the psyche.

In his writings on persona, Jung often emphasizes its superficial aspects as, for instance, in his paper *The persona as a segment of the collective psyche*, where he makes the point that the contents of the persona are similar to the impersonal unconscious in being collective. "It is only because the *persona* represents a more or less arbitrary and fortuitous segment of the collective psyche that we can make the mistake of regarding it *in toto* as something individual" (Jung, 1953: 157) (Original italics). He goes on to say: "It is. . .only a mask of the collective psyche, a mask that *feigns individuality*, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks" (Jung, 1953: 157) (Original italics).

He goes on to say the essential components of the persona may be summarized as a compromise between individual and society, a semblance, and a two-dimensional reality. However, in the course of analysis, the persona often begins to break down with the result that the conscious mind can become suffused with material from the collective unconscious. The resultant release of involuntary phantasy material seems to be the specific activity of the collective psyche. As the influence of the latter increases, the conscious personality loses its power of leadership and

is “pushed about like a figure on a chess-board by an invisible player” (Jung, 1953a: 161). Jung illustrates this process with case material from a patient whose persona was identified with that of the supremely wise, grown-up, all understanding mother-daughter-beloved behind which her authentic self lay hidden. Her transference onto Jung consisted of the intellectual father who would collude with her intellect as her actual father had done. In the course of analysis she had dreams that brought up material from the collective unconscious which in turn led to her realizing her own real potential instead of her previous role-playing.

From these brief comments, it can be seen that persona has a paradoxical nature in lying between consciousness and the contents of the unconscious so it is important to stress that the persona is not itself pathological but may become so if an individual is too identified with their social role of mother, lawyer, teacher and so on. This kind of persona identification which is concerned with conscious and collective adaptation leads to rigidity and an ego which is capable only of external orientation so that unconscious material will tend to erupt into consciousness rather than emerging in a more manageable form.

Persona Versus Vocation

As has been said above, the persona is the psychic mechanism that consciously adapts an individual to the demands of the external world, but, being an archetype, a part of it lies in the unconscious. There may come a time in any individual’s life when conscious adaptation proves insufficient and the unconscious part of the persona becomes active often through neurotic symptoms which can lead the person into therapy. Jung’s view of anyone seeking that kind of help was that they were ultimately seeking a spiritual solution to problems. Paradoxically, the path to the inner spiritual quest for anyone lies in the unconscious part of the persona: “But since the soul, like the persona is a function of relationship, it must consist in a certain sense of two parts – one part belonging to the individual, and the other . . . in the unconscious” (Jung, 1971: 167–168).

On the whole, Jung’s view of persona was somewhat negative equating it with unconscious adaptation to mass demands. He poses the question of what induces anyone to emancipate themselves from the “herd and its well-worn paths” (Jung, 1954: 175) the latter induced by identification with a collective persona. The answer lies in “*vocation*” (p. 175) which “puts its trust in it as in God. . . vocation acts like a law of God from which there is no escape” (p. 175). This vocation or inner voice is a different one to the voice of the persona (from the Latin *personare*: to make resound)

which can boom loudly in order to compensate for feelings of inferiority: “. . . whenever people are called upon to perform a role which is too big for the human size, they. . . inflate themselves – a little frog becomes like a bull. . .” (Jarrett, 1988: 1213).

The religious life is the one that follows its own destiny by separating from identification with the herd persona. As Jung says: “We can point to Christ, who sacrificed. . . to the god within him, and lived his individual life to the bitter end without regard for conventions. . .” (Jung, 1958: 340). And as Jung goes on to say about the god archetype: “. . . since experience of this archetype has the quality of numinosity, often in very high degree, it comes into the category of religious experience” (Jung, 1958: 59). What the conscious part of the persona may regard as evil is a perception based on it not conforming with what an individual considers to be good so that paradoxically it is through confrontation with and conscious integration of the evil, and, therefore, rejected parts of the personality that a truly religious and meaningful attitude to living evolves. As Jung states: “. . . all religious conversions that cannot be traced back directly to suggestion and contagious example rest upon independent interior processes culminating in a change of personality” (Jung, 1953b: 175).

Jekyll and Hyde

A fictional example of where an individual cannot perform the task of confronting the evil that lies in the psyche is attested to by Murray Stein in his writings about the persona in his book *Jung’s Map of the Soul*, wherein he highlights Jung’s special interest in this phenomenon which has to do with playing roles in society. “He was interested in how people come to play particular roles. . . and represent social and cultural stereotypes rather than assuming and living their own uniqueness. . . It is a kind of mimicry” (Stein, 1998: 111). He goes on to say that character is often situational and cites the Jekyll and Hyde story as an extreme form of that. In looking more closely at that particular story, one could say that Jekyll was identified with the persona of the caring doctor whose sole aim was to be in the service of humankind. He was in denial of his more animal instinctual side, which, through being repressed, grew in force until eventually it got the upper hand and gained control of his whole personality. The latter exemplifies what Jung calls *shadow* which stands in relation to the persona as polarities of the ego and, in this way, they represent a classic pair of opposites. Where there is a weak ego, shadow and persona can split into extreme polarities leaving no possibility of a dialog

between the two as in the fictional case of Jekyll and Hyde. It may be of interest to note that Robert Louis Stevenson said that much of his writing was developed by “little people” in his dreams, and specifically cited the story of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in this context. This writer has speculated on his use of the name “Jekyll” for the human side of the character he was depicting as it bears an obvious resemblance to the word jackal. It may be that, in choosing this ambiguous name, Stevenson is drawing attention to the animal nature from which the persona evolves.

Soul as Persona

Jung’s interest in the persona arose out of his study of multiple personalities and dissociation in an individual which, in turn, was sparked by his experience with the French school, in particular the work of Pierre Janet. “One has only to observe a man rather closely, under varying conditions, to see that a change from one milieu to another brings about a striking alteration of personality. . . . Angel abroad, devil at home” (Jung, 1971: 464). Different environments demand different attitudes which depend on the ego’s identification with the attitude of the moment. This personality-splitting is by no means only abnormal but led Jung to state that “such a man has no real character at all: he is not *individual* but *collective*, the plaything of circumstance and general expectation” (Jung, 1971: 465) (Original italics).

Jung links *soul* to *persona* by differentiating the former from *psyche* in the following way: “By *psyche* I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious. By *soul*, on the other hand, I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a ‘personality’” (Jung, 1971: 463). Jung gives an instance of a man whose persona was identified with the soul leading to “a lack of relatedness, at times even a blind inconsiderateness” (Jung, 1971: 467). This kind of rigid persona can result in a person “who blindly and pitilessly destroys the happiness of those nearest to him, and yet would interrupt important business journeys just to enjoy the beauty of a forest scene” (Jung, 1971a: 467). In other words, persona identification with soul can lead to a deep aesthetic sensibility but also to a lack of heart and a capacity for relatedness.

On the other hand, a lack of connection between soul and persona can have grave consequences as Jung demonstrates with Spitteler’s prose epic *Prometheus and Epimetheus*. In this work, Prometheus is depicted as having sacrificed his ego to the soul, the function of inner relation to the inner world, in the process losing the counterweight

to the persona, which would connect him with external reality. An angel appears to Prometheus saying: “It shall come to pass, if you do not prevail and free yourself from your forward soul, that you shall lose the great reward of many years, and the joy of your heart, and all the fruits of your richly endowed mind” (Spitteler, 1931: 23). As Jung points out, the soul, like the persona, is a function of relationship and hence consists of two parts – one belonging to the individual and the other to the object viz. the unconscious.

In conclusion, it should be clear from the above that the development of a well-functioning persona is an essential task for any individual but in the process two major pitfalls must be avoided. The first is an over-valuing of the outer persona which leads to dissociation from its unconscious side and hence from connection to the symbolic life; the second is an under-valuing of the persona which can result in dissociation from the external world of reality. Jung cites Schopenhauer’s claim that the persona is how one *appears* to oneself and the world but not what one *is*. In view of this, it is wise to bear in mind the well-known saying that one should never judge a book by its cover. As Jung states: “. . . the temptation to be what one seems to be is great, because the persona is usually rewarded in cash” (Jung, 1959: 123).

See also: [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psyche](#)

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Personal God

Kenneth L. Nolen

A personal God is a supreme being with self-consciousness and will, capable of feeling, has the attributes and desires of a person, and enters into relationships with individuals and people groups. Although not all Christians believe in a personal God, the belief is integral to and most prevalent in Christianity. Atheists do not believe in God or gods. Agnostics believe that there is a God or gods but that they are unknowable, and Deists believe in an impersonal supreme God that exists and created the universe, but does not intervene in its normal operations. Other god or gods may have human characteristics and feelings that encompass the entire range of human attributes, emotions, and abilities, but lack the holiness and relational attributes of the unique God of Judaism and Christianity.

A major survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that 6-in-10 adults in the United States believe in a personal God. However, to say that God is a person is to affirm the divine ability and willingness to relate to others and does not imply that God is human, evolved from humanity, or is located at a specific point in the universe. Although the Christian concept of a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, could imply a belief in three gods, Christian creeds are quick to clarify that there are not three gods, but only one God existing in three persons. In this sense the word, “God” must apply to a person or a whole composed of interrelated persons. A personal God has all of the maximum attributes of a human person and in addition is omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternal, and morally perfect. The belief in a personal God presupposes that God is active in the affairs of humanity while enacting an eternal plan for humankind and all of creation. God, who has attributes of male and female, is usually referred to in the masculine. He is actively sustaining and preserving his creation for his own purpose. Since God is divine and may have attributes unknown and unknowable by humanity, God must be self-revealing.

Christians believe that God is self-revealing in nature, in special relationships with individuals and groups of people, but especially in Christian scriptures or Bible. Although the Christian Bible does not try to prove the existence of God, it does give insights into God’s nature and attributes. From this self-revelation, God is described as a spirit, who wants to be known by humanity, who has a name or names, who is wise, faithful, truthful,

patient, good, loving, gracious and merciful, holy, righteous and just. Many of these same moral attributes are found in the characteristics of humankind, but God’s attributes are exceedingly greater in intensity and holiness. The God of Judaism and Christianity emulates the positive absolutes that humanity strives for but fails to achieve.

Commentary

The presuppositions that an investigator brings to the discussion will have a bearing upon his or her belief or disbelief in a personal God. Psychology and religion have had an ongoing tenuous relationship. At times, their relationship could be described as warfare between science and religion with psychology attempting to replace religion or at the very least enter into the discussion of the origins and functions of religious beliefs and practices. For some, a personal God is an anthropomorphic human creation and a mere reflection of humanity and has no place in the world of science. While others who understand the positive effects of faith and belief, blend psychology with religion until a belief in a personal God is no longer necessary. At other times, psychology and religion agree as they consider spirituality a central part of the human journey seeking ways in which psychology could deepen the understanding of the foundation and positive effects of religion on the human condition including the belief in a personal God.

See also: [▶ Anthropomorphism](#) [▶ Biblical Psychology](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ God Image](#)

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Personal Unconscious

Brandon Randolph-Seng

The unconscious has a long history in psychology. Although Freud is credited for his contributions on the understanding of the unconscious, contemporary psychology has failed to find evidence for much of Freud's assertions concerning what the unconscious part of human beings contains. The unconscious is now considered to be indicative of automatic thought processes. Automatic thought is generally characterized as nonconscious processing. Automatic thought processes involve reflexive responses to certain triggering conditions. These processes require only that a stimulus event or object be detected by an individual's sensory system. Once that triggering event is detected, the process runs to completion without awareness (for a review see Wegner and Bargh, 1998). Such nonconscious influences on thoughts can, in turn, automatically influence behavior. One frequently-cited demonstration of this effect involved the priming of some participants with the concept of the elderly. Results showed that these elderly-primed participants subsequently walked slower than did control participants (Bargh, Chen, and Burrows, 1996).

What are the nonconscious components of thought for religion and the religious believer? Is it possible that mental representations that shade the way an individual interprets a variety of situations, such as religious beliefs, could have automatic influences? Research in this area suggests the answer to this question is yes, particularly for religious individuals. For example, using a method designed to measure implicit (i.e., automatically activated) evaluations, Hill (1994) found that religious and nonreligious people made similar implicit evaluations towards religiously neutral objects. In contrast, implicit evaluations of religious

objects were stronger among religious people than among nonreligious people. Going one step further, recent research has shown that subliminal (i.e., outside of conscious awareness) presentations of the concept of God actually reduce causal attributions to the self for believers of God (see Dijksterhuis, Aarts, and Smith, 2005). Can religious representations in turn automatically influence behavior outside of awareness? Research once again says yes. Subliminal presentation of religious words (e.g., amen, faith, saved) have been shown to increase prosocial behavior (helping, honesty) and do so without participants' conscious awareness of such influence (Pichon, Boccato, and Saroglou, 2007; Randolph-Seng and Nielsen, 2007). Furthermore, these behavioral effects are not moderated by self-reported religiosity (Randolph-Seng and Nielsen, 2007; Shariff and Norenzayan, 2007).

See also: ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Unconscious

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Petitionary Prayer

▶ Contemplative Prayer ▶ Prayer

Peyote Ceremony

Richard W. Voss · Robert Prue (Sicangu Lakota)

The Peyote ceremony has been described in a number of ethnographic works (Steinmetz, 1990; Anderson, 1996; Schaefer and Furst, 1996; Hultkranz, 1997). While the interpretations these works offer are suspect for their ethnocentrism, the ritual descriptions are largely consistent with observations of the ceremonies. The second author has attended peyote ceremonies, on both personal and professional levels, as both an invited guest and as part of his research, and will describe the process of the peyote ceremony. The conduct of the peyote meeting is fairly simple when compared to the complex rituals many of the shamanistic societies of the plains have or had (Wissler, 1916).

The ceremony is typically held in either a plains style tipi or a Navajo hogan, although some chapters have buildings set aside for their services. In any case, there is always a dirt floor and participants sit or kneel on blankets for the duration of the 8–10 h service. Exceptions are made for elderly, who may sit in a chair, or for prepubescent children, some who will lie down being their adult guardians, being allowed to sleep. The ceremony itself begins with the lighting of the fire at sunrise on the morning of the service. A Fire-keeper tends the fire throughout the day praying. Participants arrive in the hours preceding the service proper, which usually begins at about 4 h before midnight. There are opening prayer songs, prayers and words of instruction by the Roadman. Each person present is usually acknowledged and made welcome, with special attention being given to the elderly, youth, those who have traveled far and individuals new to the religion.

A Roadman is a man qualified to conduct the ritual who serves in the role of facilitator more than medicine man, priest or minister, although some Roadmen are also highly skilled shamans and orators. The service continues with the sponsoring party saying a “few” words about the nature of the service, why and in some cases for whom the service was called. Peyote Way services are not routine, for the most part, but are called a specific purpose of healing, thanksgiving or celebration. While the opening of the ceremony is happening corn husks and tobacco are passed to all participants, who roll prayer smokes. Some participants carry ground peyote into the ritual that they add to the prayer smokes. These prayer smokes are than smoked in unison with all participants

addressing the Chief Peyote to intervene on behalf of their prayers. The Chief Peyote is a whole dried peyote plant placed prominently on the altar (viewed as the symbolic road of life), and is not thought of as a deity itself, but as an intercessor to God.

Many peyotists profess to be Christian and view the Chief Peyote to be a manifestation of Christ. Once the initial prayers and songs have been said, the peyote is passed around. Referred to as medicine in both English and most Indigenous languages, the peyote is consumed either green or fresh, in powdered form, in slurry of ground peyote or as a tea. Medicine is passed around after several rounds of singing, however, individuals can usually ask for more throughout the ceremony. Once the medicine has been passed a staff, fan and rattle are passed sequentially to each participant who then prays silently or sings four songs, accompanied by a drummer.

The Peyote Way services use a water drum, usually made of a cast iron kettle and partially filled with water, which produces a unique droning sound. The drummers are usually highly skilled and fast paced beat contributes to the transcendent state. The drumming, rattling and singing continues for about 4 h until midnight when there is ritual water brought in by the sponsoring woman or the wife of the Roadman. Participants usually leave the tipi to stretch, or relieve themselves. The service resumes following the short break and continues in a similar manner to the first round. The water woman brings in more water at sunrise, again offering words of gratitude and thanksgiving, usually addressing each participant personally. She then smokes over the water and which is then passed around for participants to take a drink. The water is followed by a ceremonial meal consisting of dried pulverized deer meat, corn meal, a fruit pudding and a sweet desert. Then the service is ended, but the ceremonial space is not disbanded until after the participants have taken a lunch meal.

The atmosphere of the service is usually quite reverent and sedate. This is in striking contrast to the atmosphere when the service is completed which is quite animated, with humor being the order of the day, with old and new acquaintances poking good-natured fun at themselves and each other. People appear quite emotionally open during this period. Individuals that I have known for years and thought to be quiet and reserved, openly shared personal challenges or intimate concerns about themselves or others. The ceremony seems to help participants become more vulnerable and emotionally connected with one another. Caution is advised in assuming that this animation and openness is caused by the intoxicating

effects of peyote alone. The same behavior can be observed following other intense indigenous rituals, (e.g., Sundance, Vision Quest or Sweat Lodge Ceremonies).

Ceremonial Use of Peyote and the Professional Healthcare System

Beginning Discussion

There is evidence that the medical community in the United States is ambivalent about how to comprehend and view the ceremonial use of peyote (Salladay, 2005; Yuill, 2006). How should a professional healthcare provider react or respond when he or she learns that one's patient is active in the peyote religion and periodically attends a peyote ceremony? While there are emerging studies that show that the ceremonial use of peyote does not correlate to increased risk of psychological or cognitive deficits (Halpern, Sherwood, Hudson, Yurgelun-Todd, and Pope, 2005), there is also evidence that the illicit use of peyote (outside a ceremonial context) is associated with low levels of social support, low levels of self-esteem, and low identification with American Indian culture (Fickenscher, Novins, and Manson, 2006), more research needs to be done looking at the interactions between peyote and prescribed medications.

Peyote has been classified under federal law as a Schedule I controlled substance, however exemptions have been enacted, through the American Indian Religious Freedom Amendments Act of 1991 (AIRFAA) to protect members' exercise of traditional peyote ceremonies of the Native American Church. While there are exemptions for members of the Native American Church of Native American descent, the interpretation of this federal legislation has been subject to various interpretations by the states (Parker, 2001). Parker notes, "While current exemption structure seems to provide ample protection to Native Americans practicing peyote religion, continuing challenges to the constitutionality of the exemptions by non-Native Americans indicates that Congress could strengthen and clarify the exemption to avoid future problems and court challenges" (2001: 13).

See also: ➤ [Christ](#) ➤ [Native American Messianism](#) ➤ [Ritual](#) ➤ [Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Peyote Religion

Richard W. Voss · Robert Prue (Sicangu Lakota)

Peyote Way: Background and Cultural Context

The term "Peyote Religion" describes a wide range of spiritual practices primarily from tribes of the American Southwest that has expanded into a kind of pan-Indian movement under the auspices of the Native American Church (NAC). Peyote religion, formally recognized as the Native American Church (NAC) incorporates the ritual use of peyote, the small spineless peyote cactus *Lophophora Williamsii*, into its spiritual and healing

ceremonies. The peyote ceremony is led by a recognized practitioner who is referred to as a Roadman who is sponsored by an individual or family requesting a ceremony, usually for some specific need or healing or to recognize some event, such as a birthday or an important life transition.

Derived from the Aztec word *Péyotl*, the Peyote Way religions have expanded their spheres of influence from an area around the Rio Grande Valley, along the current US-Mexico boarder, to Indigenous groups throughout Central and North America (Anderson, 1996).

The ritual use of peyote has roots in antiquity. A ritually prepared peyote cactus was discovered at an archeological site that spans the US-Mexico border dated to 5,700 years before the present. Other archeological evidence, paintings and ritual paraphernalia, indicates that the Indigenous people of that region have been using both peyote and psychoactive mescal beans ritually for over 10,500 years (Bruhn, et al., 2002).

The Peyote Way is a complex bio-psycho-social-spiritual phenomenon that encompasses much more than the pharmacology plant. The contemporary peyote practice found in the United States, Canada and by Mestizo peoples in Mexico differs significantly from the older rites that continue to be practiced by the Huichol, Cora and the Tarahumar in Mexico (Steinberg, et al., 2004). The forebearers of the modern Native American Church were the Lipan Apache, who brought the practice from the Mexican side of the Rio Grande to their Mescalero Apache relatives around 1870. From the Mescalero it spread to the Comanche and Kiowa in Oklahoma and Texas. It quickly spread to most of the Eastern Tribes forcibly relocated to the Oklahoma Territory. The quick spread from the Mescalero to most of the Oklahoma Tribes has been attributed to the loss of traditional religions due to oppression (Anderson, 1996).

The psychedelic properties of peyote are just a part of the whole spiritual package “this is not to say that peyote does not facilitate visions but rather that it is only one influence in a total religious setting” (Steinmetz, 1990: 99). It is important to note that describing peyote as a “psychedelic” while accurate, is fraught with problems, particularly when the Peyote religion is studied outside its indigenous context. Here, one needs to differentiate the ritual use of peyote by indigenous practitioners, called Roadmen, and Native American Church participants from use or abuse of peyote by curiosity seekers and experimenters who are simply seeking a “high” devoid of a ceremonial and cultural context. Peyote has been described as both a psychedelic as well as an entheogen. An entheogen is a chemical or botanical substance that

produces the experience of God within an individual and has been argued to be a necessary part of the study of religion (Roberts and Hruby, 2002). Elsewhere, an entheogen has been defined as a psychoactive sacramental plant or chemical substance taken to occasion primary religious experience. Within such an understanding the complementary use of Peyote Ceremony within the context of mental health treatment has been viewed as a form of cultural psychiatry (Calabrese, 1997). Other entheogens include psilocybin mushrooms and DMT-containing *ayahuasca*, which, similar to the use of peyote, have been used continuously for centuries by indigenous people of the Americas (Tupper, 2002).

Civil Rights Versus Indigenous Rites: New Pathways for Treatment

Mental health practitioners from across disciplines may view Peyote Religion and the Native American Church with some degree of suspicion, if not, with downright skepticism. Mack (1986) discussed the medical dangers of peyote intoxication in the peer-reviewed *North Carolina Journal of Medicine*. Mack refers to the users of peyote as “the more primitive natives of our hemisphere” (p. 138), and gives repeated attention to details of nausea, vomiting and bodily reactions that happen, at doses that he failed to mention were 150–400 times higher than the ceremonial amount reported nearly a century prior (Anderson, 1996). So, there is need for reasoned and open discourse on this important resource and potential partner for the mainstream mental health practitioner.

Psychiatric researchers, Blum, Futterman and Pascarosia (1977), looked at the mildly psychedelic effects of the peyote, coupled with Native American Church ritual and exposure to positive images projected by the skillful use of folklore by the road man. They found these components facilitated an effective therapeutic catharsis. Albaugh and Anderson (1974) hypothesized that the effects of peyote created a peak psychedelic experience that were similar to those found when using LSD as an adjunct to psychotherapy with alcoholics. In their study of a group of lifelong drug and alcohol abstaining Navajo, Halpern, Sherwood et al. (2005) found no evidence of psychological or cognitive deficits associated with regularly using peyote in a religious setting. However, the placement of peyote, LSD and other psychedelics on the Schedule 1 classification of drugs has eliminated public funding of psychedelic research (Strassman, 2001), and has limited scientific inquiry on the effects of

such. The current bio-medical opinion on efficacy of entheogens is inconclusive (Halpern, 2001) and yet there is limited evidence that further study is warranted. Wright has suggested that the behavioral sciences should once again open its mind to the incorporation of mind expanding substances in the psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment milieu (2002). As science takes a more benign look at the effects of traditional healing practices and brain chemistry, new pathways for treatment and renewed discussions about traditional indigenous healing methods may be opened up for study (see Hwu and Chen, 2000).

See also: [Peyote Ceremony](#) [Ritual](#)

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Phenomenological Psychology

Todd DuBose

Phenomenological psychology is a type of human science psychology that emphasizes close attention to, and rigorous, detailed description and understanding of, personal lived experiences within respective lifeworlds. One's lived experience within one's lifeworld is how one experiences and makes sense of everyday events *as it is to the one experiencing* those events or happenings. Entry into meaningful experiences is accessed by descriptive approaches, rather than explanative ones, and through intuitive, empathic resonance with the intersubjective meaningfulness of an individual's enactments of significance in the world.

The formal discipline of phenomenological psychology was founded by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911; 1989). Dilthey distinguished between the natural sciences (*Naturalwissenschaften*) and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), believing the latter to be the more appropriate approach to understanding human existence. He used hermeneutical theory, or the art and science of interpretation, as the earlier hermeneuticist and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834; 1893) understood it, and broadened its scope. For Schleiermacher, interpretative skills were tools used for textual analysis, particularly sacred texts, and interpretation was partly accomplished through empathic resonance with an author's intentions for textual meaning. Dilthey expanded the interpretive process beyond textual analysis to include an analysis of human experience as disclosed in actions, experiences,

products, and cultural artifacts. For Dilthey, though, meaning cannot be experienced directly and must be “decoded” through interpretive inquiry. On the other hand, Dilthey argued that what allows for empathic and communal sharing at all is that, mediated as it is, we all share a common human existence (Burston and Frie, 2006). Moreover, Dilthey rejected any sense of unconscious representation, thus founding a central tenet of phenomenological psychology, namely, that what shows itself in existence is inextricably intertwined with the *ways* in which we experience those things (Burston and Frie, 2006).

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938; 1962), furthered Dilthey’s project, and, through the influence of his teacher Franz Brentano (1838–1917), developed what became known as transcendental phenomenology. Husserl and his teachers were influenced by Immanuel Kant’s (1724–1804) work on the possibilities and limitations of knowledge. Husserl insisted that the phenomenologist remain focused on “the things themselves,” bracketing biases and assumptions that would prevent a clear perception of things as they presented themselves to our consciousness. For Husserl, borrowing from his teacher Brentano, experience, or consciousness, is intentional, which is to say that experiences, objects, persons, things, and events are taken up by each of us in meaningful ways. We are always “about” some directive. Objects, for instance, are objects for us, have a certain calling to us, and are placed within a particular project and direction or goal of significance for us. Husserl fused the traditional distinction between noesis, or the thinking process itself, and noema, or the meaning attributed to objects experienced in consciousness. This move steps beyond a Kantian loyalty to the conditions of knowledge over the objects of knowledge and, instead, refigures knowledge as a co-construction between how we experience things and how the things themselves shape and delimit how we experience them.

Transcendental phenomenology developed into phenomenological research methodology. The challenge for transcendental phenomenological psychology became how one could move from particular experiences to general claims. Although we may have different lived experiences of any given event, human experience is structured in such a way that if we can understand the general structure of how things come to be experienced as they are, potentially anyone undergoing the same experience could find resonance with any other person having encountered it. The experience of being anxious, or angry, or desirous, albeit from differing life stories, nonetheless has the potential of sharing a common human “way” of undergoing these experiences. Arriving at this common structure of experience for any given event, though,

necessitates an act of “bracketing” pre-understandings, biases, prejudices or other assumptions about how an experience should be, in order to clear a space for things to show themselves as they are to us.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Husserl’s student, concurred that experienced was structured, but understood this fact in very different ways. Heidegger became known as the founder of hermeneutical or existential phenomenology, and saw all experience as conditioned by common, existential givens: temporality, spatiality, mortality, co-existence, mood/attunement, historicity, and bodyhood (Heidegger, 1962). Heidegger thought that the idea of an objective, isolated, egoistic ego that is separate from the world in which he experiences things as a dualistic illusion, and instead, considered the person-world co-construction an inseparable process.

Heidegger described this process as being-in-the-world, with “being” described as a comportment of existence rather than an isolated and self-contained ego, and thus, preferred to use the intentionally untranslated German word, *Dasein*, or “being-there,” for “being,” in order to accentuate a process rather than a “thing.” Existential-phenomenological psychology became a practice of interpreting the presencing of *Dasein* in eventful situations. Interpreting *Dasein* required an acknowledgment of one’s own biases and pre-understandings, rather than rid oneself of them, as any understanding presupposes an already pre-understanding. Our pre-understandings are ways in which we enter a phenomenon we want to understand better, and use what we do know about it as points of entry. One leads with the bit of awareness and experience one knows of a phenomenon and dialogues with the undulation of concealment and disclosure.

Commentary

Contemporary expressions of phenomenological psychology include methodological applications to a wide range of psychological subjects, such as assessment, diagnostic, and research practices (Fischer, 1994; 2006), Jungian studies (Brooke, 1991), stress (Kuglemann, 1992), and in critically analyzing technological impact on lived experience (Idhe, 1995; Romanyshyn, 1989). There are a plethora of countries around the world in which formal phenomenological organizations are operating, and in which research is thriving. One only need explore the umbrella organization known as the *Organization of Phenomenological Organizations*, or peruse the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* to find how many possibilities are available for interested human scientists.

Phenomenological psychology as a collective field of research today centers around the debate of whether the focus should be on description or interpretation. Most theorists agree that the dichotomy is false. Any description is an interpretation, and an interpretation, at least in phenomenological circles, is descriptive rather than explanative, and is an invitation to further disclosure rather than a reductive pronouncement of “what is the case.” Reliability and validity are understood in very different ways than in natural science research. What is true is not what can be objectively isolated, operationalized, and controlled in order to pin down unilinear causal relationships as is the case in logical positivistic styles of scientism. Truth as valid and reliable, for a phenomenologist, rests in how well one is able to describe the depth and breath of a phenomenon as it shows itself in the world. The structure of an experience is discerned through imaginative variation in which every manner of a phenomenon’s presentation is considered from all advantage points until no matter how one looks at it, certain meaningful aspects of the experience are always present. One’s validation as a phenomenological researcher comes when a human experience is so well disclosed by way of rigorous description that any human being undergoing that experience can find it familiar. Nevertheless, there is always a mystery to phenomenological disclosure in that the undulation of concealment and disclosure is never finished.

The spiritual themes within phenomenological psychology are numerous. To start with, the phenomenological psychology of religious experience has a long and brilliant history, and includes Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), William James (1842–1910), Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950), Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), Paul Tillich (1886–1965), Langdon Gilkey (1919–2004), and David Tracy (1939–) just to name a few scholars. The process itself can be compared to a type of spiritual discipline. Within the emphasis on bracketing to allow things to show themselves lies the heart of a spirituality of freedom, respect and mystical – though not mystifying – openness. Meaning making and the primacy of validating lived experience privileges depth relating in intersubjective ways. Phenomenological psychology warns against the hubris of a “god’s eye view,” in which we presume to step out of our horizons or perspectives to “know” about phenomena more objectively. On the contrary, objective knowing misses the richness of truth revealed to us subjectively. Knowing about swimming theoretically is very different from jumping in a pool and doing it. Subjective experiencing does not mean isolationist experiencing. We co-construct experiences, and

thus build communion in our co-dwellings as we ready ourselves to receive revelations of Being itself.

Finally, the French phenomenologist Michel Henry (2003) has taken phenomenology in its most radical direction to date, thus challenging many foundational assumptions of phenomenological psychology, while ironically returning to Husserl’s thought to do so. For Henry, life is “invisible” in that it is lived rather than abstracted, conceptualized, or objectified. Interestingly enough, Dilthey was found of a similar way of thinking, noting often the Latin phrase, “*individuum est ineffabile*” to describe the unfathomable nature of human existence (Burston and Frie, 2006). Henry’s work not only radicalizes phenomenology, but also radicalizes Christian thought as his work is in essence a radical phenomenology of Christianity (Henry, 2003). If Life is invisible, then I would argue that it is likewise immeasurable and incomparable. We may hear the sound of it, and may very well succeed in describing it to some extent, but we cannot know from where it comes or to where it will go from here.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Heidegger, Martin](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Psychology](#)

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Pilgrimage

David A. Leeming

Pilgrimages in various cultures are remarkably similar in essential form. The pilgrimage, whether to Lourdes, Jerusalem, Banaras, Ise, or Mecca, involves three essential steps, suggesting a rite of passage and a process of curative renewal. The first step involves a significant separation of the pilgrim from home and ordinary life and the journey to a sacred center. The separation can be signified by particular clothes, by rituals of departure or any consciously unusual behavior. It is usually characterized by a deep sense of religious community, a concept suggested by the etymology of the word religion, suggesting a binding back or gathering together under the influence of the numinous. The second and most important step is the interaction with the sacred, the given culture's spiritual energy source. Typically this aspect involves certain ritual acts, most notably circumambulation, a gathering up of

energy in the creation of a living mandala of completeness, a ritual cleansing, or abluition in preparation for a new beginning and the recitation of certain sacred formulae, or mantras. The third step is the return home. The return is always marked by a sense of renewal. The pilgrim has been re-created by the encounter with the numinous center of the collective being.

It is important to differentiate the pilgrimage from its close relative, the quest. Both the questor and the pilgrim go on journeys that can be difficult, even treacherous, and both have some goal in mind, but the questor is in search of the goal while the pilgrim knows exactly where it is and how to get there. The questor never knows what might happen on the journey, whereas the pilgrim's "progress" is essentially a ritual process. One might say that the labyrinth is the pilgrim's signifying model while the maze is the questor's.

Important examples of pilgrimage exist in most religious systems. The Hindu might visit Banaras (Kashi) and bathe ritually in community with thousands of fellow pilgrims in the sacred living waters of the Ganges. There he will recite certain mantras and circumambulate important shrines. If particularly devout, the pilgrim might make a point of literally circumambulating sacred India herself, creating a gigantic mandala of completeness by visiting the seven sacred cities. The Buddhist can visit the footprint of the Buddha on Adam's Mount in Sri Lanka. For the Christian or Jew the footprint is said to be Adam's, for the Hindu it is Siva's. Again, circumambulation and mantras are important, and sometimes ablutions. In keeping with ancient traditions of prescribed visits to the Temple in Jerusalem, the Jew in our time will visit the Wailing Wall of the old Temple. The Christian will circumambulate the sacred places in Jerusalem associated with the passion of Jesus or visit curing shrines such as Lourdes, or, like Chaucer's famous pilgrims, travel to the shrines of martyrs. People of animistic traditions tend to see the whole world as a sacred place, so that anywhere one is can be a pilgrimage site, and buildings, such as Navajo hogans and Pueblo kivas are themselves metaphors for constant pilgrimage to the center.

Perhaps the most elaborate pilgrimage is the Hajj, one of the five essential "Pillars" of Islam. For this pilgrimage, taken by the community of Muslims, there are special requirements for the home-leaving and the journey, very specific rules of behavior while at Mecca, and clear rituals that involve ablutions various sub-pilgrimages to outlying areas, and a sacred mantra of humility and obedience recited during a circumambulation of the Kab'ah, the structure in the great mosque of Mecca

that is the center of the Muslim world. As in the case of all great pilgrimages, the Hajj-pilgrim, or Hajji, returns home re-newed and re-created by his experience. It should be noted that back home, the Muslim makes the pilgrimage symbolically and spiritually every time he faces Mecca and prays.

Liturgies are, in fact, often symbolic pilgrimages. The Eucharist of the Catholic tradition, for example, is an elaborate symbolic communal pilgrimage to the sacred center, reinforced even by the architecture of the various types of church building. Holy Water at the door (in ancient times the baptismal font was there as well), the ablutions of the priest, processions, the circumambulating of the altar, or sacred center, during its censuring, and the complex system of mantras all suggest the pilgrimage.

Having once more noted the aspect of community or *communitas* in pilgrimage, it must be noted that this element is associated more with external as opposed to internal pilgrimage. External pilgrimage has been called “exteriorized mysticism.” To the extent that such a characterization is valid, interior pilgrimage might be equated with mysticism itself. Thus, the pilgrim who travels to Mecca or Banaras is acting out the interior journey taken by the Yogi or the contemplative nun to the sacred center. The process for the mystic, which involves *communitas* only in the sense that nuns or monks, for instance, are a community of contemplative prayer, nevertheless resembles that of the external pilgrim in its basic plot. The interior pilgrim establishes a separation from ordinary life by accepting some prescribed discipline, involving such matters as clothing, breathing, posture, or particular objects of meditation.

The Pilgrim then proceeds to the sacred center found within. John of the Cross enters upon the Dark Night of the Soul, the purifying process by which God prepares the mystic for Union. The Hindu ascetic – the yogi – never moving from one place, can visit the seven sacred cities. The Mevlevi (Mawlawiya) Sufis, or Whirling Dervishes are perhaps unique in that each dancer, turns on his own axis, entering a trance-like ecstatic state even as he circles the sacred center in an intricate expression of perfect community with his fellow interior pilgrims. Upon his return, the interior pilgrim, whether the Yogi, the Mevlevi or the Christian mystic, like the external pilgrim, is a person who has been renewed by the numinous power of the center.

The idea of the pilgrimage as spiritual therapy, then, is universal, and humans of all sorts – mystical and otherwise – have traditionally turned to pilgrimage as a source of curing. People go to Lourdes and other holy

places to be cured of physical disease, of course, but the ‘more typical pilgrim is the one who is experiencing a malaise of the soul or the psyche. A person who is in this sense “lost” takes a journey to his/her culture’s spiritual center, participates in the prescribed activities, and returns home in a centered state. A similar goal is achieved through participation in religious ritual. It is not surprising that Jung and other modern psychotherapists have suggested religious activity for persons whose backgrounds provide an opening to the numinous through such activity.

An attempt to interpret the pilgrimage psychologically can begin with the assumption that human beings are naturally attracted to the phenomenon by reason of their consciousness of what Aristotle called “plot.” A defining characteristic of our species is our universal and perhaps even obsessive concern with questions of beginnings, middles, and ends. We see life as a journey, and to the extent that we are goal-oriented, we see it sometimes as a quest, but often as a pilgrimage. For the human species, pilgrimage may be said to be an archetypal pattern, a representation of an essential collective psychological tendency. We understand that if we are in any sense broken – collectively or individually – we would do well to take the difficult journey to the center and work towards a state of renewal or re-creation. As in the case of all pilgrimages, to reach this center we are greatly helped by an experience of the numinous, whether induced through sectarian religious activities, meditation, love, music, or various kinds of mantra. When we speak of the individual journey, our pilgrimage analogy is that of the interior pilgrimage, which, in psychological terms, becomes a journey to the Self. The Self is the totality of personality from which we can receive the ablative power that renews and leads towards Individuation, that is, Self-realization. In short, the psychological pilgrimage, if accomplished, takes the individual to a curing circumambulation of or assimilation of the sacred center of one’s very Being.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Circumambulation](#) [Communitas](#) [Hajj](#) [Islam](#) [Ka’bah](#) [Mandala](#) [Ritual](#) [Self](#)

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Plato and Religion

Rod Blackhirst

Plato (428/427^{BC} – 348/347^{BC}) was a Greek philosopher, a citizen of Athens and follower of Socrates. He founded the Academy, a school for statecraft, circa 387^{BC}, his most famous student being Aristotle. His work – in the form of dialogues – has had an immeasurable influence upon Western civilization. The modern philosopher, Whitehead, once famously quipped that “the whole of Western philosophy is nothing but a series of footnotes on Plato.” The same might be said of other fields of learning where Plato’s thought has been seminal. He has made a profound contribution to both the arts and sciences, including psychology. Many aspects of his thinking foreshadows modern theories. In psychology, for example, his teachings regarding *eros* as a foundation for human motivation clearly foreshadow the theories of Freud or, as some prefer, Freud’s theories are a decadent version of Plato’s earlier theory. In religious thought, Plato has long been acknowledged as prefiguring aspects of the Christian faith, even to the extent that some Churches have canonized him as a pre-Christian saint. More generally, he has influenced important streams of mystical thought and spiritual psychology in Judaism, Christianity and the Sufi schools of Islam.

It should be noted that while we commonly attribute theories and ideas to Plato himself, these are usually taken from the words of Socrates as presented in Plato’s philosophical dramas and that, in a famous passage in a letter to a friend called Dion, Plato states that his own ideas are nowhere to be found in his dialogues. This is the so-called “Socratic problem” – to what extent does Plato’s Socrates speak Plato’s mind? All the same, the teachings and arguments of Plato’s Socrates are, for convenience, referred to as “Platonic” and it is common to refer to the “Platonic tradition” of thought that has its roots in Plato’s dialogues. This tradition extends across the last 2000+ years of occidental culture and has penetrated most fields of learning. Nearly all of the dialogues might be construed as contributing to Platonic psychology but the main contributions are found in the dialogues called *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium* and to some extent *Timaeus*.

Plato (i.e., Plato’s Socrates) argues that there is a mental, supra-physical realm of “Forms” or “Ideas” or “archetypes” that is beyond the restraints and limitations of time and space and that the spatio-temporal realm is related to this archetypal realm as a copy is related to a

model. Plato’s psychology, like his political philosophy and everything else, needs to be understood in the context of the metaphysical framework of this pervasive “Theory of Forms.” For Plato, for example, human beings – as creatures of time and space – yearn for eternity and for the pure reality of the Forms. This is the basis of all human motivation. It is why the hero does brave deeds – he seeks the immortality of fame. And it is at the root of the sexual drive – lovers seek a surrogate immortality through procreation. By extension, the religious impulse is an expression of the same urge but on a higher plane.

An important corollary of the Theory of Forms is the Theory of Recollection. This states that human beings possess a faculty (*nous*) that comprehends the traces of the Forms in their physical copies. When we see beauty in a rose, for example, it is because the rose *reminds* us of the Form of Beauty, i.e., Beauty Itself. The Forms are structural and innate. Plato is at pains to insist that our senses are unreliable and that the mind, not the senses, is the agent of cognition. When we see a circle our eyes merely register an unintelligible set of data; it is our mind (or the faculty of *nous*) that matches this data to its innate knowledge of the Form of Circle, thus making the sensory impression intelligible. That is, Plato proposes that we are born with a stock of (supra-physical) mental templates and that these are the basis of all cognition.

Exploring this theory throughout his dialogues, Plato next proposes that there must be a hierarchy of such Forms and that at the pinnacle of this hierarchy there must be a Form of the Forms, namely what he styles “The Form of the Good.” The theory seems to be an adaptation of aspects of ancient Greek religious thought where natural phenomena were understood as expressions of various simple allegorical deities such as Love, Night, Chaos etc. For example, Plato’s Forms of Sameness and Difference (two of the most basic Forms) seem to be extrapolations from the deities Love and Strife, a principle of union or similarity and a principle of dissolution or differentiation. In a similar way, Plato’s creator-god, the “Demiurge,” appears to be a philosophical rendering of the Olympian craftsman god, Hephaestus. Whereas Greek religious thought personified such principles, Plato’s Forms are non-personal archetypes. His “Form of the Good” is very like the Judeo-Christian/Islamic notion of God but, importantly, has no personhood. In modern terms we would say it is an “abstraction” but for Plato this is exactly wrong since the world is “abstracted” from the Forms not the other way around.

There are several descriptions of the human psyche given in the dialogues, most notably in the form of allegories. In the *Phaedrus* (246a–254e) Plato compares

the human soul (*psyche*) to a chariot with a charioteer driving two horses, one white and one black. The white horse is well-trained while the black horse is ill-bred and unruly. The charioteer represents the intellect or reason (*nous*) that must reconcile conflicting impulses as it steers the vehicle (body) through life's journey. In the *Republic* (514a–520a) Plato offers a parable of the human condition in which prisoners have been held in a cave since childhood and compelled to watch a puppet-play of shadows on the cave wall. Not knowing any better, they mistake this for reality. It is only with great effort that they might escape from their bonds and eventually discover the source of these shadows and, beyond the cave, the light of day. This is an epistemological parable but also a model of human psychology with the shadows on the wall representing the conscious realm, that small portion of the mind we regularly assume to be reality with the rest of the cave representing other hidden levels of consciousness.

This line of thinking is often criticized for being counter-intuitive, dualistic and life-hating. The world is a mere copy of the “true” world which is beyond death. The body of flesh, with the vicissitudes of pleasure and pain, is a prison in which the mind is trapped. In the *Phaedo* Socrates seems to regard life as a disease and as a punishment with death as a cure and a release. Platonic psychology, therefore, is deemed anti-naturalistic. To a great extent the entire modern scientific enterprise can be seen as a process of shedding the influence of Plato in that it situates man in a natural context and attempts to understand human beings as a product of natural rather than supernatural forces. For Plato, the natural world is derivative and therefore fundamentally unreal – he presents the study of natural science (*phusis*) as an inherently unworthy enterprise that offers a “likely tale” at best.

There are readers of Plato, however, who argue that on closer examination this dualism is only a first step in the Platonic enterprise and that, ultimately, Plato is fully aware of the shortcomings of the Theory of Forms. In the dialogue called *Parmenides*, in particular, Plato seems to demolish the theory and looks beyond the duality of copy and model. Others point out that Plato is not a pessimistic philosopher with a bleak view of the human condition. One of the most notable correlatives of the Theory of Forms and its culmination in the Form of the Good is the Socratic dictum that ignorance is the root of evil. According to this theory, no one does evil willingly; rather, the evil-doer has made a miscalculation and mistakenly supposes that his evil deeds will bring himself or others some good. This is a profoundly optimistic view of the human state since it proposes that people can be taught to be good, that education is the key to human

advancement and that evil-doers can be shown their miscalculations and that they will then correct their ways since they, like everyone else, are in pursuit of the transcendent Good (whether they are aware of it or not). For Plato, the highest human achievement is the “Vision of the Good”, the pneumatic apprehension of the Good Itself, equivalent to the mystical vision of God in religious systems.

Regarding popular religion the indications throughout the dialogues are conflicting. Socrates is presented as being dutifully obedient to the established religious cults and yet elsewhere is so opposed to anthropomorphism that he would ban Homer and other poets from his ideal society. In an infamous provision of the dialogue called *Laws*, atheism is made a crime punishable by execution. In Plato's account of the trial of Socrates, Socrates is accused of introducing false gods and, by implication, impiety regarding the established religious order.

The influence and reputation of Plato has declined especially since World War II and the publication of such works as *The open society & its enemies* by Karl Popper (1945) which paint him, with some exaggeration, as the father of both right and left-wing totalitarian ideologies. The main exception to this waning influence has been a revival and reinterpretation (some would say perversion) of Plato's political philosophy through the teachings of Leo Strauss, regarded as one of the intellectual founders of contemporary neoconservatism in the United States. Strauss' studies concentrate on the so-called ‘Noble Lie’ passage in the *Republic* where Plato justifies rulers creating myths to pacify the ruled. For Strauss, an atheist, this is the role of religion. Most people, he argues, are not psychologically or emotionally equipped to be atheists and to face the bitter meaningless of existence; it is better if the rulers of society maintain religion as a “Noble Lie” to help preserve psychological stability in individuals and cohesion in society as a whole. This is surely a far cry from Plato's intention but it illustrates the ways in which, for good or for bad, Plato's works continue to stimulate contemporary ideas.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Plato on the Soul](#) [Psyche](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Plato on the Soul

John Pahucki

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato (424–348 BC) wrote copiously on the question of the human soul. The soul is given substantial treatment in many of his dialogues – the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus* primarily, though the *Meno*, *Ion*, and *Philebus*, as well as other dialogues, are at least tangentially concerned with topics related to his view of the soul as well. Of these treatments, two particular items of interest to the student and historian of psychology are his “tripartite” theory of the soul and his epistemological theory of *anamnesis*, or learning by recollection.

Plato's tripartite theory is given most explicit expression in Book IV of the *Republic*. According to Plato's view, there are three elements which constitute the life of the soul. Of these the one that is unique to human beings, and thus privileged by Plato, is *reason*. Plato's accent on reason would be the impetus behind Aristotle's – and historically, the Western tradition's – characterization of man as *animal rationale*. The other aspects of the soul are the *spirited* element, which seems to correspond to the emotions, and the *appetites* of the body which we share in common with the beasts. Reason and the appetites are often in conflict, with the spirited element capable of lending its weight to either side in this internecine struggle of the soul. The individuals lauded by Plato are those in whom reason successfully reigns, though these would seem to always constitute a minority.

Plato's theory is a historical curiosity, as it seems to anticipate Freud's psychodynamic model of the mind and its intrapsychic conflicts among the id, ego, and superego. Indeed, Freud may have been aware of Plato's theory as he employed a metaphor similar to the one from Plato's

Phaedrus where the philosopher compares the appetites to an obstinate horse who must be firmly guided by the charioteer of reason (a second horse, corresponding to the spirited element, does not resist the commands of its master).

Plato's epistemological theory of *anamnesis*, or learning by recollection, is based on what has come to be described as the *learning paradox*, first formulated by Plato in his dialogue the *Meno*. There Socrates asks the question how learning is possible. If we are seeking after something we do not know, we will be unable to recognize it if and when we do encounter it. If we do recognize it, we must have had some previous knowledge of it in order for this recognition to occur in the first place. Either way, learning seems to be a paradoxical enterprise. This leads Plato to present his own theory of learning as recollection based on his belief in the reincarnation of the soul. In dialogues like the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, Plato will argue that learning/knowledge is possible based on our pre-earthly existence in the realm of divine forms. These forms are the templates of all sensible objects, undergirding the sensible realm and giving the world its rational structure. When the soul incarnates in matter, it temporarily “forgets” its previous experience of the forms. Learning occurs when certain earthly experiences “trigger” these memories. Anamnesis is thus a form of “cryptomnesia” as described by Jung. It should be stated that Plato's belief in the transmigration of the soul had strong precedent in the Pythagorean cult as well as other mystery cults extant at the time.

The linguistic and cognitive theorist Noam Chomsky has identified his own “innateness” theory of linguistic acquisition as based on a kind of Platonic learning paradox. According to Chomsky's theory, linguistic ability may be structurally fixed or “hardwired” into the mind; we may be able to postulate a “universal” a priori grammar based on what has been described as “the poverty of the stimulus.” Put simply, we evidence a degree of intricacy and depth in our knowledge and utilization of language far in excess of what we could have formally learned.

See also: [🔗 Freud, Sigmund](#) [🔗 Plato and Religion](#)

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Polytheism

Paul Larson

Polytheism is the worship of many forms of the divine. Etymologically it means many gods, but to say that is to delve into the nature of personhood. Pepper (1942) in his summary of epistemologies set out six world hypotheses, four of which he felt were minimally acceptable in rational discourse, and two unacceptable because of their reliance on faith. Each of the six world hypotheses (similar to the modern concept world view) is grounded in a root metaphor. The two unacceptable world views were animism and mysticism. The former was based on the root metaphor of the person. He was less clear on the distinction between animism and mysticism but seems to refer to the distinction between the natural religions and revealed religions. His identification of the concept of the person as being at the heart of a spiritual world view was correct. Indeed, to understand theism whether mono- or poly- requires understanding the nature of the person.

Pepper's psychologism was saying that because we experience the divine in us and we are people, we project out onto the world our own experience of personhood. We attribute all the experiences we have to the power(s) which are divine. Since we have consciousness, our gods must have consciousness, since we have choice and agency, our gods must have nothing less than that since they are transcendent to us and greater than us, much like a whole is greater than the sum of its part. Whatever is divine must be no less than what we are, and must be anywhere from somewhat to immensely greater than us.

There are several types of spiritual world views, so polytheism must be set into its context. Though it may not have been the first spiritual view to arise historically, the belief in some impersonal divine ground of being that is the source of life, and all that is, is possible. The clearest example of this type of belief comes from Chinese traditional religion and philosophy. Chi (Jap. Ki) is the impersonal force that animates all living being and is imbued within even inanimate matter as well. This life force is also found in the Indian concept of "prana," common to both Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. It is also found in Stoic philosophy as "pneuma." Both literally mean the breath of life.

To some with a completely secular scientific world view, the very laws of nature may be likened to an impersonal divine ground of being in an existential sense. This is basically the position of either pantheism or its

close variant panentheism. Spinoza and Leibniz are two early modern philosophers who represent this stream of belief. This is also the position of the Deists; that group of Enlightenment thinkers who first articulated a basically secular philosophy while preserving that sense of reverence and awe to the existence of life itself.

What, of course, makes the respect for the impersonal forces behind life and existence divine is the religious experience. Both James (1902/1958) and Otto (1917/1958) support the notion that the beginning of the life of the spirit is religious experience; not belief, not acts, but the experience of awe in the face of the great *mysterium tremendum*. Belief in the near universality of religious or spiritual experience makes us all mystics at the core; some may tenderly stick their toes in these deep waters while others jump in with both feet in ecstatic joy.

The next question is whether we ascribe personhood to the divine force and whether belief in an inanimate divine force or power is incompatible with personhood. On the basis of the principle that the lesser is included in the greater, the burden of proof rests with those who would exclude an impersonal force as not present with the divine person(s) to say why.

Assuming that the divine can take on the qualities of a person, the next question is one or many. This is related to the philosophical debate as to whether the "physis," or stuff of the universe is one or many, perhaps no more resolvable now than to the Pre-Socratics who took up the question in the first millennium BCE. It is also related to the related debate between Parmenides and Heraclitus as to whether stasis or change is more fundamental. Belief in stasis tends to favor ontological monism, which would include monotheism. Belief in change tends to favor polytheism by providing the means by which the divine may be ever-present, though the actors may shift among the many masks of God (Campbell, 1955, 1962, 1964, 1968).

The historical records supports a vigorous and ancient period where polytheism was the dominant spiritual world view. Part of the rhetorical appeal of monotheism is the rejection of the confusion multiplicity of divine coupled with a moral rejection of the all to close modeling of human foibles and flaws into the biographies of the gods. But across the widest reach of the planet and throughout all human times polytheism has continued despite competition from monotheism with its aggressive proselytizing.

One instructive development was the synthesis of Hindu polytheism to harmonize with an underlying spiritual monism. Behind Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and all the other Hindu gods was Brahman. Although it was based in earlier statements in the Upanishads, it took

Adi Shankaracharya to provide a coherent integration of polytheistic outer forms with a single unifying singleness beyond all concept or duality, the ground of being. So even in the midst of polytheism one can see a sort of monotheism as consistent. It should be noted that Brahman, like prana, chi/ki and pneuma is impersonal in nature, beyond all human concepts. In Buddhism the Vajrayana as well as Mahayana schools accept an impersonal unity beyond the obvious multiplicity of the world. The Vajrayana Buddhism of Tibet in particular has a whole catalog of personal forms of the deity and an equal number of demi-gods, dharma protectors, dakinis and so on. Yet with Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy the unity of non-duality and emptiness provides a fertile ground upon which phenomenal existence can play out our many incarnations in the samsaric wheel of life. In the Western Esoteric Tradition (WET), or occultism as it is often known, the first model of this same sort of co-existence of impersonal monism as an originating point for a phenomenal polytheism is the Neo-Platonic hierarchy of emanations found in Gnosticism in its many forms.

The next question is whether there are any true polytheisms, given that the most sophisticated forms of philosophy and theology among historically and culturally polytheistic religions? The answer is yes, at least in the sense that in polytheistic systems there is at least a modeling of the male/female dimorphism of human persons. If we allow that the divine can be said to be a person, then why would we use just one gender? Many contemporary positions within the Western monotheisms that are response to the feminist critique of patriarchy allow that what may have been historically gender biased language can be best understood as inclusive of both genders or beyond both genders, whether we continue to use the male oriented language or modify our liturgies and prayers. The whole leverage about Brown's *DaVinci Code* sought to raise the magnitude of awareness about the divine feminine. Polytheism provides the minimal coverage of both genders, and in nearly all historical settings had several families of deities modeling the diversity of the human family, complete with extensive genealogies.

One curious case is Mormonism, the major type of restorationist theology in Christianity, and associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). They are explicitly and clearly monotheistic in the aim of their worship, but their theology implies a Heavenly Mother as well a Heavenly Father. Implicit is an unknown possibility for an endless series of gods of both genders stretching back in ageless time and moving forward as individual humans deceased, now existent,

or yet to come achieve salvation at the highest level, in the celestial kingdom. Mormonism expresses a radical doctrine of spiritual evolution arising out of its American historical roots and a philosophy of progress (McMurrin 1959, 1965).

Contemporary Paganism or earth-centered religions are all clearly polytheistic in their worship and spiritual focus. The primacy of the Divine Earth Mother and her Consort (the Horned God, under various names) in Wicca and similar movements affirms a multiplicity of divine personifications. There are many reconstructionist groups come with many names; those in the Norse or Germanic traditions prefer being called heathens. The varieties of traditions in occultism (cf.) as it is often called, likewise are polytheistic.

In summary then, the veneration, worship and mythological narratives of multiple gods and goddesses is alive and flourishing through contemporary animistic aboriginal or native religions, through highly evolved religious traditions such as Hinduism and many forms of Buddhism where multiple deities are yet subsumed into a non-personal divine ground of being beyond human labels or names. It has also been reconstructed as part of a revival of earth based religious movements founded in Western Europe and America from the nineteenth century onward. Even an explicit monotheism such as Mormonism contains some elements of polytheistic theology. So polytheism is alive and well. It was never completely supplanted by monotheism, though the two forms of theism are shaking hands in some instances.

See also: [▶ Animism](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Gnosticism](#) [▶ James, William](#) [▶ Mormonism](#) [▶ Occultism](#) [▶ Paganism](#) [▶ Pantheism](#) [▶ Wicca](#)

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Possession

Craig Stephenson

In common usage, “to possess” means “to hold as property,” “to own,” “to occupy.” The English word derives from the French *posséder* and originally from the Latin *possidere*, from *potis* meaning “able” and *sedere*, “to sit.” The metaphoric image which resides behind the concept of possession is perhaps, then, of a being successfully claiming space, perhaps “sitting” in a position of power. Hence, the suffering and distress associated with “possession” we attribute to foreign entities or partial aspects of the personality occupying the seat of selfhood by virtue of a tyrannical overthrow. For example, in the Christian tradition, according to the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, Jesus cures people suffering from various mental and physical ailments caused by occupying demons (*daimonia*) which he drives out of them (see Demons); in the Gospel of John, while Satan as “adversary” confronts and tempts Jesus, he enters Judas (John 13:27). Inherent in the Christian understanding of evil, then, is the notion of an “obstruction” (*skandalon*, Matthew 16:23) that “holds,” “claims” or “occupies” the embodied self (Kelly, 2006).

The subsequent language of possession in the history of European religion has been far more fluid than one might imagine, and the set texts identifying orthodox criteria for establishing legitimate cases of possession were very much of a specific time and place. For example, in Christianized Europe’s early Middle Ages, the possessing devil’s field of action is defined as the imagination, not the body or corporeal reality. As portrayed in the writings of Tertullian, Augustine, and John Cassian between the third and fifth centuries, the devil is most importantly a deceiver who employs *fantasmata* in order to take possession of the soul, and it is particularly in dreams that we fall prey to the devil. True dreams come from God; the devil fills dreams with false and tempting images. However, in 1233 the pontifical constitution *Vox in Rama* described the ritual homage to Satan as a feudal *osculum* in reverse (that is to say, by kissing the devil’s buttocks), and what the Church once considered nocturnal dream voyages were now redefined as sectarian meetings marked by physical (not imaginary) acts of incest, sodomy, infanticide and cannibalism. By 1484, according to the Papal Bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* promulgated by Innocent VIII, witches and sorcerers abjured their faith by inviting the devil to enter their bodies. Since the body became increasingly the subject of

diabolical attack in the higher Middle Ages, terms such as “possession” and “obsession,” which had been used almost synonymously to describe the intermittancy of manic attacks, come to be more highly differentiated. Etymologically, *obsidere* denotes “to sit at or opposite to,” “to sit down before,” “to besiege” as when an enemy force sits down before a fortress. Hence, an obsessive spirit is perceived as assailing, haunting, harrasing a person from outside, while a possessing spirit is considered to have taken up residence inside the human body. Such distinctions are not so very far away from current Western psychopathological diagnostic criteria which differentiate, for example, between paranoid feelings of being persecuted from without and delusional notions of being pre-occupied by thoughts which are not one’s own but which one believes have been inserted into one’s mind. While psychiatry coopted the word “obsession” and stripped it of its religious connotation, the word “possession” has remained outside psychiatric discourse (until its recent tentative entry into the appendix of the DSM IV as a dissociative disorder currently under review).

The most important source for contemporary literature on possession is anthropological. As a social anthropologist, I. M. Lewis (1971) argues in an objectivist manner that possession and shamanism are two components of ecstatic religion which can best be interpreted from within a structural functionalist framework of delineating power and social status. From within this perspective, possession functions as an obliquely aggressive strategy with which disempowered or marginalized individuals, especially women, seek to redress their political subordination within oppressive, predominantly patriarchal cultures. Lewis defines the suffering caused by possession as linked to status deprivation and portrays possession cults as socially-motivated manoeuvres which heal, at least in part, by enhancing the social status of sufferers, recasting them in fantasy or belief as humans “seized by divinity.”

Paul Stoller (1989) emphasizes the particularity of Songhay possession in Tillaberi, Niger, as a fusion of human and spirit. Possession as “fusion” signifies a white-heat meshing of elements foreign to each other, an active seizing, a loss of identity for each of the elements, a loss of soul, an interpenetration. Stoller describes how the Songhay sorcerers perform rituals of separation or cleansing to alleviate suffering caused by fused states, for example, leading their mediums to a crossroad where they fling millet seeds (which correspond in number to the possessing spirits) onto an anthill and flee from their state of fusion and oneness to the enclosed compound, to a separated state of twoness. Stoller investigates possession

through its theatricality, the possession troupe functioning like a repertory company, the *zima* as stage director and dramaturge, the mediums as actors. The ceremonies are theatrical events in which possession troupes offer healing through compensatory existential reenactments of an ancestral world, replete with historical, sociological and cultural themes, in which mediums learn to fuse with and later separate from a collective *imaginaire*.

Janice Boddy (1989) delineates in terms of cultural symbolism and morality several levels at which *zar* possession in the northern Sudanese village of Hofriyat performs a therapeutic function. For instance, when *zar* spirits usurp and block a woman's fertility, the husband must enter into an exchange relationship with her spirits and thereby implicitly renegotiates his relationship with his wife, both human beings being equally powerless before a transcendent third, the *zar*. Boddy argues that Lewis's social functionalist analysis of *zar* possession is inadequate because it glosses over the issue of belief. *Zar* practitioners, though not with conscious intent, take the potentially destructive ambiguities in a marriage and open them up to a symbolic performance and subsequently to interpretations which might lead the marriage in a positive direction. The performance does not necessarily resolve the conflict or its ambiguities, despite the adoption of a spirit idiom. Part of its therapeutic potential resides in the fact that the ceremony articulates a possible world and a possible way of orienting oneself within it. If the husband chooses to receive this other language elucidated by the adepts, the marriage relationship may be enriched by new meanings and by new ways of communicating.

According to Boddy, the *zar* possession cult is a resource used only by specific individuals within the culture. A spirit must make sense to those whom it encounters; the sense it makes is a product of human and spirit collaboration. Consequently, possession by a *zar* requires control on the part of the possessed. The hosts must have the ability to enter trance, at the same time remaining alert to their surroundings. Even when the spirits descend, the hosts are expected to be sensitive to cues from other spirits and the audience of human observers. Seriously disturbed people would focus on their own intentions and neglect those of the spirits, and would be classed as misdiagnosed, seen as engaging in idiosyncratic fantasy which the *zar* patently are not; or accused of playing with the spirits and provoking their wrath. Individuals who can successfully enact such dramas become increasingly familiar with the "roles" they may – as spirits – be required to play. Paradoxically, then, the possessed are able to bracket their own substantial concerns and suffering in deference to those of the *zar*.

Central to the experience of possession is the diagnostic act, that is to say, testing the spirits, to see whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). Boddy emphasizes that the Hofriyat differentiate between *zar* spirits (whom the culture believes can be integrated through ceremonial marriage) and others (such as black *jinn* which must be exorcized if possible), and that the diagnostic act of giving the spirit its right and proper name, of differentiating between *zar* spirits and black *jinn*, already contributes a positive effect to a suffering individual. Subsequent marriage with correctly identified spirits in a rite of passage suggests that the status of the sufferers changes paradoxically for good, that thereafter the spirits will not simply possess them; rather, they will allow themselves to be invoked, and the interplay will be potentially productive.

In analytical psychology, Jung describes a similar apotropaic effect of diagnosis, a partial alleviation of suffering when a repressed complex is identified and thereby acknowledged by ego consciousness (see Complex): "The true symbol, the true expression of the psychological fact, has that peculiar effect on the unconscious factor, that is somehow brought about by giving it the right name" (Jung, 1984: 581). And describing the psychological life-process of differentiating and, as much as possible, integrating otherwise dangerous and difficult unconscious complexes/spirits into consciousness (a process he called "individuation"), Jung argues that the goal is best symbolized by the alchemical image of a "marriage of opposites." By the time he writes *Aion* in 1951, Jung has revised that notion, taking it from a universalist symbol of marriage as representing ordered wholeness, to cross-cultural images of an intricate and neverending interplay of opposites, of an Otherness inherent in experiences of selfhood.

Writing about cannibalism, Claude Lévi-Strauss argues:

- ▶ It would be tempting to distinguish two contrasting types [of societies]: those which practice cannibalism – that is, which regard the absorption of certain individuals possessing dangerous powers as the only means of neutralizing those powers and even of turning them to advantage – and those which, like our own society, adopt what might be called the practice of anthropemy (from the Greek *émein*, to vomit); faced with the same problem, the latter type of society has chosen the opposite solution, which consists in ejecting dangerous individuals from the social body and keeping them temporarily or permanently in isolation, away from all contact with their fellows, in establishments specially intended for this purpose (Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 388).

Michel de Certeau (1970) applies Lévi-Strauss's structuralist distinction between ingurgitating and vomiting to

the most famous case of possession in the Western history of religion, the possession of the Ursuline nuns at Loudun, France in 1631. Certeau suggests that there exist two opposing responses to the suffering caused by spirit possession: to vomit out and exorcize the spirit, or to absorb, literally incorporate and integrate the spirit as Other, in an attempt to neutralize and even turn to one's advantage its dangerous power. Most of the iconography of the Christianized West confirms the extent to which its societies have one-sidedly identified with anthropomy, although there exists with the canonical literature the possibility of divine as well as demonic possession. In this regard, Lacan (1966) as the great reader and interpreter of Freud, rescues psychoanalysis from the positivist medical interpretation that rendered Freud exclusively "anthropemic" in his approach to the unconscious; that is to say, Lacan corrects the inclination to read Freud as characterizing all psychological symptoms as foreign elements which ought to be expelled.

The goal of contemporary psychotherapy is for the patient to be "self-possessed": at its most banal, this suggests the ability to habitually exercise control of one's self, as when, for example, one is said to possess oneself in patience; at its most profound, it evokes the image of selfhood as "able to sit" squarely in its own seat. In this context, it may be important to note that the English verb "exorcize" comes from Greek *exorkizein* meaning "an oath," and is translated into Latin as *adjuro* or *conjuro*. Etymologically, then, the verb *exorkizo*, "to exorcise," originates in attaching the prefix *ex* meaning "out" to the root [*h*]orkos "the daemon of oaths." The Greek divinity Horkos is the daemon-son of Eris, goddess of Discord or Strife, who punishes those who do not honor oaths they have sworn. But his name also denotes "fence" or "bulwark," suggesting that taking an oath functions as a protective enclosure. The etymological image behind exorcising is of casting "out" a "daemon" but also of "invoking and putting on oath." That is to say, hidden behind the onesided anthropomy of the Christianized West may reside also the image of an exorcist solemnly (by naming God) invoking a devil ironically in an attempt to thereby establish a truth.

See also: [Complex](#) [Devil](#) [Dreams](#)

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Possession, Exorcism, and Psychotherapy

Stephen A. Diamond

What is Exorcism?

Exorcism – the ritualistic expulsion of malevolent spirits inhabiting body, brain or place – has been practiced in some form throughout human history, and is probably the primeval prototype for psychotherapy. Exorcism is a traditional treatment for possession by evil spirits or demons, and was a method employed for millennia by prehistoric shamans, witch doctors, priests and medicine men prior to and during ancient Greek and Egyptian cultures. Hippocrates, the father of western medicine, was purportedly trained as an exorcist.

Exorcism is deeply rooted in demonism and demonology, presuming that the "victim's" symptoms are caused by evil entities that have invaded and taken possession of body and soul. Jesus of Nazareth reputedly practiced exorcism in healing "demoniacs," as described in the New Testament: "They brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. . . And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils" (Mark 1:32, 34). The Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Protestant (especially Methodist, Charismatic, Evangelical and Pentecostal) Church still practice exorcism in

extraordinary cases deemed – usually after at least some scientific scrutiny and in keeping with current Vatican policy – to be bona fide demonic possession. References to exorcism and possession can also be found in Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, as well as Scientology.

Exorcism entails forcing the evil spirits out of the victim by religious ritual, prayer, supplication, admonition, threats, bargaining, enticement, confrontation, and other means. Typically, the victim's symptoms of possession worsen as an exorcism is initiated and the ceremonial symbols of the higher power (incantations, holy relics, crucifix, holy water, Bible, etc.) are introduced. Rage is notably and predictably the predominant response to exorcism, traditionally known as the “rage of the demon” resisting expulsion, and the possessed person is frequently physically restrained so as to prevent hurting themselves or others while in this enraged state. *Exorcistic catharsis* consists of the unbridled expression of the anger, or rather, the demon's rage expressing itself autonomously through the victim. However, unlike in psychodynamic psychotherapy, there is no conscious ownership of the anger required during this primitive process: the rage belongs instead to the demon, to whom it is attributed, not to the victim. Once the victim is cathartically purged (abreaction) of the demonic (see demonic), he or she returns to a normal, albeit still relatively unconscious, naïve, and tenuous state of psychological equilibrium – the demon or devil having evidently been driven out.

Demonic Possession

The idea of demonic possession is a theological or spiritual explanation for human evil, suffering and aberrant behavior. Possession has been a well-documented phenomenon occurring across cultures in virtually every era. But the term *possession* is seldom mentioned in the mainstream psychiatric and psychological literature. Instead, psychiatry and psychology speak of *obsession*, which has similar intrusive, involuntary, ego-dystonic qualities. Mild cases of demonic possession were referred to by the Catholic Church as obsession as far back as the fifteenth-century, and psychotherapists still use that diagnostic term today. Or we refer to “multiple personality disorder” (dissociative identity disorder) in which one or more so-called subpersonalities temporarily take total possession of the person against his or her will. Or we diagnose *bipolar disorder* in those possessed by mania, irritability or melancholy; and intermittent explosive disorder to describe someone possessed or overtaken by uncontrollable rage. Indeed, the subjective experience of possession – being influenced

by some foreign, alien force beyond the ego's ken or control – can be considered more or less a phenomenological aspect of most psychiatric disorders. Today, this “possession syndrome” (Diamond, 1996) is seen by psychiatrists and psychologists as a mental disorder more often than not caused by some underlying neurological or biochemical aberration. Biochemistry, in the form of the tiny neurotransmitter, has become our demon du jour to which all manner of psychopathological evils are attributed. But despite its obscurity in the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic texts, it must be admitted that the enigmatic experience known for millennia as “demonic possession” persists today in differing forms and varying degrees. The only difference is the way in which we now attempt to explain and treat it.

Exorcism Versus Psychotherapy

At least since Freud's day, it has become commonplace to refer metaphorically or poetically to struggling with one's vexing psychological problems as wrestling with “demons.” Carl Jung (1921, 1971) theorized that, from a psychological perspective, “demons are nothing other than intruders from the unconscious, spontaneous irruptions of unconscious complexes. . .” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 64–65). Psychotherapy, a structured process of psychological treatment originating in the pioneering work of Freud and Jung, has been practiced now for little more than a century, and has deep roots in and remarkable similarities to exorcism. According to psychiatric historian Henri Ellenberger (1970), “Exorcism is the exact counterpart of possession and a well-structured type of psychotherapy.” He explains that the exorcist typically addresses the possessed and the demons in the name of a higher power, as for example, when the priest invokes the power of Jesus Christ in the Christian ritual of exorcism. Complete conviction in both the demonic and spiritual power, and confidence in his or her own skills are essential for the exorcist's success. Psychological and spiritual support for the victim is provided, while at the same time, the possessing evil spirits are verbally attacked, challenged, and provoked to speak directly to the exorcist. In some cases, contentious negotiations are engaged in between the demonic powers and exorcist, in an effort to have them release their disturbing grip on the victim. This demanding, dangerous, arduous process can last for days, months or years, and is not always successful.

Much the same can be said about the psychotherapist. Despite the ostensibly secular, scientific persona of most practitioners, scratching the surface of rationality and

objectivity reveals a latent exorcist. Psychotherapists also speak in the name of a “higher power,” be it science, psychology or some metaphysical belief system. They too firmly believe in the reality of the pathological problem manifested in the patient’s symptoms and suffering. And they dispense encouragement to troubled patients while joining with them in a sacred “therapeutic alliance” – the common healing denominator in all types of psychotherapy – against the wicked and destructive forces bedeviling them. Psychotherapy can, of necessity, consist of a prolonged, bitter, soul-wrenching, sometimes tedious battle royale with the patient’s diabolically obdurate behaviors and emotional “demons,” a war frequently waged over the course of years rather than months, and not always with a victorious result. And, as in exorcism, there is recognition by psychodynamic psychotherapists of the very real dangers and risks of “psychic infection” or counter-transference, which can cause the therapist to suffer similarly disturbing, subjective symptoms during the treatment process. Hence the ever-present importance for both the exorcist and psychotherapist to perform his or her sacred duties within a formally ritualized structure; to make full use of collegial support, cooperation, and consultation; and to maintain inviolable professional boundaries. To paraphrase Freud: No one wrestles with demons – not even the demons of others – and comes away unscathed. Psychological infestation (counter-transference) is an occupational hazard shared by both the exorcist and psychotherapist that can undermine or sabotage the process, and must therefore be consciously recognized and constructively resolved.

Italian psychiatrist Gaetano Benedetti (1960) compared exorcism to his own therapeutic work with schizophrenics. Benedetti points out the many parallels between the process of exorcism and psychotherapy, noting how both the exorcist and psychotherapist must tend first to themselves spiritually or psychologically prior to entering the chaotic inner world of the victim or patient. The standard worsening of symptoms as the process proceeds is psychologically understood as a form of *resistance* to the treatment or remedy. The psychotic or demonically possessed person attempts to overpower the therapist, who must maintain control of the process, set consistent limits and boundaries, and not retreat from or submit to the patient’s anger, rage and aggression. Both the exorcist and psychotherapist align themselves with the healthy part of the personality against the evil or pathological aspects, repudiating all destructive, defensive expressions of the latter. Toward the end of such intensive treatment for schizophrenia, during the final “rebuilding” phase of what psychologist Jack Rosberg calls Direct Confrontation Therapy,

- ▶ the patient doesn’t understand all of what has happened and is happening to him, and he [or she] is very angry with the therapist. . . . The patient must be kept from regressing and must be increasingly motivated to get out into the world. . . . Thus, slowly, gradually and painfully, healthy defenses are substituted for unhealthy [ones], and strengthened (cited in Diamond, 1996: 213).

Born-again Christian psychiatrist M. Scott Peck (1983) noted that, unlike exorcism, traditional psychotherapy “is conducted in an atmosphere of total freedom. The patient is free to quit therapy at any time. . . . Except for the threat of refusing to see the patient anymore, . . . the therapist has no weapons with which to push for change beyond the persuasive power of his or her own wits, understanding, and love” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 214). In stark contrast, exorcism makes full use of power to overcome the patient or victim’s illness. Almost always conducted by a team or group as opposed to the one-to-one relationship of psychotherapy, exorcism controls the situation completely. Whereas the duration of a psychotherapy session is typically predetermined,

- ▶ The length of an exorcism session is not preset but is at the discretion of the team leader. In ordinary psychotherapy the session is no more than an hour, and the patient knows this. If they want to, patients can evade almost any issue for an hour. But exorcism sessions may last three, five, even ten or twelve hours. . . . Exorcism is psychotherapy by massive assault (Peck, cited in Diamond, 1996: 214–215).

As in exorcism, the constructive use by the therapist of power is essential in psychotherapy, particularly in the treatment of the most debilitating mental disorders.

In Christian exorcism, writes Peck, “the exorcism team, through prayer and ritual, invokes the power of God in the healing process. Indeed, as far as the Christian exorcist is concerned, it is not he or she who successfully completes the process, it is God who does the healing” (1983: 186). This attitude can also frequently be found in secular or even atheistic psychotherapy, with the healing power being attributed not to God, but to the palliative nature of the treatment process itself. Peck draws a distinction between human evil and supernatural, metaphysical or demonic evil, the latter being the cause, he contends, of *genuine possession*. Peck further distinguishes demonic possession from mental illness, stating that though in such cases “there has to be a significant emotional problem for the possession to occur in the first place, . . . the proper question to pose diagnostically would be: ‘Is the patient just mentally ill or is he or she mentally ill and possessed?’” (1983: 121).

For Dr. Peck and others of his spiritual persuasion, the demonic – unlike the *daimonic* – is purely negative, a power so vile it can only be exorcized, expelled, and excluded from consciousness. It has no redeeming qualities and is unworthy of redemption. On the contrary, the *daimonic* incorporates the potentially healthy, vital, creative, compensatory forces whose conscious integration is required for any real, lasting therapeutic transformation. Psychiatrist C.G. Jung (see the *shadow*) and existential analyst Rollo May (1969) provide psychologically sophisticated, secular theories of human evil and *daimonic* (as opposed to demonic) possession which, unlike Peck's, do not demand literal belief in the Devil or demons.

Out of vogue for centuries since the Enlightenment, exorcism is experiencing a twenty-first century rebirth in Europe, the United States and elsewhere. Growing numbers of postmodern pilgrims are turning desperately to exorcism to alleviate their psychological or spiritual suffering, due, in part, to a dissatisfaction with contemporary psychiatric and psychological treatment. William Peter Blatney's popular film *The Exorcist* (1973), derived from his book about an actual reported case, as well as the *Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005) presented a highly dramatized picture of possession and exorcism, restimulating public fascination with this bizarre phenomenon. Based on the current resurgence in exorcism – being met by an acceleration in the formal training of priests as exorcists by the Vatican – it appears that, for many, the archetypal myths of “demonic possession” and “exorcism” offer a more meaningful and compelling explanation for such powerful experiences than do the conventional scientific theories of biological psychiatry and cognitive-behavioral psychology. If secular psychotherapy as a true healing of the soul or spirit (*psyche*) is to survive and thrive into the future, it will need to more meaningfully address the archetypal phenomenon of possession and the psychology of human evil.

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See also: [Daimonic](#) [Demons](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Devil](#) [Evil](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jesus](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Shadow](#)

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Postmodernism

Galit Atlas-Koch

Postmodernism refers to a body of ideas that represent a new era succeeding modernism and in response to it. Postmodern thought characteristically undermines modernist assumptions concerning the universal, rational, non-historic foundations of human society. It is based on perception of multiplicity, complexity, or chaos of experience, rather than unity or organization, while repudiating meta-narratives. Postmodernism inclined towards relativistic, irrational, and nihilistic conceptions of human reality. Postmodern theorists reject the concepts of foundational knowledge, essences and universals, cause-and-effect relationships and the notion of scientific progress. They prefer theoretical pluralism over the claims of any single explanation and assert that all knowledge is partial.

There is no absolute agreement as to precisely when the postmodern era first appeared on the time axis. In economic-political terms, the main reference point is the Second World War, during which acts of slaughter and warfare on an unprecedented scale were committed in the name of different ideologies, including the Holocaust and the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This war left the Western world pessimistic about progress, rationality, and science. The renouncement of Newtonian science's mechanistic thought and the change over to electronic and photonic thought (the relativity revolution, the quantum revolution, and the digital revolution) are considered significant points in postmodernism.

Another reference point is the end of the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States and the latter's becoming the only superpower, as well as the demise of the imperialistic era and the establishment of new countries around the world; the formation of a new political world, divided into hundreds of autonomous political and cultural units, seeking pluralism and acknowledgment. Emanuel Kant concedes to be one of the first postmodernists, as well as Friedrich Nietzsche who was the first to criticize modernist thought.

For those who lived during the nineteenth century, "god died," as articulated by Nietzsche, and science provided a hedge to nihilism. In modern times, scientific truth resided in the space previously taken by religious truth. While in the modernistic era many believed that science could provide humans with the tools through which to gain access to the enigmas and structure of the universe, one of the main tenets of postmodernism is that there is no one objective truth. Accordingly, it is now plausible to assume that postmodern western religious pluralism led to a search for spiritual alternatives such as Westernized versions of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Postmodernism asserts that every view of the world is a view from a specific perspective, and that there is no external viewpoint from which one can see everything objectively. Michel Foucault wrote that there is no truth to uncover, but rather control mechanisms that produce truth. This conception emphasizes the relation between words and truth, as discourse is produced through language; usually the language of hegemonic groups, thereby increasing their power.

The postmodern claim concerning science is that science, like literature and art, is a text that each reader interprets on his or her own through deconstruction (the disassembly of the text and its restructuring) in any way one wishes. Science, they believe, depends on contemporary needs and social interests. Therefore, science does not provide correct objective knowledge, but rather depends on society, and each period has the science that befits it and that maintains power in the hands of the dominate elites.

Postmodern psychology emphasizes process over structure in conceptualizing the mind, and nonlinearity over linearity in conceptualizing development. While modern psychological concepts, as expressed by Freud and developmental psychologists such as Piaget, articulated set developmental stages of the human psyche, postmodernism rejects the assumptions regarding an invariant, stable core; one self. This newer way of thinking concerns itself with the meaning of different kinds of discourse

and interactions with the world, and with the conception of multiple selves.

Freud viewed the intellect and the brain as objects of scientific research in the modernistic sense. To him, the analytic method provides a "correct" understanding of the mind. By contrast, Relational psychoanalytic theory is considered to be a postmodern, post-scientific theory, and as written by Mitchell, Aron, Benjamin and others, it stresses our inability to stand outside nature so as to objectively describe what happens within it. All types of knowledge are therefore pluralistic, not singular; contextual, not absolute; constructed, not uncovered; changing and dynamic. Michael Eigen and Lew Aron are both important postmodern psychoanalysts who also consider religious themes in their writing. Among other prominent postmodern thinkers whose ideas are reflected in the psychology literature are Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Friedrich Jameson, Jacques Derrida, and gender researcher Judith Butler.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Heidegger, Martin](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Holocaust](#) [▶ Relational Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Postmortal Existence

[▶ Heaven and Hell](#)

Poverty

Robert Kaizen Gunn

After a brief consideration of how poverty is viewed in five world religions, some psychological aspects of poverty will be considered.

Attitudes and Actions Concerning Poverty Among the Five Major World Religions

Poverty is a major concern for every world religion. Every religion makes room for a conscious consideration of what one is to do with and for the poor. Each religion gives instruction regarding the proper attitude and action to take regarding the poor. These attitudes and actions affect one's own life, for faithfulness in each religion requires attitudes and actions of compassion and the sharing, to whatever degree, of what one has with those who have significantly less. Poverty thus directly affects oneself. Indeed, for most religions one's attitude and actions toward the poor is an essential element in the determination of one's own spiritual development and destiny.

Poverty in Judaism

- The concern for the poor is closely linked to the maintenance of justice:
 - ▶ you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit. . . . You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits (Exodus 23: 2b-3, 6).

(All quotations from the Hebrew and Christian Bibles are taken from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 1994)

- ▶ from the profit of their trading they will get no enjoyment. For they have crushed and abandoned the poor, they have seized a house that they did not build (Job 20:19).
- ▶ Thus says the Lord of hosts: render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien or the poor. . . (Zechariah 7:10).

- Leaving fields and crops for the poor is a religious duty:
 - ▶ In the seventh year you shall let (the land) rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat (Exodus 23: 11).
 - ▶ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 19: 9–10).
- God is compassionate toward the poor and judges those who oppress them:
 - ▶ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. . . .for he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy (Ps 72:4,12, 19, 21).
 - ▶ Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy (Psalm 86:1).
 - ▶ This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy (Ezekiel 16:49).
 - ▶ Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy. . . (Amos 4:1).

Poverty in Christianity

- The poor receive God's favor:
 - ▶ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven (11:5). Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have good news brought to them (Matthew 5:3).
 - ▶ Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6:20).
- Disciples are sometimes urged to become poor themselves:
 - ▶ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics (Mark 6:8–9).

- ▶ You lack one thing: go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me (Mark 10:21, cp Luke 18:22, and John 12:1–8 where words are spoken by Judas).
- Poverty for disciples is recommended because it is following Jesus' example:
 - ▶ For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich (I Corinthians 8:9).
- The surrender of private ownership to communal property is a natural expression of the new life found in Christ:
 - ▶ Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. . . . There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need (Acts 4:32).
- And yet there is a place for extravagance and abundance:
 - ▶ Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denari, and the money given to the poor,' and they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me' (Matthew 26: 9–11).
- A distinction is made between those who are materially poor and those who appear to have everything, but have nothing:
 - ▶ For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked (Revelation 3:17).

In a contemporary expression of Christian concern about poverty, people at Union Theological Seminary in New York City started The Poverty Initiative to raise awareness

and take action on behalf of the poor. Their perspective is reflected in an essay entitled "*Who are the poor?*" written by Willie Baptist and Liz Theoharis, August 2008:

- ▶ If you can't get the basic necessities of life, you're poor. The poor and dispossessed today differ from the poor and dispossessed of the past. They are compelled to fight under qualitatively new conditions and to creatively wield new weapons of struggle. In other words, the socio-economic position of the low waged, laid off, and locked out is not that of the industrial poor, the slave poor, or of the colonial poor of yesterday. The new poor embody all the major issues and problems that affect the majority of other strata of the country's population. Presently, we are experiencing the wholesale economic destruction of the so-called "middle class" in this country. This is huge in terms of political power relations and of strategy and tactics. This "middle class" is beginning to question the economic status quo. The point here is that the economic and social position of the poor is not one to be pitied and guilt-tripped about, but that it indicates the direction this country is heading if nothing is done to change it. Poverty is devastating me today. It can hit you tomorrow. The crisis of healthcare is currently the cause of half of all the bankruptcies in this country (see www.povertyinitiative.org and www.universityofthepoor.org).

Poverty in Islam

According to Osman Guner, in an essay on "Poverty in Traditional Islamic Thought: Is It Virtue or Captivity?," the Islamic words for poverty occur in the Qu'ran twelve times. Two of those times refer to spiritual poverty, meaning human finitude and humans' absolute need for Allah; the other ten refer to material poverty and how Muslims should help them. Additionally, in the Sufi tradition of Islam, the giving up of property and goods is an essential aspect of emphasizing one's utter dependence on Allah.

For most Muslims, however, there is nothing wrong with acquiring material goods, and material well being is seen as an imperative. Nevertheless, greed and oppression are considered unlawful and poverty is considered a social anomaly that should be changed. The poor are looked upon with favor both in this world and the next: "While the food of the poor will be delicious, the food of the rich will not be. . . .Allah certainly gives the deliciousness of the food of the rich to that of the poor. . . .The superiority of the poor over the rich will continue in the Hereafter too. . . .the poor of your community enter the Paradise five hundred years before the rich."

According to one author, Islam has the key to solving the world's problems of poverty and hunger through its tradition of *Zakat*. *Zakat* is an obligatory gift to be distributed among the poor and needy. Muslims are expected to give 2.5% of money that they have had in their possession for over a year. The author concludes:

Now consider this simple fact: Forbes Magazine reported that in 2004 there were 587 billionaires worldwide, with a combined net worth of \$1.9 trillion dollars. If in 2004, these 587 richest people in the world paid zakat, we would have had \$47.5 billion dollars distributed among the poor (http://www.al-islami.com/islam/islam_solves_poverty.php).

Poverty in Hinduism

Hinduism has sometimes been accused of creating and exacerbating poverty because of its caste system. In Hindu tradition, humankind is divided into four castes, called *varnas*: the highest is the Brahmin, which is for priests, teachers and wise men. The second is that of *Kshatriya*, which is for warriors, rulers and leaders. The third *varna* is *Vaishya*, which includes merchants, farmers and those who work in commerce. The lowest *varna* is *Sudra* for those who do manual labor and service. One is born into one of the levels at birth based on one's karma, that is to say, the effect of how one has lived in previous lifetimes. Each *varna* has its own set of rules and expectations, its particular *dharma*, which, if one follows it well, will enable one to be born at a higher level *varna* in one's next lifetime.

Thus understood, although people in the lowest level often live in serious poverty, in Hindu thought it is not a source of disapprobation since everyone is, in every *varna*, in each person's current lifetime, working out their own karma and anticipating raising the level of their *varna* in the next lifetime. Westerners may see a parallel between the Hindu notion of karma and the tradition in both Judaism and Christianity that assumes one's status of both physical and economic well-being to be determined, when negative, by one's own sin or the sins of forebears.

Far from seeing poverty as a virtue, however, Hindu thought emphasizes the value of acquiring wealth and a better standard of living, often through prayers to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

As Hindus have experienced globalization, however—both in terms of Hindus going to other cultures and others coming to them through business and media—there is a significant shift taking place in the understanding of caste and its place in Hindu spiritual development.

Poverty in Buddhism

Buddhism's attitude toward poverty stems from its understanding of all existence according to the first two of the Four Noble Truths propounded by Shakyamuni Buddha in the fifth century, B.C.E. Taken together, the first two Noble Truths comprise a profound critique of the role of poverty in the conditions of all people around the world.

The First Noble Truth is that all of life is *dukkha*, usually translated as suffering, sometimes as anxiety, frustration of dissatisfaction. Poverty—meaning not having enough material goods for health, safety and the kind of well-being needed to realize oneself—is bad, therefore, because it usually entails suffering, and the loss of conditions needed to flourish. It was Shakyamuni's experience that ascetic practices did not, in themselves, lead to enlightenment, and therefore even voluntary poverty—the deliberate surrender of worldly goods—for the Buddhist requires the meeting of ordinary conditions for health, safety and well-being, which is called the “middle way” in between ascetic denial and personal riches.

The Second Noble Truth is that the cause of suffering is *tanha*, perhaps best translated as “craving” or “desire.” In the Buddhist analysis, poverty is one of the primary conditions that give rise to craving, because one's ordinary needs for food, clothing, shelter and care have not been met. Thus, poverty is bad because it gives rise to the kind of craving that increases suffering, leading people to extreme behaviors that add suffering to oneself and others.

Any social, economic and political conditions, therefore, that create poverty are bad because they thereby increase the suffering in the world. Thus, Buddhists are urged to engage in “right livelihood,” ways of making a living that do not create further suffering in the world, as part of the Fourth Noble Truth concerning the following of the Buddha Way. It follows from this concern that a society that is built on creating desire in order to induce people to acquire goods and be consumers of more goods than are needed will be a society that increases the suffering in the world. When the wealth of the few requires the inordinate consumption of the many because of artificially induced desires, poverty becomes a necessary corollary to wealth.

It is one of the primary insights of Buddhism that dualistic views—perspectives or attitudes in which reality is divided into two opposing positions—will necessarily increase the suffering in the world, because one side has been reified, elevated into a fixed position, at the expense of the other. Buddhist analysis pays keen attention, therefore, whenever dualism appears, and finds there another cause of suffering. Seen this way, poverty is but one side of

human life, of which the other extreme is riches, and the Buddhist point of view is that such dualisms are entirely inter-related and interdependent, such that you cannot have one without the other. Poverty so seen is a direct outcome of the accumulation of wealth by one group at the expense of another.

- ▶ For Buddhism, such a proliferation of wants is the basic cause of unnecessary ill-being. This implies that poverty can never be overcome by proliferating more and more desires which are to be satisfied by consuming more and more goods and services. . . . In short, there is a fundamental and inescapable poverty “built into” a consumer society (Loy, 1999).

In this sense, even the affluent suffer in a consumer-oriented society, because their desires are never satiated. The poor in material goods suffer additionally because they do not have their basic needs for safety, health and well-being met. Moreover, the many efforts by governments and institutions such as the World Bank to eliminate poverty may be seen as serving the needs of development for the purpose of creating and sustaining consumers, thus increasing the wealth of the rich, while making others poor.

- ▶ Global poverty is thus conceptually necessary if the world is to be completely commodified and monetarized. . . . The poverty of others is. . . necessary because it is the benchmark by which we measure our own achievements. . . . In all these ways, then, we need the poor. . . . among the causes of poverty today are the delusions of the wealthy. . . (therefore) we should not allow ourselves to be preoccupied only with the poverty side of the problem; to correct the bias, we should become as concerned about the wealth side: the personal, social, and environmental costs of our obsession with wealth-creation and collective growth. (Loy, 1999).

Some Psychological Aspects of Poverty

The Buddhist concern for dualism finds its psychological corollary in the Jungian concepts of persona and shadow. Carl G. Jung, founder of analytical psychology, noted that personality may be divided between the *persona* and the *shadow*. The *persona* is the “mask” or “face” that one presents to the world, and includes all aspects of the person which the person consciously wants to be seen. It generally includes everything about one that may be expected to receive approval, and consists, therefore, in all aspects that one considers good and acceptable.

The *shadow*, on the other hand, contains all those attributes about oneself of which one disapproves or those of which one believes others will disapprove; it includes all things about which one might feel shame, and which one therefore hides or denies. When it comes to the poor, the psychological situation was articulated by Malthus:

- ▶ Even in the relief of common beggars we shall find that we are more frequently influenced by the desire of getting rid of the importunities of a disgusting object than by the pleasure of relieving it. We wish that it had not fallen in our way, rather than rejoice in the opportunity given us of assisting a fellow-creature. We feel a painful emotion at the sight of so much apparent misery; but the pittance we give does not relieve it. We know that it is totally inadequate to produce any essential effect. We know, besides, that we shall be addressed in the same manner at the corner of the next street; and we know that we are liable to the grossest impositions. We hurry therefore sometimes by them, and shut our ears to their importunate demands. (Malthus, 1992: 283, quoted in Johnson 2007)

Poverty thus constitutes society’s shadow, for the poor elicit an uncanny loathing on the part of those who are not poor. The loathing is uncanny precisely in the way Malthus describes, in which the giving of a “pittance” does not relieve the “painful emotion at the sight of so much apparent misery.” It is uncanny further because, as Malthus says, the sheer scope and intractability of poverty baffles the mind, invoking an unshakeable ambivalence.

The direct experience of the people who are poor—if one is not—is unsettling. To put oneself in their shoes is to imagine who and what we are underneath our clothing, our roles, our relationships, our money, credit rating or house or car—it is to become aware of how thin and arbitrary the line is between the haves and the have-nots. In manifesting this core vulnerability and fragility, the poor live close to the border of life and death, which is the province of all spirituality. (It is to be that intimate with the divine that some people choose poverty voluntarily.)

The psychological point reinforces the Buddhist point regarding the dualism of poverty and wealth: the persona by definition requires the shadow. Indeed, the persona requires the shadow, for the persona itself is based on what it consciously declares it is not, namely, it is not the shadow. Without the shadow, the persona would not exist; without the persona, the shadow would not exist. They are interdependent. The rich require the poor psychologically, just as the poor require the rich.

Insofar as an individual accepts this division of reality into personality/shadow, rich/poor, and identifies with only one aspect, one will be locked in, psychologically, into only one half of one's actual possibilities, and in denial about the other half. For the wealthy, they will be locked into maintaining their persona aspects: qualities of competence, superiority of ability and virtue, worthiness and the right to all that is considered good in life, including creativity, power, dignity and pursuit of happiness. To maintain the split, to make sure the shadow is suppressed, whole systems of thought will be devised to justify their position and to manifest *les droits du seigneur*—the rights of the lord. This psychological position will seek manifestation in every aspect of the social structure, from the economy to the politics, to the arts and religions. All of society will become organized around the split between the persona and shadow, the rich and the poor, in such a way as to insure the split and thus insure each side remains what it is and remains separate from the other.

The poor, for their part, insofar as they accept this division of reality, will become entirely identified as the poor, with all the psychological expectations demanded by their status as separate from the rich. They will not expect themselves to have a voice in the society, nor a place; they will not expect to be treated with full human dignity; they will not expect to contribute to the arts, nor have any place in religion except that of helpless victim, and thus they will adopt a form of a religion that reinforces their helpless status.

Consciousness and liberation for all people require the integration of split-off aspects of the personality. Programs to help the poor or end poverty will necessarily serve the divided psyche unless it speaks to the psychopathology of the division itself. Such a perspective cannot be imposed from only one aspect of the population, but must come from the ground up, from the people as a whole.

It is almost impossible to understand the psychological power built into the dynamics between the persona/shadow dynamics of rich and poor. It is cross-cultural, at least among developed nations. It is built into the nature of what it is to be human, because to be poor is to express and manifest the core powerlessness and vulnerability of the human condition, and to recognize how tentative and fragile human life is.

A psychological consideration of the persona/shadow dynamics of the rich and poor requires a spiritual vision, a vision of the whole, in which wealth and poverty are each integrated in relation to the other in mutual interdependence, and only from such a vision can the division between rich and poor even be imagined.

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Power

Lori B. Wagner-Naughton

Defined as the ability to influence other's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors in order to achieve one's own agenda. Power can be communicated through indirect methods (i.e., nonverbal behaviors) or direct verbal exchange. Intimate relationships, such as spouse, parent, or sibling may engender a different influence compared to religious or political leaders. French and Raven (1959) assert that there are five social bases of power that influence relationships. These include: reward, coercive, expert, legitimate, and referent. Raven (1999) further explains how reward power can be defined through rewards or approval from other's whereas coercive exchanges encompass punishment or disapproval. Expert power gives strength to the "influencer" through their knowledge or skill set. Legitimate power signifies a hierarchical structure or position within the relationship. Lastly, referent power describes the influential nature of identifying with or caring about another individual.

See also: [Communal and Personal Identity](#)

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Prajna

Paul C. Cooper

Prajna is the Sanskrit term for wisdom, intuitive knowing or “quick – knowing” (Evans-Wentz, 1954: 208). For the Zen practitioner it is the direct seeing into reality “beyond words and letters.” Prajna stands in contradistinction to knowledge based cognition or discursive, linear thinking, which from a Buddhist perspective would be considered dualistic and therefore limited. Prajna is the intuitive wisdom that reveals the truth of reality as embodied in the doctrine of emptiness and dependent-arising and that frees one from suffering. The important Buddhist scripture, *Prajna-paramita Sutra (Perfection of Wisdom Sutra)* describes prajna as unsurpassed and unequalled.

A direct parallel to psychoanalytic thinking can be found in the writings of the British psychoanalyst Wilfred R. Bion who makes a distinction between “K,” knowledge that is known discursively and through the senses and “O,” which is his symbol for ultimate Truth, and that can be intuited but not known. He writes: “O does not fall into the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally; it can ‘become,’ but it cannot be ‘known’” (1970: 26).

See also: [▶ Bion, Wilfred Ruprecht, and “O”](#) [▶ Zen](#)

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Prayer

Allan Hugh Cole, Jr.

Prayer is a central act of religion that involves seeking and responding to the presence, interest, will, purposes, and aid of the Divine. It entails orientation toward the transcendent realm, whereby expression is given to one’s own, and others’, struggles, regrets, needs, and desires.

This expression occurs in individuals and groups, in verbal and non-verbal forms, through conscious and unconscious states, and according to ritualized and non-ritualized methods. Motivations and effects of prayer may be understood in religious and psychological terms.

Religious Understandings

William James called prayer “the very soul and essence of religion” (James, 1902/1987). Viewing prayer religiously can involve appeal to objective and subjective factors (Pratt, 1920; Wulff, 1997). Objective factors generally pertain to two matters. The first is the belief that prayer is offered to, received by, and acted upon by an ontologically real and supernatural divine being. Many religious traditions, particularly monotheistic ones (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), refer to this being as God. When human beings pray to God, they do so to one that exists and functions outside of their own subjectivity. They seek an encounter with or relationship to an objective, transcendent, but living and acting entity. A second matter involving objective factors of prayer concerns its effects. Appeal is made to tangible external criteria to discern prayer’s benefits, such as improvement in physical or emotional state, or provision for one or more needs. In many Jewish and Christian religious traditions, prayer is viewed as a human response to God’s acting on our behalf, such that God always acts first and, even in prayer, human beings act subsequent to God’s initial action. Even so, many of these same traditions subscribe to belief in divine passibility (i.e. God’s capacity to feel and empathize). God’s nature is such that human prayer can affect God’s will and purposes, and enlist God’s concern and help.

Subjective factors of prayer relate to how it involves and changes the one who prays. Søren Kierkegaard, a nineteenth century philosopher, claimed that one should pray out of devotion to God, but especially to bring one’s own will, efforts, and needs in line with those of God (Kierkegaard, 1990). Kierkegaard held that prayer does not change God, for God is unchangeable. Rather, prayer changes us. Herein lay its purpose and value.

Twentieth century theologian Paul Tillich echoed this perspective. He claimed that in prayer we surrender to God, “the ground of being,” and are taken into God’s creative acts (Tillich, 1951; McKelway, 1965). In prayer, we become part of God’s “directive creativity” in the world. Kierkegaard and Tillich stressed the role of human subjectivity in religion. Kierkegaard anticipated psychological perspectives on matters of religion, faith, and practices

such as prayer, while Tillich appropriated these perspectives for theology and the philosophy of religion. Support for the veracity of both objective and subjective claims concerning prayer is found in sacred texts of many religions.

Psychological Understandings

Psychological perspectives on motivations and effects of prayer consider how it relates to religious practices and experiences, but especially as these involve what transpires within the praying subject with respect to cognitive, emotional, relational, and behavioral states.

Some psychological perspectives, particular those tied to Freudian thought, view prayer negatively. Like all religious beliefs and practices, it is said to involve an infantile form of seeking wish fulfillment (Freud, 1961). In this view, one pursues in prayer the presence and provision of an all powerful deity that compensates for human limitations and unmet needs or desires. As we look to parents to meet our needs in childhood, we look to God as we age. Such pursuit is viewed negatively because of its basis in irrational thinking and delusion, and its appeal to superstition or magical powers.

Other psychological perspectives hold a more positive view of prayer and stress its potential benefits for human wellbeing. Some like William James and other psychologists of religion who were his contemporaries have suggested that prayer is “the religious experience *par excellence*” (see Capps, 1982). Others have found that prayer is a common source for religious experience, second only to music (Greeley, 1975, Argyle 2000/2004). Prayer promotes a particular type of consciousness, including inward communion marked by earnestness, openness, and expectancy; and something is “transacted” in prayer that involves “spiritual energy” and which can promote therapeutic gain (James, 1901). Moreover, prayer may lead to enhanced self-awareness, which can include a deeper consideration of held values, ideals, goals, and responsibilities (Jung, 1961/1989). Prayer can also promote “active cognitive coping” (Argyle, 2000/2004) and cognitive restructuring, particularly as understood by principles of cognitive therapy (Beck and Emery, 1985; Cole, 2008a, 2008b). In this view, how one feels and acts is directly related to how one thinks. As one becomes more aware of one’s thoughts, patterns of thinking, and how these inform one’s feelings and behaviors, one may then alter how one feels and behaves by altering what and how one thinks. Prayer has the capacity to foster thinking, and thus feeling and behaving, in more faithful, peaceful, healthy, and whole

ways. Seeking a type of cognitive restructuring through prayer parallels what occurs in various methods employed in a therapeutic setting.

Types of Prayer

In the early twentieth century, the German historian of religion Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967) proposed a typology of prayer consisting of nine distinct forms (Heiler, 1932). These include: primitive, ritual, hymns, Hellenistic, philosophical, prayer of the religious expert or genius, prayer of great poets and artists, prayer in public worship, and prescribed and meritorious prayer. Heiler’s typology still has value, but a simpler and perhaps more relevant approach considers four primary types of prayer: meditative, ritualistic, petitionary, and colloquial (Poloma and Pendleton, 1991, Argyle, 2000/2004).

In meditative prayer, one attends to acts of contemplation and seeks the presence of God and communion with God. Meditative prayer usually results in altered states of consciousness. Although practiced less frequently than other types, its effects can be significant (Argyle, 2000/2004). In ritualistic prayer, spontaneity gives way to more formulaic, if not prescriptive, forms. Ritualistic prayer also tends to be practiced among groups whose leadership consists of an identified priestly class that regularizes expectations and practices of prayer life (Heiler, 1932). This form of prayer is often practiced in particular places held to be sacred, which informs a degree of emotional investment and perceived power in praying that otherwise may be lacking (Argyle, 2000/2004). Petitionary prayer is the most spontaneous form. In using it one makes explicit requests of God for intervention or help, but this generally lacks critical reflection (Heiler, 1932). Whether offered by individuals alone or collectively by a group, it usually involves more intense emotional states, and it often issues from a need for God’s aid amidst a perceived threat (Heiler, 1932). Colloquial prayer shares many qualities with petitionary prayer, and especially relates to efforts for “religious coping” (Argyle, 2000/2004). As the most common form of prayer, it involves talking with God as a friend or close associate, and using a familiar tone with ordinary language (Poloma and Pendleton, 1991). A major study has shown that among conservative Protestant Christians, experience with prayer is predictive of overall existential wellbeing, whereas for mainline Protestants prayer is less predictive of wellbeing than regular church attendance (Poloma and Pendleton, 1991; Argyle, 2000/2004).

See also: [➤ Christianity](#) [➤ Freud, Sigmund](#) [➤ Islam](#) [➤ James, William](#) [➤ Judaism and Psychology](#) [➤ Kierkegaard, Søren](#)

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Predestination

Mark William Ennis

Predestination (election) is an ancient Christian concept that is, perhaps the most widely misunderstood of all Christian doctrines. In the Christian Canon it is mentioned first in the Pauline literature, Ephesians chapter 1

in which Paul defines the Christian community as being “pre-ordained” by God for adoption since before the beginning of creation.

In many respects this assurance to the congregation in Ephesus establishes the “legitimacy” of gentile Christians amid an atmosphere of largely Jewish Christians. As Jews became a chosen people because of the unilateral covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants, so God now makes a unilateral covenant with gentiles. Gentile Christians are thus “pre-destined” and are the equals of God’s chosen people; the Jews.

The church in Ephesus to whom this was written, suffered under great persecution in the Roman Empire. Paul’s assurance of God’s choice of them serves to give courage to this persecuted community. Viktor Frankl observed during World War II that harsh conditions can be endured with the knowledge of a deeper meaning to life. Love, he reasoned, could enable people to live through conditions that might seem to be unlivable.

In early Christian times the Church Fathers wrestled with the concept of predestination (election) feeling the tension between this doctrine and “free will.” Others confused this doctrine with “fatalism” in which one’s life is scripted by God and each second of life is predetermined. Scripture however says nothing of a life script. It speaks of God’s irresistible love that will ultimately bring those elect to salvation. It describes the ultimate destination but does not in any way suggest a scripted life.

During the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin in order to combat what he perceived to be the salvation by works taught by the Roman Catholic Church, expanded this doctrine to include a “double decree” of predestination (election). This double decree put forth the thesis that as some people are predestined for heaven, others are predestined for damnation. Calvin, although putting forth this idea, did warn that speculating on the roster of such a list would not be productive.

In later years Arminian thought challenged Calvinists. James Arminius, who studied under Beza, a student of Calvin’s, put this thought forth. Arminius argued that God’s grace was indeed resistible and humans ultimately participate in their own salvation through their decisions. Thus began in the Netherlands, the controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism led to the Synod of Dort (1618). This synod affirmed predestination (election), repudiated Arminianism and cemented the rift between believers in each of these schools of thought.

In the twentieth century, Swiss theologian Karl Barth again tackled the doctrine of preordination (election). He upheld the double decree of election but argued that in the atoning work of Jesus, God leaves the list of those

damned under the double-decree, vacant, thereby opening up the role of the elect to all people.

The doctrine of predestination (election) represents the full unconditional love of God for an individual. Much like a child yearns for parental acceptance so those adhering to this doctrine know the true joy of acceptance by their creator. They are chosen, as were the ancient Jews through the Abrahamic covenant. In a world where often we see the break down of traditional social groups and institutions, this doctrine emphasizes belonging and can be seen as an antidote for an anomic person. During personality development the knowledge of this connection by election gives a person a grounding of belonging.

See also: [▶ Augustine](#) [▶ Frankl, Viktor](#)

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Prejudice

Brandon Randolph-Seng

Psychologically, prejudice can be defined as a predetermined judgment of a group of people including its individual members. This preconceived judgment is usually considered to be negative. Within religion, many historical examples of prejudice can be found from Christian

persecution of Muslims to Muslim persecution of Jews. Therefore, a powerful justification for prejudice is the religious belief that God has ordained a specific social order. However, a powerful justification against prejudice for a religious believer is the belief that God has ordained that “all are created equal.” Many historical examples could also be cited as evidence to this association (Meyers, 2008). What then is the connection between prejudice and religion? The answer to this seeming contradiction can be resolved upon closer examination of the psychological components of an individual’s religious belief and action (Donahue and Nielsen, 2005). Individuals with an intrinsic religious orientation understand all of life by their religion. Religion is an essential part of their orienting system towards themselves, others, and the world at large. Individuals with an extrinsic religious orientation on the other hand see religion as a means to other types of ends like social activity or power (Allport and Ross, 1967). Compared to more extrinsically motivated religious individuals, these intrinsically religious believers tend to be less prejudice. Therefore, depth of religious commitment may be the key to either making or unmaking prejudice in religious domains (Meyers, 2008).

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism](#) and [Psychology](#)

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Primal Horde Theory

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

In *Totem and Taboo* (1913/1955) Freud analyzed the phenomenon of totemic religion, characterized by the centrality of the totemic animal, symbolizing the clan,

in worship, and the incest taboo applied to all members of the same clan. This could still be observed directly among pre-literate cultures in our time. Freud asserted a connection between totem, taboo, and paternal authority.

He suggested that this connection stemmed from human pre-history, when humans lived in large groups, the primal horde, dominated by one older male, who could monopolize all females (this was first proposed by Charles Darwin). This tyrannical father was murdered and then eaten by the resentful young males, his sons, who then possessed all females, including mothers and sisters. The murdered father was then symbolized in the totem animal, which holds the authority within the horde. Through the sacrifice of the totem animal, the sons could try to allay their burning sense of guilt and to bring about a reconciliation with their father.

The primal crime, and the resulting guilt, where the starting point for civilization, morality, the incest taboo, and religion. The guilt-stricken brothers agreed to a social contract: Stop the war of all against all and to prohibit copulations within the clan, thus controlling, if not conquering, the disruptive and destructive impulses of sex and aggression.

The primal crime left a legacy found everywhere in culture. From the pre-historical to the more abstract and symbolic, the functions of commemoration, appeasement, and renunciation of instinct remained integral to the cultural compromise of the Oedipus complex expressed through religion. Religious myths and rituals obsessively re-enacted the primal crime, and the totemic meal, in which the primal crime was celebrated and atoned for, became the Christian Eucharist, and the Jewish Passover.

While Freud's assertions regarding the events of human pre-history have been rejected by most scholars, his psychological observations regarding the dynamics of totemism and ritual have been treated with respect.

Some of the best known anthropologists of the twentieth century, while critical of the Freud's thesis about the primal crime in the primal horde, embraced his phylogenetic insights. These included A. L. Kroeber, Ernest Becker, Meyer Fortes, and Derek Freeman. Margaret Mead speculated that Freud was, after all, right about the "primal crime," except that this deed was committed much earlier in the evolutionary history of humanity. It was a pre-human horde, when sexual maturity was reached at age seven or eight, and life was much shorter. And the deed was committed repeatedly, as each generation got rid of the earlier one over hundreds of thousands of years, until these pre-humans became real humans.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Oedipus Complex](#)

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Primordial Waters

David A. Leeming

All cultures naturally recognize water as a necessary source of life and survival, making it a useful symbol of creative fertility – spiritual and psychological fertility as well as physical fertility. At the same time, large masses of water are uncontrollable and, therefore, aptly representative of chaos – the chaos that precedes creation. Together, these two symbolic functions lead us, like the cosmic egg symbol, to the idea of potential, as yet unformed reality. The primordial waters figure strongly in creation myths from all corners of the world. The waters speak to the larger metaphor of creation as birth. We are all born of the maternal waters and so, in creation mythology, worlds are typically born of the waters.

In the earth diver type of creation myth a diver, usually a humble animal, is sent by the creator to the depths of the waters to find soil with which to begin the creation of Earth. In several Native American myths a toad or a muskrat, for instance, succeeds after much difficulty, in penetrating the waters, like the lonely sperm which penetrates the egg, and brings back the fertilizing germ of creation, a tiny bit of earth, a fetus to be nurtured. In India the Garo people say it was Beetle who succeeded in the dive. The Gond people say that the creator, sitting on a lotus leaf on the waters, sent the crow to find the seed of life. The Birhor creator also sits on the lotus, by means of which he himself has emerged from the waters, and he sends the lowly leech to find the germ of creation. In a Hungarian myth the sun takes the form of a duck and makes the successful dive for the "seed." Out of this small beginning in several Native American myths – particularly of the Iroquoian speaking peoples – a woman who falls from the sky, the heavens, now an Earth Mother, directs the process of creation and civilization resulting from the bit of earth. The maternal birth-giving waters are, after all, feminine.

In a Polynesian myth of Samoa, the creator broke out of a cosmic egg and allowed parts of the shell to “fertilize” the Primordial waters causing the formation of the Samoan Islands. Some Samoans say that the creator himself dove to the depths to find the stone that would form the basis of creation. A myth of the Papago of Arizona tells how in the beginning darkness rubbed with the primordial waters and so impregnated “her” with the first human. A Mongolian myth relates how the creator simply stirred the waters – perhaps a veiled image of intercourse – and filled them with creation.

The primordial water can stand as a symbol of the possibility of rebirth, a psychological and spiritual new beginning. Baptism contains the elements of this symbolism. The initiate dies to the old life in a kind of symbolic drowning but is reborn from the maternal and cleansing water as a new “whole” being. The water is also an archetypal representative of the unconscious, in the depths of which the earth diver, – the individual – can, sometimes at great risk, discover the seeds of individuation. The waters are the amniotic fluid in which preconscious Self is formed and from which conscious Self will emerge.

See also: [Baptism](#) [Chaos](#) [Cosmic Egg](#) [Creation](#) [Myth](#) [Self](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Projection

Lee W. Bailey

Projection is the term used to describe a common psychological dynamic, well known in psychotherapy and critical studies of religion. It means the attribution of

qualities of person A to person or thing B that can be traced back to the unconscious contents of person A, such as love, hate, or divinity. It is a useful theory that describes both normal and pathological ways of involvement in the world, such as falling in love at first sight. It has been used to attack religion as “nothing but” illusory projections of an infantile father complex, but recent thinkers have challenged this Pre-theoretical “projections” are described in ancient literature.

Ancient Greeks

Pre-theoretical “projections” are described in ancient literature. Xenophanes proclaimed: “But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves” (Kirk & Raven, 169). Xenophanes’ critique is not atheist, but is an effort to clear away attributions [“projection” is a modern term] that distort his view of a refined monotheism: “One god, greatest among gods and men, in not way similar to mortals either in body or in thought” (Kirk & Raven, 169).

Plato reports on a Sophist argument that the differences between different tribal gods reflect merely tribal qualities: “This party asserts that gods have no real and natural, but only an artificial being, in virtue of local conventions, as they call them, and thus there are different gods for different places, conforming to the conventions made by each group” (1961, *Laws* X, 889E).

Plato also describes what psychologists commonly call “projection” in a lover’s passion, rooted in an unconscious complex: “So he loves, yet to knows not what he loves; he does not understand, he cannot tell what has come upon him” (1961, *Phaedrus* 255D). Lovers attribute qualities to their beloved ones, Plato says, because they are unconsciously adoring a god:

- ▶ All this, mark you, they attribute to the beloved, and the draughts which they draw from Zeus they pour out, like bacchants, into the soul of the beloved, thus creating in him the closest possible likeness to the god they worship (1961, *Phaedrus* 253A).

Similarly, Freud says centuries later, parents project royalty onto “His Majesty the Baby,” because “they are under compulsion to ascribe every perfection to the child” (1974 *SE* XIV: 91). Like Plato’s lover, Freud’s theoretical parents project god-like perfections onto their beloved children.

Plato's lover is projecting forth a flowing stream that originates in Zeus, for example, and floods his beloved with a passion. But "he cannot account for it, not realizing that his lover is as it were a mirror in which he beholds himself" (1961 *Phaedrus* 255D). Like Freud, Plato recognizes that the lover is unconsciously looking in a mirror, but unlike Freud, Plato believes that what we call "projections" originate in gods, not in subjectivity.

Ludwig Feuerbach

Plato's theory was theological, but in the nineteenth century, Ludwig Feuerbach reversed Plato's theology, arguing that "The personality of God is nothing other than the projected personality of man" (1957: 226). Unlike Xenophanes and Plato, Feuerbach did not want to clear the way of projections so we could see a purified divinity or Being. On the contrary, he was immersed in the materialist subject-object metaphysic that sought to reduce religious metaphysics to the metaphysics of subjective contents. He stresses not just the illusions of such projections. The positive contents of religion Feuerbach wants to return to human self-awareness:

- ▶ God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man – religion the solemn unveiling of a man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his ultimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets (12–13).

Although Feuerbach's theory of projection was adopted widely by atheists, ironically he did not use the term "projection," that was available in German as *projizieren*. His English translator George Eliot provided this word. Feuerbach used the terms *Entäusserung* ("externalization" or "alienation") and *Vergegenständlichung* ("objectification" or "alienation"), so his theory is better termed one of "theological alienation." Marx borrowed this.

Camera Obscura

Where did the image of "projection" originate that was attached to these early psychological and religious insights? Two old related machines were the experiential collective source: the *camera obscura* and the "magic lantern." The *camera obscura* is a dark room with a small hole allowing the external scene to be projected onto an internal screen. In the tenth century, Alhazen experimented with solar eclipses projected into a dark room. Roger Bacon also experimented with the dark room, using mirrors (Bacon, 1614). Leonardo DaVinci also experimented

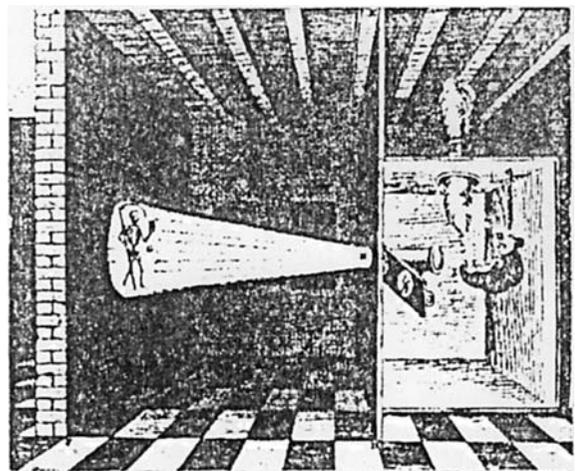
with a small *camera obscura* and made the first surviving comparison to the human eye:

- ▶ When the images of illuminated bodies pass through a small round hole into a very dark room, if you receive them on a piece of white paper placed vertically in the room at some distance from the aperture, you will see on the paper all those bodies in their natural shapes and colors, but they will appear upside down and smaller . . . the same happens inside the pupil (DaVinci, 1490).

Descartes explored the *camera obscura* with an ox-eye in the aperture to invert and focus the image. He considered the results unreliable, but John Locke believed the images to be reliable pictures of the outer world, which supported his psychology of representation. The *camera obscura* was a widespread instrument by the Renaissance, and fed both the collective images of mental projection and of mental subjectivity.

The Magic Lantern

While the *camera obscura* received external images into a dark room, the "magic lantern" projected images, painted on mirrors or glass, into a dark room, often with dramatic intent. The Dutch physicist Christian Huygens first combined the elements of candlelight, lens and picture on glass around 1659. The Jesuit Athanasius Kircher published the first illustration in his *Ars Magna* (see *Fig. 1*). The magic lantern spread around Europe with traveling magicians and carnivals using images such as angels and



Projection. **Figure 1** The first known illustration of the magic lantern, by Kirchner (1671: 768–769).

demons that produced shocking effects on audiences. Diderot's *Encyclopedie* explained the technique in 1753, but many were still in the dark.

A Belgian magician named Etienne Robertson's traveling *Phantasmagorie* show used the magic lantern dramatically. He tossed chemicals into a brazier in front of an audience, producing smoke, and images were projected from concealed magic lanterns onto the smoke. Demons, skulls, skeletons, and dead heroes appeared in the smoke (the "smoke screen"). Spectators sank to their knees, drew their swords, or covered their eyes in terror. Such shows multiplied, and their tricks were exposed in popular magazines (Barnouw, 1981). By the nineteenth century the magic lantern was spreading the idea that angels and demons alike were "nothing but" projections from a magic lantern into a dark room. Thus, Feuerbach was able to translate this collective image into a philosophical theory by 1841.

Sigmund Freud

By 1895, when the movie projector was finally working in Edison's lab, Freud's first formulation of the theory of psychological projection also appeared. He proposed that paranoia uses projection as a defense: "The purpose of such delusions, "Freud writes, "is to fend off the idea that is compatible with the ego, by projecting its substance into the external world" (1974 *SE I*: 209). Freud added to the popular image of projection by a magic lantern, and to Feuerbach's philosophy of projection from subjectivity, not only psychological depth, but the notion of projection as a mental "mechanism," modeling on nineteenth century technological inventions (such as magic lanterns). He used the theory commonly, from clinical analyses to cultural criticisms of religion:

- ▶ I believe that a large part of the mythological view of the world, which extends a long way into the most modern religions, is nothing but psychology projected into the external world (1974, *SE VI*: 258–259).

Here Freud illustrates the positivist effort to reduce religion to subjective contents using the theory of projection. Projection became a major argument for atheism in the twentieth century by reducing gods to subjective illusions. It also offered a useful perspective for cleansing religions of inappropriate projected accretions, such as nationalism and racism.

The theory of projection was applied in the clinical development of analysis of psychological transference and counter-transference between patients and therapists.

The "withdrawal" of projections was the description often used in the therapeutic work of "owning" or recognizing one's own unconscious feelings initially experienced in other people or in the world in many developing schools of psychotherapy.

Carl Jung

When Jung developed his theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes, he welcomed Freud's theory of projection, but modified it. Like Freud, he saw projection in culture saying: "All human relationships swarm with these projections" (*CW XIII*, paragraph 507). Projections generated "blinding illusions which falsify ourselves and our relations to our fellow men, making both unreal" (*CW VII*, 373). Jung agrees with Freud that in transference projections are often rooted in unreal infantile and erotic fantasies. However, he rejected Freud's theory that projection is primarily a defense mechanism, infantile and personal in content. Jung also rejected the view that projections are caused by individual repression, as he realized the collective, impersonal contents in projections. Patients not only fell in love with him, but also fantasized that he was a devil or a savior (*CW VII*, 99). Not only illusions, but also strengths may appear in projections, Jung found.

Jung did keep projection largely in the subject-object metaphysic (*CW XVIII*, 367). However, he occasionally questioned this dualism, saying: "The word 'projection' is not really appropriate, for nothing has been cast out of the psyche" (*CW IX*, i, 53). He came to reject the positivist view of projections as "nothing but" subjectivity. Throughout his work, Jung says that gods in themselves are beyond the grasp of human consciousness, but have real psychological, symbolic meanings that are important, not illusory.

After his 1944 near-death experience, Jung's mystical explorations into alchemy led him to see projections not as simply part of the subject-object metaphysic of empirical sciences. He saw projections as part of an ontologically deeper participation in the depths of existence. This was expressed in the paradoxical and obscure symbolic alchemical language that he translated. Here *proiectio* is part of the casting forth of the philosopher's stone (which is not a stone but a wisdom) into the banal world, which transforms it into a precious mystical treasure, including awakening to the *unus mundus* (one world), below its multiplicity. Jung agrees with projection theory's separation of inner from outer, but he is also compelled to describe the one world containing the collective unconscious, below the subject-object divide. This paradox of

the one and the many and their relations is a deep mystery explored by philosophers since Plato. Jung enriched its psychological dimension.

The Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz explored projection thoroughly in 1980. She shows the value of projection theory and touches on the difficulty of its subjectivism: “outward-material and inner-spiritual are only characteristic labels” (Von Franz, 1980). This theme makes projection less of a serious critique of religion. The archetypal psychologist Wolfgang Giegerich criticizes the theory of projection as the servant of physics, withdrawing soul and Being from its mechanistic framework.

Object-relations psychology expands projection theory with Melanie Klein’s theory of introjection (the opposite of projection), the process of taking external images and reality into the inner world of the self.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands after World War II, the study of projection theory was greatly expanded (but not translated from the Dutch) by several thoughtful scholars, notably Simon Vestdijk, Fokke Sierksma, and Han Fortmann (Bailey, 1988). Vestdijk and Fortmann, for example, both stressed that projection is not a psychological fact, but an explanatory hypothesis. In his 1947 *De Toekomst der Religie* (The Future of Religion) Vestdijk criticized absolute metaphysical religion as a projection, but argued for a mystical, introspective religion that withdraws projections in Buddhist fashion. The book evoked a storm of protest in Holland.

Fokke Sierksma’s 1956 *De Religieuze Projectie* (Religious Projection) placed projection in a framework of a psychology of perception, taking it out of the theory of being a pathological defense. Han Fortmann, a phenomenologist of religion, influenced by Jung and Heidegger, dismantled the subjectivist philosophy underneath the theory of projection in his 1968 *Als Zieme de Onzienlijke* (As Seeing the Invisible). For him projection is not subjective interiority projected into an objective world, but participation in qualities in the lived world (*Lebenswelt*). Participation in the world, as in ritual, is not just primitive, delusory or infantile, but a normal way of being-in-the-world, as in Feuerbach’s and Buber’s I and Thou relations, Freud’s “oceanic feeling,” Jung’s collective unconscious, Heidegger’s ontology, Vestdijk’s mysticism, and Sierksma’s perceived world. There are no subjects, no objects, no projections, for these concepts are reified theories of the mechanical metaphysic. Thus a door to religion

in a new key is opened. The theory of “projection” is a useful tool in psychotherapy and religion to separate personal feelings from outer situations, but its philosophical foundations have been deepened enough to challenge its use in dismissing religions.

See also: [Buber, Martin](#) [Collective Unconscious](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Plato and Religion](#) [Plato on the Soul](#)

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Prophets

Miriam Dean-Otting

Eleventh-Ninth Century BCE

The most highly developed manifestation of prophetic activity in the Ancient Near East is to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In examining the words and actions of these ancient prophets one can discern many psychological factors that describe and explain prophetic behavior. These include possession, ecstatic behavior, altered consciousness, obsession or compulsion, having an unmediated relationship with the Divine, visionary experience and irrationality. For the earliest prophets we can begin with Abraham and Moses and conclude with Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha. There is a single reference to Abraham as a prophet, “for he is a prophet and he will pray for you, and you shall live” (Genesis 20:7). According to Genesis 15 Abraham has an ecstatic experience, especially if the Greek translation (*exstasis*) of the Hebrew *tardemah* (deep sleep), is taken into consideration. The case of Moses warrants particular attention, both as a paradigm for other prophets, and as an anomaly: “Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses – whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Each of the other prophets listed above is an example that contributes to a composite portrait of the eleventh–ninth century BCE prophets. For instance, Deborah, seated under a palm tree in the hills of Ephraim, functioned as a judge and advisor (Judges 4 and 5). Samuel was dedicated to the Lord and served in the Temple at Shiloh, where he was called to be a prophet (I Samuel 1–3). Saul is seized by a prophetic frenzy, caught up with the guild prophets (e.g., I Samuel 10:9). He also practices necromancy

when he causes the medium of Endor to call up Samuel from the dead (I Samuel 28). David’s court prophet, Nathan, condemned the actions of his king and employer. Questioning the authority of the ruler and advocating for the powerless, Nathan thus embodies two of the characteristics of the later Hebrew prophets (II Samuel 11–12). Elijah, “troubler of Israel” (I Kings 18:17), and Elisha, his heir, work magic, perform miracles and speak unwelcome truths to the kings of Israel. In addition, their ecstatic behavior is a model for the visionary experience of the prophets described next.

Eighth-Sixth Century BCE

Fifteen books in the Hebrew Scriptures are named after individuals, with Isaiah assigned to three distinct historical periods. In chronological order these books are Amos, Hosea, I Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, II Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, III Isaiah, Obadiah, Joel, and the folktale of Jonah. There is a breadth of prophetic voice and a range of personalities and professions found in the prophetic canon. For instance, Amos claims to be simply a shepherd and a farmer: “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel’” (Amos 7:14–15). Isaiah, on the other hand, is a priest in the Temple in Jerusalem, truly part of the institutional religion (Isaiah 6). Jeremiah laments and suffers abuse. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel go into exile. Jonah sulks.

Characteristics of the Prophet

A prophet is not a fortuneteller, nor is the prophet particularly interested in the distant future, except in so far as it is influenced by actions taken in the present. In fact, the portrait of a prophet is rather complex. First of all a prophet must experience some kind of *calling*. In the biblical tradition this comes from God. This *calling awakens the prophet to injustice*, elicits both a feeling of *impending doom* and a *deep compassion for the oppressed*. *Drama and passion* energize the message of the prophet. The task is onerous and, thus, prophets frequently express *reluctance to accept the role*. Even so, a prophet is *compelled to speak* out and may seem, to others less sympathetic, to be a fanatic or zealot. In psychology we might deem this obsession. The prophet’s words carry a clout that does not spare those responsible for the suffering of others. Yet it is important that the prophet’s *perspective is rooted in a*

broad view of humanity; she or he must work for the good of all people. Furthermore, a prophet must be selfless and self-confident, but also provocative. The prophet's charisma draws followers but, nevertheless, the prophet frequently experiences loneliness, and may even be cast out, for the message is one that few want to hear. Above all the prophet's message challenges the status quo and questions the authority of those in power. Prophetic arguments are articulate and persuasive, often fueled by ecstatic behavior, supported by visions, and voiced in powerful poetic meter. Finally, a prophet most often rejects the designation and, never receives remuneration for prophesying. Above all, prophets emphasize justice, righteousness, humility and kindness. A summary of these central concepts is voiced in Micah: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

Psychology of the Prophet

The prophet's relationship with the Divine, the prophetic call, ecstatic behavior, visions and poetry are all facets of what we might treat in any study of the psychology of the prophet. Passages from the texts of the classical Hebrew prophets illustrate these characteristics.

The prophet's relationship with God is profound, and often disturbing. "The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:8). A shocking example, even if it is only a metaphor, is the expectation that Hosea's life will mirror God's relationship with Israel: "Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord" (Hosea 1:2). The central phrase *neum Adonai* ("Thus says the Lord"), repeated throughout the prophets, and many other metaphors leave no doubt that, according to the biblical perspective, the prophet is a vessel for God's words. This implies that prophet must lose sight of all personal needs and be subsumed in divine expectations.

Most prophets experience a call, but the circumstances vary considerably. For instance, Isaiah encounters a numinous vision of God in the Temple in Jerusalem, his lips are seared and purified by a burning coal born by a fantastic creature, and he is forewarned that the people will turn a tin ear to his prophecy (Isaiah 6). Jonah responds to his call by fleeing in the other direction (Jonah 1), a radical and physical denial of the call. Jeremiah is summoned as a youth, and learns that he had been appointed a prophet even before he was born. He depicts his call as a physical gesture, "Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my

mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth'" (Jeremiah 1:9).

Often ecstatic behavior precedes the voicing of the prophetic message and this is where we can point to a kind of possession, what might be called, in psychological terms, an "altered consciousness." "As for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might" (Micah 3:8). Jeremiah echoes a metaphor common in the prophets, the swallowing of God's words: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts" (Jeremiah 1:16). Significantly, he denies that he has used wine to evoke this state: "I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone for you filled me with indignation" (1:17). Several psychological states of mind, that might be called "unbalanced," irrationality, enthusiasm, possession, in sum, a variety of states of altered consciousness, activate prophetic speech. The words of the prophets are met with utmost seriousness, whether out of fear or reverence. Ecstatic behavior, then, enhances rather than diminishes the power of the message.

Out of ecstasy come visions, and prophetic texts are rife with revelations of both wrath and restoration. Perhaps the most well known is Ezekiel's colorful vision of the fiery chariot (Ezekiel 1), but plenty of visions are more mundane by comparison. Everyday objects might become catalysts for vital lessons, such as when Jeremiah visits the potter's house and watches as the potter reshapes a spoiled vessel. This sight is understood symbolically as an indication of God's intention to break down and rebuild the people Israel (Jeremiah 18:1–12). For Joel armies of locusts, surely observed in times of natural disaster, become signs of invading armies (Joel 1). Visions reveal much about the environment of ancient Israel, and demonstrate the practice of the prophets to be out and about, in the marketplace, at sacred centers, at the city gates and walking the streets, anywhere where people are gathered, so that an audience is always at hand.

Many of the passages cited in these samples are rendered in the meter of Hebrew poetry, an aspect of biblical prophecy that lends the prophetic words dignity and elegance. It is poetry that allows the prophet to ascribe to God both the power of a warrior and the empathy of a laboring woman: "The Lord goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes. For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant" (Isaiah 42:13–14). Hebrew poetic

lamentation meter enhances the grief already inherent in Amos' words: "Fallen no more to rise is maiden Israel; forsaken on her land, with no one to raise her up" (Amos 5:2).

Questions have been raised about whether prophetic possession should be described as a kind of neurosis or madness. Clearly prophetic behaviors are not average or muted in any way. For instance, some assert that Hosea's willingness to marry a prostitute, as a concrete symbol of Israel's rejection of God, was indicative of his madness. Isaiah's walking naked for three years to call attention to the captivity of the Assyrian king could indicate some exhibitionism. But this is mere speculation at a distance of well over 2000 years and is, perhaps, not so instructive. At most it seems that we can only point to some marginal behaviors in addition to the characteristics of possession, ecstatic behavior, altered consciousness, obsession or compulsion, having an unmediated relationship with the Divine, visionary experience and irrationality outlined above.

See also: [Bible](#) [Biblical Psychology](#)

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Protestantism

Jaco J. Hamman

Protestantism is a general term describing a third main form of Christianity alongside Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. It originated in the sixteenth century when in 1529 German princes presented a *Protestatio* or letter of protest against the Catholic Church's prohibition on innovation in the field of religion. This act by the "Protestants" – later also called "Evangelicals" – initiated a movement called the Christian Reformation asking "Who is the true and holy church?"

Despite holding worldviews ranging from open and liberal to nationalist conservative and even fundamentalist, Protestantism is most often characterized by: proclaiming that all glory belongs to God (*solī Deo Gloria*); salvation is by grace alone (*sola gratia*); the centrality of the spoken and written Word (*sola Scriptura*); freedom

and independence; truth and the church are ever evolving; baptism and communion as the only sacraments; and, placing a person's relationship with God above allegiance to the church. These traits can be summarized as: only grace, faith, and Scripture should govern life inside and outside the church. The church, therefore, is not the carrier of grace and salvation. In light of this belief, baptized believers are called, through the priesthood of all believers, to be instruments of grace and salvation empowered by God's Spirit.

A strength of Protestantism is its critical nature, but the same orientation has created lack of unity in dogma and institutional structure. After nearly 500 years of experiencing schisms and internal conflict over doctrinal issues such as infant or adult baptism and the nature of Holy Communion, Protestantism incorporates many different traditions. These traditions have a unique character as they developed around spiritual leaders in a specific social context. Groups include: Anglican (Episcopal), Congregationalist, Lutheran, Methodist (including the Salvation Army), Reformed (Calvinist/Presbyterian), Waldensian, Zwinglian, and also Baptist, Anabaptist (Mennonite, Brethren), and charismatic Pentecostal Protestants. Most of these groups experience secularization, loss of church membership, and internal struggles. The cultural and doctrinal diversity within Protestantism is best expressed in numerous confessions of faith. Traditionally an Anglo-Saxon faith, forms of Protestantism are growing rapidly in the developing world (African Independent Churches; South America) and in Asia (especially South Korea) due to Protestantism's missionary fervor.

Protestantism's general orientation to critical distinction rather than synthesis impacts its relationship with psychology. Yet Protestantism's search for truth brings interdisciplinary exploration. Protestants engage in *critical evaluation or correlation* of psychological theories and use whatever is deemed compatible with their worldview. Others engage in *theory building*, reworking psychological theories, especially cognitive theories, according to Protestant presuppositions. Some seek a *dialectical* approach, holding the tension between two diverse disciplines. Others yet argue that postmodern rationality, refusing objective truth, allows different disciplines to speak into each other's world without losing unique identities. Protestants also use psychology as a lens through which to read Scripture.

One goal that Protestants and psychology share is seeking ways to facilitate the good life. Typical topics of contention Protestantism has with psychology, however, are: wholeness found through a personal relationship with Jesus; Scripture as a special revelation; the problem of

suffering; the reality of evil and sin; what it means to be a human being; and how truth is defined. Protestantism can inform psychology on the human spirit's search for meaning around ultimate concerns. Psychology, in turn, can educate Evangelicals on the depths of an embodied existence. In dialog, mutual illumination is possible around concerns such as models of personhood, disease and health, individuality and community, and how transformation occurs.

See also: [▶ Baptism](#) [▶ Biblical Psychology](#) [▶ Calvinism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Evangelical](#) [▶ Fundamentalism](#) [▶ Grace](#) [▶ Luther, Martin](#) [▶ Meaning of Human Existence](#) [▶ Original Sin](#) [▶ Religion](#)

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Providence

David M. Moss III

This is a critical theological term of profound psychological significance. Providence refers to God's creative and sustaining care of the universe. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition it identifies events or circumstances of divine interposition. It also signifies revelation through insight.

In 400 BC Greek philosophers used the word *prónoia* to describe a power which rationally guides the world and human destiny by a fixed set of natural laws. This became a dogma of Stoicism. It also bears points of contact with the biblical idea of the Creator being directly involved with creation. The Old Testament records a gradual development of the *belief* in providence. Nevertheless, the Hebrew scriptures reveal a dynamic theme: God guides history in such a way that independent and free human actions are not annulled. Unlike the impersonal Stoic concept, this conception requires the Creator's intimate involvement with humanity. The New Testament develops this view but not as a theoretical explanation. It is an eschatological perspective, inherently implied far more than explicitly mentioned. The incarnation was providence personified.

Early patristic literature was strongly influenced by Greek philosophy, particularly cosmology. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215) best expressed the synonymous relationship of God and providence. Conversely, he contended that the denial of providence was to be equated with atheism. The Church Fathers also explored the biblical idea of freedom with responsibility under God's provision. During the Middle Ages, the Scholastic theologians set forth philosophical speculations about the nature and meaning of providence. Inspired by Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274) produced a penetrating examination of this belief. Subsequently, the Council of Trent (1545–1563) designated providence as a *doctrine* of the Church. However, the Reformation was already underway. This represented a break with Catholic intellectualism. Reason was not dismissed but experience was elevated to a primary importance. The Reformers also presented new views about providence. Their writings no longer centered on an explanation of the universe, but in realizations of *faith* and practical living. John Calvin's (1509–1564) teaching on predestination was exceptionally controversial. In his theological system providence was restricted and free will was restrained. Popular expressions of the Protestant

belief in providence were published chiefly in devotional literature and hymns. In the eighteenth century scholars of the Enlightenment viewed providence from a more rationalistic position. As a result, this dimension of reality became the fulcrum of Natural Theology. G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716) described providence as the rational and meaningful order of human history and the cosmos.

Systematic explanations of providence eventually raise problems of theodicy, questions about the goodness and fairness of God given the evil and suffering in creation. Pastoral theology emphasizes the ascendancy of the former over the latter. Consequently, providence is the basic source of hope for human development. In the twentieth century this belief was reemphasized by the growth of pastoral counseling as a specialized ministry. From such a therapeutic perspective, providence can be defined as an *awareness* that out of every unfortunate experience, as long as one chooses to look with insight, beneficial results will be revealed.

See also: [▶ Augustine](#) [▶ Incarnation](#)

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Pruyser, Paul

Nathan Carlin

Paul W. Pruyser (1916–1987) was a clinical psychologist who, especially by means of his prolific writing, contributed greatly to the psychology of religion while working at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas (now located in Houston, Texas). His monographs include *A Dynamic Psychology of Religion* (1968), *Between Belief and Unbelief* (1974), *The Psychological Examination* (1979), and *The Play of the Imagination* (1983). He edited *Diagnosis and the Difference it Makes* (1976b) and *Changing Views of the*

Human Condition (1987). And, with Karl Menninger and Martin Mayman, he wrote *The Vital Balance* (1963). In addition to these books, he also wrote some 30 book chapters and 80 journal articles. Pruyser also contributed to the field of psychology of religion by serving as President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and by serving on the editorial boards for *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* and *Pastoral Psychology*.

Pruyser and the Menninger Clinic

Pruyser moved to Topeka, Kansas in 1954 to work in the Topeka State Hospital. He joined the staff of the Menninger Clinic in 1956 and worked there until his death. He developed a close relationship with Karl Menninger, founder of the Menninger Clinic. Karl was psychoanalyzed by Franz Alexander and received the first psychoanalytic certificate from the training institute in Chicago (Wallerstein, 2007). At Menninger, Pruyser rose through the ranks – but never to the very top, because he was “a psychologist among psychiatrists” – and eventually participated in “the palace revolt” that removed Karl from power in his own institution, a revolt that Karl believed had affinities to Freud’s (1913/2001) *Totem and Taboo*. Nevertheless, Pruyser still viewed Karl as a father figure, perhaps because Pruyser’s own father had died at a young age. Pruyser wrote Karl these words in 1971: I hope you would “appraise the last ten years as a period in which I have not only kept your great heritage, but nurtured, fostered and expanded it” (Friedman, 1990: 324). In any case, after the overthrow, Pruyser developed a facial tic and aged “precipitately,” perhaps an indication of Pruyser’s guilt and a testimony to Karl’s interpretation of the overthrow (1990: 324). In the political struggles that followed, Pruyser was able “to retain a significant position,” but he was eventually pressured into resigning from his position as Education Department director, then to assume the post of resident teacher-scholar (1990: 338).

Pruyser’s Contributions to Psychology of Religion

Pruyser’s contributions to the psychology of religion are sadly overlooked today. Sometimes Ana-Maria Rizzuto is thought to be the first person to have brought the ideas of D. W. Winnicott, a major proponent of a British appropriation of psychoanalysis known as object relations theory, to the psychoanalytic study of religion, as she does in her classic *The Birth of a Living God*, published in 1979.

However, Pruyser (1974) had already done so in his *Between Belief and Unbelief* (cf. Hamman, 2000: 137–138). A few major points that Pruyser makes in this book – insights that are still valuable today – include: (1) “it is implied in Freud’s approach to religion that many forms of unbelief can be at the same developmental level as belief itself” (1974: 61); (2) “unbelief can be just as primitive, neurotic and drive-determined as belief” (1974: 61); and (3) “[i]f belief is personal, so is unbelief” (1974: 65). While Pruyser, following Freud, did see religion as an illusion, he did not, as opposed to Freud, view illusion or religion pejoratively. Using Winnicott’s notion of illusion – which departed greatly from Freud’s usage (cf. Jones, 1991: 38ff.) – Pruyser viewed illusion as something deeply positive, transformative, and creative.

But this is not to say that Pruyser uncritically or simplistically accepted religion. While he served as an elder in the Presbyterian Church, he stopped going to church services in his later years, apparently because he was unsatisfied with such services. He also held the view that “much of the force of current religion comes from the persistence of irrationality in both culture and our individual lives” (Spilka and Malony, 1991: 14). Jansje Pruyser, his wife, once described her late husband as a “rebel” in an interview with H. Newton Malony and Bernard Spilka, two other leading scholars in the psychology of religion. They added, “Indeed he was a rebel, but not one who was strident, noisy, or bellicose. . . . He had the rare knack of propounding controversial and iconoclastic ideas in a manner that might elicit disagreement but never hostility” (Spilka and Malony, 1991: 3). And so Pruyser was a man who struggled deeply with matters of faith and reason, matters of subjectivity and objectivity, matters of the inner and the outer worlds. And the way in which he could stand by his own idiosyncratic faith was by means of a middle way, a way inspired by Winnicott’s psychology, a way, finally, that enabled him to make his own faith real to him.

Pruyser and Practical Theology

In addition to writing for the field of psychology of religion, Pruyser also wrote for pastors, including works such as *The Minister as Diagnostician* (1976a) and an important essay in *The Journal of Pastoral Care* (now called *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*) titled “Religion in the Psychiatric Hospital” (1984). Both of these works call pastors to bring the tools that are unique to their trade – especially theology – when dealing with people’s problems.

Pruyser’s work has influenced many thinkers in the field of psychology of religion. H. Newton Malony and Bernard Spilka (1991), themselves significant contributors in the psychology of religion, edited a volume of Pruyser’s work and dedicated it to his wife. Pruyser also greatly influenced Princeton Seminary’s Donald Capps, the most prolific writer in the fields of psychology of religion and pastoral care today. Princeton Seminary had tried to recruit Pruyser to teach in their practical theology department, but he declined the offer and instead recommended to the President that they hire Capps. And so Pruyser’s influence still lives on in the work of Capps (2001) and his protégés, notably in the eloquent writing and preaching of Robert Dykstra (2001, 2005).

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Psalms

Ingeborg del Rosario

The Book of Psalms, also known by its traditional Hebrew title *tehillim* (praises), belongs to the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Old Testament of the Christian canon. Comprising 150 individual psalms (from the Greek word *psalmoi* or songs sung to a harp), the Book of Psalms is both the longest and most varied in tone, content and message of its individual religious lyrical poems. While authorship of the psalms is attributed to King David, biblical scholars note that the period of their composition spanned half a millennium (c. 1000 BCE–c. 500 BCE) and its compilation most likely took place after the end of the Babylonian captivity (c. 537 BCE), with reference to the Book of Psalms as an entity around the first century AD, in the New Testament books of the Gospel of Luke (20:42) and the Acts of the Apostles (1:20). The psalms have been classified under different genres, such as praise, thanksgiving, supplication psalms, individual and communal lament psalms, songs of trust and confidence, pilgrimage, historical, wisdom or instructional psalms, royal and messianic psalms, and temple or liturgical songs; however, these distinctions do not take into account the psalms' fluidity of message and intent. Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar, has proposed taking the Book of Psalms in its entirety and organizing them under three themes: orientation, disorientation and reorientation. This thematic organization of the psalms supports the wholistic understanding that human life and ordinary experience, along with one's faith life and relationship with the Divine are not about the occurrence of single events but are taken within the process and flow of an unfolding and ever evolving complex life journey.

What is commonly recognized is that the Book of Psalms reflects themes universal to human life and experience as well as particular to the divine-human relationship: creation, destruction and transformation; death and life; suffering and relief; good and evil; sin and contrition;

repentance and forgiveness; justice and judgment; war and triumph; injustice and loss; betrayal and vengeance; wisdom and worship; darkness and light. Many believers of both the Jewish and Christian traditions cyclically recite or sing the entire Book of Psalms, thus acknowledging how its prayers embrace and encompass the totality of human reality, how they mirror the diversity of life's facets and textures.

There are psalms and verses favored and held in memory to bring comfort and courage, strength and hope, such as Psalm 8 (“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?”); Psalm 23 (“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want”); Psalm 51 (“Have mercy on me, God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin”); Psalm 63 (“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water”); Psalm 121 (“I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth”); Psalm 127 (“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain”); and Psalm 139 (“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me”).

The lament psalms, which make up more than a third of the book's composition, are given less focus and attention in individual prayer and liturgical worship. While the Book of Psalms mirrors all of humanness and life, the lament psalms (3, 5–7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 22, 25–28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 41–44, 51, 52, 54–57, 59–61, 63, 64, 69–71, 74, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 106, 108, 109, 120, 123, 126, 130, 137, 140–143) are particularly about life assailed by suffering and pain, brokenness and dislocation, anguish and affliction. All have some experience of betrayal, rejection and abandonment, illness and death of a loved one, emotional and relational conflicts, crisis and powerlessness, oppression or abuse, even trauma. In them, the encounter with emotions of fear and terror, anxiety and bewilderment, loneliness and despair, grief and sadness, anger and resentment, rage and hatred is palpable.

In the human search for words with which to speak of experiences of disruption and express vital emotions, the lament psalms provide speech and language that reverberate through centuries and are relevant across cultures. The psalms provide vivid imagery, provocative metaphor, piercing, pointed words, offering a way of expression that resonates with the ache and agony accompanying the tearing and breaking of every human heart.

The lament psalms provide voice to speak of the pain, from the pain. In and through the psalms, one may give vent to the most intense hurt, the deepest rage, the most profound grief with words that are neither meek nor polite but are bold and direct, harsh and biting, cutting and honest, at times brutally frank.

Lament psalms also contain imprecatory verses, those that invoke curses of violence and vengeance. The Christian Psalter excludes these verses, setting them off in bracketed form. Ordinarily, they are not recited or sung in communal prayer nor are they used in liturgical readings and rites. Some examples of these verses are: Psalm 3: “Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked”; Psalm 11: “On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot”; Psalm 69: “May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever. Pour out your wrath on them; let your fierce anger overtake them. May their place be deserted, let there be no one to dwell in their tent. . . . May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous”; Psalm 137: “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks”; and, perhaps the most detailed and elaborate of the imprecatory psalms, Psalm 109: “May his days be few. . . . may his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes. May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor. May no one extend kindness to him or take pity on his fatherless children. May his descendants be cut off, their names blotted out from the next generation. May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord; may the sin of his mother never be blotted out. . . . He wore cursing as his garment; it entered into his body like water, into his bones like oil. May it be like a cloak wrapped about him, like a belt tied forever around him.”

Many individuals in psychotherapy struggle with allowing themselves the space, freedom and spontaneity to enter into and express emotions that accompany their wrenching stories. They might speak of their sufferings from the outside, looking in, rather than speak from the heart of their suffering. They might talk about their feelings rather than talk from the depth of these feelings. Some patients profess not to have the words and the language with which to identify and distinguish their feelings of grief, anger, fear, rejection and humiliation. Others are unable to give voice to emotion for fear these

feelings might intensify and overpower, leaving them out of control. One resists giving in to her grief for fear she might never stop weeping once she begins. Another resists giving voice to his anger for fear he might become violent and unmanageable. Because of the fear of feeling, patients will split-off from these emotions and disavow their presence. Ironically, when emotions are banished from the space of conscious awareness and dissociated, when they are unsymbolized, unrecognized and unarticulated, they gather greater energy, power and force in the shadows of unconsciousness than they would have in being given space and voice to be put into words, heard, held and contained in speech and language. Just as the imprecatory verses are excluded from the Christian liturgy and Psalter, so too are the urges for violence and vengeance left unspoken. When fragmented from consciousness, this powerful energy of hatred, rage and aggression becomes manifest in relational enactments. Cut-off from this vital force, one is unable to fully connect with the totality of all that is human, unable to take in shadow experiences and emotions whose release into the light of consciousness and verbal expression permit a full experiencing of all that is authentic and real.

Patients may be helped to discover emotional speech and language, to identify and distinguish, to give voice and words to the *mélange* of sensations and feelings that can seem chaotic. A therapeutic relationship that provides emotional safety and consistency allows patients to become more secure in the capacity to acknowledge, engage and befriend the expansive range of their inner life without fear of being overwhelmed. As with the God of the psalms who receives profound angst and the most vicious urges in the lament, no part of life need ever be beyond speech or conversation in the therapeutic space. For the psychoanalyst who has undergone intensive personal analysis, an internal space opens to hold and contain more of the patient's deepest experiences and emotions, to enable a total presence to courageous efforts to encounter and put into words whatever feelings might emerge, be they anger and rage, envy and jealousy, hatred and wrath, shame and guilt, or kindness and tenderness. For the patient to engage and be present to the immediacy of the experience of the inner world, the analyst must be in this immediacy, with a fullness of presence. For patients to feel greater ease and comfort with their aggression, the analyst must be capable of receiving, holding and containing the power and energy of this verbalized force without censure, judgment or condemnation. As in the psalms, with even the imprecatory verses, everything that can be said may be said in the safety of the analytic space. Before

the analyst who holds her own experiences and emotions, the patient need not be nice, well mannered, meek or polite. The patient need only be as the self presents and is present to self, with a growing range of experiences and their accompanying emotions being given voice.

The Book of Psalms acknowledges that pain and suffering are an intrinsic part of life. That the lament psalms significantly comprise the Book of Psalms emphasizes that one must deal with chaos, disruption and disorientation, the agony and anguish of life's difficulties not by denying, ignoring or minimizing their presence in life nor by splitting them off, shunning this darker and seemingly less tolerable aspect of oneself by relegating their emotional impact to unconsciousness. The Book of Psalms offers voice and language with which to speak and entrust the depth and breadth of fear, frustration, rage, grief, despair, bitterness, meanness, spite and desire for vengeance. It provides a way to give expression to these experiences and emotions with powerful yet finite, containable words, rather than by impulsive, destructive activity. The therapeutic process shares this way of the Book of Psalms in the acknowledgment of the need for language that is forthright, for containment and verbalization in words that are honest, in the moving through intense emotions which enables a delving into the meaning and depths of one's humanity and the dark corners of one's humanness. These processes awaken the possibility and potential for metabolizing and transforming the energy and power of such emotions and experiences. In the sacred space held by the Book of Psalms echoed in the therapeutic space come a gentle reorientation of life-meaning, a more profound connection with self and with all who partake and share in the universality of lived humanness and reality, and a more profound awakening to the freedom, receptivity and compassion of God who hears, welcomes and holds all, spoken, unspoken and unspeakable, in the Divine lyrical embrace.

See also: [Affect](#) [Bible](#) [Defenses](#) [Dissociation](#) [Feeling](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Trauma](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Psyche

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Psyche, the ancient Greek word meaning “soul” or “spirit,” is also the name of the Greek goddess of the Soul, one of whose symbols is the butterfly. The term was employed by Sigmund Freud to describe the unity of unconscious and conscious, the tripartite structure of the mind divided into Id (i.e., the repository of unconscious drives and wishes that determine our conscious behaviors); Super-Ego (i.e., the repository of superconscious extreme moralistic elements that compensate for the opposite extremes of the id); and the Ego (i.e., the conscious referee between the dichotomous ongoing conflict between id and superego). It was also adopted by Freud's student Carl Jung to encompass the mind and its evolving, developing relationship with the world over the course of life, manifest in the individuation of the Self from the more limited ego (Jung, 1978).

The concept of psyche links psychology and spirituality in several ways. In the Greek myth of the goddess Psyche, a human woman becomes elevated to the status of a goddess through her tumultuous relationship with Eros, the god of Love. She at first loses Eros through the machinations of his mother Aphrodite and later is restored to him through the intervention of Zeus, king of the Gods. Symbolically, this myth illustrates how the human spirit/soul is elevated and ultimately transformed through the vicissitudes love, and how sexuality and spirituality spring from the same libidinal source – a connection recognized by Freud in his theory of psychosexual development. In Jungian terms, the myth calls to mind the unity of anima (the feminine aspect of the psyche) and animus (the masculine aspect of the psyche), the Hieros-gamos (i.e., the sacred marriage of opposites) in the quest of the ego to become the Self. Moreover, the butterfly aspect of Psyche evokes the image of the caterpillar building and ultimate discarding the cocoon, which it sheds upon its transformation into a butterfly. This image brings to mind Platonic dualism – in which the soul or spirit sheds the outer physical flesh in death, flying free – an idea that is still found in many religious traditions throughout the world. Ulanov and Ulanov (1991) point out that Jung regarded Psyche as the “mother of consciousness” – that which joins with the father that is spirit (p. 12), effectively linking Christian ideology with the older Greek images described above.

See also: [▶ Anima and Animus](#) [▶ Cupid and Psyche](#) [▶ Drives](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Hierosgamos](#) [▶ Id](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Super-Ego](#)

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Psychiatry

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Introduction

Psychiatry and religion have had a complicated, at times collaborative and at times competitive, relationship over their respective histories. Since the earliest days of Western medicine, scientifically-trained physicians have recognized that religion and spirituality can affect the mind for both good and ill. Historically regarded as the first spiritual healer, the shaman is a prototype of the modern physician and psychotherapist. Prior to the fall of the Roman Empire and the growth of the Catholic Church, priests and physicians were often the same individuals in different civilizations around the world.

For all cultures, it has been a long journey to look for natural rather than supernatural explanations for mental illness. Ancient Jews seemed to have viewed madness in both natural and supernatural terms. Most Christian thinkers saw no inherent contradiction between a medical view of madness and a Christian view. Islam has a long tradition of compassion for those who were labeled mad. On the other hand, religions of Asia and Africa tended to fuse ideas of madness and demonic possession. Enlightened views on the mentally ill were found in early Christian hospitals, by Buddhist missionaries, Confucian scholars, medieval Jewish physicians, and in the Islamic hospitals of the Middle Ages. However, many societies later reverted to unscientific and at times inhumane practices. These were epitomized in the medieval Christian Inquisition, where mentally ill individuals, accused of being possessed by the devil, were put to death as witches.

Background: Science Versus Religion

Fundamental controversies between science and religion laid the groundwork for the modern origin of the antagonism between psychiatry and religion. Concerning psychiatry, a number of prejudices have stood in the way of a closer relationship with religion: the view that religions attract the mentally unstable, that religions may have their origins in madness, that religious experience is phenomenologically similar to psychopathology, that paranormal experiences are a product of definable patterns of brain functioning, that religions are harmful – inducing guilt – or that religious belief is ineffective. Research has proven these prejudices false.

Deeper reasons for the separation between psychiatry and religion have to do with the identification of psychiatry with the “medical” model. As a science, psychiatry is assumed to be based on observation and experiment and in principle open to objective testing. Religion, on the other hand, is said to be “revealed.” Psychiatry employs an essentially deterministic model, whereas religion assumes freedom of action. Yet the separation between science and religion is perhaps a peculiarly Western phenomenon.

During the early years of the twentieth century, psychiatry in the US and Europe underwent a number of changes, most notable an increasing focus on social progress and general societal welfare. In addition to an evolving body of literature on psychoanalysis, other forces that shaped the field included new religious movements such as New Thought, Christian Science, theosophy, and spiritualism, as well as the growing social marginalization of fundamentalism. Moreover, in terms of diagnosis psychiatry began moving away from classifications based on course and prognosis of disease. Specifically, “religious insanity” or “religious mania” – diagnoses based on the content of a delusion – became irrelevant to classification and treatment.

Influence of Freud

Although the notion of religious insanity faded with the coming of twentieth century psychiatry, it lived on in some form in the ideas of Sigmund Freud. Challenging the notion that truth can be found in religion, Freud viewed religious faith as based in the illusion of an idealized Father God who provides needed comfort and security; Freud in turn understood religion as a “universal obsessional neurosis.” A goal of psychoanalysis was to trust in the scientific method as a source of truth concerning the nature of one’s being and the world.

Since Freud, modern psychiatry and psychology make claims to have supplanted a number of religious concepts central to understanding human nature. Among these are notions of a soul, of sin, and of morality. Soul and sin have been replaced by notions of human consciousness and psychological and social pathologies. Deficiencies in morality are understood as products of inadequate socialization processes, thus obviating the need for confession and redemption. Religious teachings traditionally promoted the view that unhappiness, despair and other physical and mental suffering are meaningful events. While Western religious traditions recognize illness to have a purpose within a grander design and emphasize the spiritual meaning of suffering, conservative psychiatry maintains a materialistic and mechanistic orientation. Thus, the two disciplines have functioned as competing belief systems for providing life meaning and purpose.

From Freud's work through the 1976 report on mysticism by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP), there has been a tendency to associate spiritual experiences with psychopathology. The report of GAP on "The Psychic Function of Religion in Mental Illness and Health" (1968) acknowledged that religious themes often surfaced during psychoanalysis and that religion could be used in both psychically healthy and unhealthy ways. Yet the residue of nineteenth century interest in religious insanity could still be found in the glossary of the Third Edition of the DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual) and in the 1989 edition of the Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry.

DSMIV: Religious or Spiritual Problem

In order to redress lack of sensitivity to religious and spiritual dimensions of problems that may be the focus of psychiatric treatment, a new Z code category for DSM IV was proposed, "psychoreligious or psychospiritual problem." The impetus for the proposal to add a new diagnostic category emerged from transpersonal clinicians and the work of the Spiritual Emergence Network. Their focus was on spiritual emergencies – forms of distress associated with spiritual practices and experiences. The proposal had the following goals: (1) to increase accuracy of diagnostic assessments when religious and spiritual issues were involved, (2) to reduce occurrence of medical harm from misdiagnosis of religious and spiritual problems, (3) to improve treatment of such problems by stimulating clinical research, and (4) to encourage clinical training centers to address the religious and spiritual dimensions of experience.

The DSM IV category was accepted under Religious or Spiritual Problem as follows: "This category can be used

when the focus of clinical attention is a religious or spiritual problem. Examples include distressing experiences that involve loss or questioning of faith, problems associated with conversion to a new faith, or questioning of other spiritual values that may not necessarily be related to an organized church or religious institution" (APA, 2000: 741). Frequently reported religious problems in the literature are a loss or questioning of faith, change in denominational membership or conversion to a new religion, intensification of adherence to the beliefs and practices of one's own faith, and joining, participating in, or leaving a new religious movement or cult. Spiritual problems cited in the literature involve conflicts concerning an individual's relationship to the transcendent and questioning of spiritual values. Moreover, questioning of spiritual values can be triggered by an experience of loss or a sense of spiritual connection. Spiritual problems also may arise from spiritual practices, e.g., someone who begins a meditation practice and starts to experience perceptual changes. As well, mystical experiences and near-death experiences can lead to spiritual problems and were a focus for concern by the Spiritual Emergence Network. It was argued that inappropriately diagnosing disruptive religious and spiritual experiences as mental disorders can negatively influence their outcome. For example, some clinical literature on mysticism has described mystical experience as symptomatic of ego regression, borderline psychosis, a psychotic episode, or temporal lobe dysfunction. As well, "dark night of the soul" experiences have been equated to clinical depression. Moreover, the interaction of contemporary psychiatry and religion can take place at several levels: patients may have religious beliefs that need to be taken into consideration when planning treatment, and patient's values may affect acceptance of treatment.

While introduction of the V-code represents a significant first step toward explicit delineation of religious and spiritual clinical foci, it is but a modest accommodation. One limitation is the tendency to compartmentalize clinical focus on religious or spiritual issues, versus viewing them as interwoven among all other areas of functioning. With the secularization of medicine, mental health practitioners increasingly have assumed three functions traditionally recognized as being in the realm of religion: explanation of the unknown, ritual and social function, and the definition of values.

Training and Research

On average, psychiatrists hold far fewer religious beliefs than either their parents or their patients, and little if any

attempt is made to explore the relevance of faith to illness or health. Moreover, despite the importance of religion and spirituality to most patients' lives psychiatrists are not given adequate training to deal with issues arising from disturbances in these realms. C. Jung's work on the importance of recognizing the "shadow" in healing of minds and souls has contributed a great deal to cementing productive relationships between patient and therapist, priest and counselor.

Disorders of the mind raise questions about the meaning of life, the presence of evil, and the possibility that forces beyond the senses are influencing one's life. Contemporary psychiatry and religion can be viewed as parallel and complementary frames of reference for understanding and describing human experience and behavior. Thus, while they place different degrees of emphasis on body, mind, and spirit, integration is possible to achieve comprehensive patient care.

It is only recently that religion and mental health issues have been addressed through research. In large part, results from studies have indicated a salutary relationship between religious involvement and health status. The consistency of findings, despite diversity of samples, designs, methodologies, religious measures, health outcomes and population characteristics, serves to strengthen the positive association between religion and health. For several decades, empirical research findings and literature reviews have reported strong positive associations between measures of religious involvement and mental health outcomes. A beneficial impact of religious involvement has been observed for outcomes such as suicide, drug use, alcohol abuse, delinquent behavior, marital satisfaction, psychological distress, certain functional psychiatric diagnoses, and depression. A next logical step for research on religion and mental health is to explore possible explanations for this mostly positive religious effect. A variety of possible factors have already been identified, such as social cohesiveness, the impact of internal locus of control beliefs, religious commitment, and faith. Among older adults, for example, it has been shown that: (1) religious faith provides hope for change and healing, (2) religious involvement influences well-being by providing social support, and (3) prayer and religious worship affect mental health through the effects of positive emotions.

Future: Religion and Culture

In the twenty-first century, religious and spiritual dimensions of culture remain important factors structuring human experience, beliefs, values, behavior, and illness

patterns. Sensitivity to the cultural dimensions of religious and spiritual experiences is deemed essential for effective psychiatric treatment. The majority of the world's population relies on complementary and alternative systems of medicine for healing. It follows that in order for a psychiatrist to effectively work with an indigenous healer, he or she must have some understanding of the patient's cultural construction of illness, including the meaning of religious content. Religious cultures are powerful factors in modifying individual attitudes toward life and death, happiness and suffering. The subspecialty of transcultural psychiatry has gained momentum and clinical relevance from an interest in similarities and differences between cultures and the effect of culture on treatment plan. In this view, religion is a "container of culture": rituals, beliefs, and taboos of religion are profoundly important to the nature and structure of society as vehicles whereby values, attitudes, and beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation.

Finally, religion and spiritual issues have been identified as a research agenda for the development of DSM V. Examination of religion in history-taking and cultural formation processes and spirituality as a factor in self-identity, self-care, insight, self-reliance, and resiliency, are being promoted. Research on the similarities and differences of religious and spiritual issues across ethnic and cultural groups is being encouraged, as is research on the transgenerational process of acquisition or transmission of religious and spiritual norms and their impact on diagnosis.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Psychoanalysis

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Psychoanalysis is a school of psychology originated by the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Born out of struggle, it is a scientific approach to the investigation of conscious and unconscious processes, as well as a clinical discipline of artistic application and therapeutic scrutiny. Psychoanalysis is the *sine quo non* of modern psychology.

Philosophically, psychoanalysis is based on psychic determinism, a theory of human behavior rooted in a premise that certain causes predictably engender particular psychological effects. Prior to Freud, psychiatric studies theorized that organic conditions were the elementary basis of human behavior. Freud asserted that deep personality conflicts shaped the psyche, as did interpersonal and cultural influences. These dynamic forces became the psychic determinants of attitudes, opinions and behavioral patterns – including religious practices and faith convictions. Psychoanalysis, by pointing to their roots, offers a mode of shifting or managing and, to some extent, changing the consequences of these influences. This hope is Freud’s major gift to depth-psychology.

Personality Constructs

Freud’s belief in unconscious motivation was the foundation from which he developed an elaborate theory of personality that virtually reshaped Western thought. He believed that the fundamental source of

psychic energy underlying human behavior stems from an instinctive drive called libido which is sexual in nature. By “sexual” he meant any type of physically pleasurable activity, particularly those of the mouth, anus and genitals. The libido also enables an individual’s survival, motivating one to eat and drink. Along with propagation, this survival drive is the essence of what Freud termed Eros, the life instinct. The opposite of Eros is Thanatos, the death instinct aimed at a return of the human organism to an inorganic state.

While Thanatos has been debated and denied by countless critics, Freud’s personality divisions have been well-accepted as psychodynamic constructs. Basically he contends that the interaction of the id, ego and superego forms the personality. The id is an unconscious dimension of the mind that serves as a storehouse for the libido. Freud claimed that this “dark, inaccessible. . .cauldron full of seething excitations” composes all instinctive organic cravings. The id is a substratum characterized by unrestrained pleasure-seeking impulses constantly demanding expression *via* thought and behavior.

Ideally, these unconscious libidinal drives are controlled by the conscious ego. This is the rational aspect of the personality which governs the activities of the id and directs a person’s behavior so that the demands of reality are met. The ego is basically concerned with the maintenance of social approval, self-esteem and the alteration of libidinal drives so that they are in compliance with normative society.

Morality is not necessarily the product of the ego though. Ethics, folkways and mores reside in the third part of Freud’s personality schema, the superego. A product of parental authority and institutional standards – especially religion – the superego uncompromisingly guards ideas of right and wrong. In turn, the superego’s wishes continually conflict with those of the id and both battle for expression through the ego. When their tension is relatively acute the latter employs compromise mechanisms such as sublimation or compensation. Generally, such a compromise is aimed at satisfying both the id and superego. However, if the ego fails to accomplish this goal, neurotic symptoms may result, symbolically venting the frustrated libidinal impulses.

Developmental Stages

Psychoanalytic theory claims that the first exposures to crises shape the child’s personality and therefore the ways in which he or she handles stress throughout life. Like his personality structure, Freud believed that early growth

can be dynamically differentiated into three parts, each of which is a stage of development during the first five years of life. He defined these stages mostly in terms of the individual's awareness and the basic reaction of particular erogenous zones. For example, the oral stage is the first or infantile stage in a person's psychosexual maturation. The anal is the second stage and the phallic is the last pregenital phase. The next period of development is latency, a time during which pregenital impulses are repressed. These impulses are then reawakened during adolescence when the genital phase is reached.

Although family influence is important during all of these stages, Freud laid particular weight upon the pregenital periods. During the oral period one may form certain dominant character traits as a result of feeding, weaning and the mother's attention. For instance, an overprotective mother may cause a child to be abnormally dependent. Another sign of oral fixation is the argumentative person, one who displaced an early need to bite with sarcasm or quibbling.

Usually a child is toilet trained at the anal phase. Like weaning (and delivery before) this, too, is a crucial experience that may determine future attitudes and behavioral characteristics. A strict mother may produce an anally-retentive child who will continue to be obstinate and stingy. She may also encourage an explosive type of personality who will be cruel, destructive and disorderly. Conversely, a mother who coaxes and rewards may help her child to become creative and productive.

The most important point about the phallic stage is that it is the period during which the child experiences an unconscious sexual attachment to his mother and a feeling of jealousy toward his father. Freud called this the Oedipus complex and said that it results in a feeling of guilt and emotional conflict on the part of the child. Yet, like the oral and anal phases, the danger of such conflict is relative to the individual. In other words, fixation is not inevitable even though most males supposedly have this experience.

Again, latency is a period generally characterized by repression. However, if painful conflicts are repressed without being adequately resolved, they will continue to unconsciously influence the individual's thought, feelings and behavior. This will cause emotional tension or anxiety and possibly an inability to adjust. Such anxiety manifests itself in varying degrees. Freud used two standard categories to portray the magnitude of a person's maladjustment: neuroses and psychoses. To him, the former is chiefly a product of id versus ego, while the latter is a breakdown of ego, defense mechanisms and the projection of unconscious wishes onto the external world.

Religion

The projection of wishes is a key factor in Freud's use of dreams as "the royal road to the unconscious." While dream work is a central ingredient of psychoanalytic interpretation, it is also a medium of religion. Yet Freud contended that religion was an illusion, a belief system largely based on wishes. He appreciated the particularity of religion in providing a sense of emotional protection from external threat, as well as a cultural reservoir of ethical standards. Nevertheless, he believed modern mankind was capable of maturing beyond the irrational, superstitious and magical thinking of religious ideation.

Freud was an atheist who referred to himself as a "godless Jew." He saw God as a magnified father figure or parental ideal at the hub of a social neurosis one must grow beyond to be truly educated and able to cope with reality. He believed that primitive religions in patriarchal societies with strong totemic beliefs were profoundly influenced by the Oedipus complex. Young men of a tribal horde murdered their father to possess his wives. Totemic worship was to atone for such death and reinforce ethical restrictions founded on shame and guilt.

Struggle

Freud's beliefs about religion have been criticized since their first publications. They are intellectually valuable but they do not represent the driving force of psychoanalysis the way his personality constructs do. These models – especially infantile sexuality – have also been challenged since their initial presentations more than a century ago. Such controversies have led to the development of other schools of depth-psychology. These range from Analytic Psychology and Individual Psychology to Ego Psychology and Self Psychology. Clinically, all of these orientations use Freud's basic tools – free association, transference and interpretation.

Schools of Psychoanalysis vary in their expectations about treatment length and frequency of sessions. Customarily, an analyze will spend at least three hours a week on the couch for months if not years. This is because the process of analysis is not symptomatic in focus. Psychoanalysis is insight oriented psychotherapy devoted to a reeducation of the self. An effective analysis can enable one to harness neurotic energy in the interest of interpersonal responsiveness and intrapsychic balance.

Shortly before his death Freud made a brief recorded public message in which he noted his "good fortune" in the discovery of psychoanalysis. Yet he concluded, "People

did not believe in my facts and thought my theories unsavory. Resistance was strong and unrelenting: In the end, I succeeded in acquiring pupils and bringing up an international psychoanalytic association. But the struggle is not yet over.”

See also: [▶ Analytical Psychology](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psyche](#)

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Psychological Types

Adele Tyler

A theory of personality developed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung in the early years of the twentieth century. Jung theorized that people’s behaviors are directed by inborn tendencies to think and act in different but equally valid ways. His theory posits two basic orientations to the world, called *attitudes*, and four main mental processes, called *functions*. He considered these psychological preferences innate tendencies, like a preference for right or left-handedness, and speculated they were biologically based.

Jung’s stated purpose in developing a theory of psychological types was not to sort people into box-like categories but rather to expand the language of the then-new science of psychology to facilitate more methodical, empirical research on human behavior. He developed his ideas on psychological types in part from observations of his patients, both individuals and couples. In his book *Psychological Types*, first published in 1921, Jung acknowledged the historical roots of personality types in oriental astrology, Hippocrates’ theories on the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) and Greek physician Galen’s

system of four temperaments (sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic), among others.

Extraversion and Introversion

Jung’s first and central idea on psychological types was that people prefer one of two fundamentally different attitudes toward the world. A tendency to focus on the outer world of objects and people he deemed *extraversion* and an orientation toward and preference for the inner world of ideas and emotions he called *introversion*. *Extraversion* and *introversion* describe two opposite ways of using and renewing one’s psychic energy. Extraverts direct energy to and receive energy back from the external world and introverts direct energy to and receive energy from the inner world of reflection.

The preference for extraversion or introversion is easily understood by most people in their recognition of extraverted people who are outgoing, talkative, uninhibited, and involved in multiple groups and activities, and introverted persons who are more reserved, quiet, and harder to know. These differences can be observed in infancy in an extraverted child’s quicker and easier adaptation to and participation in the outer world and an introverted child’s tendency toward shyness and reluctance to engage with objects and people. The innate nature of the preference for one or the other attitude helps explain differences in personalities of children raised in the same family. Jung stated that it was incorrect to assume extraverts were active people and introverts were passive people, saying instead that extraversion correlates with acting in an immediate, unreflective way, whereas introversion correlates with acting after reflecting or acting with forethought. He emphasized that neither way was better or more valid except as called for in a particular situation.

The Four Functions

In addition to a preference for an attitude of extraversion or introversion, Jung theorized four different mental processes that explain how people use their minds. Two of these, which explain how people gather information, are called the perceiving functions, *sensing* and *intuition*. The two ways people make judgments and decisions are called the judging functions, *thinking* and *feeling*.

When using one of the perceiving functions, *sensing* or *intuition*, people become aware of what is happening, without interpreting or evaluating the experience. Sensing, which is perceiving through the five senses, is concerned

with concrete realities and is therefore focused in the present, the “what is.” Intuition, which is perceiving information through a “sixth sense” or the unconscious, looks for hidden possibilities and is therefore more concerned with the future, the “what ifs.” A person whose dominant function is sensing focuses on facts, and one whose dominant function is intuition prefers using imagination.

Evaluating the information that has been gathered via the perceiving functions is done by one of the two judging functions, *thinking* or *feeling*. Thinking relies on logic to make decisions and judgments, weighing the pros and cons to decide whether something is “right or wrong.” The feeling function makes judgments based on one’s personal values, deciding with compassion and empathy whether something is “good or bad.” The thinking function is more concerned with truth and justice, and the feeling function more concerned with kindness and harmony. Thinking makes judgments from the outside, using an objective viewpoint, and feeling makes judgments from the subjective viewpoint of “standing in another person’s shoes.”

Jung observed that an innate preference for one of these four functions emerges in early childhood and develops as the dominant mental process. Later, a second or auxiliary function emerges. The other two functions remain less developed but available to the individual through the unconscious. As with the attitudes of extraversion and introversion, Jung emphasized that all four functions are equally valid and useful.

Type Dynamics

All four of these functions are used in either the extraverted or introverted attitude, which led to eight possible combinations of preferred attitude and function, which Jung called the eight function types. It is important to understand that Jung’s is a dynamic system of personality. Rather than static boxes, these eight type combinations interact in the conscious and unconscious mind of each individual in unique ways. Each set of preferences are like poles on a continuum, with most people’s strength of preference somewhere along the continuum. Some more developed and some less developed, the functions and attitudes work as templates for potential behaviors that result in infinite varieties of individual expression, much the way that the template that governs the crystallization of frozen water into six-sided figures produces an infinite variety of snowflakes.

Throughout life a person will have an interaction and flow of energy between the poles of extraversion and introversion, sensing and intuition, and thinking and feeling.

Because one’s preferences are viewed as innate, they do not change during a lifetime, but with normal development people learn to use all the functions in both attitudes to some degree. Jung postulated that a “falsification of type” sometimes occurs where cultural influences cause a person to develop a lesser preference, much as left-handed children once were forced to use their right hands, and that this condition is a primary cause of neurosis.

Application of Psychological Type Theory

Jung’s type theory has been popularized through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a questionnaire based on Jung’s typology developed by the mother-daughter team of Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, referred to as the MBTI, includes the additional category of Judging/Perceiving to indicate a person’s preference for the perceiving functions or the judging functions. The MBTI gives scores for one’s preference for E or I (extraversion or introversion), S or N (sensing or intuition), T or F (thinking or feeling), and J or P (judging or perceiving). These four categories yield 16 combinations of preferences, called the 16 types, thus doubling Jung’s original 8 types to 16. The types are referred to by a four-letter designation that shows these preferences. For example, a person whose scores showed a preference for Extraversion over Introversion, Sensing over Intuition, Thinking over Feeling, and Judging over Perceiving would have the designation ESTJ.

The MBTI, a practical application of type theory, is the most widely used personality test in the world and has made Jung’s ideas useful for ordinary people in understanding themselves and developing their potentials. This tool is commonly used in career counseling, marriage and family counseling, education, and in organizations. Recent works in psychological type have examined the role of type in religion and spirituality, studying the ways in which each of the 16 types approaches worship and engages in spiritual practices and works. A less-recognized test of psychological types called the Singer-Loomis Inventory of Personality (the SLIP) was developed by two Jungian analysts and uses as categories the eight function types originally described by Jung.

In recent years a worldwide community of type practitioners, called typologists, has developed. Hundreds of books have been written and studies conducted applying typology to numerous fields of human activity. The prevalence of the MBTI and typology indicate that Jung’s theories on personality type continue to have value in

helping increase self-awareness and self-acceptance in individuals and by promoting better understanding and communication in human relationships of all kinds.

See also: ▶ [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) ▶ [Extraversion](#) ▶ [Introversion](#) ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) ▶ [Unconscious](#)

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Psychology

Kate M. Loewenthal

What is psychology? There is little dispute about the broad definition of psychology as the study and understanding of human behavior, cognitive processes, experience and emotion. However the history of psychology has been colorful, peppered with disputes about how such understanding and study should be done. The different views on the “how” of psychology have impacted on the psychological study of religion.

This essay will highlight some important features of the history of psychology, and suggest how these features may have impacted on the psychological understanding of religion.

Psychology and the Early Study of Religion

In its early days, in the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, psychologists had no problems with asking

people to introspect or report on their “inner” experiences. Two often-cited examples are (1) the Wurzburg school (Wundt, 1902), who asked for detailed introspective reports on what went through people’s minds when they saw or picture, for example, or solved a problem, (2) psychoanalysis (e.g., Freud, 1964) in which people were asked to free-associate, to talk about the first things that came to mind. In this climate, the work of William James, described in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) was perfectly at home. James described pioneering uses of the psychological questionnaire method in which people were asked to describe their religious development.

But as the twentieth century grew older, scientific psychology was dominated by positivism, in which it was held that the objects of scientific investigation should be publicly observable and measurable. This entailed a shift from a focus on experience, to a focus on behavior, epitomized in Watson’s *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist* (1919). The psychological study of religion was seen to be incompatible with behavior – since the object of religious activity and feeling cannot be observed and measured, this was thought to make the study of religious activity and feeling unworthy of scientific attention. The psychological study of religion fell into a decline, and this decline was assisted by the influential and rather derogatory views of Freud on religion (e.g., Freud, 1927). Religion was seldom indexed in psychology textbooks, and where it was indexed, the explanations of religious behavior and feeling were almost always pejorative (Loewenthal, 2000).

Within psychology, there remained considerable interest in personality, and in the psychometric assessment of personality and social attitudes, using psychological tests and measures. This was reflected in the psychological study of religion, particularly the seminal work of Gordon Allport on religious orientation and prejudice (1966), followed by pioneering works on the psychology of religion involving extensive use of psychological and social attitude measures (e.g., Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Francis, Pearson, Carter, and Kay, 1981).

Recent Shifts in Psychology and the Study of Religion

Towards the end of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century, there were important shifts in psychological methodologies and perspectives, reflecting a general post-modern tolerance of different perspectives.

This resulted in a growth of the range of methods used to study religious behavior and experience. Religion was indexed more frequently in psychology textbooks, and explained and studied in non-pejorative ways. The most important shifts were (1) the development of qualitative research methodologies (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). This went alongside the acceptance of experiential and phenomenological perspectives, and enabled the development of valuable work on the experiential aspects of the psychology of religion, and the emergence of interest in spirituality (Hay and Morisy, 1978; Tacey, 2004; Paloutzian and Park, 2005), (2) the development of experimental methodologies, in particular their applications to areas of psychology other than the cognitive domains to which experimental methodology had traditionally been applied. Experimental work on social cognition and attachment theory, for example, is being usefully extended to the understanding of religion in relation to social cognition, and religious feelings (e.g., Islam and Hewstone, 1993; Birgegard and Granqvist, 2004), (3) the development of cognitive science has included the study of cognitive universals in religion (e.g., Andresen, 2001) (4) the development of neuroimaging techniques in the study of psychological processes has included the use of neuroimaging in the study of religious thinking and experience (e.g., Azari, Missimer, and Seitz, 2005).

Conclusions

In brief, then, the twentieth century saw the development of psychology into a positivist discipline. Then from the mid-twentieth century onwards, psychology developed into a discipline involving a broad range of approaches and methodologies, all impacting on the way the psychological processes involved in religion have been studied.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [James, William](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Psychology and the Origins of Religion

Bernard Spilka

The Danger in Analyzing Religion

To pose questions regarding the origin of religion from a social scientific stance is to enter dangerous territory. For millennia, deviation from the views espoused by religious authorities has always been negatively viewed and where possible, suppressed. This inclination is still present, but skepticism and challenge to monolithic religion now has a considerable likelihood of eventuating in diverse positions.

A Safe Understanding

Anthropologists introduced such variation in the nineteenth century. Their orientation was not to analyze the Judeo-Christian tradition, but to follow a safe path by examining the faiths of peoples they termed primitive. This approach did not threaten the Western religious establishment and was intellectually and emotionally accepted. Another major factor was that the religious perspectives of native groups in obscure locations were largely discussed in terms of the mythology of those studied. F. Max Muller (1879) wrote on the religions of India and Edward B. Tylor (1896) referred to the “religion of the lower races,” “uncultured races,” and “savages and barbarians” (1896: 342). Readers of Muller, Tylor, and their ilk considered themselves “civilized” as opposed to the “primitives” whose faiths were treated as naïve mythological tales.

Psychology and Religion

Muller (1879), however, initiated a cognitive approach to the issue of religious origins by claiming that sensory experience with the finite world plus reason leads a person to contemplation of the infinite. He further asserted that from this “sprang the first impulse to religion” (1879: 360). Concurrently, the notion of a religious instinct was rejected. He correctly argued that it did nothing more than substitute one unknown for another. His reservations did little to deter many who endorsed the idea of a religious instinct. The death knell to this approach was sounded in 1924 by L. L. Bernard who found 83 religious instincts in the literature.

The next development emanated from Behaviorism when the search for religious origins stressed natural processes such as evolution and neural processes. Given the substrate of human biology, emphasis shifted to learning and the influence of environmental forces. Objectivity and measurement now dominated Psychology and since theories of religious origins could not be empirically verified, they were relegated to the realm of opinion and simply ignored.

Classical learning theory gave way to cognition and the revival of Muller’s stance via John Dewey (1929) who crossed both philosophy and psychology. Dewey saw the difficulty as experiential. Attempts to understand life’s uncertainty implied a basic cognitive weakness which aroused insecurity and a “quest for certainty.” According to him “Religion was, in its origin, an expression of this endeavor” (1929: 292).

Religion, Evolution and Genetics

Increasing conceptual sophistication replaced the absolutist hereditary-environment distinction. One now calculated the degree to which environment and genetics separately contributed to the phenomenon in question. A new perspective in which psychological processes and behavior were examined in twin studies plus the idea of heritability entered the picture. Reviews of this rapidly developing literature suggest that up to 50% of the variance in religion measures may be referable to genetics. Keep in mind that heritability estimates are derived from group data and do not hold for any specific person.

The first major effort along these lines was E. O. Wilson’s 1978 formulation of Sociobiology. His basic principle is that evolution has endowed the human mind with some basic guiding rules. Though these are concerned with collective social behavior, including religion, he cautiously invoked the joint influence of both genetics and environment. Wilson (1978) claimed that religion “can be seen to confer biological advantage” (p. 188). He attempted to support this position via an understanding of the role and function of myth for both society and the individual. His argument enlisted natural selection in the process.

This approach contributed to the growing school of evolutionary psychology. Its advocates embrace both genetic and environmental influences, but there is a tendency for the latter to be minimized in favor of a search for biological bases of behavior.

Interestingly, the Psychology used to theorize possible religious origins has been largely employed by anthropologists who exclusively look to cognition. Usually, without elaboration, they refer to biology and evolution for their final answer.

Pascal Boyer (2001) has been in the forefront of this movement. He initially claimed that religious ideas must be influenced by the way the brain are organized to make inferences. Theoretically, the seeking of causes and the making of attributions are given a biological foundation. This position is buttressed by noting the involvement of emotion in religious expression. Biology is joined with environment by acknowledging the important individual and social functions that religion plays in life. Above all, genetics and evolution loom in the background primarily for handling cognition. In addition Boyer appreciates religion’s function in maintaining the group. Group selection, however, is largely rejected by the biological community. Hypotheses are then posited regarding the association of cognition and social behavior with natural

selection. Religion thus develops because there is need for these concepts, socially, culturally and biologically.

Among a number of others who look to cognition for religion's origin is Stewart Guthrie (1993) who extensively and impressively details the tendency of people to anthropomorphize virtually anything that may provide meaningful explanations. The result is that religion is reduced to anthropomorphism and ritual and all other religious forms fall into line.

Anthropologist James McClenon (1994, 2002) has taken an approach that explicitly combines cognition with emotion while assuming an evolutionary foundation though the latter remains vague and undefined. His emphasis is on the experiences of early humans with what he terms "wondrous events." Though "wondrous healing" is stressed as a basis for religion, religion is primarily treated as belief. Leading also to this conclusion are trance states, hypnotizability, out-of-body experiences and the like. Helplessness in the face of the unknown especially death results in the development of Shamanism and ritualization which offer the delusion of meaning and control. The theoretical views of Freud and Malinowski among others are used by McClenon to buttress his arguments.

Cognition, Heritability and Faith

Cognitive theory offers a powerful entrée into questions about the psychological origin of religion. One can, however, argue that it may not enough. Religion does much more than help make life and the world sensible. From a motivational perspective, it aids people to maintain and/or enhance personal control over themselves and their environment. Lack of control is also one correlate of lack of meaning. Religion not only has the potential to satisfy needs for meaning and control, but furthermore brings people together, supporting them both individually and collectively. Natural selection may be invoked for all three of these functions as it can easily be shown that survival and reproductive success follow from meaning, control, and sociality. Furthermore biological and evolutionary bases for these factors are available and researchers are continually discovering their neuropsychological and hormonal correlates. In all likelihood, these elements account for the observation that there is a moderate component of heritability in religious belief and adherence. For example, data suggest that up to 50% of the variability in measures of control motivation is heritable. This overall framework is introduced

and discussed elsewhere (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, and Gorsuch, 2003). Inherited hormonal factors in sociality have also been identified. An indirect test of these views is possible. One can hypothesize that partialling out these factors from the religion – genetics relationship in twin studies should make this association disappear. This does not deny the necessity of conducting additional research to define other neurobiological possibilities for understanding the place of heritability in personal faith. The content of the three domains just cited still has to be defined though excellent insights have been offered by Boyer, Guthrie and Kirkpatrick (2004).

Religion as an Evolutionary By-Product

Kirkpatrick (2004) rejects the role of natural selection and religion as basically a biological adaptation. He sees it as a set of evolved by-products that involve cognitive, motivational and social factors. Further development should not gainsay the role of environment in the learning and expression of religious beliefs, experience and behavior. In coming to understand the nature of religion cross-culturally, naturalistic approaches ought not be viewed as threatening and blasphemous. There is room for comprehending the character of faith and spirituality from as broad a perspective as possible.

See also: [Psychology](#)

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Psychology as Religion

Ann Gleig

In a useful survey of the terrain between religion and psychology, William Parsons and Diane Jonte-Pace (2001) note that the multiple and diverse approaches now utilized within this area have replaced its identity as a single field, traditionally known as the psychology “of” religion, with the more inclusive “religion and psychological studies,” within which reside the subsets of “psychology of religion,” and “psychology in dialogue with religion.” What distinguishes the dialogical approach is that it moves beyond using psychology as a method of analysis to interpret religious phenomena to employ psychology as a tool to extend, through conversation, the aims of religion.

An additional subset appearing within, although arguably threatening to undermine, the dialogical enterprise is an approach that seeks less to relate psychology to religion than to offer psychology *as* a religion. Despite eliciting controversy for blurring the boundaries between the two fields, psychology as religion cannot be dismissed as there is little doubt that the functioning of psychology in ways comparable to religion is widespread within contemporary western culture. This is attested to by the popularity of best-selling texts offering a mix of therapeutic and spiritual advice such as Scott M. Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled* (1978) and Thomas Moore’s *Care of the Soul* (1994). Presenting itself as a modern unchurched way to experience one’s religiosity, psychology as religion has flourished within a wider therapeutic climate as an alternative method to guide an individual’s quest for meaning and the sacred.

Before proceeding to the socio-historic development of psychology as religion and notable cultural commentaries and critiques, further clarification of terms is useful. As William G. Barnard (2001) notes, the type of psychology utilized here is a humanistically oriented psychotherapy that is harnessed in service of psychospiritual wholeness and replaces religion as a way to develop existential meaning and enable a direct experience of the sacred. Similarly, religion is interchangeable with spirituality referring to a personal transformative experience of the essential core of religion, often rendered as a divine force, energy, or consciousness, that is distinct from traditional religious institutions, creeds and praxis. When

these two particular strands of psychology and religion overlap to such a degree that they fulfill the same purposes we have psychology as religion.

This merging occurs at a variety of intersections as a multitude of cultural strands converge, intertwine and trail off. Such interlacing complicates a tracing of the history of psychology as religion but one can certainly identify significant junctures and key figures. William Parsons (2008) has teased out one dominant strand, which he labels as the “*psychologia perennis*,” an unchurched, psychological form of spirituality whose origins can be seen as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the appearance of mysticism as a subjective “experience” divorced from church and tradition. The emergence of a universal, sacred inner dimension of human beings allowed for the psychologization of mysticism and links the figures of William James, Carl Jung, Romain Rolland, Richard Maurice Bucke and humanistic and transpersonal psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Roberto Assagioli and Ken Wilber. While recognizing differences in metapsychology and therapeutic techniques among these thinkers, Parsons offers a list of shared characteristics that unite them as perennial psychologists: the championing of the individual as an unchurched site of religiosity, the search for the origin of mysticism in the unconscious, a valorization of personal unchurched mystical experiences, an advocacy of perennialism, the discernment of innate, intuitive, mystical capacities, the development of psycho-mystical therapeutic regimens and a social vision grounded in the rise of *homo mysticus*.

As Parson notes, such characteristics are similar to those identified as definitive of the New Age. Indeed, Wouter Hanegraaff (1998) has described one of the major trends of the New Age as “healing and personal growth,” in which psychological development and religious salvation merge to such an unprecedented extent that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. Setting it within the wider context of the secularization of traditional esotericism as it adapted to the emerging scientific worldview, he argues that one of the defining marks of the New Age is “the psychologization of religion and the sacralization of psychology,” and delineates two major lineages for this occurrence: American metaphysical movements and Carl Gustav Jung. Regarding the first, drawing heavily on a series of works by Robert Fuller (1982, 1986, 1989) which traces the emergence of a distinctively American religious psychology, Hanegraaff divides the American lineage into two separate but related streams. The first, the metaphysical movements, includes Mesmerism, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby’s Mind-Cure,

the New Thought movement, and positive thinking/self-help popular psychology. The second, functionalist psychology, has its roots in the thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson, embraces William James, Carl Rogers, and humanistic psychology, and is best represented by James's classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Common to the American lineage are the following themes: an understanding of the unconscious as a site of harmony, reparation and revitalization; the casting of the unconscious as the locus of or a doorway to the sacred; a concept of a spectrum of consciousness in which different layers of consciousness correspond to different psychic capacities, mystical experiences and metaphysical realms; and the development of a pragmatic attitude and scientific techniques to access the resources of the sacralized unconscious.

The second major source for the psychologization of religion is Jung who Hanegraaff sees as the link between traditional European esotericism, Naturphilosophie, Romanticism, and the New Age. According to Hanegraaff, Jung united science and religion by presenting an esoteric worldview in psychological term and providing a scientific alternative to occultism. Not only did Jung psychologize esotericism, he also sacralized psychology by filling it with the contents (e.g. archetypes, the transcendent function, and individuation) of esoteric speculation rather than empirical realities. The result was a theory which allowed people to talk simultaneously about God (the Self) and the psyche, thereby collapsing the categories of religion and psychology and anticipating the rise of New Age self-spirituality.

There have been a number of cultural commentaries on the recent spread of psychology as religion. Attending to the wider contemporary therapeutic culture within which it has flourished, Philip Rieff (1966) posits a radical break between religion and psychology with a discussion of the replacement of early religious "positive communities" by therapeutically-orientated "negative communities." Traditional societies were "positive communities" governed by a cultural symbolic which encouraged restraint of behavior and an ethic which favored the group over the individual. The repression of socially destructive instincts was achieved through the acceptance of an authoritative "language of faith" and the idealization of a cultural super-ego. The institutions of the "Church" and the "Party" enabled positive communities to prevent anomie and reintegrate neurosis through religious forms of healing in which the unconscious was encountered in a non-direct manner.

In contrast, negative communities encourage a direct engagement with the unconscious and foster a therapeutic mode of self-awareness. They are suspicious of cultural

forms like religion and politics which are understood as symbolic representations of unconscious content. The shift from repression to direct engagement with the unconscious leads to the collapse of the cultural super-ego and the replacement of the "Church" and the "Party" with the "Hospital" and "Theatre" as the new cultural spaces for the working out of previously repressed psychic contents. The individual is privileged over the group and a new character type emerges, namely, "psychological man."

Critiques of psychological man and the psychologization of religion have come from Paul Vitz, (1977) Christopher Lasch (1979) and Richard King and Jeremy Carrette (2005) on the grounds of narcissism, individualism and apoliticism. The charge of narcissism is most notably filed in Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*. Echoing Vitz, he laments that the quest for self-realization promoted by the new psychospiritual therapies has encouraged an indulgent self-preoccupation and created a crisis in personal and social relationships. Moreover, in addition to being narcissistic in the self-absorbed colloquial sense, Lasch utilizes Heinz Kohut to argue that psychologized spirituality reflects and exacerbates an actual clinical disorder; a narcissistic personality structure that because of recent socio-cultural changes had become the predominant psychopathology of contemporary life. Lasch argues that the deification of the self within psychologized religiosity appeals to and feeds narcissistic grandiosity. Accusing the psychospiritual therapies of contributing to an amoral society, he calls for the creation of new communities of competence which foster civil commitment and draw out the moral energies of the Protestant work ethic.

A more recent critique by Jeremy Carrette and Richard King (2005) has targeted the twentieth century assimilation of the religious into the psychological arguing that psychology has diluted the social and ethical aspects of religion to form a privatized religion amenable to the demands of neoliberal ideology. Highlighting the roles of James, humanistic, transpersonal and popular psychology, Carrette and King argue that the individualism of psychologized spirituality allows for the infiltration of capitalist logic into religious discourse and the wide-scale commodification of spiritual "products."

However, there have also been a number of more optimistic appraisals of psychology as religion. Peter Homans (1979, 1989) has undermined the opposition between a traditional moral religious community and a contemporary amoral psychologized culture and challenged the charge of narcissism. According to Homans, critiques such as Rieff's and Lasch's fail to appreciate how much

of a generative force religion was in the formation of the current psychological climate. He argues that due to secularization, the western religious traditions were deidealized and this resulted in a period of mourning; a regressive process involving a direct encounter with the unconscious no-longer externally expressed in the form of religious symbols and ideation. While religious disillusionment may lead to despair or cynicism, there is also the possibility of a more creative response; an opportunity for individuation and the reintegration of unconscious contents into new meaningful symbols and values. Moreover, these new systems of meaning—such as the analytic psychology of a forefather of psychology as religion, Jung—not only reject but also assimilate religion so that to various degrees it lives on within them.

Homans also critiques Lasch of misreading Kohut, pointing out correctly that for Kohut narcissism was not in itself a pathological condition but rather a normal developmental stage which not only had the potential to transform into a healthy valuing of the self and empathy for the other, but also to reach the higher religio-ethical goal of “cosmic narcissism.” The issue, therefore, is not narcissism per se but whether narcissistic needs are repressed and acted out, or positively transformed. For Homans, and Kohut, therapeutic culture, with its themes of idealization, self-esteem, and grandiosity, displays a genuine engagement with narcissism and a desire for a more complete and satisfying subjectivity.

Additional defenses have come from sociologists of religion such as Robert Wuthnow (1998), Wade Clarke Roof (1999) and Robert Fuller (2001) who have convincingly attempted to rescue unchurched religion from unfounded generalizations, unfair stereotypes and pessimistic evaluations. Arguing that contemporary forms of psychologized spirituality generally display a legitimate quest for self-transformation, these works challenge the elevation of traditional religion over unchurched spirituality, the caricatures of its proponents as superficial and self-absorbed and its proposed inability to foster a social and relational ethic.

Such scholarship shows that many charges against psychology as religion are exaggerated and unsubstantiated. However, while it is necessary to temper unequivocal condemnations, many proponents of psychology as religion have recognized that certain accusations of individualism and narcissism are legitimate and have embarked on self-critiques to correct the elements that threaten to undermine its status as an authentic form of religiosity. Jorge Ferrer's (2002) postmodern deconstruction and participatory revisioning of transpersonal psychology is a sophisticated example of this. Combining

proponents growing self-reflexivity and relational turns, with the increasing academic scholarship on unchurched psychologized spirituality and the proliferation of Mind-Body-Spirit sections in bookstores with their best-selling psychology/spirituality titles, demonstrates that psychology as religion has established itself as a popular and increasingly sophisticated way to frame one's religiosity in the contemporary cultural climate.

See also: [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [Psyche](#) [Psychology](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Self](#)

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Psychology of Religion

David M. Wulff

Introduction

Classically defined, the psychology of religion consists of the systematic application of psychology's methods and interpretive frameworks to the broad domain of religion. As strictly a nonsectarian scholarly discipline, it should be carefully distinguished from "religious psychology," which is the psychology that in varying degrees is explicit in the texts and teachings of a religious tradition; from "psychology *and* religion," a phrase intended to suggest a mutually respectful dialogue between psychological theories and various perspectives in religious studies; "psychology *as* religion," which designates clinically oriented forms of psychology grounded in "spiritual" conceptions of human existence; and "integration of psychology and religion," which constitutes variously conceived (and usually religiously conservative) efforts to critique, recast, and apply psychology within a particular theological framework. The boundaries of the psychology of religion have from the beginning been difficult to draw, especially given the field's long history of providing foundations for religious education and pastoral care.

Beginnings in America

Of the many specialized areas of psychology, the psychology of religion was among the first to emerge out of the new empirical science of psychology that established itself late in the nineteenth century in both Europe and the United States. The extraordinary success of the physical sciences in understanding the natural world suggested to various nineteenth-century scholars that scientific methods might be applicable in the human realm as well. Thus arose scientific psychology as well as the *Religionswissenschaften*, the sciences of religion, or what today is called the history of religions.

The American founders of the psychology of religion, including Stanley Hall, William James, Edwin Starbuck, James Leuba, James Pratt, George Coe, Edward Ames, and George Stratton, understood "religion" to encompass both individual piety and the historic religious traditions. Using

methods that were both qualitative and quantitative, these scholars were well informed by the burgeoning literatures on religion authored by anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, and historians of religion. Among the field's early proponents, Pratt stands out for his systematic efforts—including extensive travel in India, Burma, Ceylon, Vietnam, China, Japan, and Korea—to acquaint himself with the major Eastern traditions in both their corporate and individual embodiments. And more than anyone else, he strove to grasp and sympathetically convey the worldviews and experiences of his informants. But it was William James, Pratt's thesis advisor and author of the field's signature classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), who brought the field most prominently into view.

A further impetus for the new psychology—and for the psychology of religion in particular—came in no small measure from the spirit of Progressivism. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the increasingly evident deleterious effects on society of the industrial revolution prompted in the United States an assortment of reform efforts that together became known as Progressivism. Among them was the Social Gospel movement, which centered on the conviction of many liberal Protestants that the traditional teachings of Jesus are aimed chiefly at righting the wrongs in this world, not preparing believers for the next. Hall, Coe, and Ames were themselves involved in this movement, including the social services offered by the various missions and settlement houses. But others, too, shared their conviction that the psychology of religion could help to reconceive or reform religion in such a way that it would more directly address the personal, social, and spiritual needs of the modern world. Thus the early psychologists of religion were by and large active proponents of religion, but in liberal versions compatible with the rationalistic worldview shaped by modern science, including the theory of evolution.

Two Methodological Principles

Fundamental principles for the new psychology of religion were laid out in 1902 by the Swiss psychologist Theodore Flournoy, who was a close friend of William James and, like Coe, a student of theology before he found it problematical. According to Flournoy's *Principle of the Exclusion of the Transcendent*, psychologists of religion should neither affirm nor reject the independent existence of the object of religious experience and reflection. Restated in contemporary terms, their posture should be one of methodological agnosticism. But the *experience* of

the transcendent object is most certainly not to be excluded from their province; indeed, such experience should be observed with the closest attention to its nuances and variations.

The second of Flournoy's guidelines, the *Principle of Biological Interpretation*, lays out a broadly inclusive framework for the psychological study of religion. Such study, as the principle's name indicates, should search for the *physiological* conditions of its object of study, conditions that today are naturally far better understood than in Flournoy's time. But Flournoy had more in mind than biology. The psychology of religion should also incorporate a *developmental* perspective, giving attention to both hereditary and environmental factors that play a role in the human species as a whole and in individual lives. It should be *comparative* in the sense of being sensitive to and taking into account individual differences. And it should be *dynamic* by recognizing that the religious life is a complex living reality representing the interplay of a great diversity of factors. Flournoy assigns to the field, in sum, a broadly inclusive agenda, according to which its proponents should welcome guidance and insights from many different areas of psychology. It might also hope to reciprocate by sharing insights of its own.

Two Methodological Traditions

In laying out these principles, Flournoy did not address the difficult question of what specific research methods to use. In his own investigations, he drew on case studies and personal documents, much as did James. He was thus a qualitative researcher in the tradition of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the human sciences, one of the two main traditions constituting both psychology and the psychology of religion. Hall and his Clark School of Religious Psychology inaugurated the alternate tradition, which cast itself in the empirical model represented by the *Naturwissenschaften*, the natural sciences, most notably by the use of systematic measurement and the quest for causal interpretations. Even though the natural-scientific approach won the day both in psychology and in the psychology of religion, the human-scientific perspective continued to attract proponents, especially among clinical practitioners as well as scholars specializing in the history of religions.

In the United States today, the empirical psychology of religion finds its organizational home mainly in Division 36, Psychology of Religion, of the American Psychological Association (APA) and in the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, even though in both organizations it is

distinctly a minority undertaking. Advocates of the human-scientific approach can be found chiefly in the Person, Culture, and Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion. In Europe, the International Society for the Psychology of Religion is inclusive of both traditions.

Three General Goals

Implicit in Flournoy's methodological principles are three goals that are more explicit in James's *Varieties* and that have characterized the psychology of religion to this day. The first one – the one for which James is most famous – is the descriptive task: identifying and describing the field's object of study. When the aim is a *psychology of religious persons*, as it was for James and Flournoy, the object is religious experience or – more broadly – religious attitudes, sentiments, and other such terms intended to encompass religion as it becomes embodied over time in individual lives. When, on the other hand, the aim is a *psychology of religious content or tradition*, as it was for Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung, the object becomes particular religious content that is shared by adherents of a specific tradition or that is found in a variety of traditions: images, symbols, stories, doctrines, scriptures, rituals, and so forth. Such shared religious content typically serves as the focus of individual religious experience and hence contributes to the shaping of it.

With the object of study well delineated, the psychologist of religion may then pursue either of two further goals: (1) accounting for the object's causal origins – what James called existential judgments – and (2) evaluating the fruits, or correlates, of the religious life, James's so-called spiritual judgments. The first of these goals, uncovering religion's causal origins, naturally requires some reconstruction of the past, whether it be an individual's past or a tradition's. This demand is particularly problematic for empirical researchers, who are by and large limited to measures obtained in the present. But retrospective measures – say, of parental religiosity when the respondent was a child or of family religious practices – along with contemporary assessment of a great variety of other psychological variables (e.g., attachment style) does allow for some meaningful inferences regarding causal associations in individual lives. Interpretive psychologists, on the other hand, may freely draw on a variety of resources for reconstructing the past, of both individuals and traditions.

As a self-acknowledged defender of the religious outlook if not its popular forms, James was most interested in

revealing the fruits of the religious life. That goal today dominates the work of empirical researchers. Having constructed a variety of measures for assessing individual differences in religiosity, such investigators have for more than half a century sought to identify its correlates in a diversity of realms. Initially, in an effort to understand the impulses underlying the appalling inhumanity of World War II, the focus was mainly on negative social attitudes, including authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, dogmatism, and prejudice. Religious persons, it was found, tended to score higher than nonreligious persons on measures of these attitudes. Subtler measures of religiousness were subsequently developed, mainly of “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” religious orientations, to demonstrate that it is not religiousness per se that is associated with such negative social attitudes, but superficial or inauthentic forms of it. In time, attention shifted from social attitudes to mental and physical health, once again anticipating that intrinsic, or sincere, religiosity would be associated with more positive outcomes. Today, especially with the encouragement of munificent Templeton Foundation grants, there is increasing interest in demonstrating religion’s positive association with certain classic virtues, including forgiveness, gratitude, and humility.

Challenges to the Psychology of Religion

From its beginnings, the psychology of religion has faced a number of critics. Psychologists, who tend in general to be less religious than many other academic and professional groups, have long been suspicious of any interest in religion on the part of their colleagues. Scholars of religion, on the other side, are often critical of what seem to them to be reductionistic if not also hostile views of religion among its psychological interpreters. Thus the psychology of religion has been an academic stepchild from its beginnings. Graduate programs and academic positions in the field have always been scarce, and where they appear they are usually subordinated to theological or pastoral training. Undergraduate courses on the psychology of religion are most often taught in departments of religion at church-related schools; otherwise they are likely offered only because some faculty member has a personal interest in the subject matter. Nonsectarian programs in the psychology of religion have been more common in England and Europe, where chairs in the field were founded beginning early in the twentieth century. Yet even there the field has never been widely pursued, and recent changes in economic conditions, in conjunction with the traditional priorities of theological faculties, have brought

reductions in both chairs and programs, most notably in the Scandinavian countries.

Such external difficulties are complicated by challenges that are intrinsic to the field. Most apparent is the debate between empirical and interpretive approaches, between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, which, beyond determining the research methods used, have broad implications for how religion is constructed and what questions are posed. Less obvious and more difficult is the conundrum of addressing a phenomenon that interprets itself in relationship to a transcendent dimension that by definition lies beyond the conceptual tools and understanding of psychology. Flournoy’s exclusion principle suggests the possibility of bracketing such interpretations, but in reality all researchers come to the field with personal religious views that inevitably shape the questions they address. If one takes a religious outlook to be fundamentally mistaken, as it was by Freud, one will naturally ask how it may have arisen, either in human history or in an individual life. If one has oneself a sense of the transcendent, on the other hand, one will naturally be inclined to ask why it eludes other persons. Given the obvious diversity of religious constructions of reality, the latter question would likely be posed from within a particular theological or religious framework, inevitably threatening to transform the psychology of religion into a sectarian enterprise.

One solution would be to pursue a purely descriptive psychology of religion. But that, the German philosopher Max Scheler once argued, would require a separate psychology of religion for every tradition. Another seeming solution would be the strategy of setting aside any questions about the nature or origins of religion and merely examining its fruits instead. Although widely embraced, this strategy has long been recognized as likewise shaped by religious agendas, which affect the religiosity scales one adopts or devises, the variables one investigates, and the conclusions one draws. Of the respondents to a 1998 survey of the members of Division 36 of APA, the majority of whom are clinical practitioners, nearly all reported themselves to be moderately or highly religious or spiritual. Thus it is not surprising that most research is aimed, subtly or not, at demonstrating the value of religion, and that there is a parallel burgeoning of works on the integration of spirituality into psychotherapy, some published by the APA.

Most of the religiously liberal founders of the psychology of religion sought to reinterpret or even transform religion to make it serviceable in the modern world. Today, the psychology of religion serves as a rubric under which more religiously conservative psychologists act as caretakers and promoters of traditional religious

convictions. The ideal, most fully realized by James Pratt, of a truly disinterested discipline that investigates a broad range of phenomena drawn from a diversity of religious traditions thus seems today evermore elusive.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Authoritarian Personality](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Faith Development Theory](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [Genetics of Religiosity](#) [God Image](#) [James, William](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Jungian Psychology](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Meditation](#) [Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Pruyser, Paul](#) [Psychology and the Origins of Religion](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#) [Religious Coping](#) [Religious Experience](#) [Self Psychology](#) [Sex and Religion](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Psychosis

Kate M. Loewenthal

What is psychosis? How is it related to religion and religious factors?

Psychoses are psychiatric illnesses, normally distinguished from neuroses, the other main group of psychiatric disorders. In psychosis the degree of impairment and lack of insight are said to be more severe than in neurosis. Psychotic illnesses have been categorized into two broad groups, the schizophrenic disorders and the bipolar disorders. There are significant concerns about the use of these diagnostic categories, but they are likely to remain in use for the foreseeable future. In schizophrenia, the individual normally shows a marked deterioration in self-care, work functioning, and/or social relations, but no major changes in mood. There is no evidence of an organic cause (drugs, or a medical condition). Symptoms normally include two or more of: delusions, hallucinations, incoherent speech, catatonic behavior (rigid, frozen posture), flat or very inappropriate mood. The DSM-IV classification lists a large number of related disorders in the schizophrenia group, such as the paranoid or catatonic types, but here we will consider schizophrenia as an overall diagnostic category. The other general form of psychosis is considered to be bipolar (manic-depressive, cyclothymic) mood disorder, swinging from high to low moods, sometimes with intervening periods of “normal” mood. The most striking feature of bipolar disorders is mania, euphoric joy out of proportion to circumstances, plus at least some of the following irritability and anger especially if plans are frustrated, hyperactivity, going without sleep, poor judgment, following one's own grandiose ideas and plans and feeling others are too slow, self-esteem approaching grandiosity, flamboyance, delusions or hallucinations (Comer, 1999: 352–357). About one person in a hundred may be affected by a psychotic disorder at some time in their lives. It may pass, or respond to medication or other treatment, or the person may continue significantly disturbed.

How do psychoses relate to religion? There are several important questions for discussion.

Do Religious Factors Correlate with or Cause Psychosis?

The short answer is that there are no clear associations between schizophrenia – or possibly predisposing

personality traits – and religious factors. There is some tentative evidence that psychotic episodes may be precipitated in those already prone to disturbance, by some religious practices such as meditation, but this evidence is currently very thin.

The associations between religious factors and psychotic illness have been difficult to disentangle. This is partly because some religious behaviors and beliefs – especially if they stem from a tradition alien to clinicians – may be seen as symptoms of illness, and a misdiagnosis may be made. For example a devout woman who had been sexually abused began to pray and bible-study frequently and eat moderately in an attempt to purify herself. This was interpreted as symptomatic of schizophrenia (Loewenthal, 2007: 37). Beliefs that the evil eye, spells or spirits are causing somatic symptoms may be seen as delusory, even though in contemporary transcultural psychiatry, good clinical outcomes have been reported when clinicians treat these beliefs respectfully. A further set of factors complicating the picture is that stress may well induce mood disturbances and other psychiatric symptoms, and in an attempt to cope, individuals may resort to prayer and other religious practices (Bhugra, 2002; Siddle, Haddock, Tarrier, and Faragher, 2002). Indeed there is considerable evidence that prayer and other religious practices may relieve distress (Pargament, 1997; Maltby, Lewis, and Day, 1999; Loewenthal, 2007: 59–67). Thus there may be the appearance of an association between mental illness and religiosity, but religiosity is an effect, not a cause. Furthermore, if and when stress is reduced and symptoms alleviate, religious coping is reduced – again, giving the appearance of an association between better mental health and lower religiosity. Only longitudinal studies, in which individuals are followed-up over time, can tell us more about whether religion plays a causal role in psychosis and other mental illnesses. At the moment, this does not seem likely, for schizophrenia.

There are a number of personality traits which have been suggested to relate to the tendency to schizophrenia and psychotic illness. The most heavily-researched of these is the so-called Psychoticism (P) measure in the Eysenck Personality inventory. This is negatively associated with religiosity (Eysenck, 1998). A more complex set of traits fall under the head of schizotypy, which involves personality traits which might indicate prodromal schizophrenia, including discomfort in close relationships, and odd forms of thinking and perceiving. The different aspects of schizotypy relate in complex ways to religiosity (Joseph and Diduca, 2001), with no substantial evidence to support the idea that religious

factors are related to schizophrenia or possible predisposing personality factors.

It has been suggested that meditation and possibly other religious practices and experiences may precede episodes of manic disorder in individuals who are susceptible (Wilson, 1998; Yorston, 2001; Kalian and Witztum, 2002). However this suggestion is based on clinical case histories, and there is insufficient quantitative evidence in further support of this suggestion.

Can We Distinguish Between Pathological and Benign Visions and Voices?

This has been a longstanding problem for well-intentioned and culturally-sensitive psychiatrists, given that visions and voices are supposed to be symptoms of schizophrenia. Littlewood and Lipsedge (1997), and Greenberg and Witztum (2001) offer fascinating and often tragic examples of diagnostic and therapeutic difficulties. It has now been well-documented that visions and voices are commonly-experienced by healthy individuals, and cannot be regarded in themselves, as symptoms of psychosis (see Loewenthal, 2007: 17–21). Some religious groups encourage or praise the experiencing of visions, or the hearing of voices, and these can be valued aspects of spirituality. Recent work examining the comparing the experiences of members of religious groups, and of others without psychiatric illness, with experiences of psychotic individuals indicates that the visions and voices experienced by the psychotically ill are significantly more unpleasant and uncontrollable than those experienced by others (Peters, Day, McKenna, and Orbach, 1999; Davies, Griffiths, and Vice, 2001). This work does give clues as to how psychotic visions and voices might be identified. Importantly, we can conclude that the experiencing of visions and voices should no longer in itself be treated as symptomatic of psychosis.

What Is the Significance of Belief in Demons, Evil Spirits and the Like, in Relation to Psychotic Illness?

Belief in evil spirits, demons, and other malignant spiritual forces is surprisingly widespread, including highly-developed, urbanized countries. A striking example involves sleep paralysis, which is as often reported in highly developed countries in which belief in evil

spirits is not well-supported, as in less developed countries. The individual feels wakeful but unable to move, and is conscious of a shadowy presence (Hufford, 2005). The experience is usually unpleasant, interpreted as involving evil forces, and seldom mentioned for fear of being thought insane. In fact this condition is not a psychiatric problem at all, in spite of the fears and beliefs of those who have experienced it. This example highlights the existence of a widespread and popular idea that the experience of malign spiritual forces is closely related to insanity. Lipsedge (1996), and Kroll, Bachrach, and Carey, (2002) have shown that in medieval times demons and other malign spiritual forces were only occasionally seen as possible causes of psychiatric illness. Contemporary studies have examined beliefs that malign spiritual forces can be causes of insanity. Such beliefs have been reported in many countries, for example Egypt (Coker, 2004), Israel (Heilman and Witztum, 2000), South Africa (Ensink and Robertson, 1999) and Switzerland (Pfeifer, 1994), and there has been some success reported in deploying healing methods which are believed by patients to dispel evil spiritual forces. It has been suggested that the experience of demons and the like may be regarded as an “idiom of distress” (Heilman and Witztum, 2000). Contemporary clinical practitioners with experience in different cultural settings would advocate incorporating beliefs about spiritual forces as causes of disturbance into treatment plans, wherever possible.

What Is the Current Status of the Concept of Religious Mania?

Religious monomania is a now-discarded diagnostic category. At one time it was popular, and used to denote intense religious excitement and enthusiasm, to the extent that the individual had gone beyond the bounds of the acceptable and containable. For example Jonathan Martin, a fundamentalist preacher, who thought the clergy of his time (early nineteenth century) were too lax. He had some dreams which seemed to him significant, for example in one he saw a black cloud over York Minster. These dreams inspired him to set fire to York Minster (Lipsedge, 2003). At the time this act was a capital offence, but the diagnosis of monomania helped to get the death sentence commuted to imprisonment. With religious and other monomanias, there were difficulties in distinguishing between acceptable and pathological levels of behavior – one group’s terrorist is another group’s martyr, for example.

Conclusions

There is little to support the idea that religious factors play a role in causing psychotic illnesses. It is likely that religious coping may be helpful in relieving the distress associated with psychotic illness, and the appearance of “religious symptoms” may indicate attempts to cope with distress, rather than as symptoms as such. However, as with other psychiatric illnesses, the religious context may shape the occurrence of stress, often a factor in psychiatric breakdown. The religious context may also shape expressions of distress.

See also: [▶ Demons](#) [▶ Psychiatry](#) [▶ Religious Coping](#) [▶ Visions](#)

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William Parsons (2008) offers some useful historical contextualization for the western lineage of the psychospiritual through his discussion of the “*psychologia perennis*,” an unchurched, psychological form of spirituality whose origins can be seen as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the appearance of mysticism as a subjective experience divorced from church and tradition. The emergence of a generic “Absolute” framed as an inner universal, sacred dimension of man allowed for the psychologization of mysticism and links the figures of Romain Rolland, William James, Carl Jung, and Richard Maurice Bucke with humanistic and transpersonal psychology. While recognizing significant differences in metapsychology and therapeutic techniques among these thinkers, Parsons identifies a number of common characteristics: a championing of the individual as an unchurched site of religiosity, the search for the origin of mysticism in the unconscious, a valorization of personal unchurched mystical experiences, an advocacy of perennialism, the discernment of innate, intuitive, mystical capacities, the development of a technology of altered states, the institutionalization of psycho-spiritual therapeutic regimens and a vision of social transformation grounded in the psychospiritual transformation of the individual.

Psychospiritual therapies explicitly protest against the reductive and materialist assumptions of mainstream behavioral and cognitive psychology and seek to return the soul or psyche to psychology. While traditionally associated with the humanistic-existential strands within depth psychology, as Parsons (2007) points out there has also been a recent wave of interest in spirituality within the psychoanalytic field. Much of contemporary psychoanalytic literature suggests that spirituality has seeped into many aspects of the practice of analysts and of the therapeutic expectations of analysands. For example, the analyst Michael Eigen, who is particularly influenced by Jewish mysticism and Zen, describes psychoanalytic therapy as “a psychospiritual journey,” and argues that meditative practices and psychoanalysis are not separate but rather integral parts of the growth process (Molino, 1998). Similarly, analyst Paul Cooper claims that spiritual practices have influenced many dimensions of psychoanalytic therapy, such as theory, technique, training, and supervision, and draws attention to the important empirical fact that many of his analysands understand psychoanalytic therapy as part of their spiritual growth. Furthermore, Cooper argues that there is undeniable cultural drift in this direction (Molino, 1998).

In a similar vein, concerns with the psychospiritual have entered into mainstream psychotherapy. This is

Psychospiritual

Ann Gleig

The term psychospiritual has entered psychological and religious discourse as a loose designation for the integration of the psychological and the spiritual. As a broad term it can denote a variety of positions between psychology and spirituality: a supplementation, integration, identification or conflation of the two fields. It is commonly used to describe a wide range of therapeutic systems which embrace a spiritual dimension of the human being as fundamental to psychic health and full human development and which utilize both psychological and spiritual methods (such as meditation, yoga, dream-work, breathwork) in a holistic, integrated approach to healing and inner growth. Included here are Jungian psychology, Roberto Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis, the post-Jungian archetypal psychology of James Hillman, transpersonal psychology, such as the work of Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof, Ken Wilber, Michael Washburn and Charles Tart, the spiritual psychology of Robert Sardello and a plethora of contemporary spiritual therapies which are being developed within an East-West framework.

reflected in both the professional psychotherapeutic accrediting of spiritual therapies and the establishment of a number of associations that seek to integrate the two fields of spirituality and psychotherapy, for example, the Institute for Psychotherapy, Science and Spirituality, formerly the Center for Spirituality and Psychotherapy, established in 1997 to study how psychotherapy can foster the emergence of the spiritual dimension in life and how spiritual practice may enhance the psychotherapeutic encounter.

The term psychospiritual has also been applied to mystical traditions, particularly Asian, which include psychological development as an indispensable component of spiritual growth or see psychological and spiritual development as inseparable. Some of these traditions are seen as inherently containing a psychospiritual approach. A notable example, here, is Sufism which aims for a psychospiritual transformation of the human being from a state of ego-centeredness to a state of purity and submission to the will of God (Frager, 1999). Other spiritual traditions have incorporated western psychology into traditional mysticism to create new psychospiritual integrations. An influential example of this is integral psychology, a synthesis of the Indian mystic Sri Aurobindo's teachings with the findings of depth psychology as developed by his disciple, Haridas Chaudhuri (Cortright, 2007). Another contemporary psychospiritual tradition which incorporates the insights of psychoanalytic theory to aid spiritual realization is A. H. Almaas's Diamond Approach (2004).

Finally, the psychospiritual is a term often used interchangeably with the cultural phenomena referred to as psychology *as* religion and to signify the psychologization of religion and the sacralization of psychology that is a defining mark of the New Age. Hence, commentaries on, critiques of, and predications for, these two related, if not identical, strands are indispensable in illuminating different aspects of the psychospiritual.

See also: [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Psyche](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Transpersonal Psychology](#) [Zen](#)

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Psychotherapy

Todd DuBose

On Caring Rather than Curing

Psychotherapy is an art and a science of caring for those in distress with the goal of helping others toward more fulfilling and meaningful experiences in their everyday existence. The ways in which this project is done is extremely diverse, and in fact, there are hundreds of practices in our contemporary situation that would claim the name “therapy.” Although various kinds of histories have been written, I would like to offer a read of this history that highlights its inherent religiosity.

Discerning the beginnings of psychotherapy depends on how one defines this process, and whether or not one understands psychotherapy as a science, an art, or both. I argue that its foundation rests in both the history of the *cura animarum*, or the care of souls, and in the history of consolation literature and practices across a variety of religious traditions, “*Cura*” originally meant “care” rather than “cure” (McNiell, 1977; Jalland, 2000). The psychotherapist was an *iatros tes psuche*, or physician of the soul. Much as changed since these originations. Thomas Szasz (1988) notes that psychotherapy as a talk therapy originated in ancient rhetorical traditions, but, over time,

psychotherapy has become a medical treatment. Szasz has argued, and I think correctly, that psychotherapy is not a medical treatment, evoking Aristotle's warning against the confluence of science and rhetoric.

Although aligned with Szasz's general project as a clarification and differentiation of psychotherapy from medical modeled practices, I nonetheless agree with Ernesto Spinelli's (2007) proposal that psychotherapy, or *therapeia*, should be understood in light of its true etiological foundation as less an art of persuasion and more a process of "walking with" another who suffers and is in distress. If *cura* is care and therapy is more a "walking with" rather than a "doing to," then contemporary practices of psychotherapy as problem solving and repairing brokenness are practices far from their origins. The conceptualizations of Spinelli, Szasz, and other like minded theorists and clinicians are much closer to the tradition of pastoral counseling as a companionship with another through existential transitions in life.

Another important distinction to be made about psychotherapy as seen from the field of psychology and religion concerns what is meant by the "psyche." Early Greek formation of this concept did not start with the psyche as a self-encapsulated thing or ego. Psyche was more closely aligned with *nous*, or mind (Louth, 1981). Mind, however, did not mean "brain," which is another confluence of irreconcilable differences based on a categorical mistake of fusing mind and brain (Brothers, 2001). *Nous* was "soul" and specifically the experiencer of meaning, significance and purpose, or *telos* (Louth, 1981). Hence, Viktor Frankl (1905–1997) developed his existential approach to psychotherapy and called it Logotherapy, basing logos on a noosological discernment of how meaning motivates our existential comportment in our lives (1946/1959). Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990) has further pointed out that Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) position on the psyche has been grossly misunderstood, often due to Freud's mechanistic conceptualizations of the psyche (Bettelheim, 1983). Freud's understanding of psyche, as Bettelheim argues, is the German word, *Seele*, or soul. This conceptualization is aligned with Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and the psychiatrists with whom he dialogued regarding the implications of his philosophy for psychotherapy, Ludwig Binswanger (1881–1966) and Medard Boss (1903–1990). Whereas Binswanger (1967) understood the goal of therapy to be soul oriented goals, such as the ability to love and trust again, Boss and Heidegger described psychotherapy as a process of *Seelsorge*, or soul care (Boss, 1963; Heidegger, 1987/2001). Heidegger (1962) still wanted to destruct any conception of the psyche or soul as a substantial entity, and so shift

the focus from psyche as thing to human existence as *Dasein*. *Dasein*, or literally, "being there," is the unfolding of being amid the clearing and unburdening of human existence. Psychotherapy, or *Daseinsanalysis*, allows for the particular kinds of disclosure of one's existence and relationship to existential givens that give rise to symptomatic constrictions of one's freedom in the world.

Therapy as "Begin With"

This genealogical interlude shows how current practices of psychotherapy have been consistent with its origins the origins in some cases, and in other practices have diverged from its foundations. Therapy can be a fixing of broken psyches, a walking with persons, a "being with" and description of ways of being-in-the-world, an interpretation of relational patterning, or the regulation of unbalanced chemical processes, among other possibilities. Heidegger and Medard Boss considered this process more one of analysis than therapy, in which one loosens constrictions of *Dasein's* ways of being-in-the-world (Boss, 1979; Heidegger, 1962, 1987/2001). Regarding the psychology and religion field, at first glance "loosening throughout" seems at odds with the definition of religion as a "binding back." Nevertheless, with transcendent liberation as the goal of both processes, we can see how psychotherapy is itself a spiritual discipline.

An understanding of the spirituality of psychotherapy, then, depends on how one understands psyche and therapy or analysis. Although distinctions have been made between counseling, therapy, and spiritual direction, I believe these distinctions presuppose functional and content differences that are secondary to what is shared by all of these practices: therapeutic presence. The current consensus among meta-analysts of successful psychotherapeutic practice is that the therapeutic relationship is the key factor in therapeutic change and positive outcome. Training programs, therefore, should focus most of its emphasis on teaching trainees how to establishment and foster therapeutic relationships. With this focus, intangibles arise that are nonetheless significant factors in therapeutic outcome: empathic presence, depth of compassion, degrees of self and other acceptance, risks of transparency and disclosure, the quality of discernment, the felt sense of being understood, and so forth. These qualities of therapeutic presence are well grounded in all traditions of religious care of however the soul is conceived.

The therapeutic intangibles mentioned above require discipline to achieve that necessitates risk, sacrifice, and patience – again, familiar words to all spiritual

traditions. Participation in these intangibles transforms all participants in the therapeutic process, including the therapist. Both participants are on a journey toward liberation and transformation, which is the lived experience of transcendence.

Commentary

One point for discussion in this commentary is how one adjudicates between the current insistence on providing evidence-based practices with this history of psychotherapy as spiritually informed by invisible, incommensurate, immeasurable phenomena that make up what is considered the sine qua non aspects of therapeutic change: therapeutic presence. Mere assessment from an outside position belies the history of concerned involvement and thousands of years of care and consolation. People do come to treatment in order to experience transcendence-as-transformation in their lives. Yet, being prescriptive about how one should live one's life can be intrusive at least and downright controlling at best, thus disempowering another's journey. An alternative is available, and one that is understood in light of its inherent religiosity: therapy as the clearing of space and lightening of burdens so being can unfold towards its ownmost potential in light of its embrace limitations. This is neither analysis alone, nor psycho-therapy, but a type of therapy nonetheless. One doesn't direct the future, but open possibilities towards it. Doing psychotherapy this way necessitates a less than controlling experimental approach to discerning therapeutic quality.

At the forefront of the edification debates is a competition around which style of psychotherapy should be considered the most successful. Again, success depends on what counts as data and outcome, and, in fact, meta-analyses consistently suggest that all styles are more or less equally successful – depending, again, on the quality of the therapeutic relationship, which in turn depends on the quality of the therapeutic presence. Questions about therapeutic presence should be directed to the ancient spiritual traditions, particularly the ascetic and mystical dimensions of those traditions. What isn't discussed as much as it should be is the fact that no one really knows how change occurs, in spite of our obsessive attempts to predict and control change factors. In other words, we should include more discussion about one change factor in the therapeutic process that is as old as the traditions that can inform it: mystery.

Finally, the development and choice of therapeutic modality should also be a consideration in the process

of soul care. With the shift of psyche to more than an isolated ego, and/or a growing awareness of systems, relational processes, and like kind phenomena, therapeutic modalities have expanded to include group, family, couple, and play therapy. At the same time, psychotherapy still remains within a medically-modeled format as long as those who come for help are seen as compromised and those who help them are seen as experts. Psychotherapy in the future could break this hegemony by focusing more on communities becoming more therapeutic and therapeutic milieus expanding toward more invitation to true *koinonia*, or the experience of freely being oneself as affirmed and affirming otherness.

See also: [▶ Hermeneutics](#) [▶ Homo Religiosus](#) [▶ Lived Theology](#) [▶ Meaning of Human Existence](#) [▶ Phenomenological Psychology](#)

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Psychotherapy and Religion

Kate M. Loewenthal

This essay briefly outlines some of the varieties of psychotherapy practiced today, and looks at the development of the relationship between psychotherapy and religion under two broad headings: independence, and integration.

The Varieties of Psychotherapy

Freud (e.g., 1933) is usually credited with the discovery of the “talking cure” for psychiatric illness: psychoanalysis. Although in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, psychiatric illness was dealt with by medical practitioners, the chief disturbances are those of behavior, thinking and feeling, often with no clear organic cause. The era of humane treatments had dawned, and pioneers such as Tuke, Pinel and Dix had established humane institutions for the care of the insane, in England, France and the USA respectively. But effective medical treatments were lacking. Psychoanalysis, the talking cure developed by Freud, was not always totally effective in producing improvements, but it was sufficiently effective to survive, expand and develop enormously during the twentieth century. Its development still continues and its clinical efficacy has been placed on a firm footing (e.g., Sandell, Blomberg, Lazar, Carlsson, Broberg, & Schubert, 2000). The theories, aims and methods of psychoanalysis can only be summarized briefly here. Psychoanalysis aims to enable to client to develop a conscious awareness of the feelings and ideas that underlie his or her habitual style of living and relating to others. These feelings and ideas have ruled his/her life in a powerful way. The origins of these feelings and ideas are unconscious. Awareness allows the possibility of assuming a level of control. One view of psychoanalysis, therefore,

is that it helps make the unconscious, conscious. One route by which this is often achieved is via the “transference relationship,” in which the client displays powerful feelings towards the analyst – anger, dependency, idealization – feelings which are not realistically related to the current context. The analysis of transference – the examination of these feelings and their earlier occurrences and origins – is an important route towards therapeutic improvement.

From its earliest days, psychoanalysis has engendered new theories and methods. Some are regarded as recognizably psychoanalytic – for example the neo- and post-Freudians (e.g., Horney, 1963), and Klein (1955) and her followers. Others, for example Rogers (1961), have developed schools of counseling in which a primary vehicle of improvement has been the therapist’s support and regard for the client. Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) (e.g., Beck, 2005) has begun to exert a very important influence in clinical practice, since it has been able to demonstrate effective outcomes in relatively few sessions. CBT functions by enabling the client to examine and evaluate his/her habitual thoughts, behaviors and feelings in a manner which is focused on the client’s immediate problems and agreed-upon areas of improvement, and is therefore less wide-ranging than psychoanalytic therapy. There are many other varieties of psychological therapies, but this brief account has hinted at the range and approach of some of the dominant influences in this very active field.

Independence

A starting-point is to note Freud’s apparent distaste for religion, for instance his view of religion as a universal obsessional neurosis (e.g., Freud, 1907). Spilka (1986), Loewenthal (1995) and others have described as the enormous range of ways in which psychotherapists have seen and described the role of religion: religion may be a socializing and suppressing force, a source of guilt, a haven, a source of abuse, a therapy, and a hazard. Many of the views of religion expressed in the early days of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy were detrimental: religion was seen as damaging to mental health. One response to these views is to attempt to leave religion out of the picture in any attempt to work with mental health issues.

During the twentieth century, the mental health and religious leadership professions were often seen as parallel and largely independent, each offering solutions to human misery that were alternative rather than complementary. There was some antagonism. Some psychotherapeutic writers perceived only damaging effects of religion. Some

religious leaders saw psychotherapy as a spiritually damaging venture (Loewenthal, 1995).

One reasonable justification for the independence of the psychotherapy and religious professions was advanced by Neeleman and Persaud (1995). While decrying the fact that mental health professionals overlook the often important religious concerns of their patients, they observe that mental health and religion are two largely independent areas of professional expertise. The mental health professional may feel – wisely – that s/he does not have the expertise to tackle religious issues. These, it might be felt, should be left to the chaplaincy. Similarly the religious leader may feel that s/he does not have the expertise to tackle mental health problems.

These concerns gave rise to the development of pastoral counseling among the ministry, and to transcultural psychiatry and spiritual counseling among mental health professionals. Both developments aim to give professionals awareness of and training in issues in mental health and religion, including sufficient knowledge of when to cross-refer. Many mental health practitioners and religious leaders/chaplains work now harmoniously with each other, and earlier mistrust and antagonism have generally been laid to rest.

Integration

The history of peace between psychotherapy and religion is almost as old as the history of war. Carl Gustav Jung was the prominent early exponent of harmony, with his view of spirituality as intrinsic to human nature, suggesting that spiritual growth and psychological growth involved the same processes – an inner journey involving the healing of fragmented aspects of the self, and the development of individuation (e.g., Jung, 1958). The Jungian influence was almost certainly the strongest in the early development of pastoral psychology.

Other prominent exponents of harmony include Rizzutto (1974) and Spero (1992). Both these authors use objects-relations theory (a development of Kleinian thinking), which deals with how from infancy onwards, the individual internalizes, splits, and harmonizes “objects” from his/her social world. G-d is an internal “object” and the relationship with G-d may be examined, developed and healed in the course of psychotherapy.

There has been a strong growth of interest in psychotherapy and religion, as seen for instance in the psychoanalytic explorations in Stein’s (1999) *Beyond Belief: Psychotherapy and Religion*. David Black (2000: 25) explores recent thinking involving a neuro-scientific

model. In Black’s view some of the values of psychotherapy and religion are remarkably similar, for example love, mourning and reparation. Nevertheless their goals are different – psychoanalytic therapy proceeds by the analysis of transference to allow the ego to achieve optimal functioning in the individual’s social world. The goal of religion is to achieve “a true view of the universe and our relations to it.” Black believes that mature religions aim to give access to positions which differ from what can be established and worked through in psychoanalysis. “A religious vision opens up the possibility of other sorts of development which go beyond the world of human object relations” (p. 22). Thus, interestingly, Black appears to suggest that in object-relations terms, the potential for spiritual and personal development may differ in the religious life, from what can be achieved in psychoanalysis.

In a different vein, Viktor Frankl (1986) has explored the importance of the will to meaning, and the role of purpose in life in psychological health. His introduction of these concepts into the practice of psychotherapy has enabled a positive approach in working with troubled individuals.

Attending to the client’s spiritual problems has become a strong focus of attention in the twenty-first century (Pargament and Tarakeshwar, 2005; Pargament, 2007). One noteworthy point is that the term *spirituality* has become increasingly popular as an alternative and substitute for the term *religion* – the implications of this shift are reviewed by Pargament, also Loewenthal (2007) and others. In *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*, Pargament defines spirituality as *the search for the sacred*. He argues that spiritual concerns are often salient for many clients and therapists need to be equipped to deal with them. Therapists need to be able to recognize spirituality which can lead to growth, and spirituality which can lead to a decline, also spirituality which is part of the problem, and spirituality which is part of the solution.

Another development has been the question of examining different cultural-religious traditions. In what ways do different traditions differ in the extent and manner of their integration into psychotherapeutic practice? Such issues are explored in Richards and Bergin (2000), in their *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity*, and Dowd and Nielsen (2006), in their *Exploration of the Psychologies in Religion*.

Conclusions

The early development of psychotherapy featured some mistrust as the proponents of psychotherapy and religion

viewed each others' ideas. Nevertheless from the early stages there were noteworthy attempts to integrate the practice of psychotherapy with the religious and spiritual concerns of clients, and such attempts are now flourishing. On the whole, it is the psychoanalytic and counseling schools of psychotherapy, rather than the cognitive-behavioral school, that have been responsible for these developments.

See also: ▶ [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) ▶ [Freud, Sigmund](#) ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) ▶ [Psychoanalysis](#) ▶ [Psychology as Religion](#) ▶ [Psychology of Religion](#) ▶ [Psychotherapy](#)

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Puer Aeternus

Paul Larson

“Puer Aeternus” is a Latin phrase for “eternal child.” It is an archetypal complex; that is, a psychological and mythical amalgam of symbols and images of eternal youth. It is embodied in the literary work, *Peter Pan* by the British author James Barry (1860–1937), which has been adapted numerous times in plays, movies and television. It is often used as a pejorative phrase to denote a young man who will not make the emotional commitments of adulthood and prefers to continually “play the field.”

Pushing the archetypal image backward in time from Victorian literature, Pan was the proverbial “naughty boy” in Greek mythology. Like the lost boys in Barry’s work, Pan lived out in the wild woods and was notorious for unrestrained sexuality. Other creatures fill this role, centaurs, half man half horse, were notorious for not only their unrestrained sexual appetites, but for their aggression as well. Satyrs, half man, half goat were Pan’s species, and he was their chief. Barry’s Peter Pan was pre-pubescent and sexually neuter, boyish with charm but without the threat of rising sexuality. But Pan as the archetype of an animalistic approach to sexual relations informs the use of the Peter Pan complex today.

In the gay male imago, *Puer Aeternus* can be seen as the continuation of the mythic image of same-sex attraction begun with the “erastes/eromenos” relationship as well as the Zeus and Ganymede story. The archetype continued through the real historical characters of the Roman emperor Hadrian (76–138 CE) and his adolescent companion, Antinous, a youth from Bithynia in modern day Turkey. After his tragic death by drowning in the Nile river while the two visited that province of Rome, Hadrian had him deified. The godling epebe, Antinous, became a late Roman polytheistic cult with particular support from men who sought erotic connection and love with other men. The Antinoan temples lasted until Theodosius closed all pagan temples between 388 and 381 CE.

In Jungian archetypal psychology the *Puer Aeternus*, or eternal child, represents a regressive romanticization of childhood and can be unhealthy, preventing normal adult development, or it can be transformed into an appreciation of one's remaining child-like qualities as one ages. Woman can have "puella eternis" issues as easily as men struggle with the puer. All people struggle with the eternal child as a reaction to aging. The dialectic polarity in the psyche is that of puer and senex. The emulation of youth is a strong tug in the mind fed by our consumer culture. We struggle to hold on to the seemingly unbounded energy, enthusiasm, and vitality as the "eternal child" continues to influence our choices and feelings. The process of self-exploration allows us to confront this archetypal force and through dialectic to transform the energies into an age-appropriate blend of *Puer Aeternus* and the elder, sage and wise one. We start as the former and, should we live so long, embody the other.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Homosexuality](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Purgatory

Thomas St. James O'Connor

There are diverse beliefs about the existence of Purgatory. There is little evidence for purgatory in the Scriptures. The notion of Purgatory began in the Patristic period. Purgatory is a time, place and/or moment in the afterlife between God's judgment at death and the final beatific vision. Eastern mystical theology sees purgatory as a time of purification. Humans need to be purged of their sins before seeing God face-to-face. Purgatory is the final step in human growth and divination. In Western theology, purgatory contains the notion of reparation (satisfaction) for one's sins through penance. Sinners take responsibility for the sins and accept the consequences (justice). In the medieval time, Popes and Church councils addressed this

doctrine. The Council of Florence (1439) in the *Decree to the Greeks* sought to balance the Western and Eastern notions. The reformers (Luther and Melancton, Calvin and Zwingli) threw out the notion of purgatory. They believed that God's grace in Christ was more than sufficient and that human purification and satisfaction were part of a salvation-by-works mentality. The reformers were particularly incensed by the selling of indulgences which Tetzel argued helped release souls from Purgatory. The Roman Catholic church in the Council of Trent (1563) re-affirmed the teaching on purgatory while eliminating the excesses like the sale of indulgences. In the twentieth century, Vatican II and Paul VI re-affirmed the doctrine of purgatory.

Praying for the dead (those in purgatory) has been part of Roman Catholic piety since the beginning. Some other denominations share this spiritual practice. The fourteenth century poet Dante devoted one book (*Purgatio*) of *The Divine Comedy* (translated Sayers, 1955) to the journey up Mount Purgatory. His artistic depiction has had an enduring effect. Based on the theology of Thomas Aquinas, Dante portrays purgatory as both purification and reparation for sin. Purgation is God's work and not the result of a human effort. Humans however must cooperate with grace. Unlike Hell, penitents in purgatory gladly take responsibility for their sins, accept the just consequences, are purified and make reparation that is healing.

Some contemporary thinkers believe that purgatory or aspects of purgatory can be helpful today. In family therapy, O'Connor (1999) relates Dante's notion of purgatory to narrative therapy developed by White and Epston (1991). Taking responsibility for self, accepting the consequences for one's actions, and developing personal agency are similar to both narrative therapy and purgatory. Narrative therapy externalizes the problem much in the same way that Dante externalizes the seven deadly sins. Both approaches lead to transformation. Theologian Richard McBrien (1981) believes that purgatory is the shedding of the selfishness of the ego so that humans become more like God who serves others. Similarly, Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (1984) argue that family therapy should be modeled on Martin Buber's (1970) I-Thou that purifies self-centeredness in developing a deep respect and care for others. Hargrave (1994) in his research on forgiveness maintains that reparation of wrong doing is an important aspect of forgiveness and healing. Purgatory in this postmodern era has experienced resurgence while still being disputed.

See also: [▶ Buber, Martin](#) [▶ Forgiveness](#) [▶ Healing](#)

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Purpose in Life

Todd DuBose

Purpose in life is the prime motivator for meaningful and fulfilling relationships and projects in existence, without which we can find ourselves in abject despair. Hence, discernment about the nature and edification of the purposeful life is vital to every area of therapeutic care and spiritual well-being. In fact, one could say that the partnership between psychology and religion is found in the understanding and perpetuation of the purposeful life. The purposeful life has been described by such diverse writers as the existential logotherapist, Viktor Frankl (1905–1997), to the current, American, popular culture writers (Tolle, 2008; Warren, 2007).

Originally, “purpose” meant, “aim,” “intention,” “to put forth,” or “by design.” Inherent to purpose is some type of directionality that is transfused with significance. A thorough understanding of purpose in life, therefore, entails an investigation of two primary aspects of its character, namely, intentionality and teleology.

Intentionality is our “aboutness” or “oughtness” in any given circumstance and comportment in the world. Beginning with Franz Brentano (1838–1917) in the late nineteenth century and furthered by the founder of transcendental phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), intentionality was defined as a focus on or toward something that is a part of any experience. Experience is always an experience of something, or an experience that

is pointed, about which we are attuned or concerned. We are always heading somewhere, in some direction, searching, not only with our consciousness, but also with our entire comportment. Brentano's and Husserl's positions were altered yet again by Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) who saw intentionality as an every moment experience of “care” or “Sorge” (Heidegger, 1962). We find ourselves invested in how we are in the world, to what ends, and with what constitutes our own most possibilities.

Unlike Husserl, Heidegger did not believe we could shed or escape finitude and pre-understanding to achieve a pure phenomenological clarity. Rather, Heidegger believed that our very intentions are called forth by the already and always world of meaning in which we are “thrown” or find ourselves by happenstance. Jean Paul Sartre (1905–1980) furthered Heidegger's work by equating consciousness with intentionality, including an emphasis on deconstructing any assumptions of an unconscious. For Sartre, the unconscious is merely disowned consciousness and an example of bad faith (Sartre, 1956). In short, we are living out a purpose while searching for a purpose, as it the direction in which we are proceeding either has a design to it, or, with each step, gives clues to the construction of a purposeful life. As the debate continues, what is indisputable is that there is teleology to how we experience and for what purposes.

Teleology can mean either “end” or “purpose,” but an end or purpose that either is a part of or completes a particular design or another. The existence of something in a purpose-as-plan leaves us with the question of whether the circumstance creates space for something to exist, or if our purposeful comportment would exist no matter what provisions were provided for it. Do we develop certain strengths or illnesses because it fits our culture's needs, or would we have such strengths and/or illnesses regardless of the cultural prescriptions? Contemporary perspectives on this matter, also called a nurture or nature debate, consider our designs as a product of both natural and nurturing processes. The same issue contains another dilemma: are our designs, even if a combination of nature and nurture, a part of hard determined fate or providence, or are we free to create our designs as we choose? Finally, is our purpose serving a means for the ends of a larger purpose, or is our purpose an end in itself that uses the larger context as a means to our own ends? Do we become sensual creatures because we have senses, or do we evolve senses because we need to become sensual creatures? At the same time, much like air shifting towards the most vacuous space, does our direction in life take the shape it does because of opportunity for it to do so? The answers

to these and other similar questions are predicated on whether or not one sees teleology as extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination thereof. Nevertheless, all purpose in life is an intertwining of calling and commitment, of oughtness and response, and most importantly, of an inviting niche matched with a matching fit.

The importance of purpose in life within the field of psychology and religion is probably best known in the work of the logotherapist, Viktor Frankl (1905–1997). Frankl's development of logotherapy evolved from his lived experiences within a concentration camp during World War II. Frankl's now famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946/1959), showed what human beings could endure anything as long as the purpose and meaning to stay alive is strong enough to overcome one's psychic, physical, and spiritual pain. For Frankl, his purpose to live was two-fold: he had someone who loved him and whom he loved, and he had projects to complete before his death. Frankl's convictions integrate both teleology and intentionality in the will to meaning. Spirituality, contrary to an otherworldly phenomenon, is viewed from this perspective as the meaningful and fulfilling experience of discovering, following, being sustained by, and living out our purposeful existence.

Contemporary articulations of purpose in life continue with strong following. Rick Warren's (2007), *The Purpose Driven Life*, is a very popular text, at least among conservative to moderate Christians, and focuses on the discernment and synchronization of one's life calling and direction with God's providential plan for each person. Eckhart Tolle (2008) advises us that attachment to ego-based consciousness creates our conflicts and suffering, mirroring Buddhist noble truths, and invites us to a new consciousness that moves purpose beyond our egoism toward a deeper connection with that, which is more than us all, which is experienced in the fullness of the present moment. So whether in a popular or more formally academic way, discerning and following our purpose in life spotlights what matters in assessing and committing to live.

Commentary

Several questions remain for consideration in discerning the purposeful life. First of all, one significant concern is clarifying who gets to define what is purposeful. Social construction has shown how powerful the voices of others are in shaping our life direction. Our purposes in life may actually be handed to us by the group, herd, crowd, or status quo. Yet, even though agency is shaped by our

environmental and ideological contexts, agency still remains. One still assents or not, interprets or is interpreted, decides or is handed decisions. Merely to fit with the needs of the group's purpose has led to fascist and totalitarian horrors as much as the dictatorship-like apathy regarding how one's intentions impact others. Caution should be exercised in both directions, but all said and done; we are still left with the accountability of our own personal decisions and commitments toward a direction in life. What is purposeful depends on what is valued, be it survivability, safety, or otherwise. But inspiration and motivation seem to entail more than mere self-preservation. Thriving, as the old adage goes, is more than merely existing.

Another issue for consideration is whether purpose is found, discovered, or, as I argue, in line with the tradition of existential phenomenology, that purpose is already and always lived out in the world long before it becomes an object for reflection. Even in the very Sartrean act of creating meaning and purpose out of nothing overrides the obvious meaningful place from which the creation of meaning out of nothing can occur. Our enactments of significance fold in teleology and intentionality, while simultaneously incorporating finitude and freedom. One intends and complies with design based on what is meaningful to us, which at times doesn't show itself until times of great intimacy or crisis. As Will Barrett (1913–1992) noted, we often quibble about free will and determinism until our lives are at stake and our choices become quite pronounced (1979). Our lived purposes are so much a part of our moment to moment existence that Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) demonstrated that intentionality (and the reception of the intended response) is even in our reflexivity (Merleau-Ponty, 1963).

It should also be kept in mind that intentionality occurs within a context and clearing in which the intention is summoned and recognized. Jan van den Berg (1914–), the Dutch phenomenologist, argued that the metabletic moment, or the moment in which change occurs, is a convergence of many vectors that come together (van den Berg, 1983). A space is created for purpose to become itself, much like the unfolding of Heidegger's *Dasein*.

Finally, we must address the relationship of the purposeful like to nihilism. Albert Camus (1913–1960) knew this relationship well, and perhaps put it most succinctly when we argued that the only question worth asking is whether life is worth living in spite of its absurd constitution (Camus, 1955). His answer was a courageous "yes." It behooves us to be honest about how random and seemingly impersonal tragedy can be in its savagery, often

leaving powerful undertows of post-traumatic reactions and/or invitations to suicidal despair. But even suicidal despair is purposeful. One seeks to transcend one state of existence for another, which is driven by the pain of what is and what could be, albeit from a narrowed place of attunement. Each moment, though, we inescapably enact significance, whether or not we are attuned to it, or whether or not we find it pleasing. Each moment is nonetheless a leap of enacted significance and lived out long before analyzed (Kierkegaard, 1843/1941; Henry, 2002). Hence, if we are always and already enacting significance, there can be no purpose-less existence. Knowing this about the purposeful life frees us to embrace the “call of the wild,” where the “freedom to be” may actually be the heart of purpose in a life fully lived.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Doubt](#) [Faith](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Trauma](#)

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Q

Quaternity

John Pahucki

A concept in Jungian analytical psychology which refers broadly to images of totality and wholeness – such as the mandala – that appear in dreams or other spontaneous expressions of the unconscious. Jung believed that the quaternity should serve as the primary image of the God-archetype, replacing the Christian trinity which he viewed as psychically obsolescent. The Christian trinity was an inadequate symbol to denote psychic wholeness, Jung contended, as it failed to encompass the shadow and feminine aspects of the psyche. Jung was not clear on which of these two should be accorded priority, arguing for the inclusion of Mephistopheles in the quaternity, as the shadow cast by Christ, while also expressing great enthusiasm for the Catholic Church's adoption of the doctrine of the *Assumption* of Mary. This, he maintained, established a quaternity relation as Mary, representative of the eternal feminine, functioned as counterpart to the bridegroom of Christ.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mandala](#) [Shadow](#) [Transcendent Function](#)

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Quest

David A. Leeming

In the cultural dreams that are our myths, heroes serve as our personae, representatives of our collective

psyches – first as cultures and then as a species. Gilgamesh reflects a Mesopotamian physical and psychological experience and Odysseus could not be anything else but Archaic Greek. But when we compare the heroes of these various cultures, Joseph Campbell's heroic monomyth pattern emerges and we discover a hero who belongs to all of humanity. "The Hero," writes Campbell, "is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" (1949/1973 Hero: 19–20).

The central event in the universal hero myth, the heroic monomyth, is the quest, in which a hero – the representative of a culture – seeks some significant goal or boon for his people. Often the voyage involves archetypal stages such as the search for truth or riches or a lost loved one, a struggle with monsters, and the descent to the underworld. Jason goes in search of the Golden Fleece, Parcifal the Holy Grail, and the Buddha Enlightenment.

Interpreted psychologically, the questing hero is our cultural and collective psyche out in search of identity – that is, Self, the point of self knowledge at which the conscious and unconscious come together as a unity.

As we see in the overall heroic monomyth, the archetypal pattern that emerges from a comparison of hero myths, the quest involves several almost ritualistic stages. There is the initial unwillingness to begin the journey – the refusal of the call – reflecting the natural unwillingness of most of us to give up the status quo for a difficult exploration of our inner worlds. But the hero must leave home precisely because he must break new ground in the overall human journey, as we must on the psychological journey towards fulfillment or self identity. The old ways must be constantly renewed and new understandings developed. The knights of the Round Table must give up the comforts of Camelot to achieve renewal through adventure, and Gilgamesh must leave home to seek eternal life.

The questing hero looks for something lost – a father, a sacred icon of the tribe, something that will save the people, the plant of immortality, the Holy Grail. "Religious" or philosophical heroes such as the Buddha or

Jesus look to less tangible goals: Enlightenment, Nirvana, the Kingdom of God.

The quest always involves frightening and dangerous thresholds to be crossed – giants, dragons, evil kings, seemingly impossible labors such as those of Herakles. These all reflect the monsters within our own psyches and the thresholds we must cross on the way to wholeness. When the hero confronts the ultimate threshold and dies, and when he returns to the world after his descent into death, he is an image of our descent into the very depths of the unconscious world in preparation for a new “birth” of the psyche.

See also: [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Pilgrimage](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Qur'an

Ali Kose

The Qur'an is the sacred book of Muslims who believe its complete text came through revelation. Each word of it was revealed in Arabic by Allah (God) to Prophet Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel over a span of 23 years in the seventh century. The revelation of the Qur'an began when the Prophet was 40 years old. It consists of around 600 pages, 114 chapters, and over 6,000 verses. The length of chapters varies with the longest chapter having 286 verses while the shortest one has only three. The word “Qur'an” means recitation, and the first verse of the Qur'an to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad was a command to “read in the name of your Lord, the Creator. . . .” (Ibn Hanbal, 1895: 232).

Given that the Prophet was an unlettered man, his early followers eagerly memorized and recorded each new revelation as it was revealed. By the time the Prophet passed away, the Qur'an had been completed and many had memorized its entirety. Within two years after the death of the Prophet, the first caliph, Abu Bakr, compiled the Qur'an into a manuscript which became the basis for

the authorized editions that were distributed to each Muslim province during the rule of Uthman, the third caliph. A few of those early manuscripts have been preserved and can still be viewed in museums today. Thus, there is only one authorized-version in Arabic.

Muslims believe in the original form of all the revealed books which are mentioned in the Qur'an: the Torah of Moses, Psalms of David, and the Gospels of Jesus. The Qur'an also mentions Scrolls of Abraham. Moses' contemporaries were excellent in magic, so his major miracle was to defeat the best magicians of Egypt in his day. Jesus' contemporaries were recognized as skillful physicians; therefore, his miracle was to cure incurable diseases. The Arabs, the contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad, were known for their eloquence and magnificent poetry. Accordingly, Prophet Muhammad's major miracle to prove that he is a messenger of God is believed to be the Qur'an.

Final Scripture

The Qur'an is revered by Muslims as being God's final Scripture. Its verses are and have been recited and memorized by Muslims of every nationality. It is the verses of the Qur'an that Muslims read during their five daily prayers. The faithful ones are inspired, consoled, and often moved to tears by its poetic imagery.

For the past fourteen centuries, Muslims from all over the world have written the Qur'anic verses in various calligraphic forms, which were mainly produced and perfected by the Ottoman Turks. In fact, it was in Istanbul that the finest calligraphic scripts were produced. A famous saying, therefore, goes: “The Qur'an was revealed in Mecca, read in Egypt, and written in Istanbul.”

The Qur'an contains many verses which describe natural phenomenon in various fields such as astronomy, geology, and embryology. It is also a law book to provide some basic principles for both individual and social life. Its main message is to call people to turn to the Source of all being and the Giver of life and to serve Him with a pure heart, free of idolatry or superstition. It rejects the concept of salvation or special privilege based on ethnicity, race, or color. Spiritual salvation is to be achieved by an attempt to make amends for one's sins and a sincere intention not to repeat one's mistakes in the future. There is no official priesthood in Islam, and the “imam” is no more than a knowledgeable prayer-leader; one's sins need only be confessed directly to the Creator. The Qur'an presents itself as guidance for mankind as a whole. It is not for any particular people, place, or period in time.

The Qur'an as Source of Culture

Islamic culture is founded on the Qur'an. It is recited on special occasions like wedding ceremonies, and at certain times, such as going to sleep or setting forth on a journey. In this sense, it serves the purpose of a prayer book. Muslims also utilize the Qur'an as a psychotherapeutic book. For example, they read some certain verses and gently blow them upon the sick as well as for the soul of the deceased. Additionally, verses like the eleven in the last two chapters are read to protect against evil temptations or when one fears of possession by a devil. People hang up amulets which has chapters from the Qur'an around their neck, on the main door of houses, and on the rear mirror

of automobiles to protect themselves and their belongings from accidents, evil eyes, burglars, etc. The Qur'an is also popularly used as an oath book; people swear by the Qur'an to take an oath.

See also: [▶ God](#) [▶ Hafiz](#) [▶ Hajj](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Pilgrimage](#) [▶ Sharia](#)

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R

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Fredrica R. Halligan

One of the most recognized and beloved of the great saints of India, Ramakrishna (1836–1886) is best known for his devotion to the Divine Mother, the Goddess Kali. He was also founder of the Vedanta Society that now has branches in many major cities throughout the world. The doctrine of Vedanta is based on Hindu tradition, but Ramakrishna was also versed in comparative religious traditions as well. It is a characteristic of Hindu tradition to honor and respect all religions.

Ramakrishna's life was marked by many unusual spiritual phenomena. His birth was predicted to both his parents individually as being especially devoted to both Vishnu and Shiva, two of the Hindu Trinity. Early in life Ramakrishna was a nature mystic, occasionally falling into rapturous unconsciousness at the sight of great beauty or, on one occasion, when playing the role of Shiva in a play. He was the youngest son of a poor family that was of the *Brahmin* (priestly) caste. When his oldest brother went to Calcutta to teach Sanskrit and serve as a priest in the temple consecrated to the Goddess Kali, he invited his youngest brother, then 17, to assist him in his priestly duties. When this brother died just 1 year later, Ramakrishna took over as priest in the temple. It was at that point that he underwent a profound change, dedicating himself entirely to the service of the Divine Mother. He became so engrossed in religious life that he sometimes lost track of time. Nonetheless, this was a period of dark yearning for the young Ramakrishna. His ardent spiritual thirst was for *darshan* – a vision and teaching of the Divine Mother. At one point he almost committed suicide, and it was then that the Divine Mother first appeared to him. As he taught later, when yearning is as strong as that of a drowning man gasping for breath, then we will be given the gift of knowing God. (cited in Kakar 1991: 16f).

After this first powerful mystical experience, his appetite was whetted for more. Whenever he received visions of the Goddess, he would beam with joy, and enter into *samadhi*, which is a deep and intense meditative state wherein the ego enters into unspecified, formless, featureless consciousness, and then he would frequently become unconscious. When there was any diminution in the sense of her presence, he would loudly wail and become breathless. His family worried about him; they took him to an *Ayurvedic* doctor for treatment and even tried an exorcist. He gradually passed through this initial intense spiritual phase. Subsequently his family arranged a marriage for him with the 6-year old Sarada Devi. He complied with their wishes but never had any intention of consummating the marriage. In later life he envisioned his wife as the Divine Mother herself and worshiped her.

Teachings

For Ramakrishna taught that *Bhakti yoga*, or the life of devotion, is the quickest, surest path toward union with the Divine. From this perspective, all desire can lead one to God. The passions of life are all redirected toward God rather than toward the objects of the world. Devotional mysticism, rather than eliminating the sense of individuality of the aspirant, seeks to use that sense of ego-identity by recapturing the feelings of childlike innocence and fresh vision. It was in feeling as a child, aware of his total humanity and complete dependence on the Divine, that Ramakrishna prayed:

- ▶ To my Mother I prayed only for pure devotion. I said, 'Mother, here is your virtue, here is your vice. Take them both and grant me only pure devotion to you. Here is your knowledge and here is your ignorance. Take them both and grant me only pure love for you. Here is your purity, and here is your impurity. Take them both, Mother, and grant me only pure devotion for you' (Kakar, 1991: 16).

As a priest in the Kali Temple, Ramakrishna became known as a mystical genius and he was greatly sought after for teachings. He frequently taught that one can

certainly worship God with form – any form – or one can worship God without form. What matters, he said is simply the longing and the intensity of devotion. Not awe, but devotion. He was known to have many occult powers or *siddhis*, but he always made light of them. Ramakrishna conveyed his experiences through devotional songs, myths, analogues, metaphors and parables. He generally transmitted his teachings orally, but also gave special mystical energy transmissions to his close disciples.

Vedanta Society

His key disciples were originally 16 in number. After Ramakrishna's death, which occurred at age 50 due to throat cancer, Swami Vivekananda took over leadership of the spiritual community. Starting in 1893 at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions, the Vedanta Society grew into a world wide movement. Today the spiritual traditions of India are easily accessible through this group; and in particular, when feminists are searching for female god-images, the teachings of Ramakrishna make these ideas more plausible and available to spiritual aspirants.

See also: [▶ Great Mother](#) [▶ Hinduism](#)

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Ramana Maharshi

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Sri Ramana Maharshi (December 30, 1879 – April 14, 1950) was born into a Tamil Brahmin family, though freed himself of any caste restrictions at the age of 16

upon achieving liberation. His initial experience of *moksha* was famously precipitated by an acute psycho-spiritual crisis which manifested in an all-consuming fear of death. His emergence as an *Atiasrami* was complete with the realization that Spirit is deathless, that it transcends the body and endures after physical expiration. Although he highly recommended Bhakti as a path to the Absolute, he favored the non-dual system of Advaita Vedanta far more, his primary method of instruction (aside from the knowing radiance of his silence) to encourage seekers to ask of themselves the following all-important query: Who am I? For he understood that this question, if honestly explored with both passion and intensity would lead those seeking answers through the tempestuous fog of samsaric confusion to the shining realization of *Tat Tvam Asi* – Thou Art That – the apex of the Vedantic path.

His uniquely Maharshian blend of Advaita Vedanta has influenced untold numbers both East and West. His teachings prefigured and informed in a multitude of ways the kinds of existential inquiry that would later be integrated into the humanistic and transpersonal theories that would dethrone the despots of psychodynamism and behaviorism. But these are modern distinctions; for, in Vedantic understanding the domains of what we perceive to be those of “psychology” and “religion” overlap to the point of indistinctiveness.

Many modern interpreters of Asian religious traditions to the West have embraced the figure of Ramana Maharshi as the exemplar of perfected understanding incarnate in the flesh – most famously Ken Wilber, who in his mapping of the Kosmos, privileges Maharshi beyond all other sages. Subsequent authors critical of Wilberian spiritual politics see Maharshi's complete disregard for his own health and survival not as evidence of spiritual profundity but of severe psychopathology. In the final analysis, perhaps the answer lies not so much in either extreme but in the meeting of the two.

See also: [▶ Death Anxiety](#) [▶ Hinduism](#)

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Rank, Otto

John Pahucki

One of Freud's closest colleagues for 20 years, Rank (1884–1939) was an early and influential member of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society, serving as its secretary and the editor of two journals, the *Zeitschrift* and *Imago*. He was also a member of Freud's innermost circle, the "Ring" committee. Rank was one of the first lay analysts, a point of contention in the early days of psychoanalysis, receiving his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Vienna.

Rank's eventual break with Freud accompanied the publication of his book *The Trauma of Birth*, where he traced the genesis of anxiety neurosis to the birth experience. Rank's claims in this text threatened to subvert Freudian orthodoxy, with suspicious Freudians like Ernest Jones suspecting that Rank was seeking to replace the Oedipal drama with the experience of birth trauma as the central interpretive principle of psychoanalysis. Rank did, at places, call for a reevaluation of the importance of the maternal in psychoanalytic theory, recognizing the overestimation of the role accorded to the paternal in Freud's system. In this sense, Rank's work anticipated the criticisms and constructions of later feminist psychoanalysts like Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.

Rank's subsequent work retained this sense of the importance of birth as a paradigmatic experience in psychic development, arguing that this painful severance from the maternal was to some extent recapitulated in all later relationships as well as the countless "deaths" and "rebirths" the subject undergoes in the process of self-development, described in *Truth and Reality* as the "never completed birth of individuality."

Rank became increasingly critical of the deterministic elements of Freud's thought, arguing that Freud reduced the role of the ego to a mere "showplace" in the war between the biologically driven id and the socially imposed superego. Dissatisfied with Freud's rejection of ego psychology, Rank turned to his early philosophical influences, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, in developing his own psychotherapeutic system of "will therapy."

The goal for the subject, in the Rankian view, is to marshal his creative powers for the development and pursuit of his own projected ego-ideal. Following

Schopenhauer, Rank claimed that self-consciousness had developed evolutionarily as an instrument of the will, eventually becoming capable of autonomous determination. Based on this view, Rank developed a triadic psychological typology. The majority of people, he believed, simply languish in unconsciousness, not nearly self-aware enough to labor under the burden and alienation that self-consciousness imposes. The last two types are the neurotic and the artist. Both the artist and neurotic are akin to Schopenhauer's genius, individuals who are gifted with a kind of surfeit of will that grants them prospects for liberation and self-determination that few can enjoy. The neurotic, however, refuses to embrace his creative powers as this involves conscious acceptance of the conditions of life, namely the isolation and mortality imposed on him by the act of birth. The neurotic is thus, in Rank's term, a failed artist (*artiste manqué*) who turns his tremendous energies in upon himself in constituting his own suffering. The artist, by contrast, embraces life's transience and directs himself toward the formation and establishment of his own considered ego ideal, which often proves at variance with the ideal foisted upon him by parents and society. In this sense, Rank's conception of the artist type has clear resonance with Nietzsche's notion of the "overman" (*Übermensch*) and the "transvaluation of values."

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Kristeva, Julia](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism](#)

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Rebirth

[Resurrection](#)

Redemption, the Problem with

Ginette Paris

Humanity Redeemed!

The myth of redemption is so pervasive that it permeates global politics, education, ecology, feminism... Depth psychology is not exempt. Ostensibly a depth psychological analysis starts with a pursuit of consciousness, but covertly the process often conceal a quest for redemption, masquerading as individuation, actualization, psychological health, wholeness, centeredness, mindfulness, or whatever new jargon accommodates the Christian myth of redemption. The confusion between those two concepts leads to a belief that analyzing the unconscious will lead to a clean, pure, healthy psyche; that one will evolve into a luminous, loving, dignified, pacified soul. Such a utopian dream would be nice were it not for the fact that it produces an odious, sanctimonious persona. To break the trance, one needs to differentiate redemption from individuation, salvation from wisdom. The time allotted for our life is finite, but the quest for perfection is not and when the pursuit of perfection is ego-driven, it causes psychological exhaustion. The quest for redemption turns the person into a depressed pilgrim, out of spiritual wind from the long ascension towards an impossible apotheosis of individuation. Despite every guru's teaching and Jung's warnings that individuation can never be complete, sparks from the ego are often taken for an "illumination." Because the spiritual need is real, so is the danger of inflation.

For depth psychology to emerge as a force of renewal of the sense of the sacred, it needs to escape from inflation about the quasi-divine principle of the Jungian "Self." Escape from ego fixations includes theoretical fixations upon the masters that have trained us. Deification of the masters and their theories, is, in itself, a sign that the myth of redemption is active. The masters, gurus, leaders who ask to be "adored" by their disciples are usually in the business of selling redemption ("Think like me and you'll be saved!"). When adoring disciples notice that their idols have feet of clay their critique becomes vicious, fueled by a sense of betrayal and disillusionment. However, such decanonization would not have been necessary had they not deified their master in the first place.

Neither Voltaire, nor Nietzsche, nor Freud, nor Jung, nor any of the modern philosophers of atheism were

completely free of the redemption myth. The Christian God may have been declared dead, but the mourning is not finished; it is too big a loss to be completed in just a few generations. Jung's nostalgia for the Christian God resurfaces at times in his theory about the Self (capital S); I have met many who *believe* in Jungian theory as one believes in a Savior, because they miss the certainties of faith. Until our mourning of God is done, the fantasy of redemption will grow out of all sorts of grounds.

Zarathustra's rallying cry of "God is dead provided me with an enduring motivation to practice psychotherapy: I felt then – and still do today – that a world without the Christian God need not be a desperate world. Psychotherapy is a daily battle against despair. Nevertheless, the deconstruction of conventional religions does not alleviate the need for a sense of the sacred; but where is it? The desire for redemption resurfaces in every cause that is dear to one's heart: eco-feminist redemption (when women rule, all will be fine on this planet); political redemption (this party will change everything); financial redemption (as soon as I have enough, I'll follow my bliss); romantic redemption (one day my prince/princess will come); psychological redemption (one day, I'll be individuated, one of the Illuminati). Each of these fantasies stems from the monotheistic mythology. Even the ideal of Buddhist detachment can conceal a typical Christian fantasy where the guru replaces God, and an all-encompassing philosophical system serves as faith.

To make sense of my small life, I need the amplification of my ordinary life-journey into something I can call an Odyssey; I want the magnification of my battles at the office into an Iliad; I know my house is not a castle, but in a way it is. This aggrandizement of our story, which is not at all an aggrandizement of the ego, is a valid protection against feelings of absurdity. In times of great difficulty, the narrative logic breaks down and the transformation of facts into a narrative fails. One tries to tell the events this way and that way, from this or that perspective, but the collection of facts remains absurd. The trajectory of one's life appears seemingly random – what was THAT all about? The breakdown in the narrative capacity is usually interpreted as a form of despair, similar to the despair of losing one's faith. Yet, it can also signal a very different kind of breakdown: that of the redemptive myth. Only then can the loss of the redemptive hope appear as a necessary loss.

Life is Absurdly, Awesomely Ugly and Beautiful

Christians come from a culture that has millennia of religious indoctrination in which meaning was defined

by hope of salvation in the afterlife. Nietzsche and many others bulldozed the field, but the efforts of many more generations may be necessary to change not only our religious attitudes, but our psychological makeup as well. We have only begun to expose the racist, sexist, oppressive, violent, hypocritical, parasitic, exploitative cowardice present in the cement of actual institutionalized religions. The need to explore the destructiveness of our pervasive redemption myth is as necessary as a good look at the shadow. We could begin with examining how it is very possible and feasible to live outside the redemptive myth, without falling into despair. For example, if one looks at the usual promises of human love – “I’ll love you forever” or “I’ll never abandon you” – one sees the *absurdity* of it. These promises may be sincere, but are *absurd* if one considers that mortality is an absolute limitation to the infinite depth of the experience of love. Nevertheless, this limitation, with all the sweet lies around love, is not reason enough to waste the spiritual value of love. We bring children into this world, and we love them madly, even if we know they will suffer and die. We love them with an intensity that is almost painful, even though we know, despite all our efforts, that they, like ourselves, will suffer and die. It doesn’t make much sense, but not loving makes even less sense. The sense of the absurd, which is a consequence of the loss of a religious faith in a literal god may come to be experienced as something as natural as the limitations of human love, a reality that simply is, like other realities that cannot be logically explicated.

The core idea of early twentieth-century existentialists, with respect to the experience of the absurd was to suggest the necessary dissolution of all the meanings that have been taken for granted. Their sense of the “absurd” is often interpreted as meaning “nonsensical” but it does not; I am suggesting it means “mysterious.” The notion that existential angst is the unavoidable consequence of the loss of faith in a redemptive god may very well be simply a consequence of a very long domination by the monotheistic God. Religious sentiment, like the sentiment of love, has a history. Building cathedrals was a task carried on by many generations; deconstructing the redemptive obsession may take at least that long. Postmodernism, with its unrelenting attack on ideologies and single meanings, has acted as a sort of collective therapy. It took us to a place in our consciousness where the loss of the redemptive myth is simply equal to the major absurdity of most of life’s trajectories.

It is a fact that an acute sense of the death of God can stir up feelings as painful as when experiencing the death

of a child, or the loss of a loved one in a car accident. It seems so absurd, so meaningless, the anguish is so acute. The danger is then to invest all of one’s psychic energy in *explaining* the absurd, to redeem the tragic event (Why? why? why?) The suffering soul become obsessed with a search for meaning; and because the tragic cannot be redeemed, that search itself becomes tragic. This is where I find that a depth psychological approach can be of immense help, because it moves away from explanations and remains in the territory of the tragic. It leads into the deepest layers of the imagination, where psychic regeneration can occur. It does not offer redemption but a map of the journey through psychic devastation.

Augustine asked himself the age-old question that historians have in common with depth psychologists: can one find meaning in history? (And the corollary: can I find meaning in my story?) Augustine’s answer constituted dogma for a very long time. Yes, history has meaning, says Augustine. It is the meaning given by faith. If one loses faith, one also loses meaning. Problem solved! By remaining unconscious of our Christianity, we tend to apply that same logic and replace one bible with another, falling right back into Augustinian dogma. One of the current tasks of depth psychology, as I understand it, involves dumping the last residue of that Augustinian style of consciousness, based in faith. Not that there is a need to bring up Augustine’s case again. He has been tried and found guilty over and over. Nevertheless, Augustinian debris is blocking new construction. Depth psychology is experimenting with a next style of consciousness, one that allows a person to endure the absurd, to cope with the insufferable, to lose one’s innocence and, instead of turning to Augustinian redemption, to learn to swim in the Styx, imagine life differently, making room for its tragic element. Depth psychology suggests, for example, that you are absolutely free to jump off a bridge, if suicide is what your soul ultimately wants, but before you literalize death into physical death of the body, try a metaphorical death. Try an imaginal trip to the Underworld. Try a form of loving through pain, living with loss, aging in character. Try imagining another self, inventing another myth, writing another chapter in your story. Travel first, see the inner world, and then decide if it is literal or metaphorical death you want.

The desire to find meaning is a human one, and is given expression in the creation of a narrative, but there is too often a contamination with the belief in a redemptive principle which want to turn bad into good. “My baby is dead, but she is now an angel in God’s paradise” is a frequent defense against despair,

a direct consequence of not having completed the mourning for one particular long-lived God. The almost irresistible reflex of turning everything into morality of good and evil belongs to faith, belongs to a God that defines right and wrong. The adventure of a depth-psychological analysis is a move away from this kind of religious conditioning. The need for redemptive ideals is replaced by another style of consciousness: the capacity to value the awe-inspiring mysteries of the psyche and of the beauty of the sensate world. As one opens up to the possibility of living a full and generous life, the thirst for redemption diminishes and the need to be of service to Others, to culture, and to nature increases.

Human glory, health, and fortune do not suffice to fill the vast inner space. We need to imagine a wider world, one of archetypal dimension. All humans, once they take care of survival needs, feel that there is a beyond-the-ego-realm. Many still choose to call “it” God, or Goddess, or Love, or First Principle, or “any other term of your choice,” as they say in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with impressive success. Transcendence means a sense of value above, beyond and apart from the material world. Depth psychology has helped many understand and feel that life lived in the service of Justice, Truth, Love, Compassion has enough transcendental value without any imposition of pre-fixed meanings and pre-defined values. This is why the search of a junction between psychology and the various religious traditions feels like a precious alternative to institutionalized religions; it recognizes the human need for something bigger than ego, but refuses to let religious orthodoxies manipulate that need.

Acknowledgment

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See also: [▶ Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Reductionism

Charlene P. E. Burns

Introduction

Reductionism is the process of breaking complex entities, concepts, or phenomena down into their smallest constituent parts or processes in order to more fully understand them. While essential to scientific study, reductionism generates difficulties when dealing with higher level phenomena like those related to human religious experience. The problem is especially difficult for the psychology of religion because of the tendency among many researchers to assume that description is explanation.

Historical Trends

Reductionist tendencies in the psychology of religion have historically led researchers and analysts to commit the fallacy of “nothing buttery” (Paloutzian, 1996). The discovery that certain areas of the brain are active during meditation, for example, has led some to claim that experiences of the one who meditates are *nothing but* byproducts of neurochemistry. From the standpoint of religion, this is obviously problematic. From the standpoint of psychology it is also, if less obviously, problematic since reductionism of this sort ends in loss of important information about the object of study (Zinnbauer and Pargament, 2005). Prior to the advent of neurological and cognitive sciences, the most reductionist approaches were perhaps the Freudian and behaviorist schools of thought. In Freud’s framework, the “personal God is, psychologically, nothing other than an exalted father” (Freud, 1910/1957: 123) and religion is illusion, “fulfillments of the oldest, strongest, and most urgent wishes” (1927/1961: 30). For the strictly behaviorist school of thought, religion is reduced to publicly observable behaviors, which are nothing more than operantly conditioned actions. For B. F. Skinner, the father of behaviorism, a god is nothing more than the “archetypal pattern of an explanatory fiction” (1971: 201).

The problematic nature of reductionism was recognized by some from the start. William James wrote against what he called medical materialism and advocated a descriptive approach to the study of religion. Although it is debatable how well he succeeded in avoiding

explanation, James' seminal *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) remains the standard for approaching religion from a phenomenological point of view. Theodore Flournoy (1903) identified two fundamental principles for a psychological approach to religion, the first of which is the "exclusion of the transcendent." By this he meant that psychologists should always strive to avoid making claims about the actual existence/nonexistence of God or other aspects of transcendent experience. One can learn a great deal about human psychology by studying the ways people conceive of God without making claims that these ways of conceiving prove anything about the reality of God. Carl Jung also repeatedly attempted to make this distinction clear: "the image [of God] and the statement [about God] are psychic processes which are different from their transcendental object; they do not posit it, they merely point to it" (1976: 556).

Current Thought

Over the course of the twentieth century, the majority of psychologists who studied religious experience tended toward the reductionist explanatory approach. This may in part be accounted for by the apparent "genuine antagonism toward religion among typical psychologists" and may itself account for the fact that this is an under developed field of study (Wulff, 1997: 16–18). But it seems the psychology of religion is in the midst of a paradigm shift. It is now seen as an area rich in research possibilities that overlaps with research on neuroscience, philosophy, anthropology, evolutionary biology, and cognitive science. Emmons and Paloutzian (2003) have shown that religion and spirituality are complex, multifaceted phenomena that cannot be understood from the vantage point of a single discipline. The only viable approach today is one like their "*multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm*" which "recognizes the value of data at multiple levels of analysis while making nonreductive assumptions concerning the value of spiritual and religious phenomena" (2003: 395). Approaching religion in this way is to presuppose different and interrelated "planes of information" wherein the most fundamental are "necessary but not sufficient" for explanation of higher order phenomena (Zinnbauer and Pargament, 2005: 31).

See also: ➤ Freud, Sigmund ➤ James, William ➤ Jung, Carl Gustav ➤ Psychology of Religion

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Refusal of the Call

Alice Mills

In Joseph Campbell's monomyth model of the hero quest, the hero may not immediately agree to undertake the quest on receiving the call to adventure. Refusals of the call are quite common in fairy tales, myths and other sacred tales. The hero does eventually consent to undertake the quest, but there are plenty of examples of people never undertaking the quest to which they have been summoned. In *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Campbell cites an example of a reluctant hero and heroine from the Arabian Nights story cycle and examples of those who altogether refuse from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *The Bible*. Refusal in these cases has a calamitous outcome: the nymph is transformed into a tree; God refuses to help those who have refused his call.

For the Christian, human life can be considered a quest to which all are called by the fact of their birth into this world. St. Augustine conceptualizes each Christian as a warrior engaged in spiritual warfare against the devil (though in Augustinian theology, salvation is only possible through the grace of God, not by individual effort alone). Those who refuse the call to champion the Christian cause

are damned, just as much as those who actively fight on the side of the devil. According to Jesus, God hates those who are lukewarm even more than those who are either hot or cold. Those who refuse the call must face the consequences; opting out of the spiritual war is not ultimately possible.

Freudian theory does not consistently recommend one response to the call to adventure, understood as an internal process within the psyche. In his earlier writings, Freud considers that the healthy psyche accommodates the desires of the id rather than repressing them. In his later works, however, such as *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, he argues that the id's appetites must be repressed in order for civilization to continue. In terms of this later Freudian theorisation, Campbell's monomyth call would be understood as the id's call to act out its sexual or aggressive impulses with a danger of complete loss of self-control; this call must be refused in order for the social order to be preserved. In Jungian terms, however, the call should in general be accepted, and refusing the call to adventure has deeply undesirable consequences. In the context of the healthy psyche with appropriate inner boundaries, a Jungian would understand the call to come in the first instance from the shadow, signaling its readiness to become gradually more integrated in the process of individuation. The hero's quest is then an internal effort to explore, acknowledge and accept the psyche's unconscious contents. Refusing this call means robbing consciousness of its potential richness and depth. Living thus becomes more like a mere struggle to exist; purpose and happiness are drained away. The repressed will return with increasingly peremptory calls for attention. If the call is refused, the person runs the risk of becoming possessed by unconscious contents in psychosis or of suffering severe psychosomatic illness as the body protests. Ultimately, refusing the call is psychological suicide.

See also: [▶ Augustine](#) [▶ Campbell, Joseph](#) [▶ Hero](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Quest](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Relational Psychoanalysis

Steven Kuchuck

Introduction to Relational Theory

In addition to other principles that will be discussed below, relational psychoanalysis assumes that psychic structure develops in response to interactions and relations with primary caretakers and is therefore accessible in psychotherapy or psychoanalysis through an examination of the transference-countertransference relationship. Stephen Mitchell was the primary founder and passionate voice at the center of this new way of thinking. With his large body of written work, founding of the journal *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* and central role in the formation of relational programs in New York and then internationally, Mitchell had a crucial influence on the first generation of relational analysts.

The term relational first appeared in the psychoanalytic literature in 1983, when Mitchell and Jay Greenberg proposed a synthesis of Fairbairn's Object Relations and Sullivan's interpersonal theories. Object relations theory (especially as developed and influenced by Klein, Fairbairn, Guntrip and Winnicott) offered an alternative to Freudian theory based not on drives pressing for discharge, but rather on connections with others as the main motivation in development and later life, and the resulting internalization of objects and self-other relationships. Different theorists emphasize different aspects of this process and while seen as a useful model of development, it nonetheless offers a somewhat disparate set of concepts that are sometimes difficult to apply to clinical practice. Similarly, Sullivan and his followers also emphasized the centrality of relationships to the development of psychic structure. Interpersonal theorists, in an effort to distance from classical, intrapsychic theory, deemphasized internal process in favor of here and now relating as the most accessible and therefore most important unit of study for the psychoanalyst. Originally employing a firm, authoritative style characteristic of its main founder's personality, contemporary interpersonal theory is often indistinguishable from relational psychoanalysis, though there are still sometimes subtle differences in emphasis and technique.

Key Concepts in Relational Thinking

The heart of relational psychoanalysis involves a focus on and mutual understanding with patients that therapist-patient interactions will always reflect the ways in which patients interact with others and as children were interacted with by their primary objects. Often though not always made explicit, there is an additional assumption that the analyst's particular history and internal world will also come to bear on the therapeutic relationship and may in fact influence or even pull for particular transference responses. In this way, relational psychoanalysis is a two-person psychology that while engaged in for the growth and benefit of the patient, must nonetheless take in to account the mind of the analyst as well. Selective self-disclosure, once thought to be taboo, is now seen as an important tool that when used with discretion can both enable the analyst to acknowledge his or her contribution to the current relational dynamics, and also enables the patient to recognize otherwise dissociated material through its impact on the analyst and others.

Departing from the Classical

This shift from a one to two person psychology, and an emphasis on the primacy of relating rather than drives, are two of the major differences between relational psychoanalysis and the classical Freudian theory that preceded it. While still asymmetrical-the analyst sets the parameters and tone of the treatment- relational analysis is co-constructed rather than dictated by an "all knowing" analyst, and is therefore a more mutual endeavor. In this way of thinking, the therapeutic relationship itself serves as the main vehicle for therapeutic action and change. Concepts of intersubjectivity, wherein the interaction between and mutual influence of analyst and patient subjectivities are understood as central to understanding and working through the patient's psychic conflicts and, related to this, the analytic third: the ideas and affects that belong not to analyst or patient alone but rather in the middle, co-constructed space between the two, multiple, shifting self states: there is no singular personality constellation, and enactment as co-determined, inevitable, and crucial to deepening the therapeutic relationship, are just some of the more important hallmarks of relational thinking. Relational psychoanalysis maintains a hermeneutic and also a dialectical approach; an attempt is made to maintain tension between seemingly opposite or opposing principles rather than either-or thinking or

complimentarity, which can result in a limiting dichotomy of doer-done to thinking.

Postmodernism

Relational psychoanalysis exemplifies the postmodern tradition in which it evolved. It transcends the notion that one theory or hierarchical, fixed, rigid set of rules and ways of thinking can explain the vast complexity of human behavior. Standing less in opposition to than inclusive of, it's an offshoot of and/or includes aspects of classical theory, self psychology (especially the current thread of intersubjectivity theory as developed by Stolorow and associates), object relations, interpersonal and attachment theories. There has also been an active dialogue with and feed from gender and queer theory, feminism, culture, race, class and political activism. An attempt is made to understand and include many groups that were and felt themselves to be powerless, pathologized and excluded from more traditional psychoanalytic thought (referred to in the relational literature as "the other")-women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered, people of color and others previously underrepresented in society and mainstream psychoanalytic teaching and practice.

Believing

Religion was seen by Freud and many of his followers to be the result of regressive fantasy and infantile neurosis. One goal of psychoanalysis then was to free the patient from the illusion of religion. In light of this, we might add people who believe in god or maintain other religious and spiritual attachments to the above mentioned list of those disenfranchised from classical psychoanalysis. As mentioned, postmodernism and contemporary schools of psychoanalytic thought such as relational psychoanalysis are critical of dichotomies. While the ability to reality test is of course still a necessary consideration, automatic, rigid distinctions between fantasy and reality, illusion and "truth" and science versus religion are no longer tolerated. Patient and analyst subjectivity and personal beliefs are given equal weight to or privileged over objective "facts" such as whether or not god exists. In large part as a result of relational psychoanalysis, religion is coming out of the closet. Prominent relational writers such as Lew Aron, Charles Spezzano, Michael Eigen and others write about religion and the influence of their and patients' religious beliefs and practices on the transference-countertransference field. Relational psychoanalysts have committed

themselves to welcoming and examining all aspects of the patient's and clinician's subjectivity. In this respect religion—either the presence or absence of spiritual belief and practice, associated thoughts, feelings and fantasies, can come to be an important part of the relational psychoanalytic dialogue.

See also: [Affect](#) [Dissociation](#) [Femininity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [Gender Roles](#) [God](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homosexuality](#) [Judaism and Christianity in Freudian Psychology](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Postmodernism](#) [Power](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Religion](#) [Religious](#) [Self](#) [Self Psychology](#) [Sullivan, Harry Stack](#) [Transference](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Relativism

Roberto Refinetti

Relativism refers to the contention that moral values and/or factual beliefs are not good or correct in themselves but are good or correct only in reference to other values or beliefs. The term relativism is often used with a negative connotation, and many relativists prefer the term *relativity* to express the idea that moral values and

factual beliefs are *relative to* the context in which they are adopted. The relativist posture is often contrasted with the absolutist posture – that is, the contention that at least some moral values and factual beliefs are *absolute* (i.e., good or correct in themselves).

History

Records of relativistic thought are available since the beginning of written history. Among the pre-Socratic thinkers in Ancient Greece, Heraclitus and Protagoras are often cited for their relativistic pronouncements. Heraclitus' famous metaphor asserting that a person cannot bathe twice in the same river (because the water is constantly moving and the river does not remain the same) implied that everything is in constant change and, consequently, that what is true today may not be true tomorrow. Likewise, Protagoras' relativistic thought is encapsulated in the sentence "Man is the measure of all things," meaning that truth or virtue are not absolute concepts but are rather dependent on who experiences them.

In the middle ages, René Descartes sought certainty and absolute truths but learned in his travels that "those who have views very different from our own are not therefore barbarians or savages, but several use as much reason as we do, or more" (Descartes, 1637). Later on, the 1800s brought to light much relativist activity, including Freud's relativization of the conscious mind, Marx's relativization of the free market economy, and Darwin's relativization of man's place in the animal kingdom.

In the twentieth century, Thomas Kuhn did much for the cause of relativity. Kuhn never saw himself as a relativist, but his analysis of how progress is attained in science led him to question the absolute nature of scientific knowledge. In his classic book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, he asserted that scientific knowledge is always part of a transitory paradigm that, by necessity, must eventually be discarded in order for scientific progress to take place (Kuhn, 1962). Quite more explicitly, Willard Quine used the expression *ontological relativity* to describe the fact that the objects of a science cannot exist in themselves and must instead be interpreted or reinterpreted by one theory or another (Quine, 1969).

Logical Coherence

Relativity might at first seem intrinsically contradictory, as an absolute proof of relativity would directly contradict

the relativist cause. Relativists, however, readily recognize that to say that “everything is relative” is the same as to say that “everything is absolute.” That is, when one says that statement x is relative to context y , one says not only that it is possible that statement x will not be true in context z but also that it is actually absolute in context y . This so-called “arbitrary absolute” is just as absolute as it is arbitrary (relative). Thus, the obvious fact that there is a world around us is not denied, but the absolute character of this world is put in question.

The notion of an arbitrary absolute is clearly illustrated by a musical staff with and without a clef. Notes on the staff are musically nonexistent if there is no clef (see Fig. 1a). If a treble clef is placed on the staff, such as to provide a frame of reference, then the indeterminate note assumes the absolute ontological identity of an E above middle C (Fig. 1b). This absolute E is arbitrary, however, as it becomes a G when a bass clef replaces the treble clef (Fig. 1c).

It should be noted that, because absolute relativity is indeed nonsensical, relativists do not fret about exhausting the relativization of the universe. Rather than demonstrating that nothing is absolute, relativists enjoy pointing out instances of relativity. Expunging alleged absolutes – or “questioning authority” – is the true impetus. This relativistic impetus is pervasive among intellectuals in



a Indeterminate note



b Note is an E



c Note is a G

Relativism. Figure 1. Musical staves showing the same quarter note as either an indeterminate note, an E, or a G, depending on the chosen clef (or absence thereof).

contemporary Western culture and is reflected in the emphasis on “critical thinking” in education.

Antagonism to Science

Relativists are often maligned by scientists. This is not surprising, as science is commonly thought of as an absolutist institution. Many – possibly most – scientists share a positivist view of science, according to which a real world exists independently of science and has structural and functional properties of its own that can be objectively known and understood by scientists. Against this, relativists such as Michel Foucault argued that the language of science is part of the language of a culture and, therefore, it establishes beforehand what can and cannot be discovered by scientific research (Foucault, 1969). Similarly, David Bloor claimed that pieces of scientific knowledge are nothing more than symbols standing for social struggles among scientists (Bloor, 1976), and Helen Longino stressed that the logical and cognitive structures of scientific inquiry cannot even develop without a dynamic interaction between scientific practice and social values (Longino, 1990). This relativization of science was not well received by a number of scientists and philosophers, as is clear in an edited volume entitled *A House Built on Sand: Exposing Postmodernist Myths about Science* (Koertge, 1998). The criticism expressed in this volume was partially justified because quite a few “postmodernists” (relativists) were simply ignorant of science and scientific methods. It is also true, however, that many of the self-appointed defenders of science were ignorant of philosophical relativity and made unjustifiable absolutist claims.

Antagonism to Religion

Relativists are equally apt at enraging religious leaders. After all, *faith* (belief in authority) is central to most religions. By doubting religious dogma, relativists act as heretics. That religious leaders despise relativity is exemplified by Pope John Paul II’s thoughts as expressed in his encyclical letter *Faith and Reason*. There, he posited that faith and reason are essential human attributes, and that reason without faith leads to nihilism and relativism. He explicitly condemned relativism and asserted that the rejection of relativism is prescribed by the Bible (John Paul II, 1998).

See also: [Doubt](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Postmodernism](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Psychology of Religion](#)

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Religion

Peregrine Murphy Kavros

Introduction

The word religion is derived from the Latin, *religare*, to bind, restrain or tie back, and was first recorded in English in the eleventh century. Religion is defined as a system of faith and worship or faithfulness or devotion to a principle.

Agreement about the definition of religion has been lacking. The West generally views religion as a system of practices and belief towards a sacred or supreme being. Worship in the East has emphasized transcendence or liberation, as opposed to systematic belief. Many definitions of religion have been suggested, but one approach that avoids cultural bias and secular ideologies of human origin has suggested that religion include: doctrine (a creed of belief), myth (an historical sacred narrative), ethics (moral code of sacred origins), ritual (use of sacred objects/ceremony including the historical sacrifice), experience (devotional, mystical, experiential), and social institutions (educational, social gatherings, social service, pastoral care), all of which are inter-related.

Researchers are trying to understand the relationship between religion and health, psychological functioning and decision making. Methods of studying religion are becoming increasingly formal and rigorous. Researchers use multidimensional assessments to evaluate religious affiliation, belief systems and practices. A few of the more commonly used instruments are described below,

but for a more thorough review, please refer to the work of Koenig et al. (2001).

Assessments Used in Religion

Affiliation

Roof and McKinney (1987) have developed the most common form of measuring religious affiliation. Duke University has expanded the primarily Western denominational scale to include Muslims, Greek Orthodox, Agnostics, and Atheists.

Belief

Glock and Stark's (1966) Orthodoxy Index identifies beliefs about God, Jesus, miracles, and the devil. Beliefs of orthodoxy, fanaticism, importance, and ambivalence have been measured by Putney and Middleton's (1961) dimensions of religious ideology scale.

Religious Practice

King and Hunt (1967) have assessed participation in church attendance, organizational activities, and related church work. Considering that church attendance may be influenced by relationships, (Fetzer, 1999) evaluates the emotional support provided by a congregation. Murphy et al. (2000) demonstrates the impact of religious and spiritual practices on decision making in long term illness.

Practices of Piety

Stark and Glock (1968) evaluates private prayer; and, Lenski (1963) assesses the extent to which one consults God when making everyday decisions.

Background and Theorists

Early relationships between psychological attitudes and religious belief can be found in the pre-patriarchal rites of the southeastern pre-Indo-European peoples during the Paleolithic era. The religious belief system featured a monotheistic female deity as center and possibly reflected the mother-kinship societal structure. This belief system may have developed to counter fears arising in response to

the natural elements, which were beyond their control (ca. 6500–3500 BCE). Within the Greco-Roman culture, the monotheistic God was preferred by Plato to the polytheistic gods that were vulnerable to vice, ignorance and imperfection. An early source of Christian doctrine was the *Didache* (ca. 140). Here, peace is promoted with singularity of thought and avoidance of debate. St. Augustine in *Confessions* describes the emotionally charged psychological turmoil as difficulty with singleness of belief: “My desire was not to be more certain of you but to be more stable in you” (St. Augustine: 133).

William James (1958) explains that there are two aspects to religion: institutional, and personal. Institutional religion includes worship, theology, ceremony, and ecclesiastical organization. Personal religion reflects the inner dispositions, which prompts personal prayer outside of ritual. James believes that religion is the “. . . feelings, acts and experiences of the individual. . . in their solitude, as they stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.” Freud (1856) offered the first of many psychoanalytic interpretations of religion. He observed the rituals of indigenous people and concluded that religion developed from the guilt experienced by the son when he tries to replace the father. Later, in the *Future of an Illusion*, Freud stated that human beings are essentially unhappy, and try to escape their unhappiness by engaging in religious ritual. He believed that religion enabled individuals to externalize religion’s precepts while disguising possibly incompatible internal intentions. Jung felt that religion provided something that the external world did not. However, over time he believed that individuals saw that religious truths were sometimes empty and not integrated. Neurosis was the state of being at war with oneself, which he saw could be cured by the Christian virtue of forgiveness. Healing occurred as the representation of religion and the self evolved in the psyche.

More recently, object relations theorists (Rizzuto, 1974, 1979) integrate the representation of the mother (or caretaker) as a central figure in religion. Drawing from the writing of Winnicott (1953, 1975) where he suggests that religion was synonymous with an object that the infant used to help with transitions; this illusory experience provided a bridge from the inner world to the outward reality. The child’s representation of God, therefore, evolves from the child’s relationship with his/her caretakers. This representation of God is shaped by all of the emotional factors that are dominant in the child at the time of formation, and evolves with the changing representation of the parents and the inner view of the child’s sense of self. Theorists (Rizzuto, 1974, 1979) believe that it

is possible that one can hold a representation of God while not believing, but when one believes in the representation of God, one expresses loyalty to the inner representation of the self, and to the ones who nurtured the self into existence.

See also: [Conscience](#) [Faith Development Theory](#) [Forgiveness](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [God Image](#) [Great Mother](#) [Healing](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Myth](#) [New Testament](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Psychology as Religion](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Ritual](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#) [Wisdom](#)

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Religion and Mental and Physical Health

Christopher S. M. Grimes

Since earliest antiquity humans have theorized and speculated about the relationship of religion and mental and physical health. Early writings, including those contained in Jewish scriptures, demonstrate a belief that mental or physical illness was understood as sometimes resulting from uncleanness, sinfulness, or as a result of a separation between the individual and God. A period of emotional turmoil in the life of King Saul in 1 Samuel, for example, is attributed to the Spirit of God departing from Saul and an evil spirit tormenting him. These writings are evidence of a belief within earliest cultures of a relationship between religion, spiritual healing, and mental and physical health.

Religious Practices and Healing

In many religions the concept of health refers to a sense of spiritual, mental, and physical wholeness, and in many ancient cultures the healing arts were closely related to

religious practices. As early as the fifth century BC followers of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine and healing, sought services and advice of priests of the cult of Asclepius to find cures to their ailments through, among other things, the interpretation of divinely inspired dreams. There are accounts in the Christian New Testament of Jesus providing healing of physical infirmities such as paralysis, blindness, and leprosy, as well as casting out demons from individuals feared by others because of their aberrant mannerisms and behavior. The cult of Asclepius and the accounts of the miracles of Jesus illustrate how religious leaders, because of their close relationship with the gods, God, or a higher spiritual power, have historically been viewed as healers and sought out by the lame who believed that a religious or spiritual act could restore physical health. Various religious practices ranging from prayer, scripture reading, anointment with oil or perfume, laying on of hands, interpretation of visions, casting out demons, and even sacrifice have been included in healing ceremonies across the ages.

As a result of advances in biology, physiology, and psychology across the millennia, and specifically during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, a more complete understanding of the causes of physical and mental illness has developed. Presently, within contemporary cultures, treatment of physical and mental illness are predominately based on scientific knowledge or assumptions from previous scientific research. Within Western cultures, medicine and psychology's emphasis on applying scientifically based treatments for physical and mental illnesses, while deemphasizing spiritual matters, resulted in segmented treatment of the individual's concern: Physicians are sought for physical concerns, psychiatrists or psychologists treat mental concerns, and religious leaders tend to the spiritual needs of the individual. However, since the later part of the twentieth century there has been a trend within Western medicine and behavioral healthcare toward increased awareness of the relationship between religion/spirituality and mental and physical health. The segmented treatment of the person has been less pervasive in Eastern cultures where a mind-body-spirit approach to healthcare has remained popular and the distinction between religion, medicine, and psychotherapy are less pronounced. For example, the Chinese medical practice of acupuncture which emphasizes restoring balance and correct flow to the body's Qi, an immaterial substance of vital energy; and the Buddhism emphasis on mindfulness, a concept now gaining popularity in current Western psychotherapy. Indigenous and tribal cultures, even in the West, have tended to maintain a holistic view of the person. Present day Native Americans while heavily

influenced by Western culture, may include traditional spiritual ceremonies and interventions alongside interventions informed by modern scientific research. Religious groups who subscribe to only spiritual interventions for physical or mental illness exist as a small minority.

Religion and Wellbeing

Contemporary research has consistently found a relationship between religion and mental and physical health. Generally, researchers have found individuals who practice mainstream religions have fewer physical illnesses and tend to live longer than their nonreligious counterparts (Koenig, 1999; McCullough et al., 2000). George, Ellison, and Larson (2002) propose there are multiple factors that account for these findings. Relevant to physical health, most religions explicitly prescribed good health habits while recommending moderation or abstinence of behaviors that are known to be detrimental. Relative to mental health, individuals who belong to a religious group benefit from social support and gain psychosocial resources as a result of their membership. Religion, especially organized religion, offers adherents coping resources. In times of stress, upheaval, and suffering, individuals often turn to their religious beliefs and/or a religious community to provide comfort, hope, and a sense of belonging and being loved. Generally, religiosity is associated with positive coping in times of distress (Larson and Larson, 2003). Regular attendance and participation in religious services offer members the opportunity to connect with a group of concerned individuals who support one another when there is a need. Religious communities not only care for the spiritual need of their members, but also provide help for those who are ill or in distress. Religion also provides a systematized faith and value system that helps the believer organize and makes sense out of his/her existence and relationships with fellow humans and the natural world.

However, not all forms of religion are equally beneficial to the individuals' overall well-being. Larson and Larson (2003) have noted some individual's religious beliefs lead to a sense of guilt, condemnation, and/or abandonment that can result in poorer coping and increased distress. While there has been relatively consistent support for a positive relationship between well-being and internalized intrinsically motivated religion based on a secure relationship with God, the opposite is true for religion that is imposed, unexamined, and reflective of a tenuous relationship with God; this type of religious belief

has consistently been negatively related to well-being (Pargament, 2002).

Current research on the relationship between religiosity and mental and physical health suggests a complicated multidimensional relationship. Through a review of the literature on religion/spirituality, health, and well-being, Erwin-Cox, Hoffman, Grimes, and Fehl (2007) revealed four models implicit in the current literature to explain this relationship. One model found in the literature suggests that religiosity has a positive impact on physical health as mediated by mental well-being. A second model suggests that religiosity has a positive impact on mental well-being as mediated by physical health. A third model suggests religiosity as that impacts both physical health and mental well-being while at the same time physical health and mental well-being influence each other. Erwin-Cox et al., however, settle on a fourth model that suggests: Religion has effects on both physical health and mental well-being; physical health and mental well-being effect each other; and physical health and mental well-being impact religiosity. Erwin-Cox et al.'s model emphasizes the bi-directional and interactional nature of the relationship between religion, physical health, and mental well-being revealed in the current literature.

In conclusion, that there is a relationship between religion and physical and mental health is not in doubt. The relationship between religion and physical and mental health is generally positive, although this is not always the case. Future research will hopefully clarify the multidimensional relationship between religion and mental and physical health allowing for the best possible holistic and integrated care of the individual.

See also: [American, Buddhism](#) [Amita Buddha](#) [Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#) [Biblical Psychology](#) [Buddhism](#) [Chinese Religions](#) [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Demons](#) [God](#) [Healing](#) [Jesus](#) [Mindfulness](#) [Miracles](#) [New Testament](#) [Psychology](#) [Psychology and the Origins of Religion](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Religiosity](#) [Religious Coping](#)

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Religiosity

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Introduction

The word religiosity derives from the Latin, *religisitas*, and was first recorded in English in the fifteenth century. The original sense of religious feeling or sentiment has come to be used to mean excessive or pathological expression of religious feeling.

Religious, religiousness and religiosity are used interchangeably within medical literature. This flexibility in nomenclature is confusing; it is not clear whether the religious behaviors described are excessive, pathological, or customary. Expressions of religiosity vary depending upon the religion and culture. Religiosity includes affected or excessive religious feelings or sentiments and may include behaviors that are dogmatic and pathological; religiosity may manifest as extreme scrupulosity, guilt, worry, or ritual, glossalalia, delusions, distorted beliefs, and desires of persecution or martyrdom. Hebrew and Christian Scripture distinguish between the expressions of religious sentiment. Ecclesiastes (1.16–17) states that it is the “. . . mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. . . .” James (1:26–17) writes “If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. [God desires] Religion that is pure and undefiled.” Sr. T. More attempted to clarify the heuristic: aberrant religious behavior as “a feverish state of what may better be called religiosity, than religion” (Southey, 1829).

Scientific research on the relationship between religiosity and psychological functioning has contributed

to a greater understanding of the field, but one must exercise caution in generalizing assumptions about religiosity across religious groups and cultures. Research findings have demonstrated positive, negative, or non-existent relationships. Results may be obtained through correlation (how the variables vary together); and it may be difficult to determine whether religiosity affects psychological adjustment or whether psychological adjustment manifests religiosity.

Background and Theorists

Physicians in the nineteenth century were intrigued with manifestations of religiosity. One of the more significant neurologists of the time, and a professor of Freud's, Jean Martin Charcot, demonstrated that professed demonic possession was a form of hysteria. Pierre Janet, another student of Charcot's, described a patient whose religious behaviors reflected a number of mystic stances, including the stigmata. Janet identified early forms of obsessive compulsive disorder in his patient.

Aspects of obsessive compulsive disorder are still associated with religiosity (religious scrupulosity). This crippling association has been observed in the religiosity shown by ultra-Orthodox Jews. Determining when customary religious ritual transcends to pathological religiosity has sometimes, but not always, been determined by how much distress the individual is experiencing and his/her resistance to change.

Some religious experiences such as forms of mysticism have been deemed meaningful. Delacroix studied the mystics for signs of psychopathology/religiosity. After observing fervent signs of religious behavior, Delacroix concluded that mystics were not pathological but that their unconscious life was rich and creative. He believed that the mystics were evolving to new and creative forms of existence, transforming their personalities to achieve selfless unification with God. Although mystics, through prayer, attempted to unite with God, Delacroix felt that this process was not a form of disassociation (the sense of being split off from normal awareness). While extreme and lengthy presentations of dissociation can be manifestations of religiosity, some researchers believe moments of disassociation may occur without one's awareness during religious rituals and may not include aspects of psychopathology or religiosity. One researcher discovered that many people experience being in communion with a holy other (numinous). These experiences are similar to what Otto (1950) described in *The Idea of the Holy* – as one transcends oneself to be in the presence of the sacred.

The religious groups that use extreme ritual, dogma, indoctrination, and alienation from the larger community promote fear and a form of religiosity that is deleterious to physical and mental health. As when the approximately 900 members of the People's Temple, which was led by the Rev. Jim Jones, committed mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, on November 18, 1978. The way in which one perceives God can influence how one perceives the external world. When one perceives God as merciful, kind, and forgiving one is more likely to experience positive effects in relation to mental and physical health than when one believes that God is distant, punishing, or vindictive.

Our understanding of religious beliefs has developed from research involving attachment theory. Attachment theory holds that individuals form cognitive representations of the self and others in relationship. These cognitive representations evolve out of the child's interactions with his/her caregivers, which then influence his/her behavior and expectations in relationships. Researchers here observed children's behavior as they were separated and then reunited with their caretaker. Children were classified as: *insecure/avoidant*, when they minimized contact with their caretaker, which was understood to be a defense against rejection; *insecure/ambivalent*, when children desired maximum contact, and expressed considerable distress at separation, which was understood to be reflective of inconsistent caretaking; and, *secure*, when children did or did not show distress at separation, and when they sought closeness, especially at times when they needed comforting. Rizzuto (1979) investigated the effects of attachment on how people perceived God, and their experiences with religious belief. They found that individuals who described their experience with God as *anxious* were more likely to express signs of psychopathology such as, neurotic behavior and a propensity towards negativity. Religious behavior and belief were similar, in that when *insecurely* attached people were in adult relationships that were described as *insecure*, they compensated by increasing their involvement in religious activities. Individuals, who described themselves as *securely* attached, tended to demonstrate stable religious behaviors. *Securely* attached people adopted religious beliefs that were similar to those of their caretaker's, and changed their religious beliefs or activities slowly over time. Alternatively, people who described *insecure* childhood experiences displayed signs of religiosity, which were more often than not highly emotional experiences. These individuals also tended to experience sudden changes in their religious beliefs and were more prone to acts of conversion.

See also: [▶ Altered States of Consciousness](#) [▶ Conscience](#) [▶ Delusion](#) [▶ Discernment](#) [▶ Faith Development Theory](#)

[▶ Glossolalia](#) [▶ James, William](#) [▶ Numinosum](#) [▶ Religion](#) [▶ Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#) [▶ Religious Experience](#) [▶ Religious Identity](#) [▶ Unconscious](#)

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Religious

Peregrine Murphy Kavros

Introduction

The word, religious, derives from the Latin, *religiōs-us*, the suffix, *us*, – means full of, and is first recorded in the twelfth century in Old French. Religious is most commonly defined as demonstrating the full practical, or spiritual, (human spirit, soul, or higher moral qualities) effects of religion. The word also refers to a person belonging to or bound by holy orders.

How one demonstrates the full practical or spiritual effects of religion varies. Variables influencing religious behaviors are multidimensional, measurable, and are associated with aspects of interiority. When surveys are conducted on the general population, a single dimension of belief often underlies many religious behaviors. However, when people who claim to be religious are queried, some aspects of religion weigh in more heavily over others. In order to understand how religious behaviors influence outcomes in community life, well being and longevity, many researchers have called for more rigorous investigations. Two of the assessments measuring some of the factors influencing religious behaviors are described, as well as a brief review of the background influencing the dialog between psychology and religion. An expanded review of the instruments measuring dimensions of religious behavior are found in Koenig et al. (2001).

Assessment of Religious Behaviors

Religiousness

Variables influencing religious behaviors can be identified with the Fetzer-NIA Scale, which was developed by a consortium convened by the Fetzer Institute (Idler, Ellison, et al., 2000). The scale assesses belief, religiousness,

history, private piety, morals, financial support, social support, experiences, and coping. Among other investigations, the scale has been used to measure the impact of religious behaviors on health outcomes (Murphy, et al., 2000).

Orientation

The Allport & Ross (1967) Religious Orientation scale determines whether individuals are *Intrinsically* motivated and live as though personal and religious beliefs are aligned; *Extrinsically* motivated who use religion to provide security, status, and self-justification; *Indiscriminately Pro-religious* individuals who produce responses falling in both scales, and individuals who are neither *Intrinsic* nor *Extrinsic* and are considered *Indiscriminately Antireligious/Nonreligious*. Intrinsic religious orientation has been significantly associated with many factors, one of which is *Absorption*, openness to experience and the ability to alter one's emotional and belief systems across a variety of situations; a protective mechanism against the effects of morbidity and mortality.

Background

Some researchers, despite the questionnaires wide use, have questioned whether religious orientations such as, Intrinsic and Extrinsic are distinctive. Drawing from Allport's model, Bateson and Ventis (1982) correlated categories of *Internal* and *External* with Intrinsic and Extrinsic. Findings from this study revealed three independent categories: religion as means, Extrinsic; religion as an end, Intrinsic; and, *Quest*, which describes individuals who are still questioning their religious process. More recently, an investigator tackled the questions surrounding the scales, reformatted both models and equalized the questions. Again, Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Quest emerged as three distinct categories. Individuals, who were not religious, had low scores in all three categories. Most importantly, religious orientation was found to vary among the persons, who were sampled, and their particular situation or context.

See also: [Quest](#) [Religion](#) [Religiosity](#) [Ritual](#)

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Religious Coping

Ryan M. Denney · Jamie D. Aten

Tix and Frazier (1998) defined religious coping as the “use of cognitive or behavioral techniques, in the face of stressful life events, that arise out of one’s religion or spirituality” (p. 411). Religious coping strategies often stem directly from an individual’s religious beliefs system, and helps them to construct meaning and form interpretations (both positive and negative) of stressful situations and events (Gall and Cornblat, 2002). Moreover, religious coping has been found to be a distinct form of coping separate from secular forms of coping (e.g., cognitive restructuring) (Tarakeshwar and Pargament, 2001). It has been hypothesized that the incorporation of religion into the process of coping provides a source of meaning

that may not be as salient or readily accessed during times of distress with secular forms of coping (Krause, 1998).

Religion and Coping with Trauma

When faced with stressful life events, many people turn to their faith for comfort, support, and a sense of meaning and control (Pargament and Ano, 2006). Most commonly, researchers have found that people use prayer, worship, and social support from a faith community to cope with suffering (Pargament, 2005; Tatsumura, Maskarinec, Shumay, and Kakai, 2003). A study of 586 members of main-line Christian churches in America revealed that 78% of church members utilized religion in their coping with difficult life circumstances (Pargament et al., 1990). A study of 1,000 battered wives revealed that one-third sought help from clergy (Bowker, 1988). Of 1,299 African Americans responding to an interview concerning prayer, 80% reported using prayer to cope (Ellison and Taylor, 1996). Similarly, Kesselring, Dodd, Lindsey, and Strauss (1986) reported that 37% of Swiss respondents and 92% of Egyptian respondents believe that God will help them through their cancer-related illness. Koenig, George, and Siegler (1988) also reported that 45% of older, Protestant adults believed religion to be an important part of coping. In short, many people turn to religious leaders and practices to cope with traumatic or stressful circumstances.

There are other factors and personal predictors that serve to influence the probability religious coping strategies will be utilized (Pargament, 1997). Overall, gender, religious affiliation, level of education, and ethnicity tend to be the most important determining factors in the use religion to cope with major life stress or trauma (Pargament, 2002). For example, minority status has also been correlated with predictors of religious coping (Bearon and Koenig, 1990; Bjorck and Cohen, 1993; Ellison and Taylor, 1996). Furthermore, the fewer resources available to a person, the more likely religious coping strategies will be utilized. Research has also found that the more serious and potentially threatening the stressor, the more likely people are to rely upon religious coping strategies (Pargament, 1997).

Primary Approaches to Religious Coping

Five primary approaches to religious coping have been identified (Pargament et al., 1988; Pargament, 2002). The self-directed approach refers to people

relying on their own internal resources to cope, believing they are God-given. The deferring approach occurs when people passively transfer responsibility for problem solution to God. In the collaborative approach, people view themselves as partner with God to solve problems. Pargament et al. (1988) and Pargament (2002) also describes several correlates of these approaches, with the self-directed approach to coping being linked to higher self-esteem and an increased sense of control. The deferring approach has been connected to lower self-esteem, external locus of control, poorer problem-solving skills, and increased intolerance for human diversity. Collaborative religious coping, which involves reciprocation of responsibility between the person and God, has been associated with higher self-esteem, and internal locus of control, and has been described by several researchers as the most psychologically healthy method of religious coping.

Positive and Negative Coping Strategies

Religious coping strategies have also been divided into positive and negative categories (Pargament, 1997). Positive religious coping occurs when people believe that God is guiding and supporting them through their times of trouble. Researchers have shown that those who experience spiritual support often report more positive outcomes (Pargament, 2005; Tatsumura, Maskarinec, Shumay, and Kakai, 2003). Churches and synagogues are used more than any other social support system as a source of social support in times of distress. People sometimes describe their faith communities as “second families” as they rely on the financial, emotional, and spiritual support of members and clergy. This is an especially salient point in light of the cogent empirical evidence that social support is positively related to healthy coping. Additionally, positive religious reframing has been linked to better outcomes, as persons who attribute death, illness, or other major losses to the will of God or to a benevolent God are more likely to experience positive coping, as are persons who frame their experience as an opportunity to grow spiritually (Pargament and Ano, 2006). For instance, cancer patients who attributed more control of their illness to God have reported higher self-esteem and better adjustment (Jenkins and Pargament, 1988). Tarakeshwar et al. (2006) also found that positive religious coping was related to better overall quality of life in persons with advanced cancer.

Negative religious coping mechanisms, which occur when religion and spirituality play a role in coping that

is not health-promoting (e.g., feeling abandoned by God) have also been identified. Pargament (2005) found that people who frequently use negative religious coping strategies also tend to report an increase in negative physical and psychological experiences such as depressed mood and a lower quality of life.

Major medical illness, for example, may lead to more distress and even physical symptoms because the illness itself represents a threat to one’s foundation of faith (Pargament and Ano, 2006). McConnell, Pargament, Ellison, and Flannelly (2006) found that negative religious coping was significantly linked to various forms of psychopathology, including general anxiety, phobic anxiety, depression, paranoid ideation, obsessive-compulsiveness, and somatization. Also, the relationship between negative religious coping and various forms of anxiety was more pronounced for persons who had recently experienced a serious illness such as cancer (McConnell, Pargament, Ellison, and Flannelly, 2006). Faith communities while often a source of support can also be a source of psychosocial anxiety (Pargament, 1997). Sometimes distressed persons report feeling abandoned by church members and leaders, or they feel they have been a disappointment to their faith community. This can have a negative impact on coping, which can lead to feelings of hopelessness, despair, and resentment. Just as there is positive religious reframing, there can be also be negative reframing. Seeing one’s trauma as a deserved punishment from God is one of the most common negative religious reframes reported in the literature, the effect of which is often to stifle adaptive coping (Pargament, 1997). Overall, religious coping is a multifaceted construct that has been found to affect how people understand, interpret, experience, and respond to stressful events.

See also: [Healing](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Religious Experience

Robert Kaizen Gunn

Insofar as one defines religious experience as an experience of the transcendent or the supernatural (or some equivalent term), religious experience has been around

in some form since humans developed symbols and language. We may look at the full range of religious experience in either of at least four ways: (1) how the experiences of the transcendent are viewed from within the religion itself; or (2) how the experiences may be evaluated and understood from a discipline outside any particular religion; (3) the unique approach to religious experience in a religion based on mind; and (4) the use of various drugs to induce transcendental states of mind.

Religious Experience as Viewed from Within the Particular Religion

Each religion usually begins with a profound experience of the transcendent on the part of the founder. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Moses, all had profound experiences of God that were the basis for Judaism. Jesus had direct experiences of God and his followers had direct experiences of him for the founding of Christianity. Many Christians emphasize the importance of having a personal experience of Christ, called “being born again.” Islam was founded on the experience of Allah by Mohammed. Buddhism began with the enlightenment experience of Shakyamuni Buddha, and continued, particularly in Zen, to emphasize the importance of one’s own direct experience of enlightenment, which would be verified by one’s teacher. The value of direct personal experience in religion is in its transformational possibilities: those who have them often claim to have a clearer purpose for living, a shift away from egocentrism in the direction of altruism and identification with the existential plight of all living things; and a sense of time that transcends human chronology. Within each religion there are often criteria by which particular religious experiences are evaluated as to their authenticity.

Within each of the world religions, where the direct experience of the transcendent is not emphasized, emphasis usually falls on correct doctrine, belief or ritual and practice for approval of one’s status within the religion. Thus, Judaism has its requirement of circumcision, the Mosaic Laws, the Torah and Talmud; Christianity has its gospels and New Testament canon, its belief in Christ as formulated by one of the ancient creeds (Nicene, Apostles’, etc.) and allegiance to the Church; Islam has its daily prayers and weekly gatherings, and reliance on the Koran; Buddhism has its precepts for monks and laity and the teachings of the Buddha as written in the Dhammapada, and the many sutras that followed.

Religious Experience Viewed from Disciplines Outside Religion

As an object or field of study capable of being investigated and understood by someone outside any particular religion, however, the very concept of religious experience is a relatively new idea in the history of civilizations. It requires the conceptual possibility of a secular consciousness, i.e., a consciousness that reflects on itself and on all human phenomena without presuming *a priori* any particular religious truth. It requires someone to look at religious experience from outside the religion.

In this sense, religious experience is impossible to consider without at least the theoretical possibility of atheism or at least secularization, which is to say, it is impossible without the capacity to stand back from all religions and observe religious activity as an outsider. Such a stance aims to observe, evaluate, categorize and understand religious experience on phenomenological grounds alone, without any reference to the truth claims of any particular religion.

As such, religious experience as a field of study never appeared in the world before the nineteenth century CE, that era in which God was declared dead by Nietzsche, religion was declared an opiate of the masses by Marx, God was seen as a projection of the immature human psyche by Freud, and the entire origin of species was theorized by Darwin without any assumptions of theistic causation.

One might say that the roots of an entirely secular, non-theistic *weltanschauung* were laid by the Protestant Reformation's break from the Roman Catholic Church (1517–1648), for without the concept of a legitimate consciousness separate from ecclesiastical control, all observations and truth claims were captive to the Church, as attested by the church's condemnation of Galileo (1564–1642) and Spinoza (1632–1677), among others. Although the grounds for separating from the Roman Catholic Church were *intra-religious*, based on the interpretation of the Biblical text itself, the revolutionary and ground-breaking departure was the concept of the individual conscience and the personal direct access to God as superseding ecclesiastical authority. The conception of the possible validity of an individual's conscience being greater than the *consensus ecclesiae* was the first step toward the development of a secular consciousness, a consciousness not constricted by and defined by the church's authority. In this sense, the Protestant Reformation was a necessary precursor to the Age of Enlightenment, which provided the humanistic philosophical and

political framework from which the natural and social sciences of the nineteenth century sprang. Only after Freud, Marx, Nietzsche and Darwin could the idea of a study of religious experience *per se* be considered.

William James may easily be called the father of secular studies of religious experience. His book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (James, 2004), published in 1902, remains the classic work in the field. In it he outlined the four characteristics of religious experience as being (1) transient, (2) ineffable, (3) noetic, and (4) passive. The experience is transient in that it occurs in a limited frame of time, after which the person returns to ordinary life. The experience is ineffable in that it is hard for the person to put it into words. It is noetic insofar as the person usually feels that she/he has learned something of deep and lasting value, on the basis of which her/his life is altered significantly for the better. The experience is passive in the sense that it was not created by conscious control, but "just happened." Even if one engaged in deliberate activities to increase the possibility of the experience, the actual experience was not under the person's will power or control.

It was in this book that James distinguished between the "once born" and the "twice born": the once born are people who go through life without having any powerful religious experience that significantly changes them; the twice born are those who do have such a powerful religious experience that they see it as the basis for an entirely new (and improved, from their point of view) way of living.

It was also in this book that James distinguished between the religion of "healthy-minded" people and that of those of a very disagreeable temperament. In James' view, healthy minded people choose a form of religion that is basically positive in its outlook on people and the world, whereas less healthy-minded people choose a religion fraught with the dynamics of judgment, anger and wrath. This distinction was invaluable for future studies on the particular characteristics of healthy/unhealthy people and, by extension, healthy/unhealthy religion.

The value of James' book far exceeded the numerous brilliant insights he offered: it laid the groundwork for the entire field of psychology of religion, and psychology and religion. Moreover, it suggested how religion might be a proper field of study for other sciences. Thus, since James, the many dimensions of religious experience continue to be mapped by the fields of philosophy of religion, phenomenology of religion, sociology of religion, comparative studies in religion, history of religions, neurotheology, transpersonal psychology, and genetics.

Meanwhile, as society has become increasingly secularized and mainstream religion has suffered loss of

favor, many people identify themselves as being “spiritual” without being “religious,” indicating an interest in experiences of the transcendent but a decidedly negative valuation of both institutionalized religion and monotheism. Such people tend to gravitate toward Eastern, non-theistic religions, or to personally constructed amalgams of religious and spiritual truths and practice. The result is the expansion of the meaning of “religious experience” to include “spiritual experience,” in order to include those who intentionally don’t want to be identified with institutional or theistic religion.

Religious Experience as Viewed from Within a Religion Based on Mind

More than 2,000 years before Freud, a religion arose in India that was based on the intentional exploration of the nature of mind itself. Standing midway between religions that evaluate religious experience on the basis of his or her own internal standards and scientific disciplines that evaluate religious experience from an outside observer standpoint, Buddhism is entirely based on realizing the nature of mind and what is its ground or source through intensive meditation. Fully aware of the mind’s tendency to distort, project, deny, and to engage in whatever activities may confirm a sense of a permanent self, Buddhism trains adherents in awareness of the mind’s dynamics in order to break through the delusion of a fixed, separate and immutable self to ultimate reality, the emptiness of all things. Such a breakthrough is what is called enlightenment in Buddhism. From that experience one realizes in a total (whole body and mind), non-conceptual way the basic tenets of Buddhism: the interdependence of all things, the impermanence of all things, wisdom and compassion.

Religious Experience Initiated by the Use of Drugs

The last category of religious experience to be considered is unique in that it is based on the ingestion of some form of chemical, whether found in nature, such as peyote, or manufactured, such as LSD, psilocybin, cocaine, or nitrous oxide, among others. Taking one of these drugs induces an experience with many of the characteristics identified by William James as marks of traditional mysticism: a transient and ineffable feeling of ecstasy, of loss

of boundaries, an oceanic feeling of oneness with all; the noetic conviction that one has experienced some profound existential truth about the nature of ultimate reality. On the other hand, since it is prompted by the ingestion of drugs, such experiences do not have the fourth trait of passivity James listed. The significance of the passivity in traditional religious experience is in understanding it as an experience of grace, beyond one’s control. This element may be missing for those who use a drug to trigger the experience. For some people, nevertheless, drug-induced experiences of transcendence do become transformative in their day-to-day life. Such a life change is usually made possible by the person’s continual reflection on the experience and construction of a method for integrating the experience into their common life. On the other hand, as those religions that have made use of drugs in their rituals (most notably, Native American tribes), certain precautions (such as the presence of a trust other person or community, or the context of a ritual) need to be taken so that the drug functions in a constructive way.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ James, William](#)

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Religious Identity

David M. Bell

Introduction

Most scholars in religious studies and the humanities understand religious identity to be a simple matter of self-identification with a religious tradition. The term is popular in these fields, but such an approach offers little in the way of conceptual clarity or insight into the formation or functioning of religious identity. When approached from a psychological perspective, religious identity reveals significant insight into the cognitive role of religion; new research may influence the basic questions asked about the psychology of religious beliefs and practices.

The Psychology of Identity

Erik Erikson (1902–1994), a theorist who essentially began the psychological study of identity, originally spoke of identity as a central ego achievement to be reached in adolescence (1950). One's *ego identity* ("ego" comes from the Latin nominative pronoun "I") is formed from simpler identifications made in childhood and then integrated into a coherent sense of self in adolescence. Through evolution, Erikson theorized that the adolescent is biologically wired to necessarily seek social resources for this identity process during this time of life. This illustrates the interdisciplinary quality of Erikson's *psychosocial model* as being both psychological and sociological. The psychological person is designed to pull identity content from the relative and always changing cultural resources. Observing that identity is often formed and integrated in adolescence only to be later unraveled, Erikson later expanded this stage of human development to also be a constant psychosocial element in adult life as aging individuals encounter other identity crises throughout adulthood.

The current psychological study of identity can be divided into two primary areas. One area of research looks at the cognitive mechanisms and neural structures that are utilized to construct autobiographical memory. There are three primary findings in this relatively new area. First, the field of autobiographical memory emphasizes that identity is more than a mere sociological

identification. One's identity is a neurological component of the brain that is formed through memory encoding, selective retrieval, implicit memory schemas, and many factors of psychosocial selective biases. New research in functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has shown specific modular patterns of long-term memory encoding in which particular regions of the brain are utilized in different types of memory which are complexified by variants in the content of the remembered experiences. Secondly, this research has shown that memories of experiences are re-constructed and that individuals typically overestimate the correctness of their memories. Humans naturally recreate their event memories to fit patterns of belief expectations. As part of this constructive process, implicit memories (subconscious) are formed from a collection of various experiences that then function as a filter through which to interpret later experiences. Finally, researchers in autobiographical memory have demonstrated a psychosocial quality in the cognitive formation of identity. Through developmental studies of autobiographical memory, Fivush and Haden (2003) have shown that children form a coherent sense of identity primarily through learned patterns of adult and peer interaction.

Another area of identity research uses psychometric measures of identity to determine levels of *identity status* formation. Marcia (1966) took Erikson's concept of identity development and sought to break it down into four identity statuses that could be measured. He distinguishes two factors that are relatively independent of each other in identity formation. The crisis axis measures whether a person had ever had an identity crisis, and whether they are currently in an identity crisis. The commitment axis determines whether or not someone has made a commitment to a certain identity. Identity diffusion (no crisis, no commitment), identity foreclosure (no crisis, commitment), identity moratorium (present crisis, no commitment), and identity integration (past crisis, commitment) make up the four identity statuses. The content of the qualitative interview and the psychometric measure of identity neatly divides the questions into primary areas of vocation, gender, politics and religion. Marcia's popular paradigm has been used in hundreds of published articles. The preponderance of research in identity and the psychology of religion has used variations of Marcia's measure with other established psychological measures of religiosity to reveal interesting connections in which religion is often shown to be a positive resource in overall identity achievement (see review by Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger and Gorsuch, 2003: 143–146). Such studies have shown a

connection between identity achievement and increased intrinsic religiosity, belief-threatening consultation, and the level of religious commitment. Identity moratorium is positively associated with higher levels of quest, belief threatening consultation, lower levels of religious commitment, and religious doubting. Identity foreclosure is correlated with extrinsic religiosity, religious commitment, and belief-confirming consultation. Overall identity diffusion is generally related to lower levels of overall religiosity.

There are two caveats to this work. First, these findings are limited due to biased sampling with subjects who are: primarily in the United States; primarily adolescents; primarily Christians; and primarily more religious than the norm of American society. More importantly, another limitation lies in the basic theoretical conception of the studies. Using a basic identity status measure (which includes religious content) and a basic measure of religiosity, the researchers end up confounding their results by partly measuring the same factor – religiosity. To show a relationship between religiosity and identity development, one would either have to remove the religious content from the identity measure, or design an entirely new measure of religious identity. This also reveals a problem for identity research in which the primary measure of identity is biased towards more religious people.

Religious Identity Formation and Functioning

In the last decade, researchers in identity studies have begun to focus on specific cognitive domains of identity, which may be neurologically unique from other domains, and may be formed independently of other domains. This finding of *domain specificity* has shown that identity statuses may be entirely different in one identity domain than in another domain. Several recent studies have looked at unique patterns of identity formation in the specific areas of ethnicity, gender, vocation, and politics. But few have considered the unique formation and function of the domain of religious identity. Until recently, there has been no conceptual work in a psychology of religious identity, and no tool with which to measure or establish uniqueness of religious identity. A recently proposed psychometric measure of religious identity seeks to look at identity formation through the lens of religiosity separated from overall global identity (see direction of this research in Bell, 2008). In one study of 650 subjects, four

statuses of religious identity were defined and measured in ways that revealed clear patterns of cultural resources (i.e., particular religious backgrounds) predicting but not determining overall identity formation. The conceptual bases of the four statuses were also reconsidered to avoid simple assumptions by Marcia about identity achievement in the specific content of religion. A fourth status of “religious identity integration” is being proposed that better reflects a more fluid commitment instead of a rigid commitment to a particular form of religion.

Likewise, this conceptual work considers the functioning of religious identity as potentially the most unique domain of identity in which: the focus of religious identity is often away from the self/ego (transcendence to other), much more capable of imagination, and more prone to implicit belief patterns of narrative construction. In the same study of 650 participants, it was demonstrated that people use religious identity in both implicit and explicit ways. In conjunction with the cognitive research in implicit memories, individuals use religious identity in ways in which they may be largely unaware. The importance of one’s religious identity often increases in importance due to levels of social approval bias. For example, the explicit functioning of religious identity is often presented as much more important than when measured implicitly. For the researcher, getting at such a disclosure of religious identity is difficult not only due to social approval bias, but also due to “deity approval bias.” People may want to say that religion is more important to their identity than it really is not only because of social approval concerns, but also because the deities of their belief system may not approve if it is not important enough.

One goal of this research in religious identity is to discover why it is that for many individuals religious identity lingers in the mind much longer than religious beliefs or the desire to do religious practices. For those who change or lose their religious practices, and even their religious beliefs, individuals may find that their religious identity is still present and continues to keep them somewhat oriented around religion. This illustrates how religious identity, for many individuals, may be a core psychological mechanism that takes on more permanence than beliefs and practices. Such a proposal may significantly influence how researchers in psychology and religion approach and ask the most basic questions about the role of religion in the mind. Another consideration includes the reframing of the notion of religious orientation. Allport and Ross’s (1967) measures of extrinsic and intrinsic orientation were efforts to distinguish different motivations in individuals’ religiosity as

explicitly reported by the participants. By looking at levels of social approval bias, a psychological understanding of implicit and explicit religious identity takes the question of motivation to a different level in which self-reported motivation is only one consideration.

The work should also extend beyond the measures of such factors. With adequate funding, fMRI studies could investigate whether there are unique modular areas of religious identity. To date, studies have shown how general autobiographical memories are retrieved and constructed, but this research has not considered how the content of the identity may affect the retrieval process.

In short, the psychological study of religious identity is fundamentally a psychosocial investigation in which religious content is often a rich identity resource for individuals in most societies. Certainly one does not need to be religious to be able to form an overall, integrated, and healthy global identity. Religion is part of the many cultural resources that are highly relative and prone to changing over time. Yet, the ways in which the individual needs to form a notion of self through adulthood is uniquely affected by the amount of religious resources by which that individual is surrounded. Further, religious identity content, as a cognitive domain, operates differently than other domains, including gender identity, racial identity, and political identity. Finally, it is proposed that the psychological study of religious identity is relatively unexplored and yet foundational to much of the research in the field of psychology of religion. As a new theoretical paradigm, it offers several explanatory insights into the role of religion in the mind.

See also: [♣ Communal and Personal Identity](#) [♣ Erikson, Erik](#) [♣ Religiosity](#) [♣ Self](#) [♣ Self Psychology](#)

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Religious, Role of

Sharn Waldron

Carl Jung defines his understanding of religion in terms that make it apparent that he regards religion as a certain attitude of mind taken towards particular factors of experience that are seen as powerful, dangerous, grand, beautiful or meaningful (Jung, 1938: par. 8). These factors of experience are factors of psychic experience and especially those psychic experiences that arise from the collective unconscious. From in Jung's perspective religious ideas originate with the archetypes and careful consideration of the archetypal symbols and image constitutes the essence of religion.

The Transcendent Quality of Religious Experience

Religion has a transcendent quality because these unconscious processes transcend the realm of the conscious ego, the observing subject, and the ideas and motifs of religion appear to the ego to come from beyond ad revelations. But psychologically speaking this beyond is also within although not restricted to the individuality of the experiencing person. Jung considers that the realm of the unconscious from whence these revelations derive may possess an insight superior to that of the conscious mind. Religious experience is grounded in what is both absolute subjectivity and universal truth, it partakes of the accumulated wisdom of the ages and is not lightly influenced by either the caprices of consciousness or with transitory cultural trends (Jung, 1952: par. 355).

The images enshrined in such Christian doctrine as the God-man, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth or the Cross, are not peculiarly or exclusively Christian. Not only can they be found in many pagan religions but they may also appear or re-appear spontaneously with all sorts of variations as psychic phenomenon. In Christianity they have been refined and are highly developed but their remote origins are neither faith nor tradition but primitive dreams, visions or trances. They are certainly not conscious interventions but Jung considers that they came into being at that stage of human development in which humans did not so much think as we do today but rather were aware of thoughts coming into them. These dogmas may last for untold centuries: the suffering God-man may be at least five thousand years old and the trinity is

probably even older. Jung claimed that the doctrines of a particular religion are expressions of unconscious psychic activity with their roots in humanity's primitive past. The particular religion merely shapes and refines these ancient symbolizations.

In consequence to this common reference of symbols of all religions to the fundamental archetypes, there can be no exclusive claim made by the disciples of any particular religion on behalf of its own God. These claims must rather be regarded as an index of the intensity of the conviction aroused in believers by their experience of the overwhelming numinosity that they call God. The experience is certainly valid, but the interpretation of it may not be. Anything or anyone, any figure or any symbol which, can produce this overwhelming effect is entitled to the name "God" from the point of the believer, but he can also say that, 'every idea of the ultimate, of the first or last, of the highest or lowest. The name makes no difference (Jung, 1952: par. 739 note 1).

As a psychologist then Carl Jung agrees neither with those who see God as absolute that is existing in Himself, nor yet with those who adopt the relative view of God which recognizes at least in an elementary way that there is some personal involvement in the process which produces conception of God (personal here relating to the personal psyche). Within its self-imposed empirical limits, analytical psychology recognizes God as a function of the unconscious and particularly of the collective unconscious. The image of god is, then the symbolic expression of a certain psychological state, or function, which has all the character of absolute superiority to the conscious will of the subject; hence it can enforce or bring about a standard of accomplishment that would be unattainable to conscious effort.

The Impact of the Development of Consciousness on Religious Experience

In the process of the development of consciousness by humanity, Jung argues that two unfortunate but probable unavoidable errors arose in relation to the concept of God. The first of these was materialism that declared in effect that since God could not be found in the galaxies he had never existed. The second error was to psychologise God as an illusion based on the will to power or repressed sexuality. But Jung believes that humanity cannot thus easily dispose of God or of the instinctually or archetypally based religious impulse. From time immemorial human beings have recognized the existence of gods or a God in one form or another and have been unable to do

without them. Consciously or unconsciously the idea of an all-powerful divine Being is everywhere present. He who says with Nietzsche, that "God is dead" does not thereby rid himself of God but rather faces the fatal inflation of becoming his own god – and such gods are but tin gods with thick skulls and cold hearts' (Jung, 1917: par. 113).

The alternative, which Carl Jung propounds to these two errors, is based upon the conviction that the God-images in the psyche have not only numinosity and power, but also an essential autonomy. They exist, and they are not dependent for their existence on any other need, motive, desire, or attribute of human beings. For the empiricist, the unanswerable question concerning the metaphysical reality of God in Himself is irrelevant beside the fact that the "idea of God is an absolutely necessary psychological function of an irrational nature." The idea is archetypal and thus there is that within the human psyche which will behave as a god and which caution, if nothing also, dictates should be consciously acknowledged as God (Jung, 1917: par. 113). Human beings do not create gods for themselves but there is a sense in which they choose the master they wish to serve. In choosing their god humanity necessarily denies their services to other masters and attempts to secure themselves against them. Such choices do define one's God but they do not make intelligible that unknown psychic quantity which implies the choice. For true wholeness and genuine health, or salvation, it is important that the human individual chooses wisely. In other words, humanity can become a Self only by choosing the right God. The live issue for modern humanity is between the archetypal image with its authenticity and its immediacy, on the one hand, and the intellectual constructs of the so-called enlightened mind on the other. In the final analysis these constructs represent the abortive attempt on the part of the enlightened to deny the reality of both the God-image and the realm from which the image derived (Jung, 1933: par. 429).

God as Dangerous

Christianity and Judaism and others of the world religions, recognize God as being not only redemptive but also dangerous. In Judaism for example, the holiness of God is seen as something unapproachable: no man can see God and live'. (Compare the elaborate precautions taken to protect the unwary from the Holy Mountain, from the ark. . .etc.) God must be mediated to humanity, and this mediatory function finds its highest expression in the figure of Christ. This concept of the danger of the nearness of God, according to Carl Jung is a well established psychological

fact (Jung). The concentration of psychic energy in the unconscious can have catastrophic effects upon consciousness and the saving factor is the symbol, “which is able to reconcile the conscious with the unconscious and embrace them both” (Jung, 1921: par. 178). God images are practically indistinguishable from the symbols of the self, this means that these symbols and images serve the very real purpose of putting the human individual in touch with his/her own depths in such a way that the contact does not destroy him/her but immeasurable enriches his/her life and increases the boundaries of his/her awareness.

Jung is convinced not only that religious dogma and doctrines always express and formulate essential psychological attitudes but also that they are a more satisfactory medium of expression than scientific theories for irrational facts like the psyche. A theory is necessarily highly abstract and exclusively rational whereas the imagery of dogma can encompass psychic totality and can express the living processes of the psyche in suitable dramatic forms, like the drama of creation, sacrifice and redemption.

Thus Jung argues strongly for the positive value of myth and claims that to divest the Gospels of myth would be to sacrifice that very quality in them which conveys wholeness and health. Myth becomes suspect only when one attempts to take the mythological contents literally and concretely, in which case they come into conflict with the objective knowledge of the external world. Treated symbolically, they have tremendous force and power.

Myth is not to be confused with fiction but should be recognized as the dramatic expression of psychic experience that have been constantly repeated in individual lives and in whole cultures. Since they relate back to the archetypes, their content cannot be exhausted in rational explanation and to dismiss them as primitive is to overlook the fact that humanity still has its primitive nature.

Much unnecessary confusion arises from the failure to distinguish between what Jung calls religion as immediate experience (or, more usually, just religion) and religion as creed. Once again Jung himself is partly responsible for the confusion since he is not always consistent in making it unambiguously clear whether his praise or polemic against religion is directed towards the experience or the creedal variety. Jung writes that

- ▶ the creeds have accordingly seen themselves obliged to undertake a progressive codification of their views, doctrines, and customs, and in doing so have externalized themselves to such an extent that the authentic religious element in them – the living relationship to an and direct confrontation with their extramundane point of reference has been thrust into the background (1957: par. 508).

Religion as immediate experience is grounded in the experience of the numinous, the extra-mundane, which is manifested through the unconscious. Essentially it is personal and individual experience of the collective depths and as such it is superior to even the best traditions, at least with respect to the intensity of the conviction that it imparts. His reflection on his experience may or may not accord with the orthodox conceptions or formulations of particular religious confessions but official pronouncements of Church, Synagogue, Mosque or Temple are comparatively meaningless unless the individuals to whom they are addressed can themselves authenticate them by personal experience.

This experience may well be mediated through the historic religions with their wealth of symbols and images expressive of wholeness and salvation but only if those symbols and images are consciously recognized and valued for what they are. The whole meaning and purpose of religious experience can be expressed in language more congenial to the great religions of the world by saying that the purpose lies ‘in the relationship of the individual to God (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) or to the path of salvation and liberation (Buddhism) (Jung, 1957: par. 507). Psychologically, the meaning and purpose lies in the relationship of the person to his own Self, or to the path of wholeness and health.

See also: [▶ Archetypes](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Collective Unconscious](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ God](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Repentance

[▶ Confession](#) [▶ Forgiveness](#)

Repression

D. Brian Smothers

Definition

Repression: (1) The defensive process by which an idea or memory is expelled from the conscious mind. (2) A defense mechanism used to protect the self from unwanted affects associated with instinctual impulses.

Discussion

According to Freud's original childhood seduction theory, an individual repressed unwanted or painful memories associated with childhood sexual experiences which were subsequently reawakened in adult sexuality. As Freud's theory moved away from the actuality of childhood abuse and towards instinctual sexuality, repression played a prominent role as a generic psychological defensive phenomenon in which an individual excluded painful affects and perceptions from consciousness. Repression was one of Freud's earliest discoveries in working with hysterical patients. Freud felt that such patients experienced impulses that were stricken from consciousness and converted into somatic complaints and hysterical symptoms, such as blindness and paralysis. Thus, while the memory may have been expelled from conscious awareness, the event, affect or impulse remained present through a compromise formation within the symptomatic sphere.

Originally, Freud argued that the repression of drives and affect as experienced by hysterical patients resulted in anxiety. As the affects and drives were pressing for release and subsequently repressed, the individual experienced anxious tension. Freud later amended this theory to suggest that repression was a result rather than a cause of anxiety. Accordingly, a preexisting fear, impulse or anxious tension caused the need to forget. Freud suggested that repression occurred in two separate phases, primary repression, and secondary repression or repression proper. In primary repression a child learns that some aspects of reality are pleasant, while others are unpleasant. The child, on an unconscious level, keeps unpleasant experiences and affects out of conscious awareness. According to Freud, primary repression is thought to be the cause of infantile amnesia. In accordance with the development of the superego and the

maturing of the psychic apparatus, the child is able to actively defend the conscious from unwanted perceptions. Thus, in secondary repression the child formally and consciously excludes from consciousness, desires, affects, or perceptions that may cause tension or anxiety.

At its core, repression is motivated forgetting or ignoring. Freud's early drive model suggested that impulses and affects press for release and have to be held in check by a dynamic defensive force. It is important to note that not all forgetting is an example of repression. Repression is primarily defensive, in that it protects the conscious from an overwhelming affect or perception. Classical analytic theory regards repression as a higher-level neurotic defense.

Regarding matters of religion, Freud persuasively argued that repression and obsessional neurosis were at the core of religious traditions and practices. Freud suggested that as instinctual impulses, primarily sexual ones, are repressed, the lurking remnants of the impulses are felt as temptation. Religious practices and traditions are used as a means of defending against the lurking temptation. Additionally, Freud suggested that the anxiety that is defended against in the process of repression is similar to one's fearful experience of an omnipotent God's retribution. Thus, the pious believer will repress the sinful impulse in fear of divine punishment and seek penance or repentance for any temptation. The martial ceremony is an example of this defense in religious life. The church formally prohibits sexual relations outside of marriage though after the ceremony sexual enjoyment is sanctioned. Prior to marriage, any gratification of the sexual impulse is due to temptation and in need of forgiveness or penance.

See also: [▶ Anxiety](#) [▶ Defenses](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#)

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Ressentiment and Religion

Daniel Burston

Nietzsche, Freud and Christianity

The concept of *ressentiment* and its role in religious life emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and was harnessed in the service of a critique of modernity which often had elitist and anti-democratic overtones. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was a classicist who was deeply versed in Greek religion and art, but highly selective in his preferences. Nietzsche admired Homer, who extolled the warrior virtues, but detested Plato's otherworldliness, asceticism and denigration of the body and its passions. According to Nietzsche, the Homeric warrior was uniquely capable of the resounding self-affirmation that also says "Yes!" to life, while Plato presages a "priestly" mentality that is (1) life negating, and which (2) inverts or falsifies the natural scale of values, and is rooted in self-deception.

In *The Genealogy of Morals* (1888), Nietzsche argued that Judaism and Christianity also share a pathos that inverts the noble values of the older pagan aristocracy, one rooted in a subaltern mentality or "slave morality" that results from a frustrated will to power. It is rooted in envy and rancor, traits common among the weak and dispossessed. Those afflicted with *ressentiment* habitually envy and devalue the attitudes and attributes of their aristocratic masters, who are more prosperous, powerful and favored by fortune. Unlike aristocrats and warriors, who are men of action, slaves and their "priestly" leaders wage a war of words. They rationalize their cowardice and impotent hatred by attacking the good, old-fashioned warrior virtues – courage, individualism and the unfettered expression of instinctual drives – rather than the warriors themselves. They make virtues out of necessities and their own apparent defects, i.e., their meekness, poverty, selflessness, reliance on others, and so on. Lacking the strength or resolve to throw off their oppressors' individually, slaves slowly band together (with the help of ascetic priests) to subdue and subvert the individualism and ferocity of the ruling caste through an increasingly peace-loving, collectivistic and otherworldly ethos.

Nevertheless, said Nietzsche, the newer Christian virtues of meekness, poverty, selflessness, charity and so on, do not alter human nature. They merely distort it, because

the Platonic/Christian tendency to mortify the flesh is unnatural, and a source of suffering to all who embrace it. So underneath the pious surface of Christendom, all the aggression that formerly found a "healthy" expression in individual acts of courage and self-affirmation become distorted and displaced into different forms of institutionalized sadism and revenge fantasies that pass for genuine justice.

Nietzsche's critique of Christendom vividly presages Freud's reflections on the ubiquity of repressed aggression in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Freud, 1930). But Freud said that Christianity promoted group cohesion through sublimation and aim inhibited love, but being unable to totally transform human nature, deflected the repressed aggression of believers onto external groups, and above all, onto the Jews. In Freud's scenario, then, the containment of collective aggression is a necessary step toward progress, though Jews are but the victims or casualties of progress. By contrast, Nietzsche argued that the triumph of Christianity paved the way for modern socialist and communist movements, which promote leveling, mediocrity and "degeneracy." In Nietzsche's view, Jews are not merely the target of Christian aggression; they are also its secret source. In his own words:

- ▶ Jesus of Nazareth, the gospel of love made flesh, the "redeemer," who brought blessings and victory to the poor, the sick the sinners – what was he but temptation in its most sinister form, bringing men by a roundabout way to precisely those Jewish values and renovations of the ideal? Has not Israel, precisely by the detour of this "redeemer," this seeming antagonist and destroyer of Israel, reached the final goal of its sublime vindictiveness? Was it not a necessary feature of the a truly brilliant politics of vengeance, a far sighted, subterranean, slowly and carefully planned vengeance, that Israel had to deny its true instrument publicly and nail him to the cross like a mortal enemy, so that "the whole world" (meaning the enemies of Israel) might naively swallow the bait (Nietzsche, 1956; 168–169).

There are problems with Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, one being that despite the Platonizing Judaism of Philo of Alexandria (and Jewish mystics who followed in his footsteps), normative Judaism emphatically does *not* devalue the body and its appetites, nor treat self-affirmation as inherently sinful. Furthermore, Nietzsche's monstrous (and transparently paranoid) conjecture that the Jews plotted the overthrow of Rome by denying and crucifying one of their own out of "a politics of vengeance" is sheer nonsense, and completely unsupported by any historical evidence. But though nonsense, it is extremely *interesting* nonsense,

because most of Nietzsche's Christian readers were anti-Semitic to varying degrees. Many, like Adolph Harnack, the famous Church historian, claimed that the essence of Christianity has nothing to do with Judaism, and chastised Christians who acknowledged any sense of kinship with the Jews (Harnack, 1900). By blaming Christianity on the Jews, and emphasizing the Jewish roots of Christianity, Nietzsche sought to baffle and disconcert pious Christian anti-Semites, including his erstwhile friend Richard Wagner, and others who, like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, fantasized about an "Aryan" Jesus.

Scheler's Critique of Nietzsche

While most Christian scholars simply tuned him out, Max Scheler (1874–1926), a Catholic spokesman, finally grappled with Nietzsche's critique of Christianity in a book called *Ressentiment* published in 1915. Like Nietzsche, Scheler acknowledged the presence of malice, vindictiveness, and a thirst for revenge in religious ideation, and regarded these passions as abiding character traits that warp our judgment, engendering a tendency to disparage or devalue others which is generally rationalized as righteous indignation. But unlike Nietzsche, Scheler insisted that *ressentiment* is not a specifically Jewish or Christian trait, but a universal social phenomenon, involving (1) the process of comparing oneself unfavorably to other individuals in one's own reference group, or (2) the process of comparing one's actual power and status with the status one feels one *should* possess, for whatever reason.

With respect to the former, Scheler noted that the process of comparing oneself to others *within one's own reference group* is ubiquitous and by no means necessarily harmful. After all, unless we know how others differ we cannot appreciate or understand them as individuals, or to improve oneself. More importantly, those whose self-esteem is intact can compare themselves to others endowed with greater gifts or material wealth without feeling that their dignity or personal worth is diminished or impugned by the competence, intelligence, vitality or good fortune of the other(s). A person who possesses a calm sense of self-worth weathers such comparisons without repressing his or her feelings, or allowing them to warp their judgment. Rather than responding to the presence of a prodigy, or someone favored by fortune, through a tendency to deprecate, the healthy person sees superior gifts in another person as cause for celebration or, indeed, for love and esteem. Following Nietzsche and Georg Simmel, Scheler called this the "noble" mentality, and fancifully attributed it to aristocrats in bygone days. By contrast, said Scheler, the envious,

vindictive person has a "slavish" cast of mind that was presumably more characteristic of the lower orders. He suffers from (unconscious) feelings of impotence, inferiority and worthlessness, and uses the hostile devaluation of others and copious self-deception to compensate for hidden injuries.

With respect to the latter, Scheler points out that in medieval society, people seldom cherished fantasies of upward mobility. Power and status were hereditary and deemed natural and necessary in the scheme of salvation. Industrial democracies, by contrast, replace the traditional yearning for salvation in the afterlife with the promise of equality, breeding extravagant needs and expectations, and upending traditional class and caste divisions, fostering envy and rancor among those who remained relatively disadvantaged in the struggle to "get ahead," and those whose hereditary status was dwindling, or plummeting downwards in the face of new market pressures.

By Scheler's reckoning then, *ressentiment* did exist in ancient times, but was not the real basis of the Christian faith which, by Scheler's reckoning, is neither democratic nor pacifist in character, but explicitly hierarchical, leaving ample room for the warrior virtues Nietzsche praised so highly. So the prevalence of *ressentiment* among all social classes today is not the fault of Christianity per se, but of capitalism, which Scheler, echoing Werner Sombart, likened to "the Jewish spirit." So Scheler had it both ways – declaring *ressentiment* to be a universal phenomenon, while describing it as being particularly intense in Judaism and capitalism, which he took to be related kindred phenomena. Quite apart from the high-brow, low intensity anti-Semitism on display here, Scheler's spirited defense of Christianity stood in the starkest possible contrast to the ideas of contemporaries better known contemporaries like Leo Tolstoy and Romain Rolland. Unlike these egalitarian pacifists, he was an ardent German nationalist during World War I, and was admired by many Nazis after his death, despite the fact that his mother was Jewish. But whereas Nietzsche, a more prominent fascist icon, flirted with neo-paganism, Scheler's discourse was romantic and neo-feudal, prompting him to dissociate "true" Christianity from socialism or collectivism, on the one hand, and from Judaism on the other.

Ressentiment and "Penis Envy"

Thus far, we have noted anti-democratic and anti-Semitic strains in the literature on *ressentiment*. But there are notable instances when Jewish theorists used the idea of *ressentiment* – albeit seldom labeling it as such.

For example, Freud deemed women to be notably inferior to the average male, and psychologically akin to children or “savages” cannot reason properly. By Freud’s account, women and girls harbor feelings of envy and inferiority vis a vis their husbands, sons and brothers because their male kin possess a penis; a fact that gives rise to an even more intense enmity to the requirements of civilization among women than in the average man.

The idea that women are anatomically predestined to be the “losers” in the unfolding drama of civilization strikes us as odious or hilarious nowadays. Nevertheless, Freud and his followers maintained that the normal (albeit usually unconscious) experience of a woman is of herself as a castrated (i.e., defective) male, and that the feelings of envy, inferiority and resentment that they harbor unconsciously prompt them to distort reality, and will plague them perpetually, regardless of any efforts to alter their inferior social status. The idea that one half of humanity is doomed to have their self-esteem and judgment diminished by (anatomically preordained) *r essentiment* regardless of their faith or their moment in history is also quite elitist, and manifestly sexist, but constitutes a considerable shift in emphasis from Nietzsche and Scheler.

Finally, in a series of best selling books on Arab civilization and the Muslim world today, historian Bernard Lewis invokes a version of the theory of *r essentiment* to explain the widespread fear and antipathy to the West, with its emphasis on democracy, gender equality, freedom of inquiry and expression, and so on. This is another dramatic reversal of emphasis, one laced with considerable irony. Nietzsche and Scheler saw modernity as the problem, and implicated the Jews in the genesis of this problem to an unusual degree. Lewis, who is Jewish, sees modernity as a good thing, but uses *r essentiment* to explain the roots of Islamic extremism. And while his thesis has some merit, no doubt, it has been used to justify some disastrous foreign policy initiatives, i.e., the second Gulf War.

Reviewing these diverse contributions in chronological order reminds us that the literature on *r essentiment* and religion contains many worthwhile insights, but is also fraught with bias. The passions that give rise to *r essentiment* – feelings of powerlessness, envy, the thirst for revenge, the tendency to disparage or devalue others unreasonably – are ever present possibilities of human experience, and only harden into character traits that routinely impair our judgment in adverse social and historical circumstances. Members of both sexes and all faiths are susceptible to it, and any effort to depict one faith (or one gender) as uniquely susceptible to (or representative of) this character deformity should be greeted with considerable skepticism.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism](#)

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Resurrection

David A. Leeming

The word “resurrection” refers to the return of a dead person to life and is most commonly used in connection with the Christian story of Jesus. The four writers of the biography of Jesus in the Christian section of the Bible (*New Testament*) report the mysterious disappearance of Jesus’ body from his tomb after his death by crucifixion and his subsequent appearance to various followers as a living person. This story is central to the Christian belief system.

The story of Jesus’ resurrection was by no means the first in the history of world religion and mythology. In some versions of a Greek myth, the god Dionysos rises from the dead, as do the Middle Eastern deities Attis and Tammuz and most especially, the Egyptian Osiris. Sir James Frazer in his *Golden Bough* had much to say about these resurrected man-gods. Many resurrection stories, such as that of the Canaanite Baal, were associated with agriculture, particularly with periods of draught followed by periods of fertility. In Egypt, the resurrection myth of Osiris was associated with the devastating but land renewal process involved in the annual flooding of the Nile.

For non Christians and some non fundamentalist Christians, the story of Jesus’ resurrection might be said to become more significant when it is treated psychologically. The same can be said of the earlier resurrection

stories. When one applies the approach taken by Jung in his “Christ, a Symbol of Self,” the resurrection heroes are freed from the restrictions of the merely local or the merely sectarian, and we are able to see that perhaps the real importance of the resurrection myth, whether or not it is based in some sort of historical fact, lies in resurrection and not in the individuals who are resurrected. As Zen masters say, “The first step of Zen is to kill the Buddha.”

For Jung, the archetypal or symbolic Christ as opposed to the historical Jesus is present in the unconscious of each of us as what might be called the “God within” or the “Self” waiting to be realized in our individual egos – our conscious lives. The process of the rising of the Self from our unconscious into our conscious psyches is the process of what Jung called “individuation.” The psychological or archetypal meaning of the resurrection, then, is the awakening of the Self and its emergence through the psychological growth process into our psychic lives.

See also: [Christ](#) [Christ as Symbol of the Self](#) [Christianity](#) [Individuation](#) [Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#) [Self](#)

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Revelation

John Eric Killinger

Introduction

Revelation is derived from the Greek, *apokalypsis* (ἀποκάλυψις), *uncovering of the head, disclosure of hidden springs, revelation/uncovering of divine mysteries, manifestation of persons*. *Apokalypsis* itself is a derivative of *apokalymma* (ἀποκαλύμμα), a revelation, a combination of ἀπό, *away from* + κάλυμμα, *head covering, hood,*

veil, dura mater (lit., “hard [or coarse] mother”), *grave*. *Kalymma* is related to Calypso (καλύψω), *she that conceals*. *Apokalypō* is a *bon mot* (Derrida, 1982: 64) for the Hebrew *galah* (גלה), meaning to *uncover, remove, reveal, emigrate, disclose, discover, display*. Cognates of *galah* include *ger* (גר), *sojourner*, which in the Aramaic sense indicates one who has been accepted from the outside into the YHWH faith; *golah* (גולה), the feminine form of exile (both as a collective and in its abstract sense, to go into exile); and *gilaion* (גלייך), a table or tablet – the Talmud uses *gilyōn* (גלייך), the empty margin of a page or scroll (Killinger, 2006: 359, 2007: 545). Subsidiary Hebrew words that express the divine act of revelation include *yada*’ (יָדַע), “indicate, announce”; *nagad* (נָגַד), “publish, declare”; and *dabar* (דָּבַר), “speech, word,” and in Greek, *phaneroō* (φανερόω), “I reveal, make known.”

Sources of Apocalyptic

Persian religious sources, such as the Zoroastrian *Zand-i Vohuman Yasht*, antedate both the Greek and Jewish forms of apocalyptic genre. Such traditions were carried over into the early Christian church. Apart from *revelatio*, Latin terms for revelation include *visio*, “vision, inspection”; *horama*, “vision in a dream”; and *autopsia*, “direct observation, supernatural vision.” In Islam, *Wahy*, “instruction,” or “what ought to be read,” comes from God, usually through the archangel Gabriel, given to the prophets, but in its definitive form to Muhammad. Content of revelation in the Qur’ān is wisdom and guidance for the living and warnings and the announcement of final judgment. Because it is divine, it is revelation and may not be altered. In Hinduism, the Vedas have the status of sacred revelation: *sruti* (“heard,” i.e., revealed directly by the gods to the seers) as distinguished from *smṛti* (“remembered,” i.e., composed by humans).

In the Judeo-Christian traditions there are two forms of apocalyptic: historical and the otherworldly journey. The latter form is influenced by Greek sources, such as Book 11 of Homer’s *Odyssey* (Homer, 1956) and the myth of Er in Book X of Plato’s *Republic* (Plato, 1961). Historical apocalypticism with its insistence on a coming utopian age merges well with millenarianism, connecting it with more structured forms of normative *communitas*. As event or happening, revelation can be said to be spontaneous or existential *communitas*, especially when it is the communal nature of the community or nations at stake. Numerous apocalypses occur throughout the gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi writings, the Old Testament pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea scrolls, and a small but

significant number of New Testament apocryphal documents.

Apocalyptic writers were the heirs of the sages, concerned with purity within. As heirs of the prophets they were concerned with both cleanliness and social justice. As heirs of the priestly tradition, they made use of doxology and concern with defilement/purification of the land, as well as concern for restoration of worship and an understanding of *who* could participate in such worship, thus demonstrating the alignment of their views with the sacerdotal praxes of the priestly and cultic. A paraprophetic phenomenon, apocalypses differ from biblical prophecy in their notions of radical transformations of human relation and in the manner of judgment. Akin to wisdom literature, apocalyptic writings possess a supernatural wisdom dependent on revelation rather than empirical wisdom as in, for example, the Book of Proverbs.

Features of Revelation

Judgment upon the nations, a recurring feature, does not come because of failure of nerve and/or pessimism; rather, what is pointed to is the dynamic of an “interim ethics of active waiting and faithfulness to God in all things” (Gammie, 1989: 181). This is, of course, a radical move, for as with the suspension aspect of the Hanging God or Hanged Man of the Tarot (q.v.), it is the sacrifice of all that to which we cling and hold dear, from our defenses and preconceptions to our interpretations. This not only happens communally among all the nations but also to each individual. For the faithful – those who undergo the ruptures caused by suffering whether in liminal suspension or at the hands of the cruel and ruthless (the unjust) – there is a share in the divine majesty.

A prominent feature in revelation is the holy mountain. Bearing the characteristics and potencies of the cosmos, it is the conclave of the gods like those who gather on Olympus, the battleground of opposing natural forces, and the conjunction of heaven and earth. Because of this last attribute, it is the place from which effective decrees are issued. The holy mountain is a place set apart, a margin sanctified by God, aligning it with the feature set of *galah* and its cognates. In other words, sojourners, exiles, and exilic communities go to the mountain to receive the revelation of God on tables or tablets (of stone).

The idea of the Kingdom of God has as its focus the sovereignty of the godhead, as well as its majesty and mystery – its establishment in the heavens is matched by an equivalent establishment on earth (cf. Mt. 16:19 Aland,

et al., 1998: 44)—as above, so below, as the alchemists say. The apocalyptic is a true dialectic of power. Even the Lord’s Prayer depicts this: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Natural revelation, expressed in the formula *Deus absconditus/deus revelatus* is not unlike Bion’s epistemological move from knowledge (curiosity) to ultimate reality, $K \rightarrow O$.

Christian theologians in the main reject the broad usage of *revelation* (any inspiration or new knowledge), preferring instead the narrower definition of revelation as the manifestation of something hidden that cannot be discovered through ordinary and usual means of acquiring knowledge. The neo-orthodox Christian theologian Karl Barth, for example, argued that the only true revelation is through the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. Whereas this might be quite valid in a purely Christian religious milieu, in post-modern religious plurality in which dialogue between the major monotheistic religions is paramount, the Word of God must be accepted alongside the words of God, as in the *Wahy* of the Qur’an, which are also manifestations of the divine transcendence. In Kabbalah, the letters themselves are important sources of revelation; that is, “intentional speech is an ascending human creation complementing the descending divine speech” (Idel, 2002: 182). Jewish tradition realizes that such revelations or apocalypses of the divine add spice – as presentations of a certain point of view they possess a marked exegetical character in that they enlarge scriptural scenes. The theme of apocalypse is primarily the glory or arm of YHWH, and it can be disclosed in one’s gaze or ear. Nowhere does it have the sense of fearsome catastrophe with which apocalypse has come to be associated. It is, as André Chouraqui notes, essentially “a contemplation...or an inspiration at the sight, the uncovering or disclosure of YHWH” (Chouraqui, cited in Derrida, 1982: 64).

The narrowness of definition by modern theologians has been called into question in the post-modern era. Thomas J. J. Altizer’s apocalyptic is an inversion of “what had heretofore been named and valued as God but is now manifested in emptiness or abyss” (Wyschogrod, 1987: 377), leaving creation and apocalypse in a state of nondifference. In literary theory, Tzvetan Todorov (1973) locates the fantastic narrative (which apocalypses can be) on the frontiers of two genres, the uncanny – *unheimlich* – (supernatural explained) and the marvelous (supernatural accepted).

Taylor (1987) has advanced the Derridean notion of erasure by arguing that words re-veil rather than reveal. The idea of erasure is that when something is written down, when marks are made on

paper – inscribed – something (whether or not we know what that something is) is written out, erased; an exscription has to occur, relating again to *galah, ger, gilyon, and gilaion*. This is in opposition to traditional theological thinking that revelation occurs linguistically. Taylor argues therefore that there is no revelation of divine truth but only the endless re-veiling or covering of truth. Truth and meaning: if the search is for ultimate truth such as Bion's O (q.v.), then we might find ourselves crossing the threshold into the creation of a fallacy. *Is the fallacy meaningful or meaning-making?* is the line of questioning one might well take. It is the narrative that provides the raw material. Truth may then be irrelevant, for a good lie can be the enantriodromic end of truth (and vice versa) as in a uroboros (q.v.) or topology of the torus as in early delineations of the Lacanian Real. A hermeneutic approach, interpreting with symbols that still possess cultural validity may be warranted for bringing out the hidden aspects of the narratives developing both in the consulting room and in the world outside its doors.

Drawing significantly on the work of Blanchot (1955/1982, 1969/1993, and 1971/1997a) Taylor (1987) reminds us of the fact that revelation is also tear, interstice, rent, fissure, cleft in not only the language but also the narrative structure as well. Blanchot reports that image is what veils by revealing. If, as Jung argues, image is psyche, then psyche veils by revealing, re-veils through fissure, cleft, interstice, and abyss. Blanchot (1971/1997a) observes how image is capable of negating nothingness as in the Hegelian *Aufhebung* paradigm, and as in the Nietzschean Dionysian dithyrambic view of the abyss, image is also “the gaze of nothingness upon us” (p. 40). This is perhaps why current work on void states (Ashton, 2007) is becoming important in an era when the unreality of dissolution into nothingness seems more real than ever in human history, whether linearly or spatially.

With regard to the apocalypse, the theme is that we must change. Despite concerning himself with the apocalypse as a choice between annihilation via atomic bomb or totalitarianism, Blanchot (1971/1997c) suggests that the apocalypse can be demystified by understanding. All or nothing is therefore far from being our only truth; however, the caveat to removing the projection of mystique is that “it exposes us to a loss of fear. . . that misleads but also warns” (p. 108). It is an apocalypse without an apocalypse!

Connected with the themes of erasure mentioned above, involvement of the “hard mother” aspect indicates that the word “apocalypse” can mean *away from the hard* (coarse) *mother*. As the tough fibrous outermost membrane enveloping the brain and spinal cord, the *dura mater* is composed of a series of adjacent

laminations. Of interest here is not so much the structure but two metaphoric resonances. The first of these is in tandem with the *pia mater* and involves the concepts William James (1907/1987) identified as “tough-minded” and “tender-minded.” Whereas tough-minded folk tend toward facts, empiricism, fatalism, and materialism, tender-minded folk tend toward principles, rationalism, free will, and idealism. Such a dichotomy might even relate to Sheldon's (1936) epimethean/promethean understanding of the animectomy complex (q.v.).

The other metaphoric resonance of the *dura mater* is with Grotstein's (1979/2000) laminations of awareness in consciousness. It is tantamount to living a palimpsest self. In other words, it is a kind of development in which what occurs is the smudging of one life script – or a portion or portions thereof – in order to write over and/or re-write the narrative by and through which one lives. But it is not a complete erasure, for the past essence remains, faint (faint) as it is. It's counterpart is the *pia mater* (tender mother), a soft inner membrane enveloping the brain. The brain is thus aligned with Bion's container contained (♀♂), or it suffers the ontic psychological dualism of good breast/bad breast.

The revelatory manifestation of the divine life comes from the supramental realm. If any of the following three aspects is neglected, we slip back into mental life, knowledge about rather than becoming being or growing into aesthetic consciousness. For example, neglecting the abysmal aspect (the inexhaustible, ineffable depth characteristic) leads to the transformation of revelation into information via rationalistic deism. Neglecting the logical character of divine life transforms revelation into heteronomous subjection via irrationalistic theism. Finally, neglecting the spiritual character makes a history of revelation impossible. Maurice Blanchot reminds us that the nameless navigator, who first crossed the zero parallel, “was under the impression that he found himself at an exceptional moment and at a unique point, a sacred zone, the passage over which symbolized a crucial initiation” (Blanchot, 1971/1997b: 79).

See also: [Apocalypse](#) [Bible](#) [Christianity](#) [Gnosticism](#) [Hinduism](#) [Islam](#) [Kabbalah](#)

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Rinpoche

Migmar Tseten · Thomas C. Putnam

The Tibetan word “rinpoche,” derived from Sanskrit term “ratna,” which means “precious,” “valuable” and “rare.” In general, it is applied for anything that is

considered valuable, such as gold and jewel etc. and is also applied to respected teachers and reincarnated lamas as a veneration.

In Jungian theory the title may be understood as a projection of the Self onto a person. Thus the one who has been given the title, “Rinpoche” would symbolically carry the projection of a deeply individuated person who has reached his fullest potential of wholeness. In western psychology this person would carry the projection of the Self for his/her students much like a western psychotherapist does for his/her patients.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Self](#) [Tulku](#)

Rites of Passage

Paul Larson

The phrase “rite of passage” was coined by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) in his 1909 book of that title (Fr. “Les rites du passage”). The phrase has become widely known and used to describe those rituals which mark significant life transitions of individuals in a community. Victor Turner (1920–1983) continued the focus on study of the psychology of rituals and elaborated on the ways in which these rites of passage function to move people from one social status to another (Turner, 1969/1995, 1974).

Many of the life passages which are marked by special rituals are age related, though not all. There is often a ritual at or close to the birth in which the child is named and given a place in the family and community. Another period of transition comes at puberty when boys become men and girls become women. In many pre-industrial societies the arrival of puberty shortly follows with marriage, when the individual chooses or is given a mate. This is another major transition, though in most modern industrialized societies, there is a significant time lag between physical sexual maturation and the assumption of the responsibilities of marriage. Especially in modern societies, there are special occasions to mark the completion of educational preparation and entry into the world of adult occupations and work. The commencement ceremonies at graduation use the pomp of academic regalia to celebrate the accomplishments of the new graduates. Likewise, retirement from the work force sometimes is

celebrated with at least a social occasion if not a formal ritual. Finally, at death the body is interred or buried and a memorial service is held to honor the memory of the deceased and ease the loss to those who survive the individual.

In each case, the ritual serves to mark the change in how an individual is to be regarded by the community. Turner elaborated on van Gennep's concept of liminality, that transitional state where one is neither the former status nor the new status, but is in the process of passage. In general, liminality refers to this transitional space and time "in between." There is often a period of time over which the ritual takes place or a period of preparation for it. This allows both the individual or individuals undergoing the transition as well as the rest of the community to psychologically work through the hopes, fears and expectations for the new role which the participants will assume with each other. During the "in between" phase the participants are linked by what Turner calls "communitas," the equality shared by all who are undergoing the transition.

Roles, of course, are not only born by an individual, but are relational. When a person marries, for example, they are treated differently not only by their spouse and family, but other members of the community. Likewise, when an individual is ordained to a sacred role in a community, everyone now relates to them differently. Making these transitions more manageable is the great psychological function of rites of passage. The markers are not only celebratory for the individual but important for the social group as a whole. Our entrances, or shifts in role and our exits are all marked by rituals that serve our needs as well as those who participate with us in our community lives. Thus the rites of passage serve one of the most important functions in a community of the spirit, they guide us through the transitions that inevitably mark our human life trajectory and serve as a means of transmittal of cultural values and meanings.

See also: [Communal and Personal Identity](#) [Cultural Psychology](#) [Ritual](#)

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Ritual

Bernard Spilka

Ritual, in general, refers to patterned behavior, possibly repetitious, that is usually fraught with symbolism. Ritual thus has significance beyond the actions that define it. Simply put, it is a force for connection, communication, cooperation, coordination, cohesion, control, and influence. All of these roles can first be demonstrated in animal ritualization which appears to serve language or signaling functions. Given this potential, evolutionary speculations have been introduced into our understanding of ritual (Huxley, 1966). The essence of ritual is therefore functional and adaptive as these same purposes hold for human beings.

Religious Ritual

Even though religion per se has not been satisfactorily defined in cross-cultural perspective, disagreements appear to be relatively minor. Religious ritual may, however, be distinguished from non-religious forms by its emphasis on ultimate human dependence upon superhuman agents who are not directly observable. Some scholars stress what people simply define as sacred or holy but this tends to be poorly circumscribed. To the best of our knowledge all societies possess religion and religious ritual is likewise found in all known religious traditions.

The terms, rite and ceremony, are often used interchangeably with ritual; however, some scholars distinguish them as formal actions while religious ritual is regarded as informal. Since this distinction is difficult to maintain, all three words are used here to cover both formal and informal behavior.

Patterns of Religious Ritual

Religious rituals do not occur randomly. They are traditionally associated with important cultural and individual events. First, they are annually patterned. For example, annual midnight masses have been viewed as celebrating the opening and closing of the year. Rites often accompany the planting and harvesting of crops plus specific holidays that honor major socio-cultural happenings like military victories, the establishment of nations, or the lives and accomplishments of great historical figures.

Second, ceremonies religiously validate rites of passage such as birth and death, one's coming of age, marriage, graduations from schools and noteworthy anniversaries that occur in long marriages. A third set of religious rituals is commonly associated with such public events as inaugurations of presidents and other high government and public officials. In like manner, legislative bodies open their daily proceedings with a prayer. On a different level rituals mark similar activities like the installation of presiding officers in universities and fraternal bodies. Fourth, one finds group rituals that either call upon the Divine to help persons in dire straits or thank superhuman agents when recovery from serious illness occurs or one's actions result in personal success. Note further spiritual references connote gratitude that is offered when a lottery is won or individual efforts result in athletic triumphs, high examination scores or noteworthy advancements in one's life. Fifth, there are familial religious ceremonies such as saying grace at meals, prayers before facing the rigors of daily life, or upon retiring at night. In addition people frequently develop practices utilizing household shrines, reading from sacred scriptures, intoning prayers before taking trips etc. Depending on one's religious heritage, group associations, or place in a social structure, there is the likelihood of other rituals.

Psychological Approaches to Religious Ritual

Contemporary psychological approaches to ritual usually stress cognition (Boyer, 2001; Guthrie, 1993; Lawson and McCauley, 1990; McCauley and Lawson, 2002). Motivation is much more implied than explicit, a tendency common to both psychologists and anthropologists who also emphasize cognition. The essential component appears to be a search for meaning. From a subjective perspective, the feeling that one is enlightened by ritual participation is common and may enrich the individual spiritually.

Even though Freud interpreted ritual behavior as obsessional neurosis, thereby affiliating it with pathology, modern Analytic views suggest it may be an avenue to religious experience (Pruyser, 1968). Resort to religious ritual is particularly evident under stress that poses cognitive dilemmas. Clarification is sought in ceremonies in which the person attempts to make sense of h/his predicament. People need to understand the causes of events, in other words, attributions are sought that will resolve cognitive difficulties. The intricate matrix of

relationships between ritual and myth may speak to this fundamental human desire to make sense out of life and the world.

The leads offered by these scholars need to explicitly include motivation in order to understand religious ritual more fully. Post Freudians and Jungians recognize ritual behavior as controlling and directing emotion. It may thus act as both means of self-control and a spur to control outside influences (Pruyser, 1968; Jonte-Pace, 1997). Even though these are constructive and adaptive functions, the classical idea of ritual and mental disturbance lurks in the background of many such writings.

Religious Ritual as Connection

The notion of connectivity leads to both humanistic and holistic perspectives, and in doing so tie ritual to spirituality as opposed to treating it as simple religious activity. Utilizing prayer as representative of religious ritual, connection to the supernatural is intended (Foster, 1992; Ladd and Spilka, 2002). This includes worship as public prayer. *Upward Prayer* is an obvious ritual effort to establish this kind of contact. Whether public or private, people introduce their own devices to increase, from their perspective, the efficacy of formal liturgical worship. These regularly encompass changes in body posture such as bowing and kneeling, among other motions. Some settings accept dancing. In the privacy of one's personal life, innovation is frequently present in the prayers addressed to the Divine. Since there are many reasons people desire to connect to superhuman agents, prayer is multidimensional. Foster (1992) theorizes 21 different forms. Empirically, research has distinguished over 10 types via Factor Analytic methodology.

The most common form of prayer has been termed petitionary, a term that is very broad since people may seek innumerable things, to wit, material gain or items, divine protection, God's intervention to help others as in intercessory prayer, personal guidance, self-improvement, religious experience. Prayers of confession, praise, forgiveness or thanksgiving are frequently offered. Contemplation or meditation may be sought. These are some of the more evident contents possible. Verbal ritual is clearly patterned and may be supplemented with "speaking-in-tongues," various body movements, eye-closing, hand clasping etc. When describing personal practices, people readily acknowledge that their prayers are made in a regular, orderly sequence based on individually constructed ritual formats.

According to Foster, connectivity via prayer can also be conceptualized as inward or outward. Though the upward focus remains, *Inward Prayer* stresses the self. Confession and atonement are usually its chief elements. In contrast, *Outward Prayer* emphasizes the external world and others. We witness this in intercessory prayer.

Prayer, as probably the dominant kind of religious ritual, can be viewed from a number of stances, both theoretically and empirically. As connection, it is not a simple phenomenon.

The Social Role of Religious Ritual

Ritual in general and specifically religious ritual as connectivity performs a fundamental communicative role. Recognizing this, Lawson and McCauley (1990) analyze religious ritual in terms of linguistic theory. More than simply the intended communicative substance of the act itself is conveyed to the object of the ritual. Further, the performing person becomes bound to the religious group within which the act is meaningful plus the larger culture in which the actor's faith has meaning. When people jointly participate in religious ritual, they perceive themselves as unified with their like behaving peers. They are not only connected to the supernatural but to each other through common symbolic actions. Particularly within the religious sphere there is the belief that communal rituals are more apt to influence a deity than isolated individual responses. We see this in joint public expressions of intercessory prayer or calls for collective godly blessings.

Increased social coordination and cohesion are part of this process. Implicitly, an interpersonal consensus is intimated since these acts were learned from and usually concern others. Religious institutions openly avow ceremonial messages of mutual support and harmony in public settings. The hoped for result is a reduction of conflict and enhancement of help and cooperation. Again, the enrichment of religious ritual behavior that connotes spirituality is implicit in these activities.

The significance of ritual within the individual personality implies a broad range of possibilities. At one end of this continuum there is an obsessive compulsive approach that is narrow and protective-restrictive. In the extreme, pathology as in scrupulosity may be present. At the other terminus the search for meaning in ritualistic actions can reflect a broadened view as connections to oneself, others, and the sacred come to the fore.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Myth](#) [Religion](#)

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Ritual Curing

[Healing](#)

Rogers, Carl

James G. Emerson

Introduction

In most evaluations of psychologists and psychotherapists of the twentieth century, Carl Rogers (January 8, 1902–February 4, 1987) stands amongst the top five or six whether one speaks of his personal ability as a therapist, a theorist, or a student of personality.

Person Centered Therapy

The approach of Carl Rogers, often called “non-directive,” was not nearly as absent direction as both critics and supporters claim. The phrase “client-centered” as opposed to “theory centered” or “teacher centered” is a far better statement of his approach and contribution than other terms.

He himself came to focus on the phrase, “person centered.”

Seward Hiltner and Carl Rogers

Most in the field of religion became aware of Rogers through the work of Seward Hiltner. An approach to pastoral care that centered on the perspective of the parishioner rather than the perspective of the pastor or the denomination had several values. The first value lies in awareness that the pastor and the parishioner both stand in need of a context of love and care. That holds true whether or not one speaks of the love and care of another human being or of God. The fact that Rogers came to be identified as a humanist simply defines the perspective from which the client or parishioner was viewed. The starting point was still the person and not the professional.

The Role of Empathy

The approach of Carl Rogers had special emphasis on empathy or the capacity for empathy. Empathy is a moment in which the brain of one person fully catches what is happening in the brain of another and therefore allows both people to bring that “happening” into full consciousness. The reaction of more than one student of Rogers after an interchange often resulted in the comment, “My word, he really heard me” (At least, that was my reaction when I met Dr. Rogers again some ten years after I completed my graduate work with him).

The Process and the Dynamic

From a humanist standpoint, Roger’s view lifted up the capacity of the individual to find healing of mind and self within himself or herself. The process required a context that allowed that healing to work. The task of the therapist, and by extension the pastor, was/is to bring that context into the individual encounter or the group. Contrary to the view that the pastor should have all the answers and give advice, this approach holds that the capacity and strength is within the individual. The role

of the counselor or pastor, then, is so to hear what is being said and to lift up what is heard so that the counselee or parishioner can “hear” those strengths within himself or herself.

In his book *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* edited with Rosalind F. Dymond, Rogers drew a picture of two sets of overlapping circles. In one set, he listed many types of experiences in which the experiences were distinct and not in the parts of the circles that overlapped. Those outside of the overlapping section indicated experiences that were in the subconscious and not part of conscious awareness. As, through counseling or pastoral care, experiences became more and more available to ones conscious awareness, one became healthy-healed.

From Rogers to Pastoral Care

Although Rogers saw this as a strength of the individual person, it is a simple step for one who believes in God to say that we have not just evidence of the individual at work but of God or of the Holy Spirit at work within an individual. Hence, in the confessional, what happens is that the parishioner brings to the fore events of which he or she feels ashamed. In Penance, then, it is the task of the priest to find those conscious acts that can bring cleansing to the sin or failure of which one is aware. From a Rogerian standpoint, what happens happens because of a dynamic within the individual and not because of priestly authority.

Significance for Pastoral Care

The parishioner-centered pastor finds great resource in the work of Carl Rogers for developing a process of pastoral care and counseling.

A Weakness in Roger’s View

One of the weaknesses of Carl Roger’s approach lay in the area of the reality of sin. Partly in response to that, Carl Menninger wrote a book entitled, *Whatever Became of Sin*. The approach of Sigmund Freud, which was basic to Dr. Menninger, resulted in Menninger as a Christian developing a strong sense of the negative forces in human nature even as Carl Rogers looked at the positive. (If one may speak editorially, both are needed.)

Other Applications of Rogers

As Carl Rogers went on in life, he more and more developed applications of his insights to businesses, to

educational situations, to practices of management, and to international situations. In line with what is said above, from the religious side, what Rogers would have identified as personality forces within the individual or the group the person of faith may identify as a spiritual dimension – as the work of God.

A major contribution of Carl Rogers lay in establishing means of researching what actually happened in therapy and measuring evidence of movement or change in the therapeutic process. The use of taped interviews, of Q-sorts, and of narrative case studies all became part of the scientific testing that Rogers brought to the measurement of the therapeutic experience.

The Scope of His Work

Of his many books, two key publications give the essence of Dr. Rogers' theory and his research.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)
[▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Rome

Anthony J. Elia

Rome (Ital. *Roma*) in the state of Lazio, Italy is the capital of the Italian Republic and spiritual center of the Roman Catholic world. The Vatican, which is its own self-governed city-state, is located centrally in Rome, just a few blocks from the Tiber River. Though in most cases Rome indicates the geographical location of the city and its environs, it also refers to a set of ideas ranging from the state functions of the Republic and Empire in antiquity to the centrality of power of the Roman Catholic Church and the seat of the papacy. Rome is often referred to as “The Eternal City” (*la città eterna*), “The City of the Seven

Hills” (*la città dei sette colli*), and “Capital of the World” (*caput mundi*).

The centrality of Rome has been recognized for millennia, and written about in literature, theology, and histories (including St. Augustine, Edward Gibbon, and Henry James). Psychologically, its spatial and spiritual centrality may be compared with Jerusalem, which often attracts individuals with the so-called “Jerusalem syndrome,” but to a much lesser extent. A comparable condition might best be described as a “Rome neurosis,” which Freud described as his anxiety about traveling to Rome while in Italy. As Ginsburg writes “Freud developed what he called his ‘Rome neurosis.’ He, an avid traveler in Italy, could not get to Rome, though the city haunted his dreams. To do so, he had to dig up the Rome in himself, by analyzing his dreams” (Ginsburg, 1999: 17). Freud eventually got over this neurosis, enjoying Rome tremendously, with even a consideration of retiring to the Italian capital (Jones, 1955: 96).

Rome and the Church

The relationship between Rome and the Catholic Church is inextricable. Since late antiquity and the reign of Constantine, the Church has played a dominant role in forming an identity of the city. Ernest Jones, Freud's biographer, wrote about Freud's idea of the “two Romes,” one which embodies classical antiquity, the other which was the Christian Rome, the Rome which superseded the earlier Rome of the Republic and Empire. Freud had great interest and admiration for the first Rome, but conflict with the second. This second or New Rome “could only be an enemy to him, the source of all the persecutions Freud's people had endured throughout the ages” (Jones, 1955: 18).

Rome in Freud's Analyses

Freud encountered the subject of Rome several times in his work, both in his analyses of individuals and his topical interpretations. One of the first accounts of Rome in Freud's works is from a patient “Frau Emmy von N.,” whom Freud saw beginning in May, 1889. On the morning session of 15 May, the patient asked Freud if he had heard about a “Countess Sch.,” who had been killed in an accident in Rome. The next mention of Rome was from a patient named “Fräulein Rosalia H.” in the autumn of 1892, who recounted singing at a rehearsal in Rome, at which point she was in a “state of great emotional excitement,” and fell ill upon the stage (Freud, 1953: II, 169n).

In his “Infantile Materials as a Source of Dreams,” Freud dealt to some extent with the issue of Rome as a topological ideal and the psychological implications of visiting it. When speaking of memories that may have begun in childhood, Freud notes “what I have in mind is a series of dreams which are based upon a longing to visit Rome. For a long time to come, no doubt, I shall have to continue to satisfy that longing in my dreams: for at the season of the year when it is possible for me to travel, residence in Rome must be avoided for reasons of health” (Freud, 1953: IV, 193–194). Freud then recounts the details of a dream about being in a train near the Tiber. Freud did not visit Rome until 1901, at the age of forty-five. And in the footnotes of these discussions on dreams, Freud has successive notes (one added in 1909, another in 1925), which underscore the importance of the city. He writes “I discovered long since that it only needs a little courage to fulfill wishes which till then have been regarded as unattainable; and thereafter became a constant pilgrim to Rome” (Freud, 1953: IV, 194n).

In one of his dreams, Freud described being on a street-corner in Rome and “surprised to find so many posters in German stuck up there,” which he then describes as a vision of Prague and a conflation of his early memories of Moravia, where he was born and where German was likely to be more tolerated (Freud, 1953: IV, 195).

Freud, Hannibal, and Rome

Freud’s most notable work on Rome is that which describes (1) parallels between Hannibal and Freud himself and (2) the tensions embodied between Jewry and the Catholic Church. Freud wrote in his “Infantile Material” that “I had actually been following Hannibal’s footsteps. Like him, I had been fated not to see Rome; and he too had moved into the Campagna when everyone had expected him in Rome. But Hannibal, whom I had come to resemble in these respects, had been the favourite [sic] hero of my later school days” (Freud, 1953: IV, 196). More importantly, Freud makes the connection between himself and Hannibal as something akin to a more pressing historical tension, that between the Church and the Jews. He writes “to my youthful mind Hannibal and Rome symbolized the conflict between the tenacity of Jewry and the organization of the Catholic church. . . . Thus the wish to go to Rome had become in my dream-life a cloak and symbol for a number of other passionate wishes” (Freud, 1953: IV, 196–7).

Rome appears in additional writings about childhood without significant comment (Freud, 1953: V) and a

handful of times in Freud’s commentary “Delusions and Dreams in Jensen’s *Gradiva*” (Freud, 1959: IX). In his piece “Der Moses des Michelangelo,” Freud is very interested in the artist’s sculpture, and as the editors of his collected works note, “Freud’s interest in Michelangelo’s statue was of old standing. He went to see it on the fourth day of his very first visit to Rome, . . . as well as on many later occasions” (Freud, 1955: XIII, 210).

Rome is of some importance to Freud in his work “Civilization and Its Discontents,” of which “the main theme of the book – the irremediable antagonism between the demands of instinct and the restriction of civilization – may be traced back to some of Freud’s very earliest psychological writings” (Freud, 1961: XXI, 60). In this work, Freud expresses a comparison between the *past of a city* and the *past of the mind*, which questions the mental imagining of the idea of a city like Rome, as well as the artifacts that create the historical narratives around the location of Rome (Freud, 1961: XXI).

Lacan and Rome

Lacan’s vision of Rome is much different than Freud’s ideas about Rome. Lacan was not interested in the same historical artifacts or constructions that Freud was. As one scholar has put it, “Lacan’s Rome resembled rather the ceilings of the Galleria Farnese, the archangels of Andrea Pozzo, or the facades of Francesco Borromini. (. . .) Occasionally, antiquity would revive in the form of philosophical references or famous battles, but never ruins. The unconscious discovered by Freud was to be started up anew as a Counter-Reformation, sumptuously draped in the folds of Clérambault. Rome would be his palace, the French language his garden” (Roudinesco, 1990: 253). For Lacan, the illustriousness of the Baroque Rome was attractive, as were the trappings of the Christian Rome, which seemed to be anathema to Freud’s own vision of what Dr. Jones called his “second Rome” (noted above). Roudinesco writes that “Lacan’s Rome began with Ignatius of Loyola and ended in rococo madness. As founder of a new orthodoxy, the master spawned a flamboyant theory. . . . Rome emigrated to Versailles and the Holy See to the rue de Lille. Lacan’s Rome was that of the Roman Catholic empire, a city in which the Pope was no longer a preacher but a commander in chief. The Rome dreamt of over maps in childhood; the Rome of adolescence and the Collège Stanislas: everything in the realm of religion, nothing accorded to faith” (Roudinesco, 1990: 253). As for Freud, “Medieval and baroque Rome evoked his hatred of Catholicism once more. . .”

(Ginsberg, 1999: 18). Lacan presented his *Rome Discourse* in 1953, which is seen as a “first step toward the elaboration of a theory of therapy, of its conduct, temporality, and punctuation” (Ginsberg, 1999: 18). The presentation of this discourse in Rome was symbolic of Lacan’s own feelings about the city and what it meant in his overarching thought and work (Amati, 1996).

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Lacan, Jacques](#) [Vatican](#)

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Rumi, Celaladin

Lucinda Antrim

Introduction

Celaladin (Jalal-ud-Din) Rumi, considered by many to be Islam’s greatest mystic, was born in or near Balkh (in present-day Afghanistan) on what is generally accepted

to be September 30, 1207 and died in Konya, in what is now southern Turkey, on December 17, 1273. A prolific poet and spiritual writer, his work has influenced not only Islamic literature and thought but the wider Western world. For the first years of his adult life Rumi was a respected Islamic jurist, teacher and writer, as his father was before him. With the arrival in Konya of the wandering mystic Shams-i-Tabriz, when Rumi was 37 years old, Rumi entered a period of creative and mystic fervor that resulted in an outpouring of poetry and teaching. His physical expressions of mystical experience inspired the founding of the Mevlevi order of whirling dervishes.

Life

We are dependent for the specifics of Rumi’s life on several early hagiographers, including his son, Sultan Valad. Mevlana (or Our Master) Jalal-ud-Din Rumi was born in either Vakhsh, outside Balkh, or in Balkh itself, a major cultural center where Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Christians interacted. It was a period of political unrest. Quarrels between dynasties in the region and the impending Mongol threat may have contributed to the decision of Rumi’s father, Baha al-Din, a Sunni Muslim, to leave Balkh. It is also possible that Baha al-Din left in search of greater scope for his work, which he may have felt was underappreciated in Balkh. When Rumi was 12, they departed on a journey of about 10 years and 1,500 miles, during which Rumi’s mother (one of Baha al-Din’s four wives) and a brother died, Rumi was married (to a young woman traveling with the family), and the couple had their two sons. When they arrived in the ancient city of Konya, perhaps at the invitation of the sultan, Konya was still a center of wealth and influence, growing in population with the influx of those fleeing the Mongols. Baha al-Din died in Konya in 1231, when Rumi was 24.

Rumi was well-educated, perhaps spending time in Damascus; he studied under leading Sufi mystics and learned large parts of the *Koran* the holy book of Islam, a record of God’s words revealed through the Angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad from 610 to 632 C.E. and *diverse Hadith*, commentaries on the Koran and on the saying of Muhammad, by heart. Upon his return to Konya, Rumi assumed a position in the madrase, or religious school, teaching sharia law and Sufi practices and lecturing widely.

After the death of his first wife, Rumi remarried, a woman some believe to have been a Christian and with whom he had a son and a daughter.

In 1244, Shams-i Tabriz arrived in Konya. He was the first of Rumi's three spiritual companions. A relatively uneducated wandering dervish, he was a man of complex personality, experienced by some as dismissive and demanding. He may have been a member of an Islamic order that purposely incited rejection as a path to spiritual growth. For Rumi, the meeting was transformative. Legends grew up around it: one holds that Shams, entering Rumi's home while he was lecturing, looked at a pile of books and asked, "What is this?" Rumi replied, "You don't know." The books burst into flame. Rumi asked, "What is this?" Shams replied, "You don't know."

Many of Rumi's followers reacted to Rumi's intense interest in Shams with jealousy. A combination of this, Shams's own wandering spirit, and Shams's desire to further Rumi's spiritual growth through a period of separation may have caused Shams to leave Konya after several months. Disconsolate, Rumi sent his son Sultan Walad to bring Shams back. After a period of peace when Shams returned in 1247, the jealousy of Rumi's madrase community members returned, and after less than a year together Shams disappeared. Some scholars believe he was murdered, perhaps by Rumi's older son Ala al-Din.

In 1250, after a period of deep mourning and of search for Shams, Rumi connected with his second spiritual companion, also a relatively uneducated man, Salah al-Din, a Sufi and a goldsmith in Konya. Upon Salah al-Din's death in 1258, Rumi chose Husam al-Din as his third and last beloved spiritual companion. Husam, a long-time friend and fellow Sufi, became Rumi's amanuensis and inspiration in the writing of the *Masnavi*.

Rumi died in 1273, welcoming death and telling those left behind not to grieve.

Works

Rumi wrote in Persian, with a few poems of lesser quality in Arabic. He cited a book of poems by a classical tenth century Arab poet as his favorite work but influences on his poetry are diverse, from animal stories of Indian origin to classical Sufi works to Persian love stories. He wrote in classical form, but with living, variously informed content.

In the *Divan-I Kebir*, Rumi documents his love, union, and longing for Shams-i Tabriz, as representative of mystical union and separation from God, in what are considered to be some of the world's great love poems. Rumi signs many of the poems (ghazals, a traditional Persian love poem of 5–12 rhymed lines) as Shams, indicating that he and Shams have become indistinguishable. Many

poems speak of spring, intoxication, and of Shams as the Sun, with a musicality that is often lost in translation. All are an attempt to describe inexpressible experience, suffused with a meaning beyond words. Rumi's work is endlessly associative without being dissociated; it is ultimately organized by its object: Allah. Also in the *Divan* is Rumi's Rubaiyat, a series of rhymed quatrains.

The *Masnavi*, a lengthy book of couplets dictated to his last spiritual companion, Husam al-Din, is a famously difficult book: his teachings took as its subjects everything from ribald tales about cheating Sufi wives to parables from the Judeo-Christian Bible to animal fables, through which he hinted at spiritual implications often without specifying them. He charmingly and at times frighteningly personified abstract concepts, and anthropomorphized everything from parts of the body to Sleep.

Rumi was a Neo-Platonist; Aristotelian logic held little interest for him, and he was sometimes castigated by more traditional Muslims for taking too many liberties with the interpretation of the Koran. His whirling, which began with the arrival of Shams, was viewed with suspicion by other teachers and by some of his own disciples. Within the Sufi tradition, he was relatively uninterested in the delineation of Gnostic stages by which one approaches union with God: for Rumi, man was perfected in love and suffering.

His discourses were collected under the title *Fihi ma fihi*. Several collections of his poems and a short selection of his sermons are available. His correspondence has also been preserved.

Influence

Despite the fact that his poetic language is rooted in the conventions of Persian and Sufi literature, informed by a medieval world view very different from our own, and so infused with the Koran that his *Masnavi* was called by some later Muslims "the Koran in Persian," Rumi's poetry quickens the hearts and touches the souls of many today. From providing the text of a Philip Glass/Robert Wilson song cycle to Rumi calendars, cards, and websites, Rumi is threading through the modern Western consciousness. Some trace the common phrase "It is what it is" to the compendium of Rumi's teachings, *Fihi ma fihi*, "In it is what is in it," or "It is what it is." Rumi influenced German and English writers in the 19th Century and was the UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) International Man of the Year in 2007 (commemorating the 800th anniversary of his birth).

He is widely influential in the Muslim world: in Iran, he is a household name, his mausoleum in Turkey is a place of pilgrimage, and his influence on later Muslim philosophers and poets is pervasive.

Commentary

Commentary on the intersection of psychology and religion in Rumi is conditioned by the distance from which we view this medieval mystic, who was deeply rooted in the Koran and in the society of his day.

Developmentally, Rumi remained a gifted but unremarkable Sufi scholar until age 37. His flowering as a poet and mystic began at approximately the same age as the prophet Mohammed experienced his spiritual awakening. For Jung, this is the phase of mid-life individuation. For Erikson, it is near the beginning of the middle adulthood stage, generativity versus stagnation.

Rumi's sense of identification with Shams and his identification of Shams with the Sun could be seen to indicate a fusion transference, in Kohutian terms.

Some modern commentators (e.g., Leslie Wines) have linked Rumi's mystical flowering to trauma during the long journey from Balkh to Konya, and perhaps even earlier, to trauma at age 5 as Mongols invaded his home town. The mirroring connection with Shams allowed Rumi to expand a part of self that had been desiccated and begin to process the trauma.

Creatively, Shams could be seen as the precipitant, introduced into Rumi's erudition and talent and yielding an outflow of poetry and teaching.

It is diagnostically interesting to speculate about Rumi's internal motivations: his whirling and its attendant drumming may have harnessed mild compulsive or anxious features. At times he reported that he was impelled to the poetry. Sleeplessness and fasting were a regular part of Sufi discipline and may also be related to psychic states.

Rumi's poetry explores at length and in great depth the wide range of human emotions. His lack of sentimentality allows the participation of others in his experience; he provides for readers the mirror that he found for himself in Shams and his later two spiritual companions. Numerous truths that we now recognize as psychological are found in his writing, for example, "Flee not from

the suffering We (God) inflict, for wherever you find suffering, there also you find a way to the remedy.' No one has ever fled from suffering without finding something worse in return" (*Rumi; Divan*, 1995: 123).

Rumi's relationships with Shams, and to a lesser extent with Salah al-Din and Husam al-Din, were deeply engaging at the expense of other relationships, and aroused fierce, even murderous jealousy in his community. For Bion, the pairing of Rumi with his spiritual companions, especially his first, Shams, may have been experienced by Rumi's madrase community as preventing the work stage. The pairing, very fecund, was not able to contain the heightened anxiety of the group. Some was released in Rumi's poetry, some in Shams's possible murder.

In James Fowler's Stages of Faith, Rumi is in stage 6, a Universalizer. Fowler found those at this stage to be "contagious"; Rumi's influence is still felt after eight centuries.

Psychoanalysts share with Rumi the inability to express in words the experience of the encounter, and theorists from Winnicott to Bollas to Eigen have worked to describe aspects of that experience.

See also: [Islam](#) [Julian of Norwich](#) [Meister Eckhart](#) [Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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S

Sabeanism

Sam Cyrus

An ancient religion which should not be mistaken with the Sabaeanims of Sabá (or Sheba), nor with the Sabianism (with “i” in English rather than with “e”) originated from the group of followers of John the Baptist who did not accept Jesus as the Christ.

Term Confusion and History

The confusion of the three is a constant through the literature and it is primarily, due to a translation mistake of the Koran by Marmeduke Pickthall – the term mentioned in the Koran refers to the religious group and it is written with the Arabic letter *sad* and Sabá is written with *sin* and is referred to the people of Sabá, Yemen. Other cause of confusion results from the fact that the Ansar tribe of Sabá adopted the Koranic Sabeanism as a religion. A third cause can be pointed in the fact that the followers of John the Baptist, being persecuted and expelled from Palestine, have settled down in the city of Harran, where Sabeanism was the dominant religion and also, after the conquest of Alexander, the center of religious and intellectual activity. Finally, a historical cause is in the fact that the first commentarists of the Koran, the historians and the jurists of Islam, not seeing a Sabeian, concluded that all the peoples of the world that were not Christian, Jews or Muslims, living from India to Spain, were Sabeans.

Only on tenth century, it was known that there were two different groups: the ones living at the area of the Euphrates – the Mandaeans, followers of John the Baptist – and the descendents of the city of Harran – the Harranians (Mehrabkhání, 1995).

In this period, the Mandaeans lived among the Sabeans in Harran, probably, copying some of their cosmology, and later in Babylon, where assimilated local beliefs;

posterior to the arrival of Muslims in Iraq (636 AD), they moved to the swampy lands of meridian Iraq (Cárdenas, n.d.).

Sabeanism and Other Religions

According to Mehrabkhání (1995) there are no more living believers of this religion and the only sources referring to it are the Muslim historians of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, the explanations presented in Bahá’í texts, their mention in Judaism – in *Yeshayahu/Isaiah*, 45:14 and *Iyov/Job*, 1:15 – and the existence advocated in the original Islam through quotes that distinguish the followers of the book – by one hand, the Muslims and by the other the Jews, the Christians and the Sabeans (2:62; 5:69; 22:17).

As mentioned, their geographical origin was attributed to the city of Harran (Mesopotamia), destroyed by the Mongol invasions of the twelfth century. In the Bible (Génesis, 12:4) one can read that Abram “departed out of Haran,” indicating that he could be from there. In letters, the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, Shoghi Effendi, by his turn, mentions that “The followers of this religion lived in Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham appeared” (1941 cit. in Research Department, 1996) and “Abraham is considered as having been a follower of that Faith” (1939 cit. in Departamento de Pesquisa, 2006). And the Koran describes some beliefs of the land of Abraham as similar to those of the Sabeans.

The founder of Islam Himself is seen as being of Sabeian origin, according to some descriptions of His time. About Muhammad, Ibn Jurayi (767) wrote “He is a Sabian,” ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘ibn Zayd (798) mentioned “The polytheists used to say of the prophet and his companions ‘these are the Sabians’ comparing them to them, because the Sabians who live Jaziartal-Mawsil would say ‘La ilaha ila Allah’” (a sentence common in Islamic theology), Rabi’ah ‘ibn ‘Ubbad (contemporaneous of Muhammad) wrote “I saw the prophet when I was a pagan. (. . .) I noticed a man behind him saying ‘he is a sabi.’ When I

asked somebody who he was he told me he was ‘Abu Lahab, his uncle’ (Gündüz, 1994: 18–19).

Religious Life

Sabeans believed in the need of demiurges that had all the virtues and perfections of one God unique, incognoscible, incomprehensible; prophets capable of answering any questions and unite humankind in conciliation and peace. From unknown date of foundations and having a founder or a “Prophet (. . .) Whose name is unrecorded” (Effendi, 1938 cit. in Departamento de Pesquisa da Casa Universal de Justicia, a, 2006), the learned attributed its origin to Seth – son of Adam – or Idris – Enoch –, having in account that their pilgrimage was to Giza, Egypt, where the tombs of Idris and Seth would be, or even to Hermes Trimegistus. This absence of a known founder made them “replace their unknown prophet with these spirits” (Mehrabkhání, 1995), in a total of seven, that govern the earthly world and manage the worldly and the spiritual problems. Those spirits assumed a celestial body as their own physical one – Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon – having erected temples for each one of them, in Harran (possibly, in a total amount of 12).

Each of these temples, without images, possessed a different architecture. The ceremonies in these temples were under the absolute control of the sacerdotal individuals, existing a clear dependence towards them. A detailed analysis of the religious phenomenon would show an increase of need of clergy dominion as one would go back in time, and a consequent apparent loss of responsibility of the believers’ personal acts. Nevertheless, in the case of Sabeanism there was a belief that the individual’s spirit is conscious of the punishments and rewards he/she was receiving during life, indicating an individual responsibility, despite the need of constant sacerdotal presence and confirmation on the lives and thoughts of the believers: humans were perfect creations, but in potential, and through the intervention of the spirits and through the clergy, it would have its development. Thus, conscience would become the meaning organ, as defined by Frankl (2002), guiding each human being and permitting the maintaining of his/her own identity, making him/her aware of his/her objective in life. In this way, a Sabean was someone that, guided, reflected on his attitudes, because “freedom of adopting an attitude (. . .) is never completed if it is not converted and transformed in freedom to assume responsibility” (Frankl, 2001: 75). Responsibility is now an essential force in Sabean

psychology, marking as a “distinctive note of man in his humanity” (Guberman & Soto, 2005: 122).

Family Life

The concept of family, by its turn, was one of equality, under the law, between men and women, in a monogamist couple, making more likely to have a more congruent child education, in what couple and family therapist could call balanced, or at least, inclination to a more balanced and healthy family system. Divorce was not forbidden, but it was unadvised and only made possible, once more, through the intervention of a superior and exterior entity: in this case a judge that, after the analysis of the adultery charges (only acceptable cause of divorce).

Collective Life and Individual Life

It was a religion that defended individual role, submissive to an external orientation: from the judge, the clergy, or the spirits. Thábit ibn-i-Qarrah (a devoted Sabean) has written that “some chosen among the people” are those who “have reached all this and have shown the way to heal the badness of the souls and have filled the world with the institutions and centers to fulfill and extend wisdom and piety.” These are the few who led the matters of the community. A first and superficial analysis could attribute the locus of control of the believers to external variables, but if such was true, the cities where they lived, as was the case of Harran, wouldn’t have been the centers of cultural enterprises, where difference was accepted. In reality, respecting the guide of those who were hierarchically superior could be compared to the respect a student has towards the teacher, or the relationship of a patient with his therapist: at the end, responsibility is of he/she who has, initially, lesser information and knowledge and that wants to learn and develop new capabilities. Thus the ninth and tenth centuries recorded great sages of Sabean origin, like philosophers, astronomers, physicians and botanicals.

The existence of a class superior in knowledge and wisdom could also prevent a common individual from imposing his opinions to others: as consequence equality, tolerance to difference and equal opportunities would be as if instituted. The very own diversity of the temples could be seen as an acceptance of difference and diversity. As a consequence, social and moral principles could only result of a social consensus.

Individual Life

At an individual level, like other religions, there were prayers – in a total of three or five obligatory ones, depending on the referral source. They took care of their bodies and clothing, as it would be needed for devotional moments. Such act shows a belief in some kind of relationship between the body and the spirit. They fasted three times an year – in a total of 30–46 days –, believed that circumcision was against divine creation and had as forbidden to eat some sorts of meats, garlic, onion, lentils or broadbeans.

Scholars assume they believed in life after death, due to their erect and without prostration prayers for the dead during funerals, the archeological findings pointing to their burial with fingernails and, in a specific record, the figure of a Phoenix on the tomb with the sentence “let there be the joy of a happy ending!”

They were, besides all these, owners of firmness and constancy before hardships, as reported, once more, by Thábit ibn-i-Qarrah: “when everyone was under the influence of the Cross, our parents, with the help of God, showed firmness (. . .). Blessed those who show constancy and accept all kinds of calamities for the cause of hanputeh, and manifest certitude and confidence.” It was, perhaps under this vision that they reached vast corridors of the African world, despite their Asian origins. There are authors that believe that Sabeanism was the precursor of African religions, as the case of the Ngoni people of the Bantu ethnicity of Swaziland, as described by Cárdenas (n.d.), or even *Santeria* taken to the Americas, centuries later.

See also: ▶ Abraham and Isaac ▶ Adam and Eve ▶ Bahais ▶ Baptism ▶ Christianity ▶ Circumcision ▶ Conscience ▶ Frankl, Viktor ▶ God ▶ Islam ▶ Judaism and Psychology ▶ Locus of Control ▶ Prayer ▶ Purpose in Life ▶ Religion ▶ Santería ▶ Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach

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Sacraments

Carol L. Schnabl Schweitzer

Sacred Ritual – Public Act

From a religious perspective, a sacrament is a ritual that has been elevated to a special status because it is believed to have been instituted by a divine figure. For Christians, for example, these sacred rituals or sacraments are believed to have been instituted by Christ. Scholars that study ritual are able to agree (mostly) on at least two points: (1) “ritual consciousness is pre-critical”; and (2) “ritual is meaningful and that meaning consists of the words or ideas to which ritual acts refer” (Grimes, 1993: 7). Moreover, ritual is a collective, or corporate and public act, as opposed to an individual or personal and private act; ritual is also traditional as opposed to created or invented. On these points, even Freud would be likely to concur since he declared that an obsessional neurosis was a “half comic and half tragic *private* religion” (Freud, 1907: 119). This is not to say that new rituals are not created or invented and later adopted as sacred, but it is a process that takes place over generations. The generational process points to the need for some kind of ritual authority – especially with regard to sacred rites or sacraments. Authority is ascribed to sacred texts, tradition (the generational process), ecclesiastical hierarchies, and the like. Grimes identifies several other sources of ritual authority: performance according to rules established by sacred or liturgical texts; functions that cohere with the social context and/or work to achieve explicit goals; and, moral criteria which ritual subscribes to and ensures that ritual is just (Grimes, 1993: 50). Thus, as psychologist of religion Paul Pruyser was led to conclude: “in religion, it is

folly to ignore the impact of action on belief. Religious belief is embedded in religious practices; creed is grafted onto cult” (Pruyser, 1974: 205). Though doctrine about such religious practices is in some ways inseparable from the culture and the practice it describes, there is an unavoidable “chicken-egg” question about which is prior. What then does psychoanalytic theory teach us about ritual and the sacraments in particular?

Obsession – Private Act

Freud had a less than charitable view of religious ritual and declared that all religion was best understood as a universal obsessional neurosis (Freud, 1907/1959: 126). What Freud labeled as “neurotic ceremonials” are “small adjustments to particular everyday actions. . . which have always to be carried out in the same, or in a methodically varied, manner” (Freud, 1907/1959: 117–118). If these actions are not carried out methodically and repetitively (daily), the individual experiences intolerable anxiety. Thus, one conclusion pertaining to the function of ritual is that ritual serves as a defense mechanism, which assists in reducing an individual’s anxieties about everyday life. Freud attends particularly to the small additions to what would otherwise be “mere formalities” or exaggerations of formal procedures; these additions or exaggerations may have a “rhythmic character” which consists of pauses and repetitions. One could argue that these “neurotic ceremonials” have an almost musical quality about them. Yet even Freud distinguishes between “neurotic ceremonials” and religious rituals as we shall see.

Neurotic Obsession or Sacred Rite?

The similarities that Freud identified between neurotic obsessions and sacred rites include: the conscientiousness with which the practices are observed as well as the attention paid to details; the “qualms of conscience” or guilt that is stimulated by neglecting the rituals; and, the observation or performance of such rituals in isolation from other activities in conjunction with a prohibition against the interruption or disruption of the act. The dissimilarities are equally apparent and include: the “stereotyped” character of religious ritual (Freud cites prayer as an example); the corporate or communal nature of sacred ritual; and, the details or dimensions of religious rituals that are imbued with significance and symbolic meaning consciously by the believer (Freud, 1907/1959: 119). Here we can note the “pre-critical consciousness” and meaning located in words and ideas that Grimes describes. In contrast, an obsessional neurosis is acted out in private

and the meaning (there is always a symbolic meaning) is not known, at least consciously, to the individual who engages in such practices. Finally, Freud contends that if “deeper insight” into the actual mechanism of the obsession is to be attained then one needs to examine what is at the bottom or root of the obsession which is “always *the repression of an instinctual impulse* (a component of sexual instinct)” (Freud, 1907/1959: 124). Here then we see that an obsessional neurotic practice addresses the guilt which is related to the repression of an impulse and by analogy one can see a similarity with the function of sacraments which, at least in part, are rituals performed to cleanse the believer from sin. Thus as Freud concludes, the origins of religion are located in the renunciation or suppression of “certain instinctual impulses” (Freud, 1907/1959: 125). Acts of penance or contrition, which are deemed sacraments in some Christian denominations, are ritual acts engaged in to compensate for the believer’s sinful behaviors and these acts have a pathological counterpart in obsessional neuroses. As Pruyser notes, however, this treatment of religious ritual doesn’t do justice to religious practice which leads him to render a more favorable reading of sacraments and religious rituals building upon the work of Winnicott and Erikson (Pruyser, 1974: 205–213). What then does this more favorable understanding of sacred ritual look like?

Sacraments as Sacred Ritual

Pruyser takes Winnicott’s idea of a transitional object and its transitional sphere (the attention paid to and “goings on” surrounding the transitional object) as his starting place. The transitional object is a ritual or sacred object which, Pruyser argues, is the transcendent. The object is held as sacred; for example, an infant’s mother and the rest of the family realize almost intuitively that a blanket or teddy bear is precious and it acquires a “ceremonial focus” within the family. It isn’t washed with the rest of the laundry, is often carried everywhere, and is treated with awe or reverence. This transitional sphere wherein the object becomes sacred is also the source of illusion in the positive sense of the word. It is the space between “the mental image produced by the mind itself and the objective perceptual image produced by the real world impinging upon the sensory system. Illusion is neither hallucination nor delusion, nor is it straightforward sense perception. Illusion also includes mystery” (Pruyser, 1974: 11). Thus the transitional object has an almost numinous – even if illusory – quality about it while the transitional sphere is the location for mediation between inner and outer reality and in this way serves as the place

from which religion emanates. The first occurrence of ritual takes place when an infant and mother exchange smiles while the infant is nursing (Erikson, 1977: 87). How then does this lead to the development of sacred ritual and the celebration of sacraments? If we consider the Christian sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist as examples, we can see that they are in some sense religious dramas enacted in a worship context that deal primarily with notions of grace and judgment (or damnation) which invite communal participation. To be sure, the celebration of the sacraments are fraught with symbols, the multi-valent meanings of which perhaps only the clergy or ecclesiastical authorities are able to explain fully, but their absence from the drama of human life would signal nothing short of a person with a negative identity (Erikson) or an individual who has never learned to play (Winnicott).

See also: [Anxiety](#) [Christianity](#) [Compulsion](#) [Defenses](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Instinct](#) [Pruyser, Paul](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Ritual](#) [Shame and Guilt](#) [Super-Ego](#) [Symbol](#) [Transitional Object](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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Sacred King

Stacey Enslow

The Sacred King is a unification of the concepts of the innate self-ruler; the human being as a potentiality expressed in competence, command, resourcefulness and

self-control. This is united with the mystical, religious, or psychic self, as the leader of the unearthly aspects of the human. The Sacred king joins the office of the secular King and the holy Priest into a single whole person, one who acts with authority and knowledge in the inner and outer realms of human experience. Sacred King seeks to achieve homeostasis but at an idealized level. He (the Sacred King is a “masculine” aspect – it is understood that archetypes are manifested in both genders and sexes) is the bridge between extremes of human social and personal/religious experience. In Eastern metaphysics the Human is conceived of as a bridge between “heaven” and “earth,” whereas in Western metaphysics, humanity is seen as possessing, or linking, the extremes of the “upper” or celestial worlds, and the “lower” or demoniac worlds; Heaven:Hell, Human world:Faery/Other world, Arcadia:Hades.

Mythic correspondences include, as earthly beings; Gilgamesh, Rama, and The Fisher King. Some deities representing Sacred Kingship are Marduk, Prajapati, and Osiris.

As Gilgamesh, the earliest recorded Sacred King in history, the Sacred King represents the culmination of the journey of the soul, from realization of potential, to the limits of the physical self, to the unification of desires and will to achieve the end of the soul’s journey. Gilgamesh is the Sacred Warrior, and the Wanderer, who has achieved success in the quest for selfhood and self-mastery. Gilgamesh also shows the power of the Sacred King as living and ruling in two worlds: the land of the living and the land of the divine, be they ancestors or gods. Working with the High priestess/Goddess of the Land, the Sacred King is the judge and upholder of sacred law, and by his decree secular and sacred law are joined. The Goddess and the Land are forces with which the Sacred King must remain in balance with, to stay healthy and potent.

Rama is the law-giver: he who arbitrates the sacred law and also keeps the land fertile through fairness and justice. Rama is the Sacred King as universal or social conscience, and the self as a social force; both a binder and administrator. As Rama, the Sacred king represents the idea of latent sovereignty within the self, or self-rulership, as well as the ability to empower, and rule, others. This aspect of the Sacred king is the fulfillment of the social contract between the individual and humanity: as a self-realized human being, the Sacred King performs his duties of office and is in turn sustained within the interconnected energy exchange between himself, the land and society on one hand, and between himself, the goddess of the land and the collective spirit of the people on the other. Thus the Sacred King fulfills the “Divine Mandate” of Eastern metaphysics as a bridge between heaven and earth. By

mastering the Shadow within himself, he is also the bridge between the “lower” or demonic, and “upper” or angelic realms as well.

The Fisher king is the wounded self, seeking reconciliation and healing: the Sacred King as victim, and as self-immobilized. Just as the empowered Sacred King represents the self-realized self-ruler, the Fisher King represents the powers of the King: healing, union, justice, rulership, and wisdom, all rendered impotent by the innate power of the King turned against the self. In this aspect of the archetype, the illness of the self is a public role, affecting the health of the entire network he is connected to: the Land, and its divinity, and the people, and their collective spirit.

For the Fisher King, all relationships that the Sacred King needs to fulfill are out of balance, rendering the King unable to perform his functions, and unable to be healed until the imbalances both within and without the self are healed. The Fisher King’s illness is reflected in the land, and so the land ceases to nourish the King, or his people. Also, the Land no longer nourishes the social network of the people, and so they cannot heal the King: The Fisher King is sick in body, social function and psyche.

The Sacred King has a strong messianic component: like the Fisher King, Rama and Osiris are embodiments of the Returning King which involves a period away from society and family (through illness, a personal quest or exile, death), and then a return to liberate and rule again.

Sexual potency is an important aspect of the Sacred King; all Sacred Kings excel in combat, and usually possess superlative weapons; when the King’s power is lessened, there is a corresponding lessening, or even breakage, of the potent weapon, and vice-versa. The libido is a driving force for the Sacred King; the erotic interplay between Gilgamesh and Innana, the love affair of Rama/Radhi, the castration and rejuvenation of Osiris by Isis illustrate the necessity of the male/female dynamism not only as a catalyst, but also as a means of attainment.

When the role of the Sacred King is fulfilled, he is the idealized ruler of the inner self. For the individual, the Sacred King is a realization of Maslow’s self-actualized person. In all his aspects, the Sacred King reflects an integration of the private self and the social self; the King is ruler and hero, healer and warrior. In all instances, the Sacred King is a responsible participant (and even initiator) of social action, for benefit or for ill.

See also: [▶ Angels](#) [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Conscience](#) [▶ Demons](#) [▶ Descent to the Underworld](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Heaven and Hell](#) [▶ Libido](#) [▶ Liminality](#) [▶ Love](#) [▶ Monomyth](#) [▶ Mother](#) [▶ Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#) [▶ Self](#) [▶ Shadow](#)

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Sacred Prostitution

Paul Larson

Religion has had at best an ambivalent attitude toward human sexuality. All religions recognize the value of sexual union between a man and a woman in a mutually committed relationship and ritually recognized through some sort of rite of marriage. Beyond that type of sexuality, most other forms have received more or less harsh condemnations and proscriptions. Thus, sacred prostitution, or providing sexual acts to strangers as a religious act or in exchange for a donation to a religious organization has had very limited acceptance and much more condemnation.

Where we have record of sacred prostitution it has occurred in association with the older pagan fertility goddesses of the ancient Near East. Since most of the commentators, especially those found in the Bible, have condemned the practice, the accuracy of their description of the practice should be taken with some skepticism. In the Hebrew Bible (*Tanach*), the term for a servant of a temple who would provide a sexual act to a supplicant of the goddess is “K’desh” (male) or “K’deshah (female), with the plural being “K’deshim” and “K’deshot,” though the literal root meaning is closer to “holy one” without any sexual connotation. That additional element is a gloss by the author with a point of view. “Hierodule” is the term in English for this role as translated from ancient works in Hebrew, Greek or Latin. The Greek historian Herodotus (1, 199) noted that in Mesopotamia it was required that a women offer herself sexually at the temple of Mylitta once in her lifetime.

Budin (2008) has taken the position, based on philological analysis of the evidence, that sacred prostitution did not exist. As noted above some of the terminology does not imply sexual action, but has come to be associated with a sexual meaning only through a tradition she

claims is fatally flawed. The strong moralistic tone found in the Jewish and Christian writers who are the source of much of the evidence lends weight to her criticism. She also rightfully points out that prostitution was well known in most of those civilizations without any religious overtones and references to sacred prostitutes don't usually use the terms for regular sex workers. Thus one is left with much doubt as to whether or what extent the practice existed. It is probable that there were some associations of ritual sexual activity with religious institutions. There is evidence for the existence of "hieros gamos" (Gk.), a ritual sex act between a king or high priest and a high priestess in ancient Mesopotamia. But Budin's argument is that the practice was not widespread or institutionalized. Greenberg (1988) focuses more on the male hierodule, particularly the "galli" (Lat.), the temple servants of the Phrygian deity Cybele. These men castrated themselves as part of their initiation into their priestly role and donned female garb. There is some evidence that they subsequently were available for sexual liaisons with males, though our most detailed account (Apulius, second century CE/1962) is a satirical work of fiction. Herodotus' note cited earlier is both the earliest reference and the least burdened by judgment as to the practice he describes, so it is harder to dismiss. Nevertheless, the evidence is scanty and imprecise, and the final word should be that controversy surrounding the practice makes firm conclusions difficult.

See also: [Rites of Passage](#) [Ritual](#) [Sex and Religion](#)

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Sacred Time

Rod Blackhirst

In profane understandings time appears to be a constant linear sequence of moments, but all religious and spiritual traditions conceive of a "sacred time" that is outside of or

other than this sequence. Commonly, this sacred time is said to be an "eternal now" that is located "between" (or above or beyond) the moments that make up linear time. Time is an agent of death, corruption and the finite; spiritual traditions seek a realm that is ever-living, incorruptible and infinite and therefore not subject to the flux of time.

The psychological perception of time is inconstant. Time will often seem to either "fly" or "drag" and it seems to pass slower to children and pass faster as we age. Similarly, there are cultural differences in the perception of time. The nomad, for instance, has more of a spatial than a temporal consciousness. For the nomad the starry sky is a map, while for the sedentary city-dweller it is a clock. The decline of nomadic life and the arrival of sedentary life (recorded in such myths as the Biblical story of Cain and Abel) is therefore the passage from the sacred to the profane experience of time.

One of the most primordial accounts of sacred time comes from the Australian Aborigines who describe a period called the "Dreaming" or the "Dreamtime." While this is usually conceived of as a time long before memory, it is also understood to be ever-present and can be accessed at any time by way of religious rites. This same convention is a feature of most religious systems; the liturgical or theurgical elements of the system allow a symbolic relocation from profane to sacred time, which is at the same time a return to the formative and creative period or the point of a sacred theophany (intervention of God into time).

The most conspicuous instance of this in the semitic religions is the Jewish sabbath which is celebrated every 7 days (Saturday) and is a return to the Divine repose after the 6 days of creation. The reiteration of sacred events is the guiding principle of sacred calendars and calendrical systems. The annual reiteration of events is not merely commemorative; it is a symbolic return to sacred time. Often, inter-calary days and festivals are regarded as especially sacred because they represent "time outside of (normal) time."

In Judeo-Christian mythology, the period that Adam and Eve spend in the Garden of Eden is the paradigmatic instance of sacred time. Sacred time is Edenic and before the Fall. But, as historical religions, Judaism and Christianity both propose paradoxical instances of sacred periods that are within the fold of history. In Judaism, the period during which the Israelites wandered in the wilderness in a sacred time that is "out of history" even though it is understood to have been an historical event. In Christianity, the Last Supper was an historical event at a definite time and place, but it also dwells in sacred time

since it can be accessed by the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Similarly, the crucifixion was an historical event but in Christian theology it is also an eternal event; the sacrifice of Christ is now and on-going. In shamanism and in shamanic practices that persist in later religions – such as fasting, chanting, trances, dancing, auto-hypnosis or the sacramental use of drugs – there is an attempt to have direct and immediate experience of “time beyond time” and to induce a psychological state of timelessness that is not merely symbolic. In folk tales, popular stories or so-called fairy tales sacred time is signaled by the convention “once upon a time” which refers to a mythical time that is no time in particular.

Sacred time is pristine and archetypal; it is the time when the shape and patterns of life and the world were first established. It is therefore mythological and non-historical, history then being defined as a decline, a deviation from or the passing away of sacred time. Plato, giving a very traditional account of it, says in his *Timaeus* that “time is a moving image of eternity” and that the Forms or archetypes of the world reside in eternity, their temporal (and corruptible) manifestations being “images” or copies of the a-temporal originals. In his dialog called *The Statesman* Plato also gives an account of the idea of “eternal return,” namely the notion that historical time is circular (rather than linear) and that all events in time are repeated endlessly. This idea is surprisingly widespread, as Mircea Eliade has documented, and follows from the idea that, ultimately, the movement of time is an illusion and that only motionless eternity (sacred time) is real. The myth often takes the form of an era in which the world moves in one direction (with the sun rising in the east and setting in the west) followed by a catastrophic reversal of direction at end of this era (after which the sun rises in the west and sets in the east). Time, so to speak, winds up and then winds down, although in fact both movements cancel each other out and there is really no movement at the level of the principle. The religious mystic or the spiritual seeker aspires to this principle (which is spatially represented as the center or axis of a wheel) and therefore to freedom from the cycles and vicissitudes of time and decay. In the eastern religions this idea is expressed in terms of cycles of birth and rebirth and the timeless realm is attained through liberation from these cycles. In modern thought the idea of “eternal return” was taken up by the German philosopher Nietzsche who presented it as a nihilistic denial of the liberal ideal of progress.

See also: [➤ Christianity](#) [➤ Judaism](#) and [Psychology](#) [➤ Myth](#) [➤ Plato and Religion](#) [➤ Ritual](#) [➤ Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism](#) [➤ Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Sacrifice

Morgan Stebbins

The concept of sacrifice was once so important in the study of religions that whole developmental taxonomies were created to define them from this standpoint (Frazer; Hubert and Mauss, 1981). We can still see it as one of the least understood but central ideas in religion, in dynamic psychology, and in common parlance.

Sacrifice, like many words that have crossed from ritual to general usage can be defined in two general ways. On one hand it is giving up something for something else, and on the other it is giving up something precious (anything from grain to animals to goods to humans) to a deity, in usually in supplication. For the former, one might wonder how it is different from the concept of simple exchange – and indeed it seems to be hardly differentiated especially when applying models of social value systems which depend on both cohesion and coercion. For example, a mother is said to sacrifice for her children or a soldier for his or her country, and yet it is hard to see how it was not a matter of job description in the first place. That is, it seems to be more a choice in terms of both having children as well as parenting style, except that socially the value of parenting is higher than that of self-care. The same goes for military sacrifice (the so-called ultimate sacrifice) and other things that benefit a given social group. Both of these examples show that the dynamic involved is that of giving up something personal for something collective or inter-personal (and something that often needs to remain unexamined to retain its influence).

For all of these examples, critical theory in the style of Slavoj Žižek indicates that a form of ideology is active. That is, a master signifier embedded in the language of a particular social group designates collective goals as more valuable than the pursuit of personal consciousness or desire. In this sense, the master signifier acts to justify a regrettable life – if one has sacrificed something major for something else of less tangible import, one could hardly be expected to have excelled as a person. Of course this dynamic can be reversed so that, for example with sports figures, one might be either negatively or positively assessed in terms of sacrifice made for some great achievement. In either case we can see the caustic lens of social reprobation at work. To the extent that ideological cultures can express a sentimentality toward sacrifice we have to remember Jung's words that "sentimentality is the sister of brutality" (Jung, 385).

Before moving to the specifically religious concept of sacrifice, let us notice that the word itself is derived from the Latin words *sacre*, or sacred, and *facere*, the verb meaning to make. So sacrifice is that act which makes something (or someone) sacred. The terrain of the sacred includes a range of experience from sublime experience of union to terrible and destructive acts of the divine. To make sacred then is to approach the meaning of taboo – it is nearing the holy fire, the spark of life, and the dark reaches of the psychoid realm of the psyche. The term "psychoid" refers to a theoretical level of unconscious which can never be plumbed and yet out of which content emerges. One could think of it as the irreducible biological substrate of mind (see Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche*).

In the realm of religious traditions, sacrifice of some kind is nearly ubiquitous.

It also served a social or economic function in those cultures where the edible portions of the animal were distributed among those attending the sacrifice for consumption. This aspect of sacrifice has recently become the basis of an economic explanatory model (see especially R. Firth, E. E. Evans-Pritchard). Animal sacrifice has turned up in almost all cultures, from the Hebrews to the Greeks and Romans (particularly the purifying ceremony *Lustratio* and from the Aztecs to the Yoruba. The ancient Egyptians, however, forbade the practice as being primitive, although the entombment of both humans and animals in a sacrificial form with the Pharaoh as companions after death was common.

The Hebrew word for sacrifice is *korban*, from the root *karov*, meaning to come close to God. This is a more spatial aspect of the quality of making sacred. The opening chapters of the book of Leviticus explain in great detail the various methods of sacrifice, as well as providing a veritable

taxonomy of sacrificial victims. Sacrifices were classified as bloody (animals) or un-bloody (grain and wine). Bloody sacrifices were again differentiated into holocausts (whole burnt offerings), guilt offerings (divided into a burnt part and a part kept by the priest) and peace offerings (also partial burning).

A specific set of sacrificial offerings were the scapegoat, particularly instructive psychologically because these were a pair of goats with different functions. As is well known, the scapegoat was adorned with ribbons representing the sins of the village and driven out into the wilderness. The other goat was an unblemished holocaust or wholly burnt offering to God. Psychologically translated this shows an inability to sustain a proximity to the divine while suffering consciousness of sins. Moreover, in the person manifesting the victim mentality there is a split which both cannot bear responsibility for mistakes and in which there is an unconscious identification with the divine – represented by the wholly burnt and therefore nutritionally unavailable goat. In other words, for this type of split subject the only path to an experience of value is through suffering.

The practice of human sacrifice is a particularly instructive, if brutal, reminder of the power of the gods however imagined. This translates into a personal possession by a transpersonal structure which results in the destruction of anything human. Examples come from all over the world: In the Greek world there are many stories of human sacrifice from youths sent to appease the Minotaur to Iphigenia being sacrificed by her father Agamemnon for the sake of favorable war-wind. There are many conflicting ancient sources and in fact only Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Pindar's *11th Pythian Ode* describe her actual sacrifice and her father's blood-guilt, prompted by his eagerness for war.

In Mesoamerica human sacrifice was even more widespread from Aztec sacrifice of many (usually enemy) humans in order to assure the rising of the sun, to common Mayan and Incan sacrifice for astrological and architectural reasons. It has been found in Norse culture, Indonesian tribal society, and in some African cultures, and persisted until recently in India in the form of immolation of the widow of a Brahmin on his death pyre. The immolation of the widow is called *sati*. Legislation to outlaw it was passed only as recently as 1987.

Frazer and other early theorists of religion established a dubious but very influential hierarchy or development of sacrifice from the human to the animal to the symbolic to, not surprisingly, the Christian (Frazer, *The Golden Bough*). Of course the latter (the Eucharist) is really a form of human sacrifice, but with the twist that it is also a sacrifice of God, and is self-inflicted. In this model we come very close to a psychological view in that the most valuable

thing one can give up for something higher or greater is an aspect of oneself. The factor which keeps this process from becoming merely an exchange is that of uncertainty. Although some anthropologists have seen sacrifice as a fairly transparent manipulation of the divine, the Catholic and Orthodox churches have gone to great lengths to explain that it is not in fact a manipulation of the God-head but rather an offering which is then responded to out of Grace, albeit suspiciously consistently. The instructive Biblical passage is the moment in the garden of Gethemene in which Jesus admits that he doesn't want to go through with the crucifixion but then assents, saying "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Gospel of Luke, 41:22–24). This is also found in Paul, Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

We can see that psychologically the dynamic is one of giving up the lesser for a chance at some uncertain greater. This is only viable within depth psychological approaches for which there is a mode of functioning or a psychic structure which is seen as bigger, greater, wiser, or more comprehensive. However within these systems we can see another sort of sacrificial taxonomy. An image of human sacrifice would indicate a blame of the other, of animal sacrifice indicates a relinquishing of instinct, of agricultural offerings shows a dynamic of cultural sacrifice, and a self/symbolic sacrifice shows that a process of giving up something highly valuable and personal for the transpersonal is indicated.

In this process the first victim is instinctive certainty, replaced by doubt and concomitant differentiation. This becomes the development of an evaluating consciousness, one that weighs options and consequences. If successful, personal guidelines emerge in the shape of instinct molded by will. This phrase is instructive as it is Jung's very definition of psyche; it is "instinct modified by will" (Jung, *Aion*: 56), which if still successful, push the natural impulses into a corner. There is a danger as well as hardship in this, but further sacrifice including spiritual ambition in favor of something still unknown but symbolically indicated reveals the logic of the soul apparent in the present in any given moment.

To turn the image another way, we can see the sacrificial knife (of differentiation) as the instrument of a kind of regeneration. It is one that kills the failing king, or dominant part of consciousness. As such the knife acts like the Lacanian concept of any speech act: it carries content but also carries the implicit world-view in which the content can be viable, thus undercutting the very subject of the utterance. In Lacan's case, what must be given up is the attachment to a specular (that is, apparent

in vision only) wholeness in favor of a more authentic experience of fragmentation in the face of ideological social pressure (Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Principles*).

Lacan's analysis indicates the coercive aspect of sacrifice that may be supported by a social agenda. In this we see that the dynamics of sentimentality include brutality, so that a statement of sacrifice of some overt type "I sacrifice for you" (or the call for a patriotic sacrifice under the banner of "us" when what is meant is "you") is revealed as a desperate gambit to maintain control at any price and is the reverse of a personal spiritual process.

Sacrifice is a key aspect of both religion and psychology. In religious terms it was archaically practiced through the sacrifice of an animal in order to change the supplicant's relationship with the divine. It has changed to become a sacrifice of personal intention in favor of divine spirit – although this is ambiguous it brings the concept very close to the psychological meaning in which growth is seen as giving up the smaller for the larger. For Freud this meant giving up the sexual urge, or sublimating it, into cultural pursuits. For Jung there is a definitive religious instinct in which sacrifice is made of the small personality in favor of the large. Although simple to describe, in practice it involves a typically difficult struggle to let go of something that previously defined the subject in favor of something not yet fully known but more comprehensive.

See also: [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Lacan, Jacques](#) [▶ Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#)

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Sacrifice of Isaac

Erel Shalit

The sacrifice of Isaac, in Hebrew the *akedah*, i.e., the *binding* of Isaac, is one of the Bible's most dramatic stories. In its extreme brevity, the narrative is an archetypal skeleton, not fleshed out by personal details or human feelings. It thus lends itself to innumerable theological explanations, philosophical readings and psychological interpretations.

God tells Abraham to go to the land of Moriah (possibly meaning the land of the Amorites, the land of worship, or the teaching-place of God) and offer his beloved son Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham does not question his God, with whom he has sealed a covenant. He has been promised that he will “multiply exceedingly,” and become a father of many nations. He binds his son Isaac and lays him upon the wood on the altar he has built, but when raising his knife, the angel calls upon him not to slay his son. He has passed God's test of devotion, and a ram is offered in place of Isaac. Abraham then calls the place Adonai-yireh, because “the Lord has been seen” (Genesis 22: 1–14).

For philosophers and religious commentators, the test of Abraham has provided a stage, similar to the trial of Job, for contemplating good and evil. Kierkegaard emphasized Abraham's anguish and suffering in preserving his faith. For him, “only one who draws the knife gets Isaac” (Kierkegaard, 2006: 27). The willingness to fulfill the command (or rather, as phrased in Hebrew, the request) to sacrifice Isaac becomes, then, for Kierkegaard, a rekindling of faith in the good God, while for Kant it represents an act of evil to be rebelled against.

In Jewish thought, the perception of the story has commonly emphasized Abraham's devotion to God, to the extent of sacrificing the embodiment of his future. It has been considered a paradigm of the readiness to give up life in order to sanctify the divine name, but also as punishment for Abraham having sent Ishmael into the wilderness.

Some biblical scholars have read the account as a prohibition against child sacrifice, such as mentioned for instance in Jeremiah (7: 31; see also Exodus 22: 28–29; 2 Kings 3: 27, 16: 3, 21: 6), with the angel intervening to prevent Abraham's act of filicide. The narrative has also served as a model for anti-Semitic blood libels accusing Jews of ritual murder of non-Jewish children.

Already some early legends told the story that Abraham in fact did slay and then burned Isaac. The lad

“was reduced to ashes,” only to be revived by God's “life-giving dew” (Spiegel, 1993: 37). Thus, Isaac served as a “symbol for the archetypal experience of death and rebirth” (Dreifuss, 1971: 72).

The symbolic death of Isaac has been understood as transformative, confirming him in his role as chosen to carry out God's promise to Abraham, to be the one in whom the seed shall be called (cf. Abramovitch, 1994: 123; Genesis 21: 12). This seed, says St. Augustine, while called in Isaac, is gathered together in Christ by the call of grace. The sacrifice of Isaac becomes the precursor of Christ; like Jesus carried His cross, Isaac himself carried the wood to the place of sacrifice, and like the ram was offered in place of Isaac, so Jesus would die on the cross for humankind.

The name of the sacrificial child is not mentioned in the Quran. Consequently, Muslim scholars have disagreed whether it concerns Ishmael or Isaac. Since it is said that Abraham offered up his only son, scholars have argued this could only mean Ishmael, the elder of the two. The importance ascribed to the sacrifice is reflected in Eid-ul-Adha, the Feast and Festival of Sacrifice, celebrated immediately after the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Psychological Aspects

The *akedah* offers a kaleidoscope of psychological facets and interpretations. Abraham, Urvater of the monotheistic religions, stands in the center, between the Father-God, who now requires of him the sacrifice of his repeatedly promised seed, and the late-born son, predestined to fulfill the covenant and conceive the earthly offspring. The offering of a child to appease the gods is a common theme in myth and legend in many traditions.

Psychological interpretations naturally tend to look at the father-son relation. One aspect of this is submission – both Abraham's and Isaac's – to the command of the father. It entails the recognition of God's supremacy, interpreted on the psychological level as reflecting weakness in relation to authority. Yet, the archetypal scheme seems more important than personal character, since Abraham already had shown himself quite capable of challenging God, as when he argues and negotiates with God to spare the sinners with the righteous in Sodom (Genesis 18: 23–33).

Father's Reluctance Against His Son

In a sense, the *akedah* is a reversal of and predecessor to the Oedipus complex. A complex would not have been

born in Oedipus's name if it were not for his father Laius, who frightened by the oracle's prophesy of his son's patricide and mother-incest exposed Oedipus to certain death. Only the shepherd's compassion saved Oedipus the child from certain death by unprotected and defenceless exposure to archetypal forces. Likewise, Acrisius, fearing the prophesy that his grandson would kill him, locked his daughter Danae and grandson Perseus in a chest and threw them into the river to an unsure fate, though they were saved by the good fisherman. (Later, Perseus saved Andromeda, who was offered by her father, the king, to appease the sea monster Cetus.) The Laius complex, the father's fear of the son, who eventually will destroy and replace him, precedes the son's slaying of the father.

Castration anxiety, in which the child fears the father's anger because of its choice of the mother as love object, is an innate aspect of the Oedipus complex. Theodor Reik refers to *Das Incestmotiv* by Otto Rank, in which he "conceived of Isaac's sacrifice, prevented only at the last moment, as a threat to castrate Abraham's son" (Reik, 1961: 66). The threatened castration and near-sacrifice of the son can be taken to mean that the genitality and vitality of the ego may feel threatened by new instinctual and archetypal elements that arise from the unconscious. Consequently, the ego responds like a vulnerable father who undermines his son's rise to masculinity.

The libido and potency of the son may threaten many a father, and the youthful spirit of the revolting son may pose a challenge to his authority. Jung relates *father-and-son* not only to an interpersonal dynamic, but also to the intrapsychic polarity of *discipline and instinct* (Jung, 1956, *CW* 5, par. 396). In the individual psyche, the father may represent adherence to the collective consciousness of established norms, rules and principles, whereas the son represents an upcoming, purposeful complex, which by its mere newness may pose a threat, even in the case when, as with Isaac, he collaborates in the sacrifice. In the edifying process of acculturation, aspects of the child's nature are slain.

Rite of Initiation

The sacrifice of Isaac (whose name means *he laughed*, Genesis 21: 6) has been looked upon as a puberty rite of initiation. The characteristics of the divine and innocent child, who has thrived in the delightful embrace of the Great Mother, are shed in juvenile rites-de-passage. In the process of becoming an adult, the child is now exposed to the requirements and principles of the spiritual father. Isaac's age at the time of the sacrifice is unclear; while

phenomenologically he appears to be a child, legends have given his age as twenty-five or thirty-seven. That is, Isaac moves from childhood to maturity, from innocence to consciousness. In some legends Satan tries to prevent Abraham from carrying out the sacrifice, thereby introducing conscious doubt into the otherwise passive submission. Satan is thus found in his role as adversary, instigating toward consciousness.

Rites of initiation require the sharpening of the maturing ego's strengths by exposure to what is experienced as a very real threat to body and soul. The ego is exposed to hardships and extreme conditions, such as sleeplessness and infliction of physical pain. The ego is required to hold out against its own destruction, in order to be rendered adequate to carry the Self or a transcendent principle into living, embodied reality. The danger may entail, as in the case of Isaac, being burned by fire, nature's very essential transformative energy, whether representing Logos and consciousness, Eros and relationship, or Thanatos and destruction (Shalit, 2004a, 5f.) The evolving ego must be able both to endure and revolt against the father's authority, in order to carry, continue and regenerate the collective spirit, whether social, religious or otherwise.

Sacrifice and Transformation

The readiness to sacrifice one's offspring for a higher cause has been prevalent during all times, as the death of the young in innumerable wars testifies. In devotion of a principle, whether transcendent, ideological or intrapsychic, the individual's embodied identity may be sacrificed. Many wars for one's devoted country, religion or ideology, attest to the sacrifice of one's offspring, even if reluctant and painful.

In the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham succumbs to the command of God to sacrifice the human flesh and ego for divinity and a greater Self. As a prefiguration of Christ, God's test of Abraham "is to determine whether Abraham was willing to share Yahweh's later ordeal of sacrificing his son, Christ. Abraham is asked to participate in the tragic drama of divine transformation" (Edinger, 1984: 98).

Processes of psychological transformation and individuation entail the temporary defeat, or sacrifice, of the ego. Jung writes, "Quite apart from the compassion [Abraham] felt for his child, would not a father in such a position feel himself as the victim, and feel that he was plunging the knife into his own breast?" He continues, "The self is the sacrificer, and I am the sacrificed gift, the human sacrifice," whereby the self can be integrated

or humanized, and pass “from unconsciousness into consciousness” (Jung, 1969, CW 11, par. 397ff.). With the sacrifice of Isaac, God nearly destroys his own creation (Schärf-Kluger, 1967: 154). Destruction is psychologically crucial in processes of transformation and creativity, and the process of individuation requires sacrifice and near-destruction, or representative, symbolic sacrifice, as in the akedah. However, the individual ego may, likewise, collaborate with an ideology, a mass or a leader claiming God-like proportions, sacrificing mature and critical consciousness.

Psychization

Jung coined the term *psychization* for the process whereby an instinct or a sensory experience is transferred into the psyche and consciousness. The instinctual *reflex* becomes the *reflection* of the psyche, just like soul and psyche constellate by the capacity to reflect. This is the process whereby the actual deed can be psychically represented, and experience becomes consciously *experienced* experience (Shalit, 2004b). The infant comes to *psychically* experience for instance touch and pain to which it is exposed. The concrete deed or physical sensation, such as pain, become represented and imagined in the psyche. This lies at the core of symbol-formation and acculturation, and of the representative dimension of art and literature.

Psychization expands the human sphere, says Neumann, by the withdrawal of “Gods, demons, heaven and hell,” in their capacity as psychic forces, “from the objective world,” and their incorporation in the human sphere (Neumann, 1970: 338f.).

The binding of Isaac signifies a cultural transition, whereby the sacrifice of the first-born was replaced by animal sacrifice. Whereas there is little or no archeological evidence of the practice of filicide, the binding of Isaac provides a striking archetypal image of the transition from literalness to symbolic representation, from actual deed to image-formation, i.e., of soul-making, in the absence of which the ego is literalized and “trapped in ‘reality’” (Hillman, 1992: 51). By substituting the sacrificial animal for the actual son, the akedah represents the separation of meaning from act. The near-sacrifice thus represents the very essence of psychic processes – intrapsychically, interpersonally as well as culturally.

See also: [▶ Abraham and Isaac](#) [▶ Akedah](#) [▶ Augustine](#) [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Evil](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Hillman, James](#) [▶ Alchemy](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

- [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [▶ Oedipus Complex](#) [▶ Rank, Otto](#)
- [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Sacrifice](#) [▶ Scapegoat](#)

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Sai Baba

Fredrica R. Halligan

Personal History

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a holy man who was born in the tiny hamlet of Puttaparthi in south central India on November 23, 1926. At age thirteen he declared his spiritual purpose and commenced a ministry that today provides spiritual nourishment for millions of devotees worldwide. Sai Baba is a teacher, healer, and miracle worker. He values all religions and is trans-traditional in outlook. His influence has expanded so that today his organization provides free education and medical care and clean water to countless poor Indians. Similar projects are organized in other countries because Sai Baba's call is to universal love and

service. He teaches: “The best way to love God is to love all and serve all.”

To his devotees Sai Baba is an *Avatar*, and he is believed to be the second of three Divine Incarnations that all carry the name Sai Baba. The first holy man who was known as Sai Baba lived in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in a mosque in the town of Shirdi, India. Although his parents were Hindu, he was raised by a Moslem holy man, after his parents went off to the forest to become ascetics (*sanyases*). That first Sai Baba was a teacher and healer who used ashes from a fire in the mosque for healing purposes. Shirdi Sai Baba, as he is called today, fostered inter-religious understanding. For example, he taught Hindus about Allah and Moslems about Rama and Krishna. At the time of his death, both Hindus and Moslems claimed him. Shortly before he died in 1918, he confided to a close devotee that he would return in 8 years.

In 1926, a child was born who carried the name of Sathya Raju. There are many stories about miraculous events that attended his conception and birth and, as a young boy, Sathya was known to be very spiritual and loving. His playmates called him *Guru* (meaning “teacher”) and he was known for his generosity both to his friends and to wandering beggars. Whenever he witnessed suffering, he provided help in some way.

Sathya’s parents were sometimes distressed by his unusual behavior, especially when he quit school at the age of 13 and announced that his devotees were waiting for him. “Who are you?” his perplexed father asked. Sathya replied, “I am Sai Baba,” and picking up a handful of jasmine flowers, he threw them on the ground. The flowers are said to have formed themselves into letter shapes that spelled out the name: Sai Baba.

Thenceforth he has been known as Sathya Sai Baba. His miracles are numerous. Among the most frequent and well-documented miracles are materializations. Sai Baba waves his hand and various material objects appear, apparently out of thin air. He sometimes makes jewelry – rings or locket – or icons for devotees. These religious objects include Hindu images such as Krishna, or Christian icons such as the crucifix. Frequently he materializes *vibhuti*, which is a sacred ash used for healing. In providing this healing ash, he echoes and goes beyond the sacred ash that Shirdi Sai Baba used for similar purposes.

Sai Baba now lives in a large *ashram* in the town of Puttaparthi, where he has also built a hospital and a university, both of which serve the people free of charge. His *ashram* is called *Prashanti Nilayam*, (the Abode of Highest Peace.) At the time of major feast days, hundreds

of thousands of devotees flock into the town, to view the holy man (*darshan*) and to receive the spiritual energy of his blessings. Sai Baba has told devotees that he is preparing to “leave this body” at age 92, and he has predicted that the third Sai Baba re-incarnation will occur 8 years later, at which time he will carry the name of Prema Sai Baba (*Prema* means love, and *Sathya* means Truth).

Teachings

In addition to his charitable work, materializations and occasional miraculous healings, Sathya Sai Baba teaches his devotees through public discourses that he gives frequently at his *ashram*. These teachings have been gathered into books, which now comprise over 30 volumes in the *Sathya Sai Speaks* series. There is also a website where his message is articulated. For example, this writing from 1968 describes Sathya Sai Baba’s self definition of purpose:

- ▶ I have come to light the lamp of Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come on behalf of any exclusive religion. I have not come on a mission of publicity for a sect or creed, nor have I come to collect followers for a doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into my fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this unitary faith, this spiritual principle, this path of Love, this virtue of Love, this duty of Love, this obligation of Love (Sathya Sai Baba, 7/4/68, cited on www.sathyasai.org).

Despite his stated lack of specific plans to attract followers, there are over 30 million devotees worldwide who follow the teachings of Sai Baba and believe him to be an *Avatar*, that is, an Incarnation of God on earth. When asked directly whether he is God, Sai Baba will frequently respond, “Yes, and so are you!” A central component of his teaching is that the Divine is omnipresent; Divinity resides in every person and our primary duty in life is to discover that indwelling divine life (*Atman*). In 1997, he spoke to a large group of devotees:

- ▶ *Embodiments of Love!* Only that person can be said to lead a full human existence whose heart is filled with compassion, whose speech is adorned by Truth and whose body is dedicated to the service of others. Fullness in life is marked by harmony of thought, word and deed. . . . In every human being Divinity is present in subtle form. But man is deluded. . . . The innumerable waves on the vast ocean contain the same water as the ocean regardless of their forms. Likewise, although human beings have myriads of names and forms, each is a wave on the ocean of

Sath-Chith-Aananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Every human being is invested with immortality. He is the embodiment of love. Unfortunately he fails to share this love with others in society. The root cause of this condition is the fact that man is consumed by selfishness and self-interest. . . . Only when this self-interest is eradicated man will be able to manifest his inner divinity (Sai Baba, 1997: 191f).

Like Jesus, Sai Baba frequently teaches in parables, and these stories are often spoken in modern idiom. Airplanes, for example, become the subject to teach about the presence of an unseen God (the pilot); and electrical energy is used to teach about the inner, unseen current that activates a multiple of appliances, even as God motivates and activates humans. Sometimes Sai Baba teaches from the wisdom on the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, or other ancient Indian scriptures; at other times he speaks quite directly to the needs and problems of twentieth and twenty first century global society. In 1993, for example, he spoke about a problem that is increasingly newsworthy in the twenty first century:

- ▶ My advice to office-goers and students is that it is good for them to commute by cycle at least 5 or 6 km a day. This cycling exercise is very useful, not only for maintaining health, but also for reducing the expenditure on automobiles Moreover it serves to reduce atmospheric pollution caused by harmful fumes from automobiles. The carbon dioxide smoke from motor vehicles and factories is already polluting the air in cities and is affecting the ozone layer above the earth. The primary task is to purify the environment, which is affected by pollution of air, water, and food. All the five elements [earth, water, air, fire, and ether] are affected by pollution. People should, therefore, try to reduce the use of automobiles and control the emission of harmful industrial effluents Trees play a vital role in helping mankind to receive oxygen from the atmosphere while they absorb the carbon dioxide exhaled by human beings. Hence the ancients favored the growing of trees to control atmospheric pollution. But nowadays trees are cut down indiscriminately and pollution is on the increase (Sai Baba, 1993: 35f).

Like Gandhi, Sai Baba emphasizes the importance of the fivefold values: Truth, Love, Peace, Non-violence, and Righteous living (*Sathya*, *Prema*, *Shanti*, *Ahimsa*, and *Dharma*.) Sai Baba treasures the *Bhagavad Gita* and he frequently teaches his devotees the meaning of the metaphors of that archetypal story of the war between good and evil. For example, on the battlefield in the *Gita* Krishna says:

- ▶ The point, old friend – and this is very important – is to do your duty, but do it without any attachment to it or desire for its fruits. Keep your mind always on the Divine (*Atma*, the Self). Make it as automatic as your breath or heartbeat. This is the way to reach the supreme goal, which is to merge into God (*Gita* 3:19. Hawley, 2001: 32).

Sai Baba teaches that the battlefield is our inner life. Our spiritual aim should be to surrender to the Divine, to be a willing instrument of God's Will, and to leave the results of that action in God's hands. This relatively simple statement is the essence of life's goal; it is a spiritual work worthy of conscious effort (*sadhana*). Sai Baba provides many teachings that support this goal. To keep focused on the Divine, he teaches that the easiest method in this era is, with every breath, to repeat the name of God (*namasmarana*, remembering God through any name that has personal meaning).

Sai Baba's teachings also emphasize the importance of purity of heart, which entails letting go of desires and attachments. The union of opposites involves transcending the natural tendency to have likes and dislikes, attachments, and aversions. Rather, he teaches, one should strive to care equally for friend and foe; to behave calmly whether one receives praise or criticism; to be indifferent to honor and ignominy. Equanimity is fostered when one is able to accept suffering as a blessing in disguise, and to accept adulation with humility.

Psychotherapy with Devotees

In working psychologically with devotees of Sai Baba, or with others who adhere to similar Eastern traditions, it is important to understand and accept their worldview. While anger, jealousy, fear, pride, lust etc. are natural psychological states, the spiritual aim in this Eastern tradition is to transcend those states. World – as we know it – is illusory (*maya*). The only permanent Reality is the Divine, and that permeates everyone and everything. Every situation is a scene in the Divine play (*leela*). Psychologically, this attitude enables devotees to take life a little more lightly and to cope with its vicissitudes a little more gracefully.

Self-Realization

In summary, to the devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the aim of life is to surrender to God, to be the Instrument of Divine Will, to fight the various battles of life, but to leave

the outcome in God's hands. In order to accomplish that aim, the primary purpose of life is to discover the Godlife (*Atman*) within oneself and to honor that same Godlife in others – all others. Self-realization means to know that identity and unity experientially. Sai Baba promises that such Self-realization results in a state of bliss. In essence, he teaches, we are being, awareness and bliss (*sath-chith-ananda*), i.e., when we are fully aware of the Divine within each of us and acting from that awareness, we shall receive bliss as a natural occurrence. Thus when we aspire for world unity and work toward that end, we work in consort with the Divine Will. We merge with the Divine One.

See also: [▶ Atman](#) [▶ Avatar](#) [▶ Bhagavad Gita](#) [▶ Healing](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Incarnation](#) [▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#)

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Samsara and Nirvana

Frank Scalabrino

The first part of this article discusses the philosophical and religious aspects of nirvana and samsara, and the second part approaches a psychological articulation. The second part is, of course, not considered exhaustive. In approaching nirvana and samsara, here, we will discuss the related notions of suffering, liberation, and enlightenment. Whereas the second part of this article indicates historically related psychological readings of nirvana and samsara, the first part approaches nirvana and samsara hermeneutically, as it were, moving through a number of possible understandings in order to situate our perspective of nirvana and samsara.

We approach nirvana and samsara, here, by discussing suffering, liberation, and enlightenment. Approaching nirvana and samsara hermeneutically, as it were, we will move through a number of possible understandings in order to situate our perspective of nirvana and samsara.

Etymologically speaking, “Nirvana,” of Sanskrit origin, is considered a Vedantic notion perhaps best characterized as the culmination of a path of knowledge or wisdom – the end(s) of knowledge or wisdom – like a river leading into an ocean. It is literally rendered as cessation or extinguishing and often coupled with the image of an extinguishing flame. If we were to think of the friction of the phenomenal flow of existence as igniting a flame, then we might think of nirvana as the extinguishing of that flame which in multiple ways distorts a vision of the phenomenal flow of existence.

“Samsara,” also of Sanskrit origin refers to a flowing, a wandering, an eternal cycle of (the wheel of) birth and rebirth. In this way, we might think of Samsara as the phenomenal flow of existence which, of its own accord, “ignited,” breeds an illusory view of itself. The notion of samsara is operative in both Vedic and Vedantic discourses. However, samsara is often considered a Vedantic notion discussed in relation to *moksha*, also of Sanskrit origin, suggesting liberation or release from that which is referred to as samsara.

Ethically speaking, nirvana and samsara may be explicated by examining their relation to suffering. Within traditional Buddhism we find the “Four Noble Truths” which relate to suffering. First, the truth of suffering (*dukkha*), which is the awareness of suffering, is also thought to be the awareness of samsara. Second, the truth of the origin of suffering refers to an awareness of desire and attachment in relation to suffering. Third, the truth of the cessation of suffering, which is an awareness of the cessation of suffering, is also thought to be an awareness of nirvana. Fourth, the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering refers to the habits and practices involved in maintaining an awareness of the cessation of suffering.

Ontologically speaking, samsara may be thought of as a physical or phenomenal existence or world. In time, then, samsara can be thought similar to a literal reading of Socrates' story about birth and rebirth in Plato's *Phaedo*. Namely, the physical world in which life resides can be thought of as a place into which a person is born and back into which a person is reborn after death. Given this reading, depending upon how you live your life you may or may not be “(re)born” into this place. If you are not “(re)born” into this place, then you reside in a different place. This different place, in so far as it is not the physical or phenomenal world, is of course

only a “place” nominally. Such a reading, perhaps oversimplistically, gets paraphrased in the dichotomy life and afterlife. Approaching Samsara by way of a thinking paraphrased by life and afterlife, samsara appears sequentially related to nirvana. It is in this way that nirvana sometimes gets associated with “Heaven” understood as an afterlife event, as if one is transported to a different “place.”

To sum, at this point in our possible ontological understanding of samsara and nirvana, consider the following analogy. Let us assume at this point that an understanding of samsara as a physical or phenomenal existence is like looking at a stream. Regardless of whether the stream is muddy, when we first look at a stream we might find our attention focused solely on one aspect of the stream. Perhaps we even understand that part of the stream on which we are focused to be the stream itself (see also “the five aggregates” for a different approach to samsara as an assemblage).

Departing from the above understanding of samsara, we can temporally resituate the dichotomy of samsara and nirvana. In other words, we need not think of nirvana as literally an event at the end of life or a place after life. Rather, we may think of samsara and nirvana as contemporaneous. This is perhaps what the Buddhist monk Dogen (1200–1253) invoked stating, “Most people think time is passing and do not realize that there is an aspect that is not passing” (Dogen, 1975: 70). In so far as it is in and by the world of phenomena that we are able to tell time, to think samsara and nirvana as contemporaneous is to privilege a thinking conditioned by the phenomenal world, a thinking conditioned by samsara. Returning to our analogy, this may be like focusing our attention on both the ground of the stream and the surface, and understanding these aspects to be the stream itself.

Now, ready for a different situation, recognizing what we might refer to as the non-presence and the non-being of nirvana, we can view our current understanding of samsara and nirvana as a moment in the phenomenal flowing, a moment in that which is sometimes referred to as “phenomenal flowing” and sometimes referred to as “life.” This non-presence and non-being of nirvana is standardly discussed with terms such as “emptiness” and “nothing.” As with nirvana, these terms are difficult to grasp clearly and distinctly. Yet, by following the movement toward that to which these terms are supposed to refer, we may have a clearer vision of what is being discussed as the non-presence and non-being of nirvana.

Like the Heraclitean maxim in regard to not being able to step in the same river twice, returning to our analogy, an insight regarding the identity of the stream is itself a moment in the flowing. It is as if in our seeking to identify the

ontology of the stream, we discovered our seeking to be an aspect of the stream or (privileging time) a moment in the flowing. Analogously, we see the ground and the surface of the stream being aware what we see is both the stream and not the stream. Here, up against a threshold of ineffability, we might say there is an experience of the stream but the stream is “more than” (or “less than”) this experience of it. Being as it is, we cannot experience or see another aspect or moment of the stream. However, synthesizing the experience of the stream with an awareness of the experience’s limits allows for a different awareness. Similar to remembering (above) the “place” of nirvana that is not a place, looking at the stream, seeing that which we are seeing, we “see” what we are not seeing.

Though it is a misnomer to speak as if we can shift our perspective to view, as it would be, from this no place or by this not seeing, perhaps we may at least speak of a new awareness. This awareness, as it relates to the phenomenal world from the perspective of no place, “sees” that which was our point of departure, namely recognition of and belief in the phenomenal world, differently. Such a situation, blossoming out of and intimately involved in non-attachment to the “phenomenal world,” may be thought of as an understanding of nirvana and samsara which privileges nirvana. Likewise, given this way of speaking, the understanding with which we began our ontological speaking above may be thought of as an understanding of nirvana and samsara which privileged samsara. An understanding of nirvana and samsara which does not privilege samsara is often described with words such as liberation, freedom, or enlightenment.

Heuristically we may speak of a perspectivism or a contextualism in our attempt to gain an awareness of samsara and nirvana. In other words, depending upon the moment or aspect of exposure, signs may tend toward different interpretations. A striking example, the apparent contradiction within the Mahayana Buddhist *Diamond Sutra*, compare “Save all sentient beings” with the subsequent statement, “There are no sentient beings to be saved” (Soeng, 2000: 80). This Mahayana Buddhist attempt to speak ontologically about nirvana and samsara reveals the importance of the approach and the ineffability in play. The desire to speak ontologically about nirvana and samsara and approaches to such a speaking are each aspects of what we would speak were we able. Hence, beyond a possibly true propositional account, the above attempt to speak ontologically about nirvana and samsara calls for a relationality which allows for an awareness. Though perhaps an ineffable awareness, using the language of perspectivism or constructivism may aid in communicating notions of samsara and nirvana.

Historically speaking, understandings of nirvana help differentiate a number of practices known as Eastern Religions. The textual history from which discussions of samsara and nirvana come to us appears to have originated in India. Tracing the trajectory of an awareness of what we are referring to as samsara and nirvana geographically from India across Asia to Japan and America, from the terrain of Hinduism to Buddhism through the “three vehicles” of Mahayana, Hinayana (a.k.a. Theravada), and Vajrayana (a.k.a. Tantric Buddhism), and textually from the *Bhagavad Gita* (ca. 3000 BC) to the *Upanishads*, we trace a movement of Vedic origin into a Vedantic dimension. Whereas a Vedic dimension is said to include knowledge and wisdom, the Vedantic dimension refers to the end(s) of knowledge and wisdom. Further, in this way we see some affinity between the figures of Buddha and Jesus as they may be seen to relate to the sacred texts of Hinduism and Judaism respectively.

A distinction is often made between those adhering to an understanding of gradual and those adhering to an understanding of instant enlightenment. (Discussion of instant enlightenment derives in part from the *Platform Sutra*.) The difference at work in this distinction characterizes the path to nirvana as a timely and gradual process, which may be thought to encompass a number of life times, on the one hand. On the other hand, as can be seen in the discussion of time above, the prospect of instant enlightenment is often supported by notions associating time with samsara and pointing to the timelessness of nirvana. Whether privileging gradual or instant enlightenment, situating the ineffability of nirvana serves as a point of departure in accounting for the possibility of liberation and enlightenment. Further, in so far as accounts which distinguish between gradual and instant enlightenment hold such liberation as a goal, the privileged relating to the ineffable determines practices and paths taken up toward this goal.

It is in classifying practices in regard to the concerns which helped formulate them that the Zen practices of *Koan* and *Zazen* resonate with other Buddhist practices and notions, even if the proper practice of Zen is ultimately to not be attached to these notions. For example, a concern for liberation, reminiscent of the “Four Noble Truths,” seems operative in discussions regarding samsara and nirvana. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation through hearing in the Bardo* in its full title suggests a way of speaking from one Bardo to another, as it were, so as to help liberate the inhabitants of a “lower” Bardo. Controversy, then, regarding the inclusion of Zen as a Buddhism does not set Zen, or the above excerpt from the *Diamond Sutra*, apart from these concerns or discussions regarding

liberation, samsara, and nirvana. Rather, the controversy involves classifying “traditional” Buddhism with the notion of gradual enlightenment and Zen with the notion of instant enlightenment.

Psychologically speaking, theorists disagree concerning the psychological value of worldviews privileging samsara and nirvana. Striking examples of standard psychological interpretations consider the impact of an individual’s awareness of samsara and nirvana in relation to life functioning and notions of self. Looking at Freud, Jung, and Lacan serves to frame a discussion of psychological interpretations and aspects of samsara and nirvana. With these psychological interpretations we commonly find charges of “nihilism” levied by theorists, these charges seemingly serve as a critique for both proponents and opponents alike. Texts such as Sangharakshita’s *Survey of Buddhism*, David-Neel’s *Buddhism*, and Droit’s *The Cult of Nothingness* all point to a correlation between notions of nirvana and death or nirvana and nothingness. After positing a duality, proponents of one side of the binary opposition may levy charges of nihilism against proponents of the other side for an attachment to or belief in “nothing.”

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) employed the term “nirvana principle” in discussing what he referred to as “the Death Instinct.” The following quotes support a Freudian psychoanalytic reading of any striving for nirvana as the manifestation of the body’s desire to cease its own processes of maintaining the status of “living.” Since, in Darwinian fashion, life for Freud emerges from the non-living and struggles to survive, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud speculated an “inertia” tending, then, toward non-living. Further, Freud suggested, “everything living dies for *internal* reasons” (Freud’s emphasis). (Freud, 1955: 38) Freud unfolds this interiority from which death derives in *Instincts and Vicissitudes (Triebe und Triebchicksale)*, “an ‘instinct’ appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind” (Freud, 1957: 121–122).

What is more,

- ▶ by the source of an instinct is meant the somatic process which occurs in an organ or part of the body and whose stimulus is represented in mental life by an instinct. We do not know whether this process is invariably of a chemical nature or whether it may also correspond to the release of other, e.g. mechanical, forces. . . . Although instincts are wholly determined by their origin in a somatic source, in mental life we know them only by their aims (Freud, 1957: 123).

The next two quotes appear later in Freud's writings than the previous two. Further, in the following two quotes Freud speaks directly to suffering and the "nirvana principle."

- ▶ the derivation of the super-ego ... from the Oedipus Complex ... brings it [the super-ego] into relation with the phylogenetic acquisitions of the id and makes it a reincarnation (*Reinkarnation*) of former ego-structures which have left their precipitates behind in the id. ... In the end we come to see that we are dealing with what may be called a 'moral' factor, a sense of guilt, which ... refuses to give up the punishment of suffering. ... What is now holding sway in the super-ego is, as it were, a pure culture of the death instinct, and it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death ... the more a man controls his aggressiveness, the more intense becomes his ideal's inclination to aggressiveness against his ego (Freud, 1961: 48–55).

Finally, in his *Economic Problem of Masochism* Freud suggested, "the nirvana principle expresses the tendency of the death instinct" (Freud, 1961: 160). The aim of the "death instincts" is to "conduct the restlessness of life into the stability of the inorganic state, and it would have the function of giving warnings against the demands of the life instincts" (Freud, 1961: 160).

Freud's use of the word "reincarnation" stands as a pivotal point in the interpretation of the Freudian psychoanalytic consideration of samsara and nirvana. On the one hand, we may interpret Freudian psychoanalysis as concerned with the cessation of suffering, and the death instinct with its seemingly divertible, and therefore unnecessary, velocity toward death as excessive and inadvisable. On the other hand, from a less egocentric, and perhaps more instinct-centric view, Freud's highlighting of the repetition of ego structures across organisms, from out of one body and into another body as it were, as a "re(-)incarnation" in conjunction with the association between ego structures and suffering seems open to an interpretation of the cessation of the repetition as the liberation of the ego structure from the wheel of birth and rebirth, liberation from samsara. Such a reading of Freud seems to be one less perpetuated.

With the subversion of the subject as a point of departure, Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) may be read as situated in this space which resonates with samsara and nirvana. Explicitly stating his aversion to a reductive reading rendering Freudian psychoanalysis "biological," Lacan suggests "the notion of the death instinct involves a basic irony ... Hence the congruence of the contrasting terms of the death instinct with the phenomena of repetition, ... would not cause difficulty were it simply a

question of a biological notion" (Lacan, 2006: 260–261). Further, for Lacan, "It is not, in fact, a perversion of instinct, but rather a desperate affirmation of life that is the purest form we can find of the death instinct" (Lacan, 2006: 263). The link between the death instinct and the subject which allows for Lacan's non-biological appropriation of Freud's notion is language.

Interrogating Freud's death instinct in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan asks, "How can man ... have access to knowledge of the death instinct?" Lacan states, "The answer is ... It is in the signifier and insofar as the subject articulates a signifying chain that he comes up against the fact that he may disappear from the chain of what he is" (Lacan, 1992: 295). Ultimately, with Lacan's terminology we can describe samsara and nirvana in different ways. On the one hand, if we consider nirvana as somehow a function of the symbolic order, then we might think of samsara as a function of the imaginary order. On the other hand, if we think of samsara as an identification with the imaginary other or a symbolic Other, we might think of nirvana along lines of a Lacanian real.

In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan states, "What I, Lacan, following the traces of the Freudian excavation, am telling you is that the subject as such is uncertain because he is always divided by the effects of language" (Lacan, 1981: 188.) As put by Raul Moncayo in "The Finger Pointing at the Moon: Zen Practice and the Practice of Lacanian Psychoanalysis," from *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism* "Both [the Buddhist and the Lacanian formula] could be said to converge on the Zen formula that 'true self is no-self' or the Lacanian-informed formula that 'true subject is no ego'" (Moncayo, 2003: 349).

Associating his practices with those of the instant awaking of Zen, Lacan specifically speaks of Zen. In the "Overture" of his *Seminar One: Freud's Papers on Technique*, he states, "The master breaks the silence with anything – a sarcastic remark, with a kick-start. That is how a Buddhist master conducts his search for meaning, according to the technique of zen." Again in *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, regarding (scansion) "short sessions," sessions strategically stopped short by the analyst, Lacan notes, "And I am not the only one to have remarked that it bears a certain resemblance to the technique known as Zen, which is applied to bring about the subject's revelation" (Lacan, 1991: 1). Lastly, in *The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power*, "desire is borne by death" stands at the end of a series of words which also acknowledge the "everydayness of human suffering" (Lacan, 2006: 536).

Reporting what may be taken up as a point of departure for Analytic Psychology from Freudian Psychoanalysis, Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) in *Freud and Jung: Contrasts* declared, “I prefer to look at man in the light of what in him is healthy and sound, and to free the sick man from just that kind of psychology which colors every page Freud has written.” (Jung, 1970: 335). For Jung, then, instincts are intimately connected with his notions of the archetypes, the collective unconscious, and psychological types. Though Jung’s discussion of samsara and nirvana shares with Freud’s a discussion of instincts, Jung’s derivation of an understanding of samsara and nirvana differs from both Freud and Lacan.

According to Jung, “the question of instinct cannot be dealt with psychologically without considering the archetypes, because at bottom they determine one another” (Jung, 1978: 134). In a parallel construction, Jung, then unfolds his understanding of instincts and archetypes. On the one hand, “Instincts are typical modes of action, and wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of action and reaction we are dealing with instinct, no matter whether it is associated with a conscious motive or not.” (Jung, 1978: 135). On the other hand, “Archetypes are typical modes of apprehension, and wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype, no matter whether its mythological character is recognized or not” (Jung, 1978: 137–138). Jung’s conception, then, holds open the possibility of unconscious apprehension and a way of discussing the apprehension by way of archetypes. “Just as conscious apprehension gives our actions form and direction, so unconscious apprehension through the archetype determines the form and direction of instinct” (Jung, 1969: 137). Further, regarding the archetype in its relation to instinct Jung notes, “the yucca moth must carry within it an image, as it were, of the situation that ‘triggers off’ its instinct” (Jung, 1978: 137).

Speaking directly to Freud’s equation of death and ego dissolution noted above, Jung writes:

- ▶ To us, consciousness is inconceivable without an ego . . . If there is no ego, there is nobody to be conscious of anything. . . . The Eastern mind, however, has no difficulty in conceiving of a consciousness without an ego. Consciousness is deemed capable of transcending its ego condition; indeed, in its ‘higher forms, the ego disappears altogether. Such an ego-less mental condition can only be unconscious to us, for the simple reason that there would be nobody to witness it (Jung, 1969: 484).

In this way both Lacan and Jung provide readings which do not reduce instincts to the merely biological. However, Jung goes so far as to explicitly comment here despite the apparent darkness or obscurity of the subject. According to Jung,

- ▶ the higher forms of yoga . . . seek a mental condition in which the ego is practically dissolved . . . whereas what we [in the West] call the ‘dark background of consciousness’ is [in the East] understood to be a ‘higher’ consciousness. Thus our concept of the ‘collective unconscious’ would be the European equivalent of *buddhi*, the enlightened mind (Jung, 1969: 485).

Using his Introversion/Extraversion distinction Jung equates the practice of attaining this “higher consciousness” with introversion. Jung notes “Introversion is felt here [in the West] as something abnormal, morbid, or otherwise objectionable. Freud identifies it with autoerotic, ‘narcissistic’ attitude of mind. . . . In the East, however, our cherished extraversion is depreciated as illusory desirousness, as existence in the samsara” (Jung, 1969: 481).

To conclude, in the spirit of what we might read akin to the Koan, “Meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha,” noting, “The Mind in which the irreconcilables – samsara and nirvana – are united is ultimately our mind” (Jung, 1969: 488–489). Jung sets out deconstructing binary oppositions on a diamond path, as it were, toward the collective unconscious. Jung suggests even the binary oppositions which “proclaim the dogmatic ground truths of Buddhism: ‘suffering and non-existence, impermanence and non-self,’ signifying that all existence is full of suffering, and that everything that clings to the ego is impermanent,” are ultimately in error. Further according to Jung, “Not-being and not-being-ego deliver us from these errors” (Jung, 1969: 567).

With psychological interpretations of samsara and nirvana, we have seen a movement from nirvana as an indicator of a trajectory toward biological death to a rereading of the death instinct and the use of “not-being” to signify nirvana. With these different readings we find various valuations of suffering, liberation, life, and death. We might think it appropriate along with Jung, then, to consider two more binary oppositions, true and false, and life and death, in “error.” Twisting Hamlet’s soliloquy, I express such awareness: It is not to be or not to be, but to be not.

See also: ▶ Archetype ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Hinduism ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav ▶ Koan ▶ Lacan, Jacques ▶ Zen

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Sangha

Paul Larson

In Buddhism the Sanskrit term “sangha” has two meanings. More generally, it refers to the entire community of all practitioners of Buddha dharma, both lay and monastic. It is also used specifically to refer to the monastic community, both monks and nuns. Contemporary Buddhists often refer to themselves not only as Buddhist but as dharma practitioners. This emphasizes the point that they are active in meditation, chanting, or some other spiritual practice or discipline. This is in contrast with the Western monotheisms where the term “believers” emphasizes the cognitive component, what doctrines one holds or affirms.

The sangha is one of the three gems, the other being the dharma and the Buddha. Collectively they are known as the “triple gem.” To become a Buddhist one would take refuge in the triple gem. The concept of taking refuge refers to the first of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, the pervasiveness of human suffering. As one experiences the reality of suffering one seeks refuge from not only the suffering itself, but with knowledge of the cause of suffering, attachment, one seeks the way out by practicing the methods that lead to enlightenment.

See also: [Buddhism](#)

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Santería

Sana Loue

Origins

Santería originated in Africa and was brought to Cuba by slaves from western Africa, many of whom were from Yoruba-speaking areas that are now part of Nigeria and

Benin. The religion was brought to the United States during the 1940s by immigrants from Cuba. It has been estimated that approximately 10 million individuals in the Americas are adherents to the Afro-Cuban religion Santería; somewhere between half a million and 5 million of them are located in the United States, with approximately 50,000 adherents residing in South Florida. Although many believers may have been raised in the Santería tradition, followers of other faiths are increasingly identifying as believers of Santería.

In many respects, Santería is unlike Western religions. While Western religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism rely on doctrine and liturgy embodied in sacred texts to define their beliefs and boundaries, Santería relies instead on the careful performance of numerous rituals and the fulfillment by its followers of these prescribed rituals and sacrifices. Unlike various denominations within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, for example, Santería does not have a centralized, hierarchical structure. Each house-temple (*casa de santos*) acts independently of others and may engage in very different practices and have different interpretations of those practices in comparison with other house-temples. Followers of Santería are known as such because they have carried out specific actions during prescribed rituals, not because of an accident of birth.

Significant disagreement exists with respect to the characterization of Santería as a syncretized religion. Santería has been labeled as such because some observers have noted that adherents to Santería appear to be praying to Catholic saints and concluded that Santería followers have merged the Catholic and African belief systems and abandoned their gods (*orishas* or *orichas*) in favor of the Catholic saints. Various scholars, however, have argued that because the Yoruba slaves in Cuba faced religious persecution when they worshiped the orishas, they masked this worship by imbuing a particular Catholic saint with the power and characteristics of a particular orisha. Although it appeared that the slaves were now praying to a saint, they actually continued to worship a particular orisha as manifested in the form of a particular saint. As an example, the orisha Orúnla, who is the god of wisdom, is often manifested as Francis of Assisi, St. Phillip, or St. Joseph. The persecution in Cuba of adherents to Santería continued until relatively recently; the practice of the faith was a punishable crime in Cuba until 1940 and persecution continued until the 1980s. Even in the United States, Santería did not gain formal recognition as a religion until 1993, when the United States Supreme Court ruled that prohibitions against religious rituals involving animal sacrifices were violative of the United States Constitution.

Basic Beliefs

Santería is a highly complex and ritualized faith. The various rituals, proverbs, and relationships that exist between adherents and officiants of the faith and the orishas serve to bind each to the other. As evident from the following discussion, survival of one depends on nourishment of the other.

It is believed that the orishas manifest themselves in other religions in addition to Santería by virtue of *ashé*, an amoral neutral energy force that serves as the foundation for all that exists and that is possessed by all entities that have life or power. Accordingly, it is believed that every human being who worships the Divine is actually worshipping the orishas. All religions, however, are to be accorded respect since all faiths contain truth.

Every individual is believed to be the spiritual child of an orisha. The identity of the orisha parent will become known once the individual becomes a follower of Santería. The new believer can then begin to foster the relationship with his or her orisha parent and look to the orisha for guidance and assistance with his or her problems. When an individual dies, his or her *ori*, analogous to the Christian concept of a soul, returns to Olodumare, the ultimate god, who causes the *ori* to be reborn in successive lives until its destiny on earth has been fulfilled. Accordingly, death is viewed not as the end of life, but rather as the beginning of a new existence.

Although the orishas are powerful, they are not immortal. Their survival depends on sacrifices made to them by their believers. The relationship between the orishas and believers is complex; each depends on the other for survival.

Santería's primary purpose is to assist the individual to live in harmony with his or her destiny; they will more easily be able to meet life's challenges and overcome difficulties if they follow the appropriate rituals. These difficulties may include marital strain, financial stress, illness, and problems with children. Although the individual is deemed to be responsible for his or her actions, assistance may be sought from the appropriate spirit. The individual's performance of a prescribed ritual will provide energy to that spirit so that the spirit can provide assistance to the individual.

Santería does not personify the qualities of good and evil as God or Satan, angels or devils. Rather, what is to be considered good or evil depends upon the particular circumstances. Unwelcome events are not deemed to be punishment for having committed a sin or for a human frailty, but are instead seen as the natural consequence of disharmony. Restoration of harmony between the

physical and spiritual realms is deemed to be critical. This can be accomplished through the perfect performance of various rituals designed to demonstrate respect to the appropriate orishas and to placate them. If done successfully, the orishas will reward the individual by granting his or her request, even if the fulfillment of that request would be to the detriment of others.

Ritual

Individuals seeking assistance with their difficulties will consult a *santero* or *santera* for a *consulta*. (Santero refers to males and santera to females; the term santero will be utilized in the remainder of this entry to signify both male and females.) Santeros who have developed a reputation of being knowledgeable and powerful may have established a *casa de santos*, known as an *ilé*. These are often located in a room or basement of a house that has been converted for this purpose and that houses shrines of Santería. Santeros are believed to be extensions of Olodumare, the supreme spiritual source. In their role as mediators between humans and orishas, they are able to officiate at ceremonies and rituals, diagnose illness, effectuate healing, and dispel evil spells. Santeros have been trained by longer-term practitioners of the faith who have “birthed” more junior members (male *padrinos* and female *madrinas*), and are recognized as their mentors’ godsons (*ahijados*) and goddaughters (*ahijadas*).

The process of restoring harmony between the physical and spiritual worlds and discovering how to be in balance with one’s destiny often begins with divination. Although each individual is believed to have a destiny, actions are not predetermined; rather, each person can pursue actions that are congruent with their destiny and reach their full potential, or they may act in ways that are in opposition to their destiny and create disharmony. Divination will help to clarify the client’s situation, reduce anxiety, and identify a solution to the client’s difficulties. The santero will ask the client questions about his or her situation; the client is able to clarify for themselves the presenting problem as he or she relates it to the santero.

A detailed description of the varied divination processes is beyond the scope of this entry. In brief, divination may be achieved through reliance on sanctified coconuts which, after being tossed, reveal a yes-no response to a question that has been asked of an orisha; through the use of cowrie shells that constitute the “mouth” of a specified orisha; and through the use of kola nuts or palm nuts.

Only *babalawos*, male high priests whose abilities exceed those of the santeros, are authorized to perform various forms of divination, such as that accomplished through the use of kola nuts or palm nuts. Additionally, only *babalawos* can perform animal sacrifices. Over time, the power and importance of *babalawos* has diminished as increasing numbers of santeros learn the rituals involving animal sacrifice and the more advanced forms of divination.

A sacrifice or tribute to a particular orisha may be prescribed at the conclusion of the *consulta*. Offerings, known as *ebbós*, may be prescribed for a variety of purposes: to give thanks for the favorable resolution of a problem; to obtain an orisha’s favor; to appease an angry orisha; to ward off an attack; to mark the beginning of a particular ceremony, such as an ordination; to obtain an orisha’s blessing at the start of a new venture or enterprise, among others. Each ritual service necessitates the payment of a monetary offering (*derecho*) to the orisha. The *derecho* is often needed in advance in order to pay for the various component objects to be used in the ritual, such as food, candles, animals, etc. The blood from animal sacrifices is used to nourish the orisha; the animals are cooked and eaten following most Santería rituals, with the exception of healing and death rites. The ritual of sacrifice or offering serves as a catharsis for the client’s emotions that are associated with the difficulties he or she described during the *consulta*.

A santero, or even an adherent, may become possessed by an orisha during the course of a ritual. A client’s belief in spirit possession may in some cases complicate a mental health diagnosis by a Western-trained mental health professional. However, a client’s reliance on Santería rituals and *consultas* may serve to complement therapy by providing additional support, feedback, and opportunity for self-reflection. Accordingly, it is critical that a mental health professional be willing to engage his or her client in a discussion of the client’s religious and spiritual beliefs.

Adherence to Santería or membership in the faith is not a prerequisite to a *consulta*. Individuals who seek entrance to Santería as a full member must proceed through a series of four rituals that includes (1) receipt of the beaded necklaces (*elekes*), containing specific beads that reflect the orishas to whom the individual is responsible; (2) making the image of Elegguá, a warrior orisha responsible for determining human destinies; (3) receiving the warriors (*Guerreros*), that is, receiving from the *babalawo* objects associated with the warrior orishas Elegguá (his image); Oggún (iron tools), Ochosi (a bow and arrow), and Osún (an iron chalice with a rooster); and

(4) *asiento*, an elaborate multi-day ritual through which the individual is reborn into Santería. Various aspects of the asiento serve to distinguish and separate the post-asiento individual from his pre-Santería identity: the initiate's head is shaven, he is given a new name, and he is kept in seclusion. Initiation into the faith through the four rituals typically requires several years and tutelage under a particular santero. The individual is free to halt the process at any stage and may continue as a member of the faith at the level he has attained.

Benefits

Santería has provided and continues to provide its adherents with a sense of family, community, refuge, and belonging, and the possibility of exerting some degree of control within one's current existence. Reincarnation of the ori assures the continued existence of the individual and the regeneration of the community. These physical and emotional benefits are evident throughout the faith's history. During the period of slavery in Cuba, the faith provided a mechanism through which individuals could momentarily escape from their oppression. Cuban immigrants to the United States found fellowship and community in the *casas de santos*, where fellow clients spoke the same language and held similar worldviews. The santeros and santeras serve as surrogate godparents, while fellow adherents are seen as siblings. The *casas de santos* also serve as marketplaces, where clients can exchange goods and assist each other economically. In short, the *casas de santos* and its personages constitute family and community, bound together through an intricate system of ritual and respect and, not infrequently, experiences of oppression.

See also: [Ritual](#) [Sacrifice](#)

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Satan

[Devil](#)

Scapegoat

Tadd Ruetenik

Scapegoating commonly refers to the process by which an individual, or perhaps a group, gets shunned unfairly so that a community can avoid considering a more complex problem. An unremarkable employee, for example, might get fired from a company experiencing major systemic problems, in the hopes that this action will show that the company is serious about reform. Scapegoats can also be found at the more prominent levels of a community. A football coach will often be fired in an attempt to reform a team of weak players, or more seriously, a political leader will be killed in response to problems among the populace.

The common factor here seems to be the defenselessness of the victim or group of victims, and the injustice of the punishment, which is either misapplied or inappropriately harsh. The origin of the scapegoat, however, comes from Leviticus 16, where the process is actually prescribed by law. A priest is instructed to lay his hands on a goat, confess the sins of the people, and send the goat out of the community and into the desert. The consequences of the people's sins, which otherwise would build endlessly, are thus believed to be expelled from the community along with the animal. The goat is neither guilty nor innocent: it is just a goat. The punishment is thus not misapplied, and the punishment is not too harsh – unless we consider alternative versions of the story in which the goat is pushed off of a cliff. A similar story of scapegoating occurs in the synoptic Gospels in the story of Jesus banishing demons by transferring them into a herd of swine that were sent into the sea. The demons are named “Legion,” and require a scapegoat in the plural.

The fact that in both stories the scapegoat is an animal and not a human seems to justify the action morally. When humans are the ones scapegoated, however, the act is regarded as unjust. The problem with scapegoating, however, is that its perpetrators often do not see it for

what it is. A myth develops that the sins of the individual are real and justify his exclusion. When Jesus is being crucified, he remarks that the people “know not what they are doing.”

Identifying this kind of blindness is important to the work of Rene Girard. According to Girard, a largely unconscious *scapegoat mechanism* is at work in the foundation of human civilization. The mechanism takes the form of unchallenged religious rituals. “Violence and the sacred are inseparable,” says Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* “but the covert appropriation by sacrifice of certain properties of violence – particularly the ability of violence to move from one object to another – is hidden from sight by the awesome machinery of ritual.”

This machinery results from the pervasiveness of *mimetic desire* within communities. Mimetic desire is a type of rivalry in which its competitors are focused not on objects of desire, but rather for the desire itself. Girard’s example involves considering two children who are simultaneously introduced to a new toy. Rivalry develops as soon as one child, perhaps sensing the impending interest of the other, is attracted to that toy. Predictably, the second child will also become interested in that toy, but not because of any intrinsic value in the object. Rather, the child is interested in the other child’s interest. The object in question is of secondary importance, and, in the case of pronounced mimetic rivalry, becomes irrelevant.

One does not have to look to the immaturity of children to find examples of mimetic rivalry. The interest of a few customers in a sales bin usually prompts the interest of many others. As clever marketers understand, the contents of the bin are not as important as the fact that someone appears interested in sifting through it, and this interest causes an anxiety in others, who fear they just might be missing out on something. What they are missing out on is the act of looking.

There are of course more intense and important cases of mimetic rivalry involving jealous lovers, business competitors, rival countries, etc. These cases involve more significant and dangerous conflicts, and threaten community stability. According to Girard, mimetic rivalry is both contagious and violence-inducing, and when the threat of mob violence becomes sufficiently acute, a scapegoat is sought by the members of the community. The violence done to the scapegoat by the community serves to dispel the dangerous force by symbolically expelling the agreed-upon object. Yet the symbolic expulsion is not viewed by the community as such. Scapegoat rituals are seen as real solutions, not just symbolic acts. In the case of the witch trials in colonial America, the common interpretation is

that the sacrificed women were victims of some kind of conscious conspiracy by the male elders, who trick the gullible masses. Such an interpretation avoids considering the insidiousness of scapegoat mechanism. According to Girard, both the persecutors and the public are sincere in their beliefs. The primitiveness of a community (and indeed for Girard its lack of Christian revelation) is measured by the extent to which this scapegoat mechanism eludes consciousness.

The importance of Christianity is that it reveals the scapegoating mechanism by showing that the victim, in this case Christ, is innocent. The point however is not that innocence condemns scapegoating while guilt exonerates it; the point is that either way scapegoating is a mistaken response to the problem. The scapegoated individual is not the real threat; it is, rather, an escalation of communal rivalries that threatens peace. The resurrection of Christ is seen as a victory over the dark necessity of violence and scapegoating that constitutes particular communities, and indeed civilization in general. Christianity reveals, according to Jesus, and elaborated by Girard, “things hidden from the foundation of the world.”

See also: [Ritual](#) [Sacrifice](#) [Santería](#)

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Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Atheism

David Berman

Schopenhauer’s atheism is implied rather than directly stated. For no where in his published works does he either deny the existence of God or describe himself as an atheist. Hence Nietzsche’s confident claim, in his *Gay Science* 357, that Schopenhauer was the “first admitted and

inexorable atheist among us Germans” (1974) stands in need of qualification. A more accurate statement might be that for a German – rather than a French or British writer of that time – Schopenhauer was an honest and open atheist.

Schopenhauer's Atheism

That having been said, atheism does seem to be a clear implication of Schopenhauer's system: for given that this world is essentially blind eternal will to life, there does not seem to be any need for a intelligent and good God who creates this world.

There is, however, at least one place in Schopenhauer's published work where he comes close to making his atheism explicit, which he does by what is essentially a psychological argument. The argument, in his main work, *The world as will and representation*, vol. 2, xlviii, is based on the fact that we human beings represent the highest possible development of morality and intelligence. Schopenhauer's argument is not just that there is no evidence that there is any being higher than us in these respects, but that there couldn't be. And this is shown, he thinks, by the saints and ascetics of all religions, who, because they are more morally and intellectually sensitive than their fellow human beings, are able to see that this world is the worst of all possible worlds, which moral insight leads them to mortify or deny themselves, with the aim (most clearly expressed in Buddhism) of achieving nirvana or nothingness, which for Schopenhauer is the most perfect state. Hence it is clear to Schopenhauer that if, for the sake of argument, we try to imagine a (supposed) more intelligent and good being, such as God, or a being even marginally superior to the saints, we would realize that such a being would even more instantly annihilate itself when it realized how revolting this world was.

Schopenhauer's psychological-atheistic argument is important not only for the light that it sheds on his mind and metaphysical system, but also as providing the crucial context for Nietzsche's idea of the overman, the central idea of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Part 1, 1883) and his general attempt to rescue man from nihilism. In his early work, the *Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche accepted much of Schopenhauer's pessimism, but still not Schopenhauer's nihilistic belief that the highest good was nirvana. Instead of that bleak prescription, Nietzsche puts forward the more nuanced idea of the tragic life, as exemplified by Aeschylean tragedy, as the highest condition for man. And while he does not repudiate this aesthetic prescription in his later work of the

1880s, Nietzsche does change his focus there, a change that was partly brought on by his break with Richard Wagner and their common mentor, Schopenhauer, who, in 1886 Nietzsche nonetheless describes as “my first and only teacher, the *great* Arthur Schopenhauer”. More positively, Nietzsche had by that time come under a new influence, more scientific than aesthetic, namely, the theory of evolution. For now his hope is that a new type of man might be evolved, which will answer the threat of nihilism. Thus Zarathustra's announcement of the death of God, at the beginning of *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, is immediately followed by “I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. . . [and] What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman. . .” (1962: 124).

Nietzsche's Anti-Atheism

But against such a higher development was Schopenhauer's atheism, as outlined above, which appeared to show that such a development was not possible, since man represented an evolutionary dead end; hence no being more perfect than man can evolve – which, for Nietzsche, was the nightmare of nihilism. So Nietzsche opposed Schopenhauer's atheism, although not completely, since for one thing he still accepted much of Schopenhauer's pessimistic account of life. So Nietzsche, like his great teacher, rejected the optimistic idea that a scientific or cultural or political improvements might be effected which would improve our happiness quotient – something Nietzsche associated with the shallowness of English Utilitarianism.

In short, for Nietzsche, Schopenhauerian atheism had many roles and implications, sometimes pushing in different directions, which Nietzsche importantly explores in the *Gay Science*, sections 125, 343, 357 and 370 (Berman, 1988). So atheism, thanks to Schopenhauer and others, is going to bring about enormous destruction in our world. A vast amount is going to crumble, “for example, the whole of European morality” (Nietzsche, 1974: section 343). And yet Nietzsche says, in 125, we human beings did it, we are God's “murderers.” But then he dramatically asks: “How did we do this? How could we drink up the sea. . .wipe away the entire horizon?” (1974) And Nietzsche goes on and on about the dire consequences of the deicide, which there is no need to stress here, since it is widely appreciated; but what is not so conspicuous or appreciated is the opposing tendency in Nietzsche, his anti-atheism, according to which the destructive deicide

also has a good side, since it is going to clear the way, opening up new possibilities for new creations (1974: section 343), to which Nietzsche alludes even in 125, when he says: “Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?” (1974). This is Nietzsche’s hope. But it is a hope that is threatened by Schopenhauer’s psychological-atheistic argument, a threat that Nietzsche sought to oppose by, among other things, his acute unmasking or transvaluating of what he took to be Schopenhauer’s nihilistic concepts of goodness and knowledge, pity and compassion, showing how they worked against life and instinct and hence against the great hope of a new evolutionary development of man (Berman, 1998).

See also: [God](#) [Nirvana](#)

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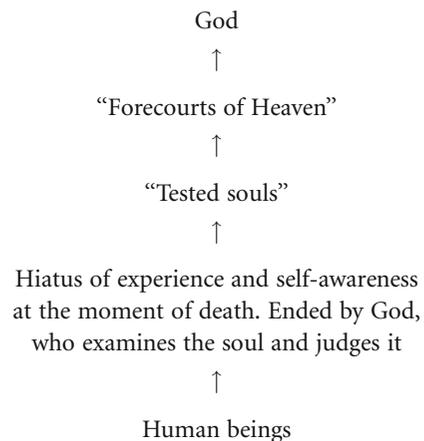
Schreber, Daniel Paul

Lorna Lees-Grossmann

Daniel Paul Schreber (1842–1911) was a lawyer and judge by profession, but became infamous as the author of *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, or *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. In this work he detailed his experiences during his second period of mental illness, lasting from 1893 until 1902. Many well-known psychologists

subsequently adopted Schreber as a case study, although none of them ever met or corresponded with him.

Schreber’s illness began with his half-dreaming thought that it must be nice to be a woman submitting to sexual intercourse. He began to experience auditory hallucinations shortly before his hospitalization in October 1893, but in February 1894 his hallucinations became more severe and for the first time visual. From these hallucinations Schreber extrapolated information that he used to create a complex world-view:



Humans have material souls present as “rays” in the nerves of the body. At the moment of death the body is left behind, and God then examines the soul for “blackening,” or damage through sinful behavior. Once finished, God assigns the soul a period of time and a method through which it will be purified; it becomes a “tested soul,” meaning that it is untested. Schreber’s “soul-language” contains several similar antonymic references, e.g., “juice” for “poison.” Once the soul is purified it enters the “forecourts of heaven,” where it enjoys continued “voluptuousness,” defined by Schreber as pleasurable experience caused by the uninterrupted closeness of God. God is split into Upper and Lower Gods, named after Ariman and Ormuzd, the sons of Zurvan, the Persian God of Time. He is unlike the Judaeo-Christian God in that He is neither omnipotent nor benevolent; He is a disinterested observer of the world and only intervenes in exceptional circumstances.

Schreber believed that earthly harmony could only be achieved through his transformation into a woman so that he could bear God’s children and thus perpetuate a new and superior race of human beings. To encourage the transformation he took to wearing feminine adornments and asking medical staff to examine his developing breasts. Schreber believed that God was working against the “Order of the World” in this matter: His rays had become dangerously linked with Schreber’s, a link that

could prove fatal to God were it to be severed while Schreber was still in possession of his wits. For this reason God was involved in an attempt with Schreber's psychiatrist Flechsig to destroy Schreber's reason. This "soul murder," as Schreber termed it, took the form of physical attacks and constant harassment from "tested souls."

The most famous of the multiple analyses of Schreber is Freud's own. Freud, like the others, never met Schreber, and concluded that Schreber's homosexual anxiety was to blame for his breakdown. Freud argued that Schreber turned the love he felt for another man, possibly his father or brother, into hate. He then justified his hatred through delusions of persecution. Schreber's change of sex was therefore an attempt to render his homosexual desires acceptable.

Alternative analyses include Niederland's, who noted the similarity between the miraculous punishments suffered by Schreber with the suggested educational methods of Schreber's father, the pedagogue Moritz Schreber. Schatzman's analysis went further than Niederland's, and blamed Moritz Schreber's "sadistic" teaching methods for Schreber's illness on the grounds of these miraculous punishments. All of these analyses accept the original diagnosis of Schreber as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, but Koehler suggested that Schreber may originally have been suffering clinical depression and in fact only made the "schizophrenic switch" in February of 1894.

Schreber published his *Memoirs* partly in the hope that they would become the foundational text for a new religion based on the knowledge revealed to him by the "tested souls." His experiences were to be viewed in the context of martyrdom; his suffering led to the acquisition of knowledge of the extraordinary world that is inaccessible to humans under normal circumstances. Comparisons can also be drawn with Biblical Job, Hildegard of Bingen and other religious mystics.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [God](#) [Job](#)

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Search for the Father

◆ Monomyth

Seder

Lynn Somerstein

The Seder, a yearly event celebrated on the 15th and 16th of the month of Nissan, is a part of the Passover celebration that marks the Jew's Exodus from Egypt in the thirteenth Century BCE. The word "Mitzraim," Hebrew for Egypt, comes from the root meaning narrow, so the Jews escaped from a narrow place to a broader world.

Since the Exodus is a prelude to God's revelation on Mount Sinai, the Seder is an opportunity for each participant to relive the Exodus as a personal spiritual event. The Seder meal is supposed to replicate the experience of escaping from bondage to freedom, and can include family references and stories about danger, freedom and redemption. Reciting the family's history is a way to draw individual members closer together; and the Hagadah, the story of the Exodus, says that the more one speaks about liberation, the better. The Hagadah and the family stories together are an oral recitation of history, and a way to remember it.

The word "seder" means order, or order of service, referring to the ritual and the celebratory meal. A thorough house cleaning leads up to the event. Special pots, pans, tableware, and foods, are served, and some foods are prohibited – no leavened foods or grains are eaten.

Matzohs, are allowed because they have been carefully prepared in under 18 min. They commemorate the haste

with which the Jews fled the Egyptians, without time to let the bread rise.

The Seder meal teaches about the Exodus. Since it is so different from usual family meals, it inspires people, especially children, to ask questions, like the famous, “Why is this night different from every other night?”

The Seder is quintessentially a *family* meal, usually led by the eldest male in the household. Participation in the Seder at whatever level is a powerful emotional experience of the love and hate occurring in the outside world and within the family as well. Using special cookware and dinnerware, and avoiding prohibited foods for the entire week of Passover can be an exercise in mindfulness or frustration.

The meal concludes with songs, and with the declaration, “Next year in Jerusalem!” This can mean the literal city of Jerusalem, or it can mean Jerusalem as a symbol of personal redemption and freedom. Whichever theme is emphasized, the personal effect of recreating ancestral, family, and individual histories and relationships to bondage and freedom can indelibly mark one’s soul with a respect for self-determination and an eternal emotional connection with one’s people.

See also: [➤ Exodus](#) [➤ Jerusalem](#) [➤ Judaism](#) and [Psychology](#)

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Self

Ann Casement

Self lies at the heart of Jung’s conceptualizing on the structure and dynamics of the psyche. He first encountered the Self in mid-life during the turbulent years of 1916–1918 while undergoing his “creative illness” following the difficult breakdown of his relationship with Freud. As a result, Jung took mid-life to be universal for experiences of the Self to come into being, a view that has been

contested by later analytical psychologists. Jung’s definition of the Self is that it is the totality of the psyche as well as being the prime archetype that keeps the psyche from disintegrating at times of stress. Furthermore, it transcends and goes beyond psyche.

If it is conceptualized as the prime archetype, the Self would be the container of opposites, above all perhaps those of good and evil. In this regard, Jung refers to it as a “*complexio oppositorum* (which) proves to be not only a possibility but an ethical duty” (Jung, 1954:320). This is to be found at the very center of what it is to be human which is also an analogy of God: “Man is God, but not in an absolute sense, since he is man. He is therefore God in a human way. . .every endeavour of our human intelligence should be bent to the achieving of that simplicity where contradictories are reconciled” (Jung, 1954: 320). Here Jung is quoting Nicholas of Cusa of whom he says: “The alchemists are as it were the empiricists of the great problem of opposites, whereas Nicholas of Cusa is its philosopher” (Jung, 1954: 320). Furthermore: “The self is a union of opposites *par excellence*, and this is where it differs essentially from the Christ-symbol. The androgyny of Christ is the utmost concession the Church has made to the problem of opposites” (Jung, 1953: 19).

On the other hand, Jung’s writings contain many references to the synonymous nature of the Self with the God-image as follows: “*Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self*” (Jung, 1959: 37) (Original italics). “The Christ-symbol is of the greatest importance for psychology in so far as it is perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the self, apart from the figure of the Buddha” (Jung, 1953: 19). However, in so doing Jung was not trying to take on the mantle of a religious thinker but, instead, remained always aware that he was an empirical psychologist. “Strictly speaking, the God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the self. It is this archetype from which we can no longer distinguish the God-image empirically” (Jung, 1958: 469). This image of wholeness rises independently in the conscious mind from the depths of humankind’s psychic nature. He goes on to say: “. . .the self is not a philosophical concept like Kant’s ‘thing-in-itself,’ but an empirical concept of psychology, and can therefore be hypostatized” (Jung, 1958: 262).

Self and Individuation

The Self is all important not only in the individuation process of individuals but also in that of collective groups

though the symbols of the Self are different at different historical epochs. He elaborated this in his work *Aion*, the name of which is taken from the Mithraic god who rules over time, as follows:

- ▶ ...“wholeness”... is nevertheless empirical in so far as it is anticipated by the psyche in the form of spontaneous or autonomous symbols. These are the quaternity or mandala symbols, which occur not only in the dreams of modern people... but are widely disseminated in the historical records of many peoples and many epochs. Their significance as *symbols of unity and totality* is amply confirmed by history as well as by empirical psychology (Jung, 1959: 31) (Original italics).

Jung goes so far as to say the Self represents psychic totality and is both conscious and unconscious. From the latter realm it may manifest in dreams, myths and fairy tales in the figure of the “supraordinate personality” (Jung, 1971: 460). In this way, it takes on the form of king, hero, prophet or savior or a symbol of wholeness such as a circle or cross. “I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the ‘self’ The goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the self. . . . symbols of wholeness frequently occur at the beginning of the individuation process, indeed they can often be observed in the first dreams of early infancy” (Jung, 1959: 164). This tantalizing glimpse into Jung’s interest in infancy was taken up and elaborated by the analytical psychologist, Michael Fordham, whose ideas will be expanded further in this piece.

Encounter with the Self

In exploring the connection between the Self and ego Jung turned to the Biblical story of the *Book of Job*. Similarly, the analytical psychologist, Edward Edinger, depicts the relationship between the story of Job with its relevance for the psyche of modern man, and William Blake’s *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. As Edinger states: “. . . the Job story is an archetypal image which pictures a certain typical encounter between the ego and the Self. This typical encounter may be called the Job archetype” (Edinger, 1986: 11). Edinger further states: “The term ‘Self’ is used by Jung to designate the transpersonal center and totality of the psyche. It constitutes the greater, objective personality, whereas the ego is the lesser, subjective personality. Empirically the Self cannot be distinguished from the God-image. Encounter with it is a *mysterium tremendum*” (Edinger, 1986: 7).

An encounter between Self and ego always results in a defeat for the latter. However, if it can sustain the ordeal

and at the same time become aware of its meaning, ego may experience an insight into the transpersonal psyche. In the Blake drawings, Job is first depicted as living in a state of unconscious innocent contentment. In the second picture, Satan manifests in a stream of fire between Yahweh and Job and represents the urge to individuation which is a challenge to complacency and living unconsciously. “Dionysian energy of excess has erupted into the Apollonian order” (Edinger, 1986: 19).

The later pictures illustrate the growing dynamism of Dionysian energy and its impact on ego by destroying its containing structures, depicted in the Job story as the loss of his children and their families. Psychologically this corresponds to the onset of bad dreams and neurotic symptoms such as depression and psychosomatic symptoms. Ego may try to deal with these by splitting them off and dissociating them from consciousness, which results in an impoverishment of the conscious personality.

The book goes on to illustrate the complete breakdown of Job (ego) when confronted with the dark side of the Self (Yahweh), which a later picture depicts as Job on high pointing down to the chthonic aspects of the numinosum, Behemoth and Leviathan. “This is the other side of the *numinosum*, which we must always remember is a union of opposites” (Edinger, 1986:55). As Edinger goes on to say: “Job is being shown the abysmal aspect of God and the depths of his own psyche, which contains devouring monsters remote from human values. . . . God reveals his own shadow side, and since man participates in God as the ground of his being he must likewise share his darkness” (Edinger, 1986:55).

Blake’s pictures and the *Book of Job* end with Job’s fortunes being restored and with an enlargement of his personality through an encounter with the Self. As Jung says: “. . . the widening of consciousness is at first upheaval and darkness, then a broadening out of man to the whole man” (Jung, 1963:171).

Primal Self

The analytical psychologist, James Astor, views Michael Fordham as the last of the founders of a movement in analysis, who tapped into something essential in the discipline. Fordham’s pioneering work led to a developmental model of Jung’s ideas of the self. “His most radical departure from Jung was to describe the actions of the self in infancy and childhood such that the infant, far from being uncentered at birth, as Jung originally thought, is a person with an individual identity even in utero” (Astor, 2007).

In this way, Fordham revised Jung's thinking of the self in showing how, through interacting with the environment, it helped to mold and create it. In this way "The self, as Fordham conceived it, was the instigator as much as the receptor of infant experience. This conception gave rise to the particularly Jungian theory of ego development in which the interaction between mother and baby ensured the uniqueness of the situation, a uniqueness created as much by the infant as by the mother" (Astor, 2007).

The prospective nature and self-regulating function of the psyche through the self's unifying characteristics "could transcend what seemed to be opposite forces" though in the course of that it could be "exceedingly disruptive' both destructively and creatively" (Astor, 2007).

Astor sums up Fordham's revised thinking on Jung's theory of the self to include a primary self or original state of integration as follows: "This primal self, he thought, gave rise to structures from interaction with the environment which it in part created. It existed outside of time and space, and was similar to a mystical (or contemporary scientific concept such as emergence), whose manifestations had archetypal form. This primary self was integrated, and in Jung's sense it was an agency of the psyche which transcended opposites" (Astor, 2007). Astor links this to Fordham's innovative thinking about the *dynamic structure* of the self which infant research is arriving at quite separately from analytic thinking. "Fordham took the innateness of Jung's archetypal psychology and demonstrated the way in which the environment affected it" (Astor, 2007). Furthermore, "by having a theory of deintegration we are able to think about the observed behavior of the infant as being continuous with the self. What this means is that the development of the individual baby is in effect an early form of individuation" (Astor, 2007).

Fordham also challenged Jung's thinking about the self as both the totality of the psyche and an archetype. "As for the archetype definition, Fordham notes that it accounts for a range of phenomena related to wholeness (archetypal images) and, in fact, is closer to the data than the totality definition. However this data 'cannot also be the totality' because it excludes the ego, which Jung differentiated from the archetypes" (Urban, 2005: 574).

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the term "Self" is spelt with a capital "S" in some instances and a small 's' in others. The former tends to be used by classical Jungians who view the Self as synonymous with the God-image; in the latter, it is used by analytical psychologists of the developmental school of thought. While Fordham was not an atheist: "Much of Fordham's work has countered this religious aspect of Jungianism" (Astor, 2007). At the same time: "His respect for Jung and his understanding of

the value of his studies of the manifestations of the collective unconscious led him to try to take a balanced position with respect to both the psychological and religious perspective" (Astor, 2007).

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [God Image](#) [Individuation](#) [Job](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Mandala](#) [Numinosum](#)

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Self Object

D. Brian Smothers

Definition

Selfobject: An object which is used in the service of the self, or objects which are experienced as part of the self and provide a function for the self.

Discussion

The selfobject is the central psychic apparatus within Heinz Kohut's theory of self psychology. To understand this ambiguous concept, one must understand Kohut's departure from conventional analytic discourse. Kohut's usage of an object significantly differs from the Freudian usage of an object. Freud's object exists, primarily, as the target of libidinal cathexis; where as Kohut's object is cathected with narcissistic energy in the service of the self. Freud's thinking was bound to the Cartesian dualism of the scientific revolution, in which one is experienced as either a subject (ego) or an object (other). Kohut, on the other hand, recognized the capacity for internalization of the experiences of the subject-in-relation to the object and the object-in-relation to the subject. Accordingly, the selfobject is those dimensions of our experience of another person that relates to this person's functions in establishing our sense of self.

Based on his groundbreaking work with traditionally unanalyzable individuals, narcissistic patients and those with other disorders of the self, Kohut established a bipolar theory of development that contrasted with the traditional drive model proposed by Freud. Extending the works of Margaret Mahler, Heinz Hartmann and Edith Jacobson, Kohut's work sought to develop a theory of self. For Kohut, the infantile or rudimentary self develops along two primary continuums in relation to others, the grandiose self and the idealized parental image.

Kohut viewed narcissism not as pathological, but as a necessary component of healthy development. In his theory, the infant must develop a sense of confirmation through the mirroring of the parent. Thus, the parent must reflect back the grandiosity of the child as a means of her acceptance and participation in the infants developing sense of self and self-agency. Children are biologically and environmentally dependent on an (m) other for food, shelter and nurturance. This other provides critical tasks by fulfilling physiological and psychological needs that the child cannot fulfill herself, though the child will experience the other as an extension of herself. Effective mirroring builds the child's internal confirmation of her self-agency through the development of healthy selfobjects. These internalizations will aid her by mobilizing her to act on the world and to have her needs met. If the need for mirroring is absent or inadequate, the child will grow to feel deficient and will spend her life seeking the selfobject to fulfill this gap within herself. Psychic structures of self are built through the process of transmuting internalizations. Through the process of optimal frustration of the child's narcissistic needs by the parent, the child's emergent self develops. The emergent

self will eventually provide mirroring and idealizing through mature relations and the external/internal functions of mature selfobjects.

According to Kohut, one's experience of self is the unconscious experience(s) of self-in-relation to objects, therefore self is selfobjects. Thus, as an individual experiences a sense of 'I', he/she is inextricably bound to the 'I' in relation to the particular 'other' to whom he/she is experientially connected. Therefore the experience of self differs across time, contexts and relationships. The concept of a selfobject refers not to an object in the interpersonal sense of the word, but to the inner experience of an object, therefore, the selfobject is defined by our inner experience of the object and its function in establishing a sense of self. Put more simply, selfobjects are not necessarily selfs or objects, but one's internal subjective experience of the relationship and its functions for the self.

It is important to note that the rudimentary infantile self is bound to the experience of external others and their selfobject functions. As the individual matures, selfobjects may not necessarily be experiences with a physical manifestation of an other, but may be ones dynamic experience of a piece art, music, literature or religious traditions, beliefs, and associated matters. Mature individuals can turn to selfobject functions of symbolized abstractions to meet their deepest self needs, as we are never fully independent of our deepest self needs.

In his interview with Robert L. Randall, a young theologian, Kohut briefly outlines the theological implications of self-psychology. For Kohut, the role of religion could not be simply reduced to one dimension of the self, though with this said, his focus on the idealizing needs and the role of religion is worth noting. According to Kohut, the core nuclear self is developed through mirroring, idealizing and the optimal frustration of these needs. Through the optimal responsiveness of the caregiver in meeting the mirroring and idealizing needs, and the eventual frustration of those needs, the child slowly internalizes the selfobject functions and the nuclear self emerges. The parent must allow the child to idealize him or her, essentially merging with the perceived strength found within the parent. In the rudimentary child unable to meet her own needs, this process may be internalized in ways such as, "You are perfect, and I am a part of you, so I am perfect." As mentioned above, the mature individual never outgrows the basic self needs, though they are altered through the usage of mature selfobject relations. Accordingly, God is the perfect idealizable object. The sense of belonging to a religious tradition or having a personal relationship with God, may, through the process of merger and idealization, align one with God's perfection.

A benevolent image of God may provide the mirroring and idealizing functions needed during times of distress. It is not unusual to hear an individual state that “God is my strength;” indeed the psalmist even made this assertion. Thus, faith, or one’s faith may function as an organizing selfobject experience, providing psychic structure and experiences of self leading towards equilibrium, cohesiveness, well-being, and esteem. Individual differences are uniquely respected within this conceptualization, as one’s experience of a religious experience is not internalized and experienced in the same manner as another’s. The religious experience of hearing a moving sermon, participation in the Eucharist, or the symbol of Christ on the cross, become internalized sources of self through the experience and selfobject functions of these abstractions. In the Muslim tradition, the Koran, and recitation of Koranic verses may hold substantial symbolic selfobject functions for individuals of this faith. The Koran soothes, supports and strengthens the Muslim through its subjective and shared selfobject functions.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Kohut, Heinz](#) [Narcissism](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Relational Psychoanalysis](#) [Self](#) [Self Psychology](#)

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Self Psychology

Carol L. Schnabl Schweitzer

The psychology of the self is a psychoanalytic theory of the development of the self which focuses primarily on narcissistic disorders or configurations of the self. With the

publication of Heinz Kohut’s *The Analysis of the Self* in 1971, the psychology of the self, though widely criticized by psychoanalytic theory purists, began to gain respect as a psychoanalytic treatment for a particular kind of pathology – narcissism. Heinz Kohut understood his work to be an addition to, rather than a replacement of, Freud’s groundwork in psychoanalysis. There are several significant points of departure from Freud’s metapsychology including Kohut’s precise understanding of transference, internalization, and empathy.

Narcissistic patients, according to Kohut, experience the transference not as a projection of their existing internal psychic structures but rather as an expression of a need for internal psychic structures which are missing. Thus, the analytic task focuses on liberating the patient from his or her denial of a need. Likewise, Kohut offers us a somewhat different understanding from Freud of the process of internalization. Building upon Freud’s work, Kohut understands internalization as more than the taking in of the qualities of the libidinal object which is lost and mourned; it is a process which includes the taking in (or internalizing) of idealizations of a selfobject when that object has temporarily failed in one of its need-fulfilling functions. One indication that analysis is progressing from Kohut’s perspective is the ability of the analysand to tolerate the inevitable empathic failure of the analyst.

Kohut proposed a bi-polar model of the self: one pole is related to ideals (idealized self); the other is related to ambitions (grandiose self); and, the area or space between the two is comprised of inborn skills and talents. The poles of the self are developed in relation to selfobjects (or the original primary caretakers who fulfill the needs of the developing self). The maternal selfobject is associated with the idealized self while the paternal selfobject is associated with the grandiose self (originally the narcissistic self). These selfobjects are not viewed as separate entities but rather in terms of the way they fulfill or fail to meet the needs of the developing infant. Kohut theorized that an infant could tolerate a traumatic failure on the part of one but not both parental selfobjects (or others who may have primary caretaking responsibility). Thus, a paternal selfobject need not be the biological father; it may not even be a male but someone who provides father-like care. The same is true for the maternal selfobject.

The three major constituents of the self (ideals, ambitions, and talents) shape the three major groups of transference experiences in the analytic process. If the area of ambitions (grandiose self) is damaged the patient will likely experience a mirror transference in which the analyst is the person around whom constancy is established. This can be related to the “gleam in a mother’s eye as she

gazes at her infant.” If the area of ideals is damaged then the patient experiences an idealizing transference which means that the analyst provides soothing and tension-regulating functions if the narcissistic injury occurred early in childhood. If the injury occurred later in childhood (or even beyond childhood) then the analyst may become “de-idealized” quickly as the analysand seeks attachment with an omnipotent object. And finally, if the area of skills and talents is damaged then the patient looks for reassurance in an alter ego or twinship transference in which the analyst is experienced as being similar to the analysand’s grandiose self. How then, does analysis change from Freud’s original understandings according to Kohut’s theory of the self? In other words, how does analysis provide a cure?

Freud maintained that a narcissist was not curable because a narcissist was not accessible to the influence of psychoanalysis; thus, the patient lacked the ability to invest in a transference relationship (Freud, vol. 12, 1959 and vol. 14, 1959). The noteworthy difference is Kohut’s focus on the treatment and cure of narcissistic personality disorders. The touchstone in Kohut’s analytic process is empathy which he understood as a *data-gathering tool* within the analytic relationship, not a cure in itself. (See: *How Does Analysis Cure?* 1984: 300–307.) Why is empathy in and of itself not a cure? Kohut, using an illustration from Nazi Germany, demonstrated that empathy (or the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes) can be used for good or ill. The Nazis used empathy to exploit the vulnerabilities of their victims to inflict emotional pain. Nevertheless, Kohut contended that empathy is what ultimately affirms our humanness and makes psychological existence possible (Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, vol. 4, 1990: 531–532). In an attempt to correct the many misunderstandings and misappropriations of empathy in the analytic relationship, Kohut offered the following toward the end of his life (1981); empathy is “the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person.” (*How Does Analysis Cure?* 1984: 82.) Indeed, the capacity to experience empathy is one of the five qualities identified by Kohut which signal the transformation of narcissism in the therapeutic relationship. The origin of empathy is located in the earliest mother-infant relationship as the developing self of the infant takes in the mother’s feelings toward the infant.

Other determinants of a healthy self include creativity, transience, humor and wisdom. The analyst is able to observe these qualities developing in the transference relationship. Creativity, quite simply, is a person’s ability to idealize his or her work; it suggests a capacity of playfulness and imagination. One may observe that a patient is

now able to celebrate his or her innate skills and talents instead of seeking reassurance.

Transience is the ability to accept one’s own mortality. The patient demonstrates an ability to surrender the need to be omnipotent, first in relationship to the analyst, and then subsequently in other relationships. Humor, if it is not a defensive posture (e.g., sarcasm may be a defensive signal), suggests an acceptance of transience. When humor is indicative of a transformation of narcissism, the patient has experienced a strengthening of his or her values and ideals. A genuine sense of humor, according to Kohut, is witnessed by the analyst as the patient’s ego is able to experience amusement when reflecting upon old rigid configurations of the ego (e.g., grandiose fantasies and exhibitionistic strivings).

Wisdom, or at the very least a modicum of wisdom, may emerge at the end of a successful analysis. Like Freud, Kohut suggested that analysis never truly ends but he maintained that a successful analysis is eventually terminated. During the concluding phases of analysis, wisdom attained by the analysand helps to maintain self-esteem even upon recognizing personal limitations. The analysand may exhibit a friendly disposition toward the analyst even though there are conflicts remaining and the analyst’s limitations have been recognized by the patient as well. In brief, human frailties are now tolerated with composure instead of being defended against with tendencies toward self-aggrandizement or infantile idealization.

Within a religious framework, too much interest in the self may be viewed as pride, self-centeredness, selfishness or sinfulness. Pastoral theologian Donald Capps has written about the narcissist as a tragic self (Capps, 1993) who feels more depleted than ever upon the recognition or observation that others receive the mirroring that one desires for oneself. The unmet desire for mirroring triggers a shame response as the grandiose self receives another disappointment. As Capps observes, many faithful Christians reel from the admonitions against seeking praise and recognition which is in itself a tragedy of faith because “[w]hat was a display of healthy narcissism is redefined as an expression of self-centeredness, and the Christian faith is used to legitimate the renunciation of our desire to be mirrored. This is tragic, for mirroring is at the very heart of the Christian gospel. Quite simply but profoundly, it is the form and means by which the depleted self experiences divine grace, the benediction of God” (Capps, 1993: 64). Thus, in part, Christian faith may be an impediment to the analytic process, especially if the narcissistic vulnerability presented by an analysand is a wounded grandiose self.

See also: ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Kohut, Heinz ▶ Libido
▶ Narcissism ▶ Projection ▶ Psychoanalysis ▶ Self
▶ Self Object ▶ Self Psychology ▶ Transference

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Sex and Religion

David A. Leeming

- ▶ Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

(John Donne, *Holy Sonnet 15*)

Sexual and religious experiences have in common characteristics conveyed by such words as *desire, mystery, ritual, passion, ecstasy, and union*. Ideally we go to religious services and “to bed” because our bodies and our psyches *desire* something beyond ourselves. There is a sense of awe and mystery associated with both activities and certain *rituals* that contribute to *passion* and, when things go well, to *ecstasy* in both. The fact that, for some, such an analogy will smack of sacrilege or even heresy

only indicates the depth of the split between these two natural human activities. If we have a deeply ingrained horror of mixing sex and religion, this has not always been so.

To begin as far back as we have records of religious experience we would have to look to the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) period to such sites as the great painted caves and pre-historic settlement ruins in southern France. There we would find, among other objects, abstract and stylized drawings of what appear to be female genitalia and paintings of strange humanoid male figures with animal heads and pronounced genitals dancing before great horned beasts. The themes of the paintings and related figurines, and the dark and moist painted caves themselves, as many scholars have pointed out, suggest, not pre-historic bathroom graffiti, but myths of a goddess-based religion in which human sexuality, centered on the woman, serves as a metaphor for the hoped-for fertility of the humans of the given tribes and of the surrounding earth with its potential plant and animal food sources.

A natural development of the Paleolithic goddess mythology took place in the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and Neolithic (New Stone Age) periods, in which the female, now clearly a mother goddess associated with the emerging practices of agriculture and animal husbandry, was often depicted in the act of giving birth, as, for example, in the famous case of the goddess on sanctuary walls and in figurines at the site called Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia (modern Turkey). Appropriately, the goddess at Çatal Hüyük was accompanied in her many birthing representations by a male fertility principle in the form of a bull.

The sacred marriage of the Great Goddess and the Bull of Heaven – of Earth and Sky – would be celebrated as a central act in the various forms of the Sumero-Babylonian religion in Mesopotamia throughout the Copper and Iron Ages. It was celebrated, for instance, in various “hymns” which today’s religious people would probably consider to be pornographic and sacrilegious. In one hymn, the goddess Inanna calls out:

- ▶ My vulva, the sacred horn,
Heaven’s vessel
Is eager, like the new moon, to be full.
My fallow land desires a plow
Who will plow my moist ground?

The goddess being impregnated and giving birth to new life was a logical and almost inevitable early metaphor for hunter gatherers and especially for agriculturalists that depended on the fertility of earth for survival. And it is

in this context that the depositing of the male seed in the womb or any plant seed in the ground would have been expressed metaphorically by way of such mythical figures as the god who pours out his life-giving fluid and the dying and buried or “planted” god who returns in the spring.

The process by which sexuality begins to get a bad name in religion seems to coincide with the demise of female power and political importance in the face of a rising male-dominated, warrior-based patriarchy. In ancient Mesopotamia, for example, we find a significant change from early second millennium BCE Sumerian stories of a positive relationship between the hero-king Dumuzi (Tammuz) and the goddess Inanna (Ishtar) to a late Babylonian version of the stories, in which the heroic Gilgamesh scornfully refuses the advances of the same goddess. The situation in which the patriarchal hero refuses the sexual advances of the now suspect, strength-draining female is repeated in other contexts around the world. The Irish hero Cuchulainn’s refusal of Queen Maeve – an avatar of the old fertility goddess Morrigan – is a Celtic example. The Bible contains stories of the harm that can come when the otherwise powerful and dominant male is seduced. The stories of Adam and Eve and Samson and Delilah are only two of many such stories in which the *femme fatale* has replaced the old fertility goddess. In Greece it is Pandora, whose name really means “gift giver” and who was in all likelihood once a goddess of agricultural abundance, who is said by Hesiod to have released the evils of the world from her famous box.

Nowhere is the antagonism between sexuality and religion more evident than in the three great monotheistic or Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as they have evolved. The “People of the Book” envision a world created alone by a distinctly mateless god, Yahweh-God-Allah. Although there are other examples of *ex nihilo* (from nothing) creations by male gods, the more natural metaphor for the conception and birth of the universe has involved the union of male and female. Whether by way of a primal mound (literally a pregnant Earth), the primal maternal waters, the cosmic egg, or intercourse between primal god and goddess, the feminine aspect of nature, with only a few exceptions, plays a significant role in the world’s creation stories. This is true, for example, of most animistic religions as well as of Hinduism, Shinto, Taoism, and certain branches of Buddhism, although, it must be said, each of these religious cultures, like the Abrahamic traditions, has tended to place women in an inferior position to men in human society.

The exclusion of the feminine from godhead in the Abrahamic religions developed in part, of course, from the concept of a single deity and the desire of Jews, Christians, and Muslims to separate themselves from so-called Pagan traditions. Furthermore, the depiction of the Abrahamic god—Yahweh, God, or Allah,—as essentially male is a reflection of the realities of cultures that had long been patriarchal. It might well be argued, however, that patriarchy itself, including as it does the insistence on God’s maleness and singularity and the relegation of women to secondary status is, as Karen Armstrong, has suggested, “expressive of deep anxiety and repression” (1993:50).

“Repression” is an important word here. We know, for instance, that the Hebrews in Canaan as depicted in the biblical book of *Exodus*, like most peoples of the ancient world, tended to assimilate the deities of conquered or neighboring peoples. It was only the development of priestly law and early rabbinical condemnation of Canaanite religious practices that led to the repression of the popular worship among the Hebrews of the goddess Asherah (“God’s wife”), for example, in her many, often erotic, aspects. By being stripped from godhead, sexuality, associated particularly with women, inevitably became tainted by the concept of sin. Women were tempters, women were psychologically and even physically dangerous. Thus, it was Eve who corrupted Adam, initiating, among other things, shameful sex. And it was Delilah who seduced Samson, symbolically castrating him by cutting off his hair.

The repression of the natural relationship between sexuality and religion in the Abrahamic religions has not been limited to story or myth. It is clearly expressed in ritual practices which, whatever their original “religious” or social intent, have resulted in a sense of the essential impurity of certain biological functions associated with human sexuality and an inferior role for women. In effect, religion has been used to reinforce the repressive patriarchal idea of women as the valuable property of men, the necessary but controlled vehicles for pleasure – under certain circumstances – and reproduction.

Christianity and Islam have perpetuated the tradition of the essential impurity of sex and the consequential inferiority of women. The repression of sexuality in Christianity is expressed metaphorically in the depiction of Jesus and his mother in the canonical gospels and dogmas. There the asexuality of Jesus, the virginity of Mary, and Mary’s own immaculate conception form a de facto denial of the sacredness of sexuality itself, a denial that is in conflict with the depictions of holy men and

avatars of godhead in other religions – Krishna and Moses, for example. Jesus’s asexuality undermines the theological position that Jesus is God truly sharing our human nature.

Until very recently, Christians and Jews, did not ordain women to their clergy ranks. And even now such ordination is denied not only by the more orthodox branches of Judaism but by most Muslims and by the largest sect of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church. It should be pointed out that this is true in spite of the prominent role played by women in the early organization of Christianity and Islam.

Saul of Tarsus (Saint Paul) preached the “head covered, back of the church” doctrine that greatly resembles the early prohibitions against women studying the *Torah* or praying in the synagogues or the present restrictions applied to Muslim women in regard to places of prayer. By the second century CE, the North African theologian Tertullian (160–220) saw women as “the devil’s gateway,” a point of view developed by one of the most influential of the “church fathers”, Saint Augustine (354–430), in the doctrine of Original Sin. The first sin, that of Adam, and especially Eve, was passed on to humans in the sexual act, he announced, an act to which men were enticed by women: “What is the difference, whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman” (see Armstrong, 1993:123–124).

As in the case of Judaism and Christianity, certain Islamic scholars have used often distorted understandings of scripture to justify what can only be called, in spite of various complex and supposedly positive rationales, the oppression of women in such institutions as polygamy, female circumcision, *purdah*, and the denial of basic social and political rights. At the center of this oppression has been the sense of male ownership and a strict double standard in regard to sexual practice. For the Muslim, as for the Christian and Jew, the female and female sexuality are powerful and potentially tempting distractions that can take the believer’s mind away from religion and proper order and threaten male control. For many among the Abrahamic faithful – believers in the one god, a wifeless male god, and his prophets – to accept the equality of women would be to accept what are seen as the chaotic ways of the pagan. In short, the secondary status of women is linked to the doctrines of exclusivity associated with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

On the other hand, it has been argued by many that the Abrahamic attitude towards sexuality represents an alienation of humans from their humanity. Nietzsche called the Christian God a “crime against life.” And there have, of

course, always been challenges within religious traditions to the prevailing view of the incompatibility of sex and religion. Like the ancient hymns to Inanna, the biblical *Song of Songs* is a celebration of holy sex. And, implicitly or explicitly, mystics of all three Abrahamic religions (and other religions as well), have turned to sexuality for language that can convey the desire, the mystery, the ritual, the passion, the ecstasy, and the union that together comprise full religious experience.

In a poem of the sixteenth century Christian Spanish mystic Saint John of the Cross, the Soul sings of its intimate union with God:

- ▶ O flame of love so living,
How tenderly you force
To my soul’s inmost core your fiery probe!
Since now you’ve no misgiving,
End it, pursue your course
And for our sweet encounter tear the robe!

The thirteenth century Sufi (Muslim mystic) Jelaluddin Rumi used similar imagery to convey his sacred love of a friend, a love inseparable from his love of God:

- ▶ The Friend comes into my body
looking for the center, unable
to find it, draws a blade,
strikes anywhere.

And later,

- ▶ Two hands, two feet, two eyes, good,
as it should be, but no separation
of the Friend and your loving.
Any dividing there
makes other untrue distinctions like “Jew”,
and “Christian”, and “Muslim”.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Exodus](#) [God](#) [Great Mother](#) [Islam](#) [John of the Cross](#) [Ritual](#) [Song of Songs](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Shadow

Stephen A. Diamond

For Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung (see Jung), the theory of the “shadow” was a metaphorical means of conveying the prominent role of the unconscious in both psychopathology and the perennial problem of evil (see evil). In developing his paradoxical conception of the shadow, Jung sought to provide a more highly differentiated, phenomenologically descriptive version of the unconscious and of the *id* (see *id*) than previously proffered by Freud. The shadow was originally Jung’s poetic term for the totality of the unconscious, a depiction he took from philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. But foremost for Jung was the task of further illuminating the shadowy problem of human evil and the prodigious dangers of excessive unconsciousness. Especially concerned with those pathological mental states historically known as “demonic possession,” Jung’s psychological construct of the shadow corresponds to yet differs fundamentally from the idea of the Devil or Satan in theology. As a parson’s son, Jung was steeped in the Protestant mythos, digested the rich symbolism of Catholicism, and studied the other great religious and philosophical systems. But, as a physician, he intentionally employed the more mundane, banal, less esoteric or metaphysical and, therefore more rational terminology “the shadow” and “the unconscious” instead of the traditional religious language of god, devil, *daimon* or *mana* (see the daimonic). For Jung, depth psychological (see depth psychology) designations such as *the shadow* or *the unconscious*, were “coined for scientific purposes, and [are] far better suited to dispassionate observation which makes no metaphysical claims than are the transcendental concepts, which are controversial and therefore tend to breed fanaticism” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 97).

The shadow is the unknown “dark side” of our personality – dark both because it tends to consist predominantly of the primitive, benighted, negative, socially or religiously depreciated human emotions and impulses like sexual lust, power strivings, selfishness, greed, envy, aggression, anger or rage, and due to its unenlightened nature, obscured from consciousness. Whatever we deem evil, inferior or unacceptable and deny in ourselves becomes part of the shadow, the counterpoint to what Jung called the *persona* (see *persona*) or conscious ego personality. According to Jungian analyst Aniela Jaffe, the shadow is the “sum of all personal and collective psychic elements which, because of their incompatibility

with the chosen conscious attitude, are denied expression in life. . . .” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 96). Indeed, Jung differentiated between the *personal shadow* and the impersonal or *archetypal shadow*, which acknowledges transpersonal, pure or radical evil (symbolized by the Devil and demons) and collective evil, exemplified by the horror of the Nazi holocaust. Literary and historical figures such as Hitler, Charles Manson, and Darth Vader personify the shadow embodied in its most negative archetypal human form. “The shadow,” wrote Jung (1963), is “that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 96). The shadow is a primordial part of our human inheritance, which, try as we might, can never be eluded.

The pervasive Freudian defense mechanism known as “projection” is how most people deny their shadow, unconsciously casting it onto others so as to avoid confronting it in oneself. Such projection of the shadow is engaged in not only by individuals but groups, cults, religions, and entire countries, and commonly occurs during wars and other contentious conflicts in which the outsider, enemy or adversary is made a scapegoat, dehumanized, and demonized. Two World Wars and the current escalation of violence testify to the terrible truth of this collective phenomenon. Since the turn of the twenty-first century we are witnessing a menacing resurgence of epidemic demonization or collective psychosis in the seemingly inevitable violent global collision between radical Islam and Judeo-Christian or secular western culture, each side projecting its collective shadow and perceiving the other as evil incarnate.

For Jung, the shadow is most destructive, insidious and dangerous when habitually repressed and projected, manifesting in myriad psychological disturbances ranging from neurosis to psychosis, irrational interpersonal hostility, and even cataclysmic international clashes. Such deleterious symptoms, attitudes, and behavior stem from being possessed or driven by the dissociated yet undaunted shadow. Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic story of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* can be taken as a cautionary tale par excellence: dissociation of the shadow results in a perilously lopsided development of the conscious personality and renders us susceptible to destructive possession by the disowned shadow. The overly good Dr. Henry Jekyll is at times taken over body and soul by his equally evil shadow: the depraved, nefarious, wicked Edward Hyde, his complete opposite. Indeed, the shadow contains all those qualities we hide from ourselves and others, but which remain active within the unconscious,

forming a sort of “splinter personality” or “complex,” not unlike the relatively autonomous sub-personalities found in multiple personality (dissociative identity disorder) or in so-called demonic possession or demonism (see devil; exorcism; daimonic). Under stressful circumstances or in states of fatigue or intoxication, this compensatory alter ego or shadow complex can be triggered into temporarily taking total command of the conscious will. The abject negativity and destructiveness of the shadow is largely a function of the degree to which the individual neglects and refuses to take responsibility for it, only inflaming its ferocity and pernicious power. The shadow’s sometimes overwhelming strength and disturbing ability to intrude into one’s cognitions, affects and behavior has historically been experienced and misinterpreted as demonic possession, for which exorcism is believed to be the only treatment (see exorcism). Yet, it must be emphasized that the shadow is not meant to be taken literally but rather, allegorically: it is not an evil entity existing apart from the person, nor an invading alien force, though it may be felt as such. The shadow is a universal (archetypal) feature of the human psyche for which we bear full responsibility to cope with as creatively as possible.

But despite its well-deserved reputation for wreaking havoc and engendering widespread suffering in human affairs, the shadow – in distinction to the literal idea of the devil or demons—can be redeemed: The shadow must never be dismissed as merely evil or demonic, for it contains natural, life-giving, underdeveloped positive potentialities too. Coming to terms with the shadow and constructively accepting and assimilating it into the conscious personality is central to the process of Jungian analysis. Working with dream material (see dreams) is key to comprehending and dealing constructively with the shadow. The shadow tends to appear in dreams as a figure of the same sex as the dreamer, but Jung draws a distinction between the personal shadow and the *anima* or *animus* (see anima/animus), symbolized in dreams as the opposite sex. Typically, it is the subjective experience of the shadow or evil and its ego-dystonic effects (or, as in the case of the hypercivilized Dr. Jekyll, an inexplicable malaise or vague sense that something vital is missing in us) which motivates the person to seek psychotherapy and spurs one toward new growth, maturation, and individuation (see individuation). Indeed, in many ways we need the shadow, and must therefore learn to develop a more conscious and constructive relationship to it. Becoming conscious of the shadow requires tolerating the inherent tension of opposites within, sometimes “having it out” with the shadow and standing up to its destructive influence; other times permitting it some measured outward

expression in the personality; but always treating it with utmost respect.

Notwithstanding its negative influence, Jung understood the *daimonic* nature of the unconscious, and that the compensatory effects of the shadow upon individuals, couples, groups and nations could be beneficial as well: “If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of all evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc” (cited in Diamond, 1996: 96). Creativity can spring from the constructive expression or integration of the shadow, as can true spirituality. *Authentic spirituality* requires consciously accepting and relating properly to the shadow as opposed to repressing, projecting, acting out and remaining naively unconscious of its contents, a sort of precarious *pseudospirituality*. “Bringing the shadow to consciousness,” writes another of Jung’s distinguished followers, Liliane Frey-Rohn (1967),

- ▶ is a psychological problem of the highest moral significance. It demands that the individual hold himself accountable not only for what happens to him, but also for what he projects. . . Without the conscious inclusion of the shadow in daily life there cannot be a positive relationship to other people, or to the creative sources in the soul; there cannot be an individual relationship to the Divine (cited in Diamond, 1996: 109).

Acknowledgement

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See also: ▶ Anima and Animus ▶ Archetype ▶ Daimonic ▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality ▶ Devil ▶ Evil ▶ Id ▶ Individuation ▶ Nazism ▶ Persona

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Shakers

David C. Balderston

The Shakers were the largest, longest lasting, and the most widespread of all the communal or utopian societies that emerged in nineteenth century America, whether secular (Fourierists, Owenites) or religious (at Amana, Bishop Hill, Ephrata, New Harmony, Oneida, and Zoar). Their formal name is the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. A Christian millennial sect, they looked to their founder, "Mother" Ann Lee, as a female manifestation of the Christ spirit.

Origin

Described first as "Shaking Quakers" from the free, ecstatic movements that characterized their worship (shaking or trembling is mentioned in several passages in the *Bible* as God's powerful activity and humans' response, e.g., Psalm 99: 1, Ezekiel 38: 19–20, and Philippians 2: 12–13) and because they were mistaken for nonconformist Quakers, the Shakers developed certain religious and psychological practices that helped them to grow, prosper, and endure for many decades, eventually shrinking to currently one small group at Sabbathday Lake, ME – still vibrant and supported by a dedicated organization of Friends of the Shakers.

From humble, working class origins in Manchester, England, at a time of religious ferment and searching outside the Established (Anglican) Church, e.g., the Quaker movement, itinerant preachers such as Methodist George Whitefield, and possibly the immigrant "French Prophets" or Camisards, an illiterate woman named Mrs. Ann Lees Standerin emerged as a charismatic leader in a local revivalist group previously organized by a couple named Wardley. After persecutions, she and a few followers, including her husband who eventually left her, emigrated in 1774 to

New York City in the American colonies. Within a few years, they had established themselves near Albany, NY, first at a wilderness site called Niskayuna (now Watervliet), and later at a permanent center not far away in New Lebanon, NY. A nearby revival of "New Light" Baptists was petering out, and Ann Lee's fresh message of salvation found willing converts.

Growth

Missionaries were soon sent from the new center into four New England states. While enduring prejudice, violent opposition, and the death of Ann Lee in 1784 at age 48, the Shakers still managed to establish a total of 11 communities by 1793. Several strong and capable leaders, both female and male, carried on her work, and by 1836, ten additional communities had been founded in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and western New York. Out of a total of 23 Shaker communities, 18 endured for an average of over 125 years. The Shakers reached a peak population of 5000–6000 by ca. 1840.

Religious Practices

Religiously, the Shakers were noted for the following: an emphasis on the female or maternal aspect of God as manifested in Ann Lee; men and women considered equal in their religious contributions and leadership; their "shaking" behavior during worship including strange and spontaneous movements and vocalizations early in their history, and organized marches and patterned gestures later on; celibacy and separation of the sexes by mandating separate sleeping quarters, dining tables, seating in worship, and entrances to major buildings; pacifism; confession of sins; separation from the "world's people" in isolated villages; the inspired creation of many new songs, hymns, and mystical "spirit drawings" – especially in the revival period known as "Mother's Work" (1837–1847). Members turned over all their money and possessions to the community, following the examples of the early first century CE Christians, as recorded in the *Bible's* New Testament at Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35 where they "had all things in common." Biblical support for the female aspect of divinity is found in Genesis 1:27 and Rev.12:1 ff., while the breakup of marriage is justified at Luke 20: 34–35, and supported by Jesus' radical challenge to abandon family ties at Matt. 10:35–37 and Luke 14:26. While confession of sins was a universal requirement, and the loss of sexuality, possessions, and family ties was a standard sacrifice, probably the dominant theme of Shaker religion has been an

upbeat one: *love*, always available from God and always needed between humans – a succinct principle that exemplifies the Shakers' characteristic simplicity.

Psychosocial Features

Psychologically, the Shakers' egalitarian view of both sexes allowed for the unopposed emergence of several exceptional female leaders. The absolutes of celibacy and separation of the sexes were tempered by the Shakers' enthusiastic worship, e.g., loud singing, synchronized energetic marching and dancing, and physical gestures in which both sexes mirrored each other. During much of the nineteenth century, young men and women would join in "union meetings," small, mid-week gatherings where the sexes would sit in two rows opposite each other and converse, with an elder Shaker monitoring, on various topics of the day – an outlet that helped make the restricted yet close daily proximity of the sexes workable. Individualism was downplayed while the importance of the community was stressed: cemeteries have just one large gravestone marked "Shakers," or small uniform markers recording only names and dates. When whole families joined, they were separated into men's and women's dwellings and their children reared communally. Communities were organized into large, separately sited "Families" for full members, novices, and inquirers, with a leadership hierarchy of elders and eldersses, deacons and deaconesses. Although previous family ties were severed, this community organization provided a larger family, in which all members were known as "brethren" and "sisters," while special leaders were termed "Mother" and "Father." In an age when divorce was nearly impossible and separation usually brought poverty, many women in distressed marriages found refuge among the Shakers, and not just their children but the many orphans left at Shaker villages were given educations considered superior for the times. In general, the austerities of Shaker life seem to have been balanced by spiritual resources and intuitive psychological sensitivity that enabled their remarkably long and fruitful communal existence.

The Shakers' well organized communal life and industrious work ethic produced prosperous farms, innovative crafts, excellent functionally designed chairs and cabinet-work, a widely marketed variety of seeds in standardized packets, and a wholesome, plentiful diet – all of which made possible a unique material culture that also expressed the Shakers' active religious life, summarized in their motto: "Hands to work and hearts to God."

Decline

The all-too-human occasions of youth to rebel against authority, of trustees (who were delegated to conduct business with the outside world) to embezzle funds or invest unwisely, and of illicit lovers and disillusioned apostates to leave the community – all these challenged the Shakers, but after the Civil War external economic and social factors caused an accelerating decline in new members, and the consolidation of communities and then their closing, with some to reopen later as museums. The growth of cities, industrialism, and spreading rail networks reduced the market for Shakers' agricultural and handcrafted products, while also increasing the allure of "the world" with new employment options and personal freedoms available. The proportion of male members shrank, and farming was increasingly done by hired non-Shakers. Women came to dominate in leadership roles, and the average longevity of remaining members increased significantly, due to a healthy lifestyle and the mutual support of communal living. As times changed, so did many aspects of the Shakers' daily life and worship, demonstrating their adaptiveness.

Institutional Strengths

While the Shakers had their origins in spontaneous ecstasies and confrontational testimonies, as their emotional responses to being seized and shaken by the sudden visitation of the Christ spirit, their widespread expansion and long endurance owes as much to the development, after Ann Lee's death, of rational ordering of their social organization, economic structure, and formal worship – all of which were designed to perpetuate, less spontaneously, the original message that was so liberating and spiritually nourishing to so many.

Historiography

Questions remain about the accuracy of some early accounts, and especially about the view that Ann Lee's loss of her four children at very early ages had determined her negative view of sex (although reportedly Mrs. Wardley, an earlier Shaker, had also promoted sexual abstinence). Besides thousands of the Shakers' own publications and manuscripts now in archives, many non-Shakers have written about them; see the bibliography for recommended authors. Aaron Copeland's 1944 music for

Martha Graham's ballet, "Appalachian Spring," incorporated the now-famous tune, "Simple Gifts," composed perhaps in 1848. More recent television specials and musical recordings continue to appreciate and publicize aspects of the Shaker legacy.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [Gender Roles](#)

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Shakti

David A. Leeming

The Sanskrit for "power" or "energy," Shakti (*sakti*) in Indian religion is the energizing material power of a given Hindu god, a power personified as his wife, especially the wife of Shiva. Often depicted in a state of sexual union, the god and his shakti together represent the Absolute, the god being non-activated Eternity, the goddess being activated Time. The Goddess, Devi, is Shakti or "Universal

Power." As Prakrti, she is the shakti or female energy by which the original Purusha, the primal male, becomes creation. As Lakshmi, she is the manifestation of the divine energy associated with Vishnu. Shiva's shakti takes many forms – Uma, Durga, the terrifying Kali, the motherly Parvati, for instance. By extension, Sita is the Vishnu avatar Rama's shakti in the *Ramayana*, and Draupadi is the shakti of the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*. And by further extension, the Hindu wife is a manifestation of her husband's shakti. By still further extension, shakti may be said to be the spiritual equivalent of the Jungian *anima* (Latin for psyche or soul) in which the anima is the subconscious inner self of the male – his feminine principle – and the related animus is the subconscious inner self or masculine principle of the female. The individual might be said to be animated by the anima/animus as the god is animated by his Shakti.

See also: [Anima and Animus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Shamanic Healing

Meg Bowles

What is Shamanism?

Shamanism is an ancient method of healing found in many cultures that focuses upon the relief of spiritual pain and suffering through interventions in non-ordinary reality. Non-ordinary reality (see Castaneda, who originally coined the term) can be described as the dimension of the Cosmos that exists outside of and parallel to the

linear time-space arena of ordinary awareness. What distinguishes the shaman from other healers is the ecstatic flight or journey into non-ordinary reality in order to contact his or her tutelary spirits for the knowledge and healing needed for a specific patient or community. The shamanic state of consciousness which enables the shaman to see what others do not, is entered into and exited at will, usually with the aid of repetitive drumming or rattling. The drum is often seen as a spirit horse whose sound allows the shaman to ride into the Upper or Lower Worlds of the shamanic Cosmos. It is the helping, compassionate spirits that the shaman interacts with in these realms – the power animals, teachers, and other wise beings – who do the diagnosis as well as the healing work in partnership with the shaman. A master of linking the ordinary with the non-ordinary worlds, the shaman therefore functions as an intermediary or bridge who also interprets and communicates the meaning of what is experienced in these alternate realities.

The resurgence of interest in shamanism and shamanic healing that has been thriving for the past few decades is evidence of a deepening hunger to reconnect with the transcendent dimensions of reality in a direct, revelatory way. Ancient shamanic practices have been resurrected and revitalized throughout the world as indigenous people have become freer to practice their own traditions openly (as in the former Soviet Union for example), and have sought to recover the old ways of their ancestors in order to heal themselves and their communities. Feminine shamanic traditions which possess more of an interpersonal orientation, that encourage and empower patients to become active participants in their own healing are also taking their rightful place of importance alongside the more masculine, heroic shamanic traditions (see Tedlock) where the patient adopts more of a passive role. While some Westerners have been drawn to study with indigenous shamans, many more have been able to explore shamanism through various training programs in what has become known as “core” shamanism that have been offered all over the world through organizations such as the Foundation for Shamanic Studies.

Core Shamanism

The body of work referred to as core shamanism was originally synthesized and brought to Westerners by the pioneering work of anthropologist Michael Harner. During the 1950s, Harner conducted extensive fieldwork with the Jivaro and Conibo people in South

America and was eventually initiated as a shaman. After further research into many other shamanic practices throughout the world, Harner began to synthesize and distill the fundamental techniques that he found in common across various traditions into a universal, core practice for integration into Western contemporary life. These techniques, the primary one being the shamanic journey process which enables one to enter into the characteristic ecstatic, shamanic state of consciousness, have proven to be accessible even for those who have no prior training or conscious experience with anything remotely shamanic.

Core shamanism is essentially a modern spiritual practice free of specific religious or cultural requirements. That said, the basic world view embodied in both traditional and core shamanism is an animist one which perceives everything in the Cosmos as being imbued with life essence or spirit, including all members of the varied and wondrous kingdoms that are part of the natural world. Everything is alive and connected within an intricate web or tapestry of energy, both in this physical realm as well as in other parallel realities. In contrast to a psychological perspective of spirits, where the phenomenon might be viewed as an externalization of an unconscious, autonomous complex (Jung), the shamanic experience of spirits is that they have an innate intelligence and a reality of their own that exists outside of the personal and collective psyche.

The Spiritual Origins of Illness

Shamans and practitioners of core shamanism see the phenomenon of illness as a spiritual problem resulting from either a loss of power, a loss of soul, or an intrusion of an energy form which does not belong in the patient, which may be localized somewhere in the energy body or, in the case of spirit possession, systemic. A person suffering from soul loss, for example, does not feel fully alive and engaged with life. Symptoms of soul loss may include experiences of chronic depression, dissociation, addiction, and unresolved grief as well as persistent physical illness. Judging by that list many if not all of us suffer, or have suffered, from some form of soul loss during the course of our lives. There are a number of ways in which the lost soul can spontaneously return to embodiment, such as in a healing dream or even in a luminous moment during analytic work. Sometimes however, a shamanic intervention by another is needed.

Soul Retrieval

One of the most powerful core shamanic healing practices engaged in today is that of soul retrieval, a classic form of shamanic healing (Eliade, 1972) which was spontaneously rediscovered in a journey by shamanic practitioner, author, and therapist Sandra Ingerman during work with a client many years ago. Soul retrieval is a healing ritual where the shamanic practitioner, in partnership with her tutelary spirits, journeys into non-ordinary reality to search for the missing soul parts which are ready to be returned to the patient. The soul parts are located, interacted with, and finally “pulled” or carried out of non-ordinary reality as the journey ends, after which the practitioner restores them to the patient by blowing their essence into the heart and crown chakras of the patient’s body. The energy contained in the returned soul essence is often experienced and felt on a subtle yet palpable level by the patient.

According to Ingerman, soul loss is a natural response to unbearable trauma. Trauma triggers a self-protective phenomenon consisting of the splitting off of a part of one’s vital essence or “soul,” which then literally flees the patient to become stuck in a dimension of non-ordinary reality where it then leads a parallel existence, but one where the gifts and potentials of that soul part (as well as the memories of the trauma) remain inaccessible and no longer incarnated in this world. This view is not so different from that of an analytical psychologist, who might conceive of soul loss as an archetypal defense of the personal spirit (Kalsched, 1996); however, an analytical psychologist might also perceive the phenomenon as taking place in the inner world of the patient (see self care system) whereas according to Harner, the practitioner of core shamanism observes the evidence of soul loss empirically, in the parallel universe known as non-ordinary reality.

Integration with Other Healing Modalities

There is a growing interest with regards to integrating core shamanic healing practices with analytical psychology (and other forms of psychotherapy) as well as with other disciplines such as Western medicine. Having been trained as a psychotherapist, Ingerman sees work of therapy as having tremendous value; however, her pragmatic view is that for the necessary psychological working – through process to progress, the patient’s soul must be embodied and therefore in residence or “home”

to engage with the therapist – hence the need for the shamanic approach to bring back the split-off soul parts in order to restore wholeness to the patient. Many analysts who have found themselves working endlessly with a patient’s “false self” (Winnicott) as they patiently hold a space for the vulnerable child to appear in their consulting rooms might resonate with Ingerman’s position. While the experience of soul retrieval can be a powerful and transformative process standing on its own, or as a complementary practice to deepen the work of psychotherapy, it does not provide a quick fix. As with any other healing modality, there can be pitfalls, such as if the egos of the patient and/or the practitioner get in the way of the process. The work of facilitating and integrating the return of soul into life can be arduous, complex, and humbling, as much as it can be deeply rewarding.

Conclusion

Integrating the two disciplines of analytical psychology and core shamanism in a way that honors the power and essence of each practice without falling into a diluted soup of New Age meaninglessness presents a worthy challenge going forward for all of us who seek wholeness for ourselves and the patients with whom we work.

See also: [Healing](#) [Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Shamans and Shamanism

Richard W. Voss

Context for the Discussion: Shamans and Non-Ordinary Reality

- ▶ Shamanism is a great mental and emotional adventure, one in which the patient as well as the shaman-healer are involved. Through his heroic journey and efforts, the shaman helps his patients transcend their normal, ordinary definition of reality, including the definition of themselves as ill. The shaman shows his patients that they are not emotionally and spiritually alone in their struggles against illness and death. The shaman shares his special powers and convinces his patients, on a deep level of consciousness, that another human is willing to offer up his own self to help them. The shaman's self-sacrifice calls forth a commensurate emotional commitment from his patients, a sense of obligation to struggle alongside the shaman to save one's own self. Caring and curing go hand in hand (Harner, 1990: xviii).

The generic term “shaman” describes a wide range of practices among indigenous people wherein “helpers” or “spirits” are called upon to help the patient asking the shaman for help. The term is derived from the language of the Tungus people of Siberia (Eliade, 1964, Harner, 1990), and from the Chinese, *sha men*, as well as the ancient Sanskrit *sramana* which is translated as “ascetic” and from *sramati* as “he fatigues” (Hopkins, 1918). The term describes the indigenous practitioner who works with spirit helpers, and through whom the spirits “doctor” or treat the individuals that come for help and healing. Often the metaphor of the “hollow bone or tube” is used to describe the power of the shaman – as he or she is one who is simply a tool or conduit for the helping or healing process – the power for the healing comes from

something beyond the shaman – often from some other world or realm. Generally the shaman does not seek to become a shaman, but the spirits choose him or her for this purpose or the individual inherits the “helpers” or “medicine” from their family ancestors (Personal communication, 1999, 2001). John A. Grim noted that “Among tribal people the shaman is the person, male or female, who experiences, absorbs, and communicates a special mode of sustaining, healing power. For most tribal peoples the vital rhythms of the natural world are manifestations of a mysterious, all-pervasive power presence” (see van der Leeuw, 1938/1963; Grim, 1983).

In the past other, more pejorative terms were used to describe these healers, such as “witch,” “medicine man or woman,” “witch doctor,” and “sorcerer,” etc., so the use of the more generic term “shaman” avoids such prejudicial overlays to this healing tradition, and is preferred (Harner, 1990). The shaman is distinguished from other kinds of healers by his or her use of altered consciousness, which Eliade called “ecstasy” (cited in Harner, 1990). Harner notes that shamanism is the most widespread and ancient methods or systems of mind-body healing known to humanity (1990: 40). Equally remarkable is fact that the assumptions and methods or processes of shamanism are very similar across the various and distant regions of the world (Harner, 1990; Eliade, 1964). Years ago, one of my students showed me a video tape of a spirit-calling ceremony conducted in a remote indigenous community in Brazil – which had many elements I had observed in traditional Lakota spirit-calling ceremonies, such as the use earth in the “altar” as well as the use of six directions’ flags (the black, red, yellow, white, blue, and green), tobacco offerings, a darkened room cleared of all furniture.

Harner noted that the shaman

- ▶ operates in nonordinary reality only a small portion of his [or her] time, and then only as needed to perform shamanic tasks, for shamanism is a part-time activity. Among the Jivaro, the Conibo, the Eskimo, and most other primitive groups, the master shaman is usually an active participant in the economic, social, and even political affairs of the community... The shaman moves back and forth between the two realities deliberately and with serious intention (1990: 46).

The shaman I met in a remote Amazonian community was the president of his community council, a teacher, and also collected Brazil nuts in the forest. When I first met him, his riverboat was on its way to the market, heading away from his village. When he learned that I had come to interview him, he met me at the small village grocery store where I

was told to meet him – I was amazed that he arrived sooner than I did, even though he had been traveling in the opposite direction. He was a highly respected political leader of his community, was modestly dressed, and wore a rosary around his neck. The interview took place on the porch of the small building which served as the local “grocery store.” Other traditional “medicine men” or shaman I met often worked tirelessly helping their communities, one actually served as Chairman of the tribe, served on tribal council, and conducted healing ceremonies whenever requested – pretty much at the request of anyone seeking help and assistance (Personal communication, 1999, 2001).

Shamans Do not Operate in the Abstract

I think the best way to discuss C/Shamanism is to describe it in concrete terms. In 2004 I had the opportunity to conduct field research in concert with the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research (ACEER) as part of a Faculty Development Grant made possible by West Chester University and the ACEER. As part of this project I visited a traditional indigenous Ese'ija community along the Tambopata River in southeastern Peru. While conducting this field research I had the opportunity to interview numerous individuals about the healing and helping traditions of c/shamans in the area. These interviews included interviews with chaman, patients, community leaders, and other healthcare professionals. As part of this research, I asked a recognized chaman if he would sing a healing song used in his ceremonies. He told me to return later that evening to his casita, not exactly answering my question. Over the years I have learned to follow directions literally, without analysis (which requires a shift from my otherwise usual mode of study). I returned to the little casita at nightfall where he was resting in his hammock. I was invited to sit in one of the adjoining hammocks where we continued our conversation until he invited me into his house.

The Entire Forest Was Dancing!

I was instructed to sit on the edge of his bed. He rolled four tobacco cigarettes, each about 3 in. long, and laid them aside. The C/Shaman stood in front of me. Then he poured rose water over my head from a small bottle which dripped over my face and back. The rose water had a very pleasant fragrance. He then lit one of the cigarettes and blew smoke on me and all around me. He then took a small bunch of long leaves (called a chakra) that were

tied at the stem which formed a handle; the leaf rattle was approximately 10 in. in total length and about 6 in. wide. The C/Shaman then began striking the top of my head with the chakra while he sang a very simple melody in a very soft, subdued birdlike whistle, formed by the air blown against the roof of the mouth through the teeth, not a hollow whistle blown through the lips. All the while the C/Shaman continuously struck the top of my head gently with the chakra. The C/Shaman's song did not have any recognizable words, consisting of a very simple and subdued, yet shrill, whistle. I recall thinking how simple and childlike the tune was – it seemed like a very “happy” tune. I recall feeling very relaxed and that I was “in good hands.” There were no explanations given by the C/Shaman; the process was entirely experiential. By this time I had closed my eyes and I focused on the rustling sound of the dry leaves of the chakra. Before I knew it, with each strike of the chakra, I felt as if the entire forest had opened up, and was dancing around me. It was as if the little leaf rattle became the spokesman for the forest, and it was as if I was hearing the entire forest singing and dancing all around me and I was part of it. It was as if the C/Shaman had brought the entire vegetation of the Amazon into that little casita.

Shamanism and Psychology

John A. Grim noted a more universal implication for the interest in shamanism, noting, “Shamanism is not only characteristic of tribal peoples but also is an ongoing and irreducible mode of experiencing the sacred that is not limited to a particular ethnic group. . . . Elsewhere he noted that “. . . shamanism has a certain attraction for our times, when the more sophisticated, or more rationalized, modes of religious life are often so weak that they no longer communicate the power needed by contemporary man, who must resolve a new and overwhelming set of tensions in a creative manner” (1983: 29). Shamanism is particularly of interest to those interested in the intersection between religion and psychology, J. A. Grim noted further, that “The meaning of shamanism lies in the depths of the human psyche, which is not yet fully known to itself but is partially manifest in particular human efforts to structure symbols as a way of knowing” (1983: 31).

Conclusion

A discussion of shamans and shamanism provides an important perspective on the intersectionality of

Psychology, Religion, and Ecstatic Experience, and focuses the clinician on the role of “caring and healing” in the therapeutic interaction which is not focused on clinical detachment or objectivity, but rather on ecstatic engagement, connectivity, and the subjectivity of the healer with the patient where both encounter the non-ordinary reality and subsequent psychological and spiritual transformation.

See also: ➤ Eliade, Mircea ➤ Healing ➤ Shamanic Healing

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Shame and Depth Psychology

Gerardo James de Jesus

Shame

Shame can be defined simply as the feeling we have when we evaluate our actions, feelings, or behavior, and conclude that what we have done wrong, makes us wrong. It encompasses the whole of us; it generates a wish to hide, to disappear, or even to die. Shame, as the deeper problem of the self, means that one has suffered a loss of being, not merely loss of status. Individuals suffering from a shame-based complex have a characterological style of

identification with a given behavior due to internalization. For example, when someone is called “an angry person” an emotion becomes the core of his character or identity. He doesn’t *have* anger or depression; he *is* angry or depressed. Similarly, shame-based people identify with this affect – toned complex in a globalized way which becomes characteristic of their behavior. People with shame-based complexes guard against exposing their inner selves to others, but more significantly, will guard against exposing themselves to themselves. The shamed affect is ignited upon hearing a single word, observing a gesture by another that is distorted and catastrophized, or by just about anything that will trigger the complex, creating a negative affect that is felt in a global sense.

One way of understanding a shame-based complex is by noting what shame-based persons are not. Quoting from M. Scott Peck, John Bradshaw notes that to be a non-shame based person “requires the willingness and the capacity to suffer continual self-examination.” Such ability requires a good relationship with oneself. This is precisely what no shame-based person has. In fact a toxically shame-based person has an adversarial relationship with himself, often compulsively seeking ways to avoid the affect – toned shame-based feeling. It’s this very reason that he projects it away from himself onto others. Other defensive mechanisms which the ego uses to avoid feeling the shame affect are repression, dissociation, distraction, or ownership. This inter-subjective work occurs on an unconscious level; if he understood what he was doing on a conscious level, he would have learned to own it and become conscious of his projections.

The following three points attempt a description of the problem of shame emerging both at an individual and a communal level. First, a normal response of failure to an internalized standard created by an authoritative source such as family, society, or religious affiliation can generate a shame-based complex that has a globalized affect that engulfs one’s entire being. Further, shame-based individuals make no distinction between themselves and real and imagined failings. So, often what they imagine to be real is exaggerated.

Secondly, the inability to distinguish between imagined failings and behavior that is not exaggerated is referred to as fusion. Fused feelings blur the self, making it difficult to differentiate clearly. What is cognated, or re-cognized, such as inner features, feelings, memories, thoughts, images, standards, God-concepts, are fused with outer features, interpersonal associations such as church, family life, society, culture. Another way to view it is to imagine a co-assembling of inner feelings and thoughts, images, memories, bound to outer shaming

events associated with God, church, or family. The church, an outer association where acceptance and purpose is sought can actually be a place where shame is internalized. Feelings of anger, rage, self-contempt, comparison with others and meaninglessness are not relieved with Church activities such as prayer, Bible reading, or hearing homilies. Rather, life becomes a ritualized routine without any connection to a goal or purpose when what is heard is felt to be like shame. For some who have left the church, the hearing of a sermon can become fused with a feeling of shame, and the feeling re-experienced as memories of childhood visits to the house of shame: the church. The sense of “feeling lost,” is not unusual in a place where “being found” is preached.

Third, there is no one theory of shame that allows professionals in the field to devise a uniform treatment of the problem. A DSM diagnostic disorder of shame does not exist. Instead, shame is observed as symptomatic of that which stems from mood disorders, or, some would argue, evident in the behavior of personality disorders. It would be helpful to define the state of shame by compiling a list of a unique set of behaviors or a set of stimuli that elicit the particular feeling, informing pastoral psychotherapists on how to treat a patient. What is evident is that those in Christian faith communities who suffer from shame acquire it as a by-product of their theological formation.

As persons of faith process psychological life through theological presuppositions that have helped guide, and at times, misguide them, rather than dismiss the theology or the Christian faith, the pastoral psychotherapist can help the patient discern and re-think metaphors, symbols, and stories that shaped much of the client’s identity in a way that is empowering and liberating. Theological concepts such as incarnation, forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, and unconditional love, can be reframed by re-hearing the sacred narratives in a new way. A healing methodology of pastoral psychotherapy that re-frames the stories, myths, and narratives can be discovered in depth psychology.

The pastoral psychotherapist trained in depth psychology can serve as a primary relational object for the patient’s transferences and projections. His or her presence in the therapeutic moment can help to form a healing imago in the memory of the patient of non-shaming episodes. The Christian psychotherapist can discover a theological basis for this encounter in an incarnational theology that is vicarious in its expression, vicarious in the sense that the Christian psychotherapist who utilizes a depth approach to therapy can address shame by speaking in a theological language familiar to the patient. By *re-presenting* the humanity of the Christ that

embraced all people in the light of their psychological formation, the Christian psychotherapists non-shaming presence humanizes the process by moving away from absolute pronouncements of God’s will to a declaration that embraces the mystery of the human. By accepting what appears as unrelated phenomena in feeling, thinking and behavior, which, in a more behavioral modification approach would have been avoided, or minimized with absolute biblical principals, the depth approach honors that within the self and outside the self that seeks to bring transformation, including deriving meaning of the shame-based complex and its part in psycho-spiritual renewal.

Depth Psychology

Jung’s theory of depth psychology is distinguished by its emphasis on the unconscious as an objective reality. By exerting specific pressures on our subjective consciousness, it produces oppositional, at times compensating viewpoints that guide the process of individuation. The unconscious does not determine consciousness in a fixed way, but operates constantly in the background as a guide to the process of healing and wholeness. To observe this background is to learn how to own the process of individuation. The patient in analysis learns to hear and be conversant with the shame-based complex when it rears its head. By capturing projections, the patient remains conversant with the oppositional voices, embracing the affect rather than avoiding, repressing, denying, or projecting. Differentiation of internalized shame-based affect from outer events is enjoined in the process. By differentiating internalized voices, the patient embraces what once felt oppositional, and in doing so, discovers that what once felt like a feeling to be avoided or projected, can be viewed as a key to understanding the self. From a Jungian depth psychological point of view, transcendence and transformation are possible as the oppositional is now acceptable.

Depth psychology is much broader as a methodology for addressing shame than are Biblical ways of thinking as the source of solving personal complexes and problems. Some approaches to psychotherapy from a Christian perspective assume an anthropology that places the spiritual life as a higher or initial life of the self that is combined with a rational or mental self. By appealing to this spiritual motivation, an appeal that depth psychology also embraces, the cognitive approach seeks to direct the patient towards a Biblical way of thinking as the source of solving problems. The assumption is that if one is spiritually oriented towards God’s principles and lives

“obediently” in accordance with these principles, all else will follow. For some, this seems to work, but for those unable to accept this principle of spiritual obedience as a solution to all problems, the therapy may not be effective. Consequently, therapy for a non-Christian is not possible, as a prerequisite for successful therapy is to embrace the “truth” of God’s principles.

Although depth psychology is similar to a Christian cognitive approach in its emphasis upon the spiritual as a medium for transformation, its universal approach to seeking what is common in all humans and cultures, differs from a Biblical approach to counseling. In depth psychology, prerequisites like embracing Biblical principles are not necessary. It seeks to ask what is it that is longed for in all humans through the symptoms that are expressed by all people. There is no fixed way of being “Christian,” rather; to be Christian is an invitation into a way of seeing oneself in its relation to the outer world through a Christ that is transcendent. In the spirit of the Christ of the gospels, the shame-based person learns to reconcile, embrace, and accept all that feels oppositional in him. Rather than seek to impose a conventional form of wisdom that is enculturated as a way of legitimizing an institution, a depth psychological model can be woven into a theological anthropology that sees the unconscious process as guided by a Spirit that knows of the Christ, an archetypal reality Jung called the Self. The Self is that within all humans that acts as if it knew God or Spirit. It includes both the ego and the unconscious and is encountered when the human need for *transcendence* is understood in the psychotherapeutic moment.

The Transcendent Function is discovered in a process called oppositional dialogue or active imagination. The patient is empowered to hear the “authoritative” voices that once determined approval as a longing to be made whole. By placing oneself in an oppositional relationship with the affect – as if it were alive – one learns to hear and even speak to the affect, seeking meaning for its long and painful manifestation in the life of the shame-based person. Rather than be quick to purge it, or perceive it as a result of a “disobedient life,” the process helps to reframe it as a summoning to a more spiritual life. In this approach, “disobedient acts” are less the focus of therapy, and learning to hear what the “acts” and their symptoms mean is a focus of the depth approach. One’s overall longing is what is most essential. Ann Belford Ulanov reminds us that “the encounter between Self and transcendence presses for its own resolution, towards what Jung called individuation.” The push for transcendence can be manifested in shaming behaviour, and shaming behavior can be conceived as manifesting the need for

transcendence. For a Christian psychotherapist practicing within a Jungian theoretical framework, (since as mentioned, Christians tend to address personal issues from within their respective theological presuppositions), the spirit of Christ can be spoken of as the presence that reconciles, embraces, and accepts what felt oppositional and shamed.

By defusing and differentiating the internalized voices discussed above through this active imaginative approach, the patient learns how to capture the unconscious projections. What is projected or transferred is the feeling that is avoided, namely the affective shame-complex. Since passing blame through scapegoating or demonizing is a common transference phenomenon of the unconscious, it too is an archetypal reality called the shadow. The shadow is that which disrupts and interrupts the ego’s need to save face to the outer world. It is the psychological clothing we wear in order to survive an outer world that has shamed us. One cannot act as if the shadow does not exist, for it will manifest itself in projections. Consequently, coming to terms with one’s shadow involves clearly defusing and differentiating what is mine, and what belongs to the other. It defuses the internalized images that are fused with the outer world and helps the patient arrest the projections. As the fusion of the inner and outer spheres created the globalized sense of shame, embracing the shadow and differentiating from the ego’s need to project contributes to the conscious ownership of the self, as it seeks to become whole.

In the case of a shaming theology, oppositional dialogue seeks to have the patient converse with inner feelings and voices that a shaming theology avoids, since its commitment is the legitimizing of an enculturated religious institution. Depth psychology holds to the legitimization of the objective psyche and its summons towards individuation. A Christian doing psychotherapy from within a Jungian theoretical model might say, “The spirit blows where *it* wills,” not where, and how, the institution says it blows! This embracing of the oppositional within as an authentic process of the self is a way of learning about the “truth that sets one free.”

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Complex](#) [Individuation](#) [Shadow](#) [Transcendence](#) [Transcendent Function](#)

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Shame and Guilt

Jill L. McNish

The Shame Affect

According to the influential affect theorist Sylvania Tompkins (1963: 118), shame/humiliation is one of six innate negative affects. By the word “affect,” Tompkins means “a physiological mechanism, a firmware script” that is dependent on “chemical mediators that transmit messages, and on the organizing principle stored in the subcortical brain as the affect program” (Nathanson, 1992: 149). “Shame,” according to the oft-quoted definition of Tompkins,

- ▶ ...is the affect of indignity, transgression and alienation. Though terror speaks to life and death and distress makes of the world a vale of tears, yet shame strikes deepest into the heart of man. While terror and distress hurt, they are wounds inflicted from outside which penetrate the smooth surface of the ego; but shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul. It does not matter whether the humiliated on has been shamed by derisive laughter or whether he mocks himself. In either event he feels himself naked, defeated, alienated, lacking in dignity or worth (Tompkins, 1963: 118).

The affect of shame manifests in a variety of physiological ways including blushing, sweating, dizziness, lowering or averting of the eyes and increased heart rate.

Shame, as distinguished from guilt (which affect theorists understand to be a subpart of the shame/humiliation affect), is about exposure and the experienced

self. Guilt is remorse about acts believed to have been wrongfully committed. Shame is about the experienced wrongness of aspects of one’s very being and is often, directly or indirectly, related to the condition, the needs, the desires, limitations and suffering of the human body.

Guilt Distinguished from Shame

It is believed by affect theorists following Sylvania Tompkins (1963) that guilt is subsumed under the affect of shame. Since guilt involves acts believed to have been wrongfully done or left undone, whereas shame involves a sense of the wrongness of the self regardless of acts or omissions, guilt involves less experience of the self than does shame. However, guilt and shame are often fused, with guilt also involving a conscious or unconscious fear of retaliation, or talion dread. Feelings of guilt imply basic trust in one’s world, its laws, rules and taboos, and in the persons who are the interpreters of these laws. It is generally understood that guilt feelings develop during the oedipal stage of life when culture’s laws are first internalized through fear of the father.

Religions typically are among those societal institutions that create rules, laws and taboos to which persons are expected to adhere. For example in Judeo-Christian religious structures, the Ten Commandments set forth basic laws which must be complied with. Most Christian denominations provide mechanisms and rituals for confessing one’s wrongful acts and omissions, thus assuaging feelings of guilt and leading to a sense of forgiveness and reconciliation. It has sometimes been observed that in secular life psychotherapy provides opportunity for “confession.”

Implications of Shame

Contemporary psychology understands the affect of shame as being necessary to protect individual boundaries of privacy, and to ensure individuals’ social adaptation. Furthermore, psychological theorists following the groundbreaking study of Helen Lynd (1958) see experiences of the affect of shame as providing access to the deepest possible insight into personal identity, since shame is viewed as the affect closest to the experienced self. In her 1971 work *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* Helen Block Lewis persuasively argued from empirical clinical studies that real psychological healing cannot occur without express analysis of shame issues. However, it is axiomatic that for some individuals shame is the overarching and deeply

engrained habitual mode of reacting to others. Large degrees of shame, inappropriately or obsessively fixed, can lead to profound depression and other mental illness. Defenses to the experience of shame include social withdrawal, isolation, addictions, depression, violent acting out, abuse of power, self-righteousness, blaming and projection, shamelessness (a power defense to shame) and perfectionism.

It has been argued that shame is archetypal, as is evidenced in the myth of Adam and Eve's fall and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. It has likewise been asserted that the enduring power of the narratives of the Christian Gospel derive from the shame that is explicit and implicit in Jesus' birth, life, ministry and crucifixion, as well as the shameful circumstances of many of the individuals to whom he ministered (see McNish, 2004).

See also: [Affect](#) [Archetype](#) [Crucifixion](#) [Depression](#) [Fall, The](#) [Jesus](#) [Myth](#) [Oedipus Myth](#) [Power](#) [Projection](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Taboo](#)

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Sharia

Amani Fairak

Sharia or Islamic Law, is a set of principles implemented in the Islamic community. Sharia comes from the Arabic word (شريعة) Shara'a which means to enforce a code of conduct in order to facilitate a way of life. Islamic Law is integrated into almost all aspects of life, from relationships, education, law to economics and politics. Islam proposes four descending criteria to which Islamic society or individuals can refer as an ideal model for social

policies. Sharia has certain sources from which it derives its authority in Islamic society; and characteristics that give it credibility and authenticity among Muslims. Sharia is divided into two major sources and nine sub-sources. The first two sources are *the Quran* and *the Hadith*, which are believed to be directly or indirectly divinely inspired. The sub-sources are mainly based on scholastic interpretation and judgments.

Sources of Sharia

- 1) Quran: Muslims believe it to be the literal word of God (see Quran).
- 2) Hadith: the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (see Hadith).
- 3) Ijma': the consensus or the collective agreement of Muslim scholars (see Ijma').
- 4) Qiyas: the standardisation of any issue against Quran and Hadith based on Ijma'a (see Qiyas).
- 5) Istihsan: it comes from the Arabic word *Istah'sana*, or to prefer something over other possibilities of decisions.
- 6) Masaleh Morsalah (the Common Good): a jurisprudential agreement can be Islamically approved if it brings about common good for the Islamic community or the public.
- 7) Sadd al-Dhara'ei (the standardisation of appropriate means and ends): it is to block any means that might cause social disruption even if the ends can be noble. This also means that any means that might bring about a common good should be Islamically facilitated.
- 8) Al Orf (conventions): it comes from *Arafa* in Arabic, which means an acceptable manner of doing something. It is the social convention or custom in any given Islamic society that may contribute to change in Islamic Law.
- 9) Math'hab al-Sahabi (the teachings of the Prophet's companions): it is to use the teachings of the Prophet's companions as a raw model in everyday life if there is no direct text from the Quran or Hadith or the previous Islamic laws.
- 10) Sharia man Qablana (Pre-Islamic Laws): if there is no known source from a companion, Muslims can follow the laws of the previous Messages like Christianity and Judaism as long as they does not conflict with the main sources of the Quran and Hadith.
- 11) Istit'hab (continuity): the presumption of continuation of a certain status is to remain as is until it can be changed or refuted by evidence.

Characteristics of Sharia

- 1) Divine law: Muslims believe that the Quran is the third and final literal Message that God has sent to humankind, after al Taurah (*Torah*) and al Injeel (*The later Bible*).
- 2) Long-term and short-term policy of reinforcements: the Quran speaks of promises and consequences for the short and long-term. The mention of heaven and hell are emphasized throughout Quran. Muslims believe that every action has a reaction that can be either rewarded or disciplined in this life (al-Donia) or the afterlife (al A'khirah).
- 3) Universality: since the Quran is the last message from God, its message is universal to all humankind in contrast to the previous messages of Jesus and Moses and other prophets whose messages were exclusive to their people.
- 4) Comprehensiveness: as last Message, the Quran discusses every aspect of human life on every level, personally, socially, politically, spiritually, scientifically, and educationally. Therefore, Muslims believe that the Quran is a divine law that is open to re-interpretation and so applicable at any time anywhere.

Commentary

Several psychologists and sociologists of religion have distinguished between the focus of Islam and western psychology. Islam tends to view religion as the core of the individual's life while psychology tends to view religion as one aspect of the individual's life. Social psychology, therefore, may suggest that abiding by Sharia Law is to confirm the identity of the individual Muslim in society. To follow certain codes of conduct, to adhere to specific policies of discipline or to at least to accept such a lifestyle aims at sustaining the religious institution and ensuring its survival.

Islam, as a social system and establishment, introduces the term *umma* or nation to indicate the importance of a "unified Islamic community". This community is governed by particular policies in order to fulfill certain needs and to meet specific goals. Sociology may explain this concept as

- ▶ ...a cultural and ideological territory in which no Muslim would find himself alien regardless of political or geographical diversities. In one sense, it is comparable to the notion of 'Western World' abundantly

used to define a cultural and ideological territory today (Ebrahimi, 1996).

Umma works as "...a common framework in which temporal association of different groups sharing the Islamic values can be maintained" where the goal and the strategy in cultivating the concept of *umma* is already recommended in the Quran.

See also: [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Qur'an](#)

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Shekhinah

Mark Popovsky

In Rabbinic Literature

In early rabbinic texts such as the Talmud, the term Shekhinah (lit. "dwelling") is used as one of many Hebrew names for God. Deriving from the verb meaning "to dwell," this particular divine appellation suggests imminent divine manifestation in a specific place or at a specific time. For example, the Shekhinah is said to rest at the head of a sick person's bed, to appear when ten men gather for prayer or to rest between a righteous man and his wife. Though this is the only commonly used Hebrew name for God that is grammatically feminine, in Talmudic and contemporaneous sources, overt feminine images are rarely associated with it. In most instances, the term Shekhinah could be replaced with other Hebrew names for God such as "Master of the Universe" or "The Holy One Blesses Be He" without any consequent change in the passage's meaning.

In Medieval Texts

A primary concern of many medieval Jewish philosophers from the post-Talmudic period such as Saadya Gaon, Judah Ha-Levi and Moses Maimonides was to preclude

any interpretation of scriptural passages which might suggest divine anthropomorphization. Revelation and prophecy were especially problematic phenomena for these philosophers because they presume that God communicates in human language. Consequently, among these philosophers, the Shekhinah was often understood not as another name for God but rather as a divinely created separate entity. The Shekhinah became the divine intermediary that would appear to prophets in visions; for, God himself does not speak. The Shekhinah is the entity that reflects God's presence in the world and that interacts with human beings because God's ultimate transcendence makes direct human-divine contact impossible.

The concept of the Shekhinah evolved further in the writing of the Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) from the twelfth century on. Kabbalistic thought posits that a profound unity of the divine once existed but was severed because of human sin. With this rupture, the masculine and feminine principles of the divine were separated and remain alienated from each other to this day. The Shekhinah becomes the symbol of the feminine aspect of the godhead, the element of the divine closest to the created world and most directly in contact with human beings. According to the Kabbalists, it is the duty of each individual to work to unite the male and female halves of God by observing the laws of the Torah and living a holy life. Human actions affect the divine, either promoting or hindering progress towards its reunion. Redeeming the Shekhinah from its exile from the remainder of the godhead becomes a primary motivation for behavior in Kabbalistic teachings.

It is in the Kabbalistic literature generally and in the Zohar most prominently that feminine and sometimes even erotic imagery is first associated with the Shekhinah. The Shekhinah is often depicted as a queen or a bride and serves as a foil to the traditional patriarchal images of a transcendent deity. It is not uncommon in Kabbalistic texts to find imagery portraying the reunion of the Shekhinah with the remainder of the godhead as sexual intercourse. Some Kabbalists would attempt to visualize such divine coupling when performing religious duties in order to remain aware of the broader theological implications of their righteous acts.

Contemporary Analysis

Reflecting the status of women in the pre-modern period, the Shekhinah is often described in Kabbalistic texts as

beautiful and radiant but passive and dependant on the deeds of men for redemption. Some scholars suggest that the popularity of the Shekhinah as a gendered representation of God may have arisen out of the same psychological and theological needs for divine intimacy and accessibility which popularized the Cult of the Virgin Mary among contemporaneous Christians. A number of modern feminists have argued that Jewish women should reclaim the image of the Shekhinah as a counterbalance to the many masculine images of the divine found in scripture and Jewish liturgy. Some Jewish pastoral counselors have reported positive results exploring feminine images of the Shekhinah with women who have suffered trauma and are alienated from more traditional divine imagery.

See also: [Female God Images](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Kabbalah](#) [Talmud](#)

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Shema

Lynn Somerstein

Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ehad – Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

This prayer is recited in the morning and afternoon prayers and on the death bed. The word “shema” means listen, or understand, indicating that one is to turn inward and feel God, since God cannot be visualized. “God is one” is a unifying principle.

The word “Lord” is used to replace the name of God, which cannot be said.

Eloheinu means “our God.”

Ehad means “one.”

This short phrase captures monotheism and identifies the Jew saying it as a dedicated person of God and a member of the Jewish people – it is a statement of belief and of identity. It is an affirmation of Judaism and a

declaration of monotheism. It unifies the self as it declares that the individual self belongs with a particular group. This unifying sound of the shema can serve to hold the individual personality and make it feel safe and connected.

See also: [▶ God](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Prayer](#)

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Shinto

Robert S. Ellwood

The Nature of Shinto

The word “Shinto” can be translated as “The Way of the Gods,” and refers to the traditional religion of Japan. Shinto has roots in the prehistoric past of Japan before the introduction of Buddhism, together with Chinese forms of writing and culture, around the sixth century C.E. “Shinto” then appeared as a term to differentiate the worship of the traditional kami, or gods, from “Butsido,” “The Way of the Buddha.” The two faiths became deeply intertwined in the Middle Ages, when Shinto shrines were often closely associated with Buddhist temples, the deities of the former regarded as guardians, students, or even alternative indigenous expressions of the imported Buddhas and bodhisattvas. But during the modernizing and increasingly nationalistic Meiji era (1868–1912) Shinto and Buddhism were separated by the government. Shinto became in effect a state religion. Extreme nationalists favored Shinto, regarding it as the authentic Japanese faith, its deities being ancestors or divine companions of the imperial house. After the end of World War II in 1945, Shinto was separated from the state. Its some 80,000 shrines were placed under local control, and apart from a few controversial relics of the past, such as the Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to Japanese war dead, the religion went its own way.

Shinto, however, continues in what many consider to be its true nature, a religion centered on the patronal

deities of particular places and communities. Most Shinto shrines are *ujigami* shrines, that is, shrines of the patronal deity of a particular community, extended family, place, or occasionally class of persons, such as a certain trade. The kami (or it may be a family or group of kami) is either unique to that shrine, or is a mythological figure of broader background essentially in the same local role. These places of worship are maintained by that community, and their *matsuri*, or festivals, are celebrations reaffirming traditional bonds.

Shinto shrines are easily recognizable by their distinctive *torii* or gate, with two upright pillars and one or two large crossbars, through which one passes to enter the shrine precincts, as though moving from one world to another, from the pollution of everyday life to a realm of sacred purity. The shrine itself will typically have an outer porch, bearing such symbols of kami-presence as a mirror, drums, and hanging *gohei* or zigzag strips of paper. Behind them stands an eight-legged table for offerings. Finally steep steps rise up to massive doors, very seldom opened, concealing the *honden* or inner sanctum where the *shintai*, or token of the divine presence, is reverently kept.

Shinto Worship

Shinto worship typically commences with a stately, highly ritualized offering of food (typically rice, salt, vegetables, fruits, seafood, and rice wine), followed by the chant-like reading of a *norito* or prayer, and the reception by worshippers of a sip of the rice wine as a sort of communion. At major community festivals worship is followed by colorful, celebrative events, ranging from sacred dance and *sumo* wrestling to processions, fairs, and traditional horse or boat races. This last part of the festival, which may go on all day to end with fireworks in the evening, is far from solemn, often having more the atmosphere of Mardi Gras or Carnival in Latin countries.

In any case, the main annual *matsuri* is an important solidifier of community identity; its preparation takes months, and it usually involves special, jealously-maintained customs distinctive to that place. Shinto is fundamentally grounded in archaic agriculture, and most festivals are related to the agricultural year: seedtime, the growing season, harvest. New Year’s, the time of renewal in this highly “cosmic” religion, is also very important.

Persons frequently visit shrines at other times as well to pray, customarily approaching the shrine porch, clapping hands twice as it were to attract the deity’s attention, then bowing the head for a few moments.

Main Themes of Shinto

Five main themes can be thought of as characterizing Shinto:

1. The importance of the purity versus impurity concept. Shrines, and persons taking part in their rites, must be kept free of contamination by death, disease, or blood. Kami, together with their abodes – which are usually set in green park like spaces as far as possible – bespeak the purity of pristine nature as over against the pollution so often afflicting the city and human life.
2. Tradition. Shinto strives rigorously to maintain traditional practices extending back to the mists of prehistory. For many Japanese, buffeted by the immense and unsettling changes that have affected their country in recent centuries, it is undoubtedly reassuring that one segment of national life changes little and connects them to ancient roots.
3. Matsuri or festival. Shinto fully recognizes the value of “sacred time” that affirms community, permits joyous and even ribald behavior, and is like a release from the tensions of a highly structured, achievement-oriented society.
4. Pluralism. It must always be borne in mind that Shinto is only a part of the Japanese spiritual spectrum; there is also Buddhism, and (while it is not a religion in the strict sense in Japan) Confucian morality, still extremely important in attitudes to family, work, and society. Most Japanese have some connection to all three, having an affiliation with both a traditional family shrine and Buddhist temple, while affirming Confucian ethics. Shinto is typically thought to affirm the joys and relationships of this world, while Buddhism has to do with ultimate metaphysical questions and life after death. Thus marriages are frequently celebrated in Shinto shrines, and funerals (which, having to do with death, would pollute a Shinto shrine) are conducted in Buddhist temples.
In this regard it should be pointed out that membership figures for Shinto are virtually meaningless; while few Japanese would think of themselves as “a Shintoist” in the western sense of belonging exclusively to one religion, most in fact are likely to visit shrines and participate in Shinto festivals, whatever exactly that may mean in terms of commitment.
5. Polytheism. Shinto, with its many thousands of finite kami, seems to be the only thoroughly polytheistic religion in a major advanced society today.

Shinto and Psychological

All of these points are of great psychological interest. Psychologists know that issues of purity and pollution can be very real to countless people, that the place of tradition as over against other forces is the subject of vehement debate both in society and within individuals, that the need for celebrative release in a world of tension must somehow be dealt with, and that we need to find ways to live with integrity in a highly pluralistic society. In all these matters, undoubtedly there is much to be learned from the Shinto experience.

Polytheism is an especially fascinating case, because it is a challenge to the monotheistic or monistic direction in which most of the world’s other religion have gone in the last two thousand years. The theologian Paul Tillich once pointed out that the difference between monotheism and polytheism is not just a matter of quantity, of one God versus more than one, but also of quality. Polytheism involves a different way of seeing the sacred world: not as all centered in one divine power and person, but as diffuse and diverse. The polytheist perceive separate spirits, finite but with distinctive personalities, in this sacred grove and that waterfall, over this town and that, for love and for war. Modern Shinto apologists have argued this is important; that Shinto is the most democratic of religions because it holds the universe runs by processes of divine conflict and consensus, rather than by a single autocratic will. Some psychologists, from William James in *The Pluralistic Universe* to post-Jungians like James Hillman in several works, have perceived modern western society to have become psychologically polytheistic in all but name, and have urged us to come creatively to terms with that vision. Neo-pagans around the world have also lately been paying renewed attention to Shinto.

The psychological significance of Shinto for many Japanese also lies in its symbolic relation to primary social identities, and to nature. Both are very important in Japanese consciousness. In this society, anomie and insecurity can be felt very acutely when the support of a family or peer group is lacking. Families, communities, trades and businesses have their patronal kami and shrines, and collective worship events that reinforce bonding. Shinto has been called a religion of the particular; rather than universal themes, it emphasizes sacredness in particular places and groups, so strengthens attachment to significant locations and people.

Shinto moreover consorts well with the Japanese love of natural beauty. It has been spoken of as a “natural religion” in another, more psychological sense as well: as religion in harmony with the “natural” cycles and social

structures of human life, unlike faiths that challenge the merely “natural” on the basis of transcendent revelation. But inspired by Shinto, as well as forms of Buddhism such as Zen, the Japanese appreciate finding the sacred in the world and human life as it is when it is rightly perceived.

Shinto, then, remains an ancient religion with contemporary relevance. It is important for understanding Japan, and also perhaps ourselves.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ James, William](#) [▶ Polytheism](#)
[▶ Ritual](#)

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Sin

Morgan Stebbins

The concept of sin can be thought of as a type of error. This can be an error according to either divine or social standards. Furthermore, the concept of sin is active in both religious and secular determinations of group allegiance, human fallibility, suffering, and the cure of suffering. Having said that, the dynamics and repercussions of sin are quite different depending on whether the sin is conceived of as transgressing secular law or divine order. Since there is no sin that is good, it is related to evil. Evil can be seen as relative harm (good for me, bad for you), as distance from the divine (St. Augustine and the *privatio bonum*), or as an absolute and archetypal aspect of the construction of reality.

It may clarify the concept of sin to describe it as a more differentiated and active form of a sense of the taboo that can be seen in relationship with confession, heaven, and hell. Since no significant religious or secular

traditions propose a worldview in which humanity is in a state of perfection, sin can be seen as a fairly universal concept although one with incredible variation. Not all religions use a concept of sin in a narrow sense, but it does appear that all religions and indeed all individuals have a way of identifying and dealing with problems, errors, or situations that appear to be beyond the scope of local logic. Local logic (so called because sensible patterns of thought are only comprehensible within a shared emotional, cultural, and metaphysical frame) easily identifies mistakes and can chart the course of their correction. For experiences that supercede this capacity, metaphysics of some kind enters the fray. Metaphysics in this context covers the conceptualization of all non-rational modes, including experiences of love, death, birth, sin, or anything that humans have the capacity to conceptualize but not satisfactorily explain. That is, experiences which are in some way transpersonal are also beyond the normal problem-solving mechanisms of the mind. Not only is the apperception of some types of experiences such as birth, death, and aging beyond the conscious mind's capacity according to psychological theory, evolutionary psychology has shown that there are not any conscious cognition modules for processing them.

Large-scale forms of transpersonal thinking can also be fruitfully described as religions or political ideologies, whereas small-scale forms are called personal projections. Projection is here meant in the broadest and most neutral form: the subject's assumptions about reality are constantly being refined and tested by social interactions and so are in some sense projections. However if personal projections become too detached from social networks of meaning, the subject may be identified by the society as psychotic. This can happen even locally, as many people report having neighbors who are “completely crazy” (see Horwitz, 2004). To further complicate the picture, even individuals who identify as fully secular imagine the transpersonal aspects of sin in a highly uniform and predictable way that is functionally similar to the various religious modes (Boyer, 2002).

Sin is typically defined by dictionaries in two ways: on the one hand it is an offense against God, on the other it is something highly reprehensible, but otherwise secular (Miriam Webster Dictionary). To the religious and secular aspects we will add psychological views in the following discussion. However, from within the structure of religious experience, an offense against God carries definite consequences and demands solutions which are only offered by expert technicians (priests) validated by the religious hierarchy. Thus, as previously stated, we can think of sin as an error or transgression. To whom or

what, and what the consequences and solution are, vary by tradition and culture, but in any case the systems are closed and sin is seen as in some way evil.

All of the major religious systems employ a category of sin. Other types of religious or supernatural traditions such as the Greek pantheon or many ancestor or spirit-based traditions have a way to account for actions which anger the supernatural beings and usually need some kind of specialized intervention. It is instructive that the primary Hebrew words for sin are *het*, meaning something that has gone astray or off the path, and *aveira*, or transgression (There are at least 20 Hebrew words that convey variations of the meaning of sin!). What goes astray is *yetzer*, or the human inclinations which must be channeled by the law. The cure for *het* is found in adherence to the law (in Orthodox and Conservative Judaism the law or *Halakha* – meaning the way of walking, or path – is comprised of 248 positive and 365 negative *mitzvot*) and the expiation of guilt during the celebration of *Yom Kippur*. The *yetzer ha-ra* is the evil inclination which would appear to be a conceptual cognate of original sin except that it is balanced by *yetzer ha-tov*, or the good inclination. This is strongly paralleled (in contradiction to the doctrines of St. Augustine) in the Christian New Testament by Rom. 5:12–19. Psychologically speaking, original sin can be translated as an acknowledgment of feeling estranged or alienated from the law of one's psychic dominant. Spirituality, within this psychological model, depends upon discovering and submitting to a law that comes from a non-conscious aspect of ourselves. In this view, spirituality is not dependent upon social norms or emotional states, but rather upon acting and thinking in ways compatible with the psychological structure that each person comes to discover.

The concept and dynamics of Sin have been gradually differentiated throughout the Hebrew Bible into the New Testament, reaching a crescendo of complexity in the Catholic scheme. The latter includes sins ignorance as well as deliberate action, venal and mortal sins (the mortal seven sins of pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth are held to be fatal to spiritual progress), sins of animosity to God, and finally the state of original sin which is not dependent upon an action (The Catholic Encyclopedia; also cf. Genesis 3, as developed originally by St. Augustine but refuted by the monk Pelagius). Sins of commission are expiated through a 5-step process of confession, whereas original sin is only transformed through the mystery of the Eucharist. Original sin, although an unpopular concept in many circles, can be seen psychologically as an intuition that something highly charged needs attention in the very foundation of the

human condition and as such has parallels even in the Buddhist tradition.

Buddhism is usually portrayed as having no concept of sin. While it is true that in most forms of Buddhism there is no metaphysical divinity, in practice there are many conceptions of different Buddhas which are beyond space, time, and causality, making them functionally identical with divine beings. Also, the concept of karma, while not implicating a judgmental higher being, is nevertheless a system of punishment and reward for misdeeds (or errors) both of omission and commission. This is further differentiated into a large array of behavioral precepts not unlike the *mitzvot* or Catholic list of sins (*Nirvana Sutra* and spread around the *Pali Canon*, see Nakamura, 1980). Furthermore, Buddhist texts outline the three poisons, or hindrances to the realization of one's Buddha nature: anger, greed, and ignorance (Watson, 2001). The most potent is ignorance, seen as the root of all suffering. This is the original state of mind of all humans, and is described very specifically as ignorance of the ontological truth of the emptiness of human nature. All suffering, and to put it another way, all sinfulness, is related to this ignorance. Suffering is not the same as pain, and neither Buddhism nor psychology would promise to eliminate the kind of discomfort that comes from making hard choices, or what Jung called conflicts of duty. Rather what can be changed is neurotic suffering, or to put it the other way around, neurotic suffering is often the avoidance of the authentic struggle implied by integrative growth.

The Muslim Qur'an describes also describes sin (like the Jewish and Buddhist traditions) using the error and guidance model (rather than the fall and salvation model). Sura 1:5 describes God sending a succession of prophets to lead the faithful back to the straight path. Sin is thus a kind of distraction correctable by following the examples of the prophets and of course the great prophet, Muhammad.

In all of these descriptions we see a common human experience of something being wrong, and sin locates the problem in the relationship between the personal subject and some transpersonal aspect. Sin moves fully to the psychological realm if conceived of as the description of an experience which leads away from the dominant (and usually unconscious) value in a given personality. Thus sin, radically seen psychologically as a symptom or symbol, also gives shape to a change of attitude which closes the gap between the personal subject and his or her highest value (leaving aside, for the moment, whether that value is conscious, unconscious, ideological, or individual). In other words, sin is the recognition of a projection

that is now ready for integration, as well as containing, in itself, as the direction (in symbolic form) of the integrative process.

We can see that this re-contextualizing completely changes the symptom into a complex signifier of psychological progression. An illustration of the flatness of the concept of sin when seen from a pre-determined perspective is contained in the following vignette: President Calvin Coolidge, seeking guidance, attended a sermon on sin. Upon returning, his wife asked what the preacher had said about it. The President shrugged and answered, "He was against it." Instead, the psychological dynamics of sin have a double quality, like the original sin of Adam and Eve being seen as both the cause of expulsion from the Garden as well as the beginning of some correction. The experience of a fall or expulsion can be seen as the first step in moving away from a relationship based on assumption and fusion, and toward a more nuanced and conscious position directed by the very symbol that had been called sin.

An example is found in the treatment of alcoholism. As soon as the subject becomes aware that alcohol has been having a negative effect, the projection on the substance is already beginning to change. However, rather than merely avoiding the concrete usage of alcohol, the cure is found in investigating what exactly was the change in personality that occurred when drinking was engaged (whether this is an increased level of social comfort, an interest in others, relaxation, or even aggression). It is this very change in consciousness that the psyche as a whole is pressing for an awareness of, and experience shows that it will not be satisfied (rather like a jealous god) until this change is accomplished. From the neutral, a-moral side of the psyche, there is no preference for just *how* this is done. However, from the side of personal consciousness, it makes all the difference whether the change takes place through practice and engagement or through drinking.

This double description is not far from a Gnostic view in which the beginning of the path toward gnosis is found in filth, sin, decay, and the experience of alienation (Jonas, 2001). Medieval alchemy, as well, locates the initiation of the *opus* in the experiential feces of the human condition, and for Jung the deep analytic process begins with the cast-off and despised parts of the personal psyche, the shadow (Jung, 1979).

In addition to the religious, secular, and psychological aspects, two others should be mentioned in order to highlight the multiple valences of this concept. Evolutionary anthropology has shown convincingly that religion in general and the embedded concept of sin specifically enable the identification of trusted cohorts, allow room

for the problem of de-coupled scenario building (called imagination in other contexts) and provide the economic incentives for a priestly class. From the perspective of a Lacanian critique of the subject (in many ways not different from the Buddhist, see above), the conceptual error is found in the *very idea* of wholeness or healing (Lacan, 1982). Wholeness is thus seen, like the Freudian interpretation of religion in general, as an illusion (Freud, 1989). Instead the subject is constituted at the deepest level by a lack of being which is only painfully exacerbated by collusive and ideological strategies of regaining any concept of wholeness. These strategies actually open the wound through the foreclosing of the natural flow of language.

Both of these latter approaches enable us to ask of sin: what is sin for in the dynamics of the subject? This question allows one to translate from the dogma of a religious tradition to an experiential appreciation of the concept of sin.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Islam](#) [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Skinner, Burrhus Frederic

Gilbert Todd Vance

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904–1990) is known as the pioneer of radical behaviorism. He was an avowed atheist as an adult and his ideas and methods are not generally

associated with religion. However, Skinner's work clearly shows that he was exposed to and influenced by religion and religious ideas. In his autobiography, Skinner describes the influence his Presbyterian Sunday School teacher had on his early love for learning and writing. He also recounts having a "mystical experience" as an adolescent and losing his belief in God after he did not receive additional "signs" to confirm and build on this experience.

A central idea of traditional Presbyterianism is that of predestination, the belief that an omnipotent and omniscient God has determined the fate of the universe from creation until the end of time. This theme is explicitly discussed and contrasted to the idea of free will in Skinner's novel, *Walden Two*. Skinner's radical behaviorism posits that all behavior is determined, not free. In this way, the determinism of radical behaviorism is similar to the religious idea of predestination. While he does not explicitly acknowledge such in his autobiography, it is possible and even likely that the ideas and arguments put forth in *Walden Two* were influenced by Skinner's early exposure to the Presbyterian faith.

See also: [▶ God](#)

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Smith, Joseph

Paul Larson

Joseph Smith (1805–1844) was the founder of Mormonism (cf.). He was only 14 and living with his parents in Palmyra, New York, when he became absorbed with finding out which of the various religions was the true one. The whole region was known as the "burned over" region because of the very active evangelization by preachers; a period known as the second Great Awakening of religion in America. After a period of fervent prayer in a forest grove near his home in 1820 he received a

theophany, or divine manifestation where he was told that none of the current religions were true. This is known as the First Vision. Three years later he received another visitation, this time from an angel called Moroni. He was instructed where to look for some plates which he was to recover and then translate the contents with the aid of devices known as the Urim and Thummim. The resulting book was published as the *Book of Mormon*. It claims to be the record of several waves of ancient Hebrew peoples who came to the New World by boat and the civilizations which developed from them over centuries.

From this and several other revelations he was instructed to found a church which was to be a new dispensation of the Gospel with full authority of priesthood to perform sacraments and teach the true religion. In 1830 he and several others including some family members founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), also commonly known as Mormons. The reception to this new proclamation was not generally favorable. Many thought him possessed of the Devil, others just thought he was deluded. Even from an early point in the history of the movement, word surfaced of his association with magical practices such as use of divining rods for finding buried treasure or lost objects (Brodie, 1971; Quinn, 1998). Though later attempts to sanitize his biography have dismissed these claims, there is good evidence for some involvement in folk magic traditions.

Despite critics, the LDS church grew and so did opposition. He moved his flock to Kirtland, Ohio, after a former Campbellite (Disciples of Christ) preacher, Sidney Rigdon converted along with many of his congregation. It was here that the first temple was constructed. Temples are buildings for special rites apart from the regular meeting houses. Persecution of the Church continued as many Christians found the fundamental claim of authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* as a supplementary scripture to the Bible to be unacceptable. Additional practices and beliefs articulated by Smith as Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the new Church were also at odds with orthodox Christian teachings. He rejected all previous creeds, Ecumenical Church Councils and other sources of authoritative teachings held by many Christians. In addition to the *Book of Mormon* he began compiling his revelations in a book now known as the *Doctrine and Covenants*. A third new scriptural book, the *Pearl of Great Price*, contains books whose authorship is claimed to be Abraham and Moses. These are claimed to have been translated from papyri found with a mummy which came into Smith's possession. As a result of continued challenges he moved the church to Independence, Missouri,

building a temple there and proclaiming it to be the center of Zion.

From an early period Smith supported aggressive evangelization of others. Missionaries were sent to various parts of the United States and began traveling to Europe, bringing in many converts, mostly from northern European countries. Smith moved the church to Missouri, and then after further persecution, to a city he founded on the Mississippi River in Illinois, named Nauvoo. Here, he felt, he and his followers could be secure by building a place where they could be concentrated and thereby hold political control. He founded the Nauvoo Legion, a militia, to guarantee protection for his followers. However, opposition continued and mounted. By this time the Mormon doctrine of polygamy had become widely known and the source of much additional anger from the surrounding community and the American public. Finally, in an outbreak of violence he declared martial law. He and his brother were then taken on criminal charges of treason to the jail in Carthage, Illinois. On June 24, 1844 a mob seized control of the jail and killed both Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. Several other followers who were with him were wounded but survived.

His death precipitated a struggle for succession of the church. The largest faction favored election of Brigham Young, who was then a leader of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, the major body of leadership of the church directly under the President and his counselors. Another faction supported his son, Joseph Smith III. This became known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of LDS. Young decided to move the flock deep into the far west of the United States to avoid further persecution through isolation and is now known as the Community of Christ. In the winter of 1846, the largest body moved across the river and camped in Iowa, at a place now known as Winter Quarters. From there they migrated across the plains and on July 24, 1847 entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake in what is now Utah. There Young proclaimed that “this is the place” where they could settle and found a new community.

Smith's legacy is established as a founder of a major religious movement, including both the dominant LDS church based in Utah, and several offshoots. The movement was burdened for many years by the doctrine of polygamy, which has been abandoned by all but a few fundamentalist spin-offs. The LDS Church in Utah is one of the most rapidly growing religions and is perhaps the leading example of “restorationist” Christianity, which rejects the bulk of the history of the church as clouded by apostasy and claims that one or more modern prophets

have restored the true religion. Brodie's (1971) biography was the first scholarly work which differed from the Church's official hagiography; it stimulated controversy which still reverberates today. Regardless of how one conceives of the status of the *Book of Mormon* or the religion founded by Smith, it is certainly clear that he had a prodigious capacity to formulate a new theological vision and attract followers to that vision.

See also: [Christianity](#)

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Socrates' Daimonion

David Berman

Probably the fullest description of Socrates's daimonion is in Plato's *Apology* 31c, where Socrates says:

- ▶ I have a divine sign [daimonion] from the god which... began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never turns me towards anything. This is what has prevented me from taking part in public affairs, and I think it was quite right to prevent me. Be sure, gentlemen of the jury, I should have died long ago otherwise.

One reason that Socrates's daimonion is important is because in *Republic* 496, Socrates suggests that it enabled him to become a true philosopher. This is puzzling, but is made even moreso by the fact that the daimonion does not offer any reasons, but only deters from this or that action. And yet notwithstanding, Socrates, the great rationalist, submits to it. The problem then is squaring Socrates's over-riding commitment to having reasons and his willingness to follow religiously his daimonion.

The Sources

We have two primary sources for the daimonion, the writings of Plato and those of Xenophon, another contemporary follower of Socrates. The data that we need to work from are Plato's *Apology* 31c (as quoted above), also 40 and 41, *Euthyphro* 3b, *Alcibiades* 1, 103, *Euthydemus* 272, *Phaedrus* 242, *Theaetetus* 151b, *Republic* 496; *Theages* 128–30, and probably *Hippias Major* 304 (accepting Reeve's proposal in Smith and Woodruff, 2000: 31–33.) The sources from Xenophon are his *Memorabilia*, I.1.1–9; and 3.5; also IV. 8.1 and 8.5; also *Banquet* viii.5; and Socrates's *Defence* 5 and 13.

On the whole, there is considerable coherence and consistency in these sources. Probably the biggest textual problem is the dialogue called *Theages*, which of all the Platonic dialogues contains the most material on the daimonion. The problem is that in it Socrates says that his daimonion was the dominant element in what he taught his followers. Here Socrates the rational moralist seems to give way to Socrates the man magically possessed by his daimonion, which he says "has absolute power in my dealings with those who associate with me" (129). But since it is agreed by present-day Plato scholars that the *Theages* is not by Plato, we can put its evidence to one side in this article.

Here, then, is what we learn about Socrates's daimonion:

1. It is a divine sign that Socrates had since childhood and which always turns him away from something, never directly towards anything (Ap. 31).
2. Specifically, it stops him: (1) in mid-speech (Ap. 40); (2) from leaving the changing room at the bath house (Euth.); (3) from crossing a river to return to Athens (Phaed.); (4) from initially befriending Alcibiades (Alc.) and from initially associating with Antisthenes (Xen, Banq.); (5) accepting back students that have left him (Theat.); (6) from going into politics (which he believed saved his life) Ap. 40; and also other professions (7) such as becoming a Sophist (Hippias Major) and (8) from twice worrying about or preparing for his defence at his trial (Memorabilia 148 and 491).
3. It frequently came to him and sometimes in small things; Ap. 40.
4. It was the source of one of the three accusations made against him at his trial, namely that he introduced new divine things; Euth., Ap. 31; Memo 1.
5. He believes that it was responsible for his becoming a true philosopher; Rep. 496.

6. In Rep. 496 he also says that it was unique or rare.
7. It seems to compel acquiescence; for Socrates always, as far as we know, obeys it.
8. It gives no reason, although this might be qualified by the evidence of the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates says that "just as I was about to cross the river, the familiar divine sign came to me" and adds: "I thought I heard a voice coming from this very spot, forbidding me to leave until I made atonement for some offense to the gods." - which could be taken as the reason for the sign, although hardly a sufficient, justified reason.
9. Unlike the usual divinational signs, such as thunder, birds of omen and sacrificial victims, Socrates's daimonion is not publicly observable. And although he describes it as a voice (in Ap. 31 and Def.), all his other references to it are as a sign. However, here again the evidence of *Phaedrus* might also seem to go against this, since Socrates does talk of a voice speaking to him from "this very spot," although he says that it seemed to be, or he thought it was, a voice speaking to him.
10. In the *Phaedrus* passage the sign is preceded by Socrates feeling uneasy.
11. When Socrates describes his daimonion at his trial (in Ap.31 and Def.), and especially its prescience, it provokes an angry response from his judges.

Interpretations

This, then, is the hard or hardish evidence. The question is: what does it tell us about Socrates's daimonion?

1. Perhaps the most widespread view, recently expressed by Gosling, is that "The voice of the daimonion is pretty clearly what we would call the voice of cautious conscience" (1997: 17). This fits with its subjective character and with Socrates's concern with what is right. But the interpretation seems belied by what Socrates says in Rep. 496, that it is unique or rare, for then Socrates would be saying that that he was unique in having a cautious conscience. Gosling characterization also seems at odds with the outbreak of anger from the judges, which strongly suggests that they thought that Socrates was making an outlandish claim. Seeing the daimonion as a moral manifestation also does not fit the appearance of the sign in the *Euthydemus*, where it stops Socrates from leaving the bath house.
2. Another widely held interpretation is that the daimonion was essentially an indirect manifestation of

Socrates's rationality. Among the proponents of this view is Martha Nussbaum, who speaks of the daimonion as "an ironic way of alluding to the supreme authority of dissuasive reason and elenctic argument" (see Smith and Woodruff, 2000: 32–33). What is attractive about this view and those like it is that if it were right, we would then have a way of dealing with the problem mentioned at the beginning of this article. For then there would be no fundamental conflict between Socrates's rationality and his daimonion. But this suggestion, like Gosling's interpretation, does not fit the evidence of the *Euthydemus*, or (comfortably) most of the other appearances of the daimonion.

3. A variation on (2), which also draws somewhat on (1), is that the daimonion is rational but that its conscious rational operations have become instinctive or intuitive by long use in the service of virtue. This seems to be Montaigne's proposal, that Socrates's daimonion was "a certain impulse of the will that came to him without awaiting the advice of his reason" (p. 35). But, though attractive, it also suffers from the difficulties of (1) and (2).
4. A more searching suggestion, although *prima facie* less attractive, is made by Nietzsche in his important "The Case of Socrates." This is that the daimonion, which Nietzsche describes as an "auditory hallucination" was an indication that Socrates was suffering from mental illness. I think this is essentially right, but it needs to be honed in important ways. Most important, it needs to be observed that not all mental illnesses are bad. Socrates himself is especially clear about this in the *Phaedrus* 244–5, where he speaks of the valuable things that have come from madness (mania). Also, it is not clear, despite Nietzsche's description, that the daimonion was a psychotic symptom. For unlike the classic psychotics, such as Schreber, Socrates does not believe he was hearing voices that brought him into direct contact with other persons or agents. What all the evidence (with the possible exception of *Phaedrus*) suggests is that he was experiencing (subjective) signs or urgings. Hence, if Socrates was suffering from a mental illness it is probably closer to a neurotic rather than a psychotic illness. And there is evidence that it did resemble an important neurosis, namely obsessive compulsive disorder or OCD, a condition most famously described by Freud in the seventeenth of the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* and the case of the Rat man.

The most important evidence pointing to the daimonion as a form of obsessional neurosis, is that:

1. it compels but without giving a reason; and yet the sufferer feels that it must be obeyed.
2. that those subject to such compulsions often try to rationalize them after the fact, which is what Socrates does.
3. As the obsessional neurotic very frequently believes that he, or his condition, is virtually unique, so did Socrates.
4. Having this condition gives the sufferer a sense of his importance even grandeur. Of course, in one way this does not fit with Plato's picture of the modest Socrates. But this was not how the judges at his trial reacted to his account of his daimonion. It created clamour, since it suggested that he had a special relation with a god.
5. In the *Phaedrus* it goes with or is preceded by uneasiness or anxiety. Obsessional neurosis is also frequently found in people obsessed with morality (as e.g., Zola) which was also Socrates's case.
6. It also very often takes a religious form, most famously shown in Luther and Bunyan.

Of course, in proposing that Socrates's daimonion should be seen as a form of good obsessional madness, I am not claiming that it perfectly fits. Thus we do not know that Socrates found his daimonion oppressive or unwanted. But then it isn't clear what his attitude to it was, or whether it was consistent over the many years that he had it. That he believed it divine and obeyed it does not prove that he liked having it. Another likely objection to this interpretation is that it is crudely reductionistic. In fact, this need not be the case, if we bear in mind Socrates's judgement in the *Phaedrus* that the most valuable things have come from good madness. For then, it is not religion that is being reduced to psychology, but psychology that is being raised to religion. And given Socrates's extraordinary accomplishments- i.e., becoming arguably THE exemplary wise man, even perhaps the noblest human being in history and, through his crucial impact on Plato, the guiding spirit of western philosophy- we have little or no reason to regard anything which was distinctive of him as MERELY psychological or bad psychopathology. Nor, bearing this in mind, should we even exclude the possibility that the daimonion was what Socrates thought it to be, namely a supernatural sign from a god. Seeing the daimonion as some form of good madness does not exclude that. Indeed, if anything the extraordinary character of Socrates's achievements seem to call for some such an extraordinary, paranormal explanation. The daimonion as good or divine psychopathology also offers a way of reconciling the conflict between Socrates daimonion and his rationalism: in short, that it provided the necessary safety net or veto for

Socrates's commitment to reason and rational justification, preventing him from becoming a rational tyrant as well as encouraging his rationalism by the tendency that obsessional's have for finding reasons for their compulsions, or – perhaps we should say in Socrates's case – his repulsions.

Of course, one thing that needs to be mentioned, as lying behind Socrates's unique accomplishments and between the plausibility of the supernatural interpretation and the psychopathological interpretations, was the apparent ability of his daimonic repulsions to be unerringly, providentially right.

See also: [Daimonic](#) [Plato and Religion](#)

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Song of Songs

Ingeborg del Rosario

The Song of Songs, also known as the Canticles of Solomon, is a collection of lyrical love poetry belonging to the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures or the Old Testament of Christian Scriptures. The Song's title, the Song of Songs, is in the style of the superlative, similar to other Scriptural references as “the Lord of lords,” “the God of gods,” “the Holy of holies.” While the Song has neither evident moral or ethical teaching nor any mention of God and is highly charged with passion and desire, deeply sensual and earthy in nature, by this designation, the Song is

upheld as the Song above and beyond all songs, the godliest and holiest, the greatest of all songs. Within Jewish and Christian traditions, from as early as Rabbi Aqiba (c. 100 CE) and Origen of Alexandria (c. 240 CE) Gregory of Nyssa and Bernard of Clairvaux, to the mystics Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, the Song is most commonly read and interpreted as an allegorical expression of God's agape, the divine passionate love for Israel, the chosen people, and later, of Christ's intimate love for his Bride, for the individual soul and for his Church. At the same time, while providing an analogue with which to speak of the intensity of divine love, a faithful reading of the Song, which alternates between three voices, a woman, her male lover and a female chorus, needs also to recognize its particular nature as a secular, erotic love poem. From its onset, the Song is eloquent with vivid metaphor and pulsating imagery that playfully express without inhibition or constraint the human experience of sexual yearning, desire and fulfillment:

▶ Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! (Song 1:2).

Oftentimes, the challenge lies in being able to hold together these two ways of reading the Song. Spiritual growth and closeness to the divine do not entail a shunning of the authentic human capacity to be sensual and sexual, to know pleasure, to experience the urgings of desire and the delight of its satisfaction. Development and maturity in the spiritual life does not mean a forsaking of what is innately human, a relinquishment of our embodied nature. Disembodiment deprives and alienates, rather than nourishes and ennobles, the human spirit.

The religious patient in therapy might have profound sexual shame, guilt and inhibition around speaking of and referring to the body, sexual sensations and feelings because of imbibed religious beliefs that have dichotomized and alienated the life of the spirit from felt and sensed human reality. Deep shame can hinder the knowing and trusting of the body's inherent goodness and worth, beauty, loveliness and desirability. Spiritualization as a defense often serves to protect this patient from intense anxiety around being in the body and from experiencing powerful feelings and palpable sensations as well as from having to face and work through internal conflicts around religious beliefs, guilt from the association of the body and pleasure with evil, and sexual shame. Rigid, obsessive attitudes and compulsive behaviors might develop to support and consolidate a defensive spiritualized wish for self-lessness and accompanying disembodiment. Patients might also struggle with repression or dissociation around experiences of relational intimacy and sexuality especially if there is some history of sexual trauma, abuse or trauma to the body. The fear and terror

of reawakening or reliving these traumatic experiences can keep patients numb and disconnected from their bodies, unable to feel and, consequently, unable to feel real and in themselves. On the other hand, there are patients who must deal with promiscuity or with sexual addictions and compulsive behaviors that also struggle with a form of this dichotomy between body and spirit. For these patients, there can be an obsessive, insatiable desire for the thrill and pleasure involved in these encounters, a longing that is dissociated from the human reality of the embodied love-object and their potential for a mutually intimate relationship.

A radical experience of the divine as well as an authentic movement towards wholeness and integration involve and presume an immersion in one's body and a growing awareness of the liveliness of its senses, a consciousness of one's sexual nature and robust capacity for mutuality and intimacy. The Song expresses sheer joy in the sensual: fragrant scents and aromas, the taste of sweetness and spice, the roundness of the belly, curve of the cheeks and color of the lips, the radiant ruddiness of the lover and the growing excitement that accompanies the sound of his approach, the heart-piercing desperation and frustration around his leave-taking, the exhilaration of desire and of being desired:

- ▶ How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, delectable maiden! You are stately as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its branches. Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine and the scent of your breath like apples (Song 7:6–8).

The Song touches on deeply human struggles: to take in and receive such profuse admiration of oneself and one's body; to risk physical touch and emotional connection that opens one to vulnerability and the possibility of painful rejection; to experience deep neediness and desperation for love along with the angst that comes with loneliness and abandonment; to deal with familial and cultural stereotypes that affect and distort issues of body image and physical self-care. The Song also provides a vital way of being with and in the body through which the world is known and experienced: allowing the mutuality of sexual desire and delight, palpable affection and playfulness; acknowledging that the human and communal journeys involve comings and goings, searching and finding, finding and losing, want and woo, intimacy that can be left bereft, need and satisfaction, lack and deprivation, assurance and insecurity, the yearning to touch and be touched, to hold and be held, wounding by love and fulfillment in love; recognizing that these same

dimensions are reflected in the spiritual journey and in each one's sacred relationship with the Divine.

The Song calls to a lived consciousness and embrace of the human-divine capacity for passion, yearning and oneness that is both singularly embodied and spirited, allowing each to be deeply moved and affected by the other; that is empowering, vitalizing and transformative, as audacious and bold as the woman of the Song demanding her lover to

- ▶ Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame (Song 8:6).

See also: [▶ Affect](#) [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Body and Spirituality](#) [▶ John of the Cross](#) [▶ Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#) [▶ Sex and Religion](#) [▶ Shame and Guilt](#) [▶ Teresa of Avila](#) [▶ Trauma](#)

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Sophia

Annabelle Nelson

Origins

Sophia is derived from the Greek word *sophizesthai*, (Cady, Ronanad, and Taussig, 1986) or one who is wise. Her name is also comes from the Greek work *sophos* (Cady, Ronanad, and Taussig, 1986) or to be of the same kind. An interpretation of this definition is that Sophia is contained in all of life; each life form is of the same kind as Sophia. Matthews (1991), describes Sophia as a warrior, dressed in camouflage haunting history. Similarly Schaup (1997) describes Sophia as a red thread who can be traced throughout the history of human experience.

Sophia has been defined as a deity, goddess, creator and archetype. She is referred to a many entities: a Middle

Eastern goddess; the “she” listed in the *Book of Proverbs*; the creator in the Gnostic gospels; a symbol of God in matter in Eastern Orthodox theology; the primordial Jungian archetype of all matter and life in Jungian thought; and synonymous with Paramita Prajna, the mother of all Buddhas. Sophia is the spiritual force which formed the material world, and as such her spiritual energy is in each form of creation. Because of this, Sophia can be a conduit from the material world to the spiritual essence in each life form.

Goddess

As a middle eastern goddess, Sophia’s name is associated with Barbelo (Ann and Imel, 1993) who is the mother of all the angels, as well as Jehovah’s mother. There is an entity called Sophia Prunikos (Ann and Imel, 1993) or the fallen half of Sophia who was thrown out of heaven and became a whore on earth. She experienced the dark side of the human condition, integrated this and then returned to heaven as an aeon. In another form Pistis Sophis (Davidson, 1967) was the serpent who tempted Eve. Pistis is translated as faith. As a deity, Sophia embraces all of life without moralistic judgments.

Creator

Sophia was also named as the creator in the gnostic gospels in the *Nag Hammadi* scrolls (Eliade, 1987). The name for the gnostics comes from the Greek word, *gignoskein* (Eliade, 1987) meaning to know. In the scrolls Sophia is described as a self-generating, emergent force that rippled into existence to begin creation. This story has similar features to the structure of the Jewish kabbalah, where wisdom is *hokhmah* (Seghi, 1995) and is the first manifestation of the unknowable divine energy.

The Gnostic gospels with Sophia as creator are related to Plato’s *Timaeus* (Conford, 1959). Speaking through *Timaeus*, Plato described creation as beginning with “one” or the world soul, termed Sophia by the Gnostics, and then subdividing exponentially. In all its varied forms, all matter and life still contained a piece of the world soul, Sophia.

In the *Nag Hammadi*, Sophia is beyond the opposites that define reality, and becomes a paradox that unites.

- ▶ I am the knowledge of my inquiry
and the finding of those who seek after me,
and the command of those who ask for me
and the power of the powers in my knowledge

of the angels who have been sent at my word
and of the gods in their seasons by my counsel
and of spirits of every man who exists in me (Bonheim, 1997: 216).

Old Testament

Cady, Ronanad, and Taussig (1986) says that the “she” in The Book of Proverbs, Wisdom and Baruch was Sophia. The following quotes exemplify Cady’s point (Catholic Family Edition of the Holy Bible, 1953):

- ▶ For wisdom is more active than all active things; and reacheth everywhere by reason for her purity (Wisdom, Chapter 7, vs. 24).
- ▶ For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars being compared with the light, she is found before it (Wisdom, Chapter 7, vs. 29).
- ▶ Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding; that thou mayst know also where is length of days and life, where is the light of eyes and peace (Baruch, Chapter 3, vs. 14).
- ▶ Receive my instruction, and not money, choose knowledge rather than gold, for my fruit is better than gold and the precious stone and my blossoms than choice silver (Proverbs, Chapter 8, vs. 10 and 11).

Religious Contests

A Russian orthodox mystic, Vladimir Soloviev (1978) created a theology called Sophiology in an attempt to resacralize nature. Bulgakov (1993), one of Soloviev disciple’s, makes the point that Sophia is unspeakable and unknowable but she is where the “creaturely world is united with the divine world in divine Sophia” (p. 17). Sophiology teaches that the way to become spiritual is through the material world.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Sophia is Pranaparamita, the Mother of all Buddhas (Macy, 1991). Prana is profound cognition and Paramita is translated as perfect or gone beyond.

- ▶ Freed from the dichotomies which oppose earth to sky, flesh to spirit, the feminine appears here clothed in light and space, as that pregnant zero point where the illusion of ego is lost, and the world, no longer feared or fled, is re-entered with compassion (Macy, 1991: 107).

Paramita personifies the Buddhist concept of “dependent co-arising.” All sentient and insentient life arises from the same energy, consistent with *sophos*, to be of the same kind. Paramita or Sophia symbolize the possibility of transforming the human mind to sense the interconnection of all life.

Sophianic scholars such as Thomas Schiplfing (1998) and Susan Schaup (1997) conclude that the ecstatic visionary experiences of Hildegard von Bingen and Jacob Boehme were of Sophia. Arne Naess (1992) coined the word Ecosophy to create a philosophy of aligning human life to ecological equilibrium.

Archetype

Maria-Louise von Franz, a Jungian therapist, calls Sophia the self-knowing primordial cause or the energy from “the archetypal world after whose likeness this sensible world was made” (von Franz, 1985: 155f). She also says that Sophia is the fundamental archetype or the blue print of the material, sensible world (von Franz, 1996). Woodman and Dickinson (1996) believe that humans are at the brink of a paradigm shift moving into a state where the spiritual self is the locus of development and interconnectedness will mark consciousness, or the paradigm contained in the archetype, Sophia. The search for wisdom, then, is contained in this quote: “To become like Adam and unite with the inner Sophia and become androgynous” (Eliade, 1987: 13). Sophia transcends religious, racial, tribal, national and even species differences as part of creation, and becomes a method of gaining wisdom of merging human consciousness with the world soul contained in all life.

See also: [Archetype](#) [Buddhism](#) [Eliade, Mircea](#) [Female God Images](#) [Gnosticism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Prajna](#)

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Soteriology

Emily Stetler

Soteriology is the branch of theology dealing with the study of salvation. The term comes from the Greek *soterion*, “salvation,” and is also related to *soter*, “savior.”

Soteriology relates to several other branches of theology in that it asks who is saved, by whom, from what, and by what means. It asks, as well, what the end goal of this salvation is. In Christianity, soteriology is inextricably linked with christology, for both fields centralize the significance of Christ as savior. Christian soteriology, then, developed vis-à-vis the process of defining doctrinally who Jesus is and what his life, death, and resurrection mean for humankind. While it is outside the scope of this article to give a comprehensive overview of christological developments, we may examine two christological concerns of the early church that are immediately relevant to soteriology: that Christ must be fully God, and that he must be fully human.

The issue of Christ’s divinity came to the fore in the early fourth century, when the priest Arius of Alexandria insisted that the Son, Jesus, was not coeternal with the

Father but was created by him. Jesus was the first of all creation, but created, nonetheless. He was, Arius claimed, *homoiousios* with the Father – of *similar* substance. Would Arius' position have been accepted, the soteriological implication would have been that the world's Savior would not have been one with the one wishing the world's salvation.

While the Council of Nicaea condemned Arianism in 325 by declaring the Son to be *homoousios* – of the *same* substance – with the Father, another soteriological challenge soon arose. Apollinaris of Laodicea described Christ as being fully human insofar as his body was concerned; his divinity, however, took the place of a human soul. In this instance, Christ would not be truly human; he would simply be the divine *Logos* enfleshed in a human body. Soteriologically, Jesus the Savior would be, in the Apollonarian view, one with the Father who desires the world's salvation, but unable to be identified with the humans whom he saves. The Council of Chalcedon in 381 condemned Apollonaris and his teaching. Christian soteriology, then, insists that the savior be one with both the God who saves and the people whom he saves.

Certainly, Christianity is unique in being defined by its savior, but there are savior-figures in other religions, too. For instance, some sects of Buddhism see a bodhi-sattva as helping to bring about salvation. In Pure Land Buddhism, devotees believe that the Dharmākara bodhi-sattva (also known as the Amitābha Buddha) works to help them enter the perfect land of bliss.

Soteriology, though, deals not only with the *soter*, the savior figure, but also addresses what salvation means. In Christian theology, salvation classically means salvation *from* sin and *for* Heaven. Among and within Christian denominations, however, this statement of salvation still leads to disparate understandings. Western churches traditionally have taught that Christ redeems humankind from personal and original sin; Eastern churches, however, have no doctrine of original sin. Likewise, salvation to Heaven classically means, in the West, that humans can hope to experience the *beatific vision*, seeing God face-to-face in the afterlife. In the East, Heaven has been construed differently; the emphasis has been on Christ bridging the gap between man and God so that, through Christ's saving work, the human experiences *theosis*, a divinization by which he participates in the divine life of the godhead. Heaven, then, is the fulfillment of Athanasius' axiom that God [Christ] became man so that man may become [by adoption, not by nature] God.

Like Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam has no doctrine of original sin, so Muslim soteriology focuses on salvation

for Heaven. This is accomplished primarily through faith, although some sects of Islam also emphasize adherence to the law and the need for purgation of sin.

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, salvation entails liberation from the illusions of this world. In Hinduism, it is primarily ignorance from which one must be saved; and so the process of salvation is a process of becoming aware of the illusoriness of the world, the transience of all things, and the self as an extension of *brahman*. According to Buddhism, the person escapes suffering through freeing himself from desires and false attachments to the world and the self.

Increasingly across faith traditions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, soteriology has come to be understood as having ramifications in this world as well as in the afterlife. Liberation theologies emphasize that salvation is not salvation from sin alone, but also from structures of oppression and violence. Faith communities have become more socially engaged to promote human flourishing in this life.

Commentary

In Christianity, soteriology has an undisputable relationship with sin, especially in the Western churches. From a psychological perspective, then, soteriology presupposes a state of guilt, the state in which an individual feels he has committed a violation of moral law. While guilt can be a positive impetus for change, it can also fester and lead to anxiety, depression, and despair.

Freud understands guilt as a state of disjunction between the ego and the superego. More relevant, though, is the notion of existential guilt, associated with Søren Kierkegaard, among others. Kierkegaard denies a concept of original sin that implies that humans cannot resist sinning. Rather, he suggests that humans are free, and in the face of this freedom, they experience anxiety. It is through wrestling with this anxiety that the person becomes authentically human; failure to do so furthers guilt. Ultimately, the person who does not engage his anxiety will fall into despair. Salvation in Kierkegaard's paradigm entails recognizing oneself as a sinner, culpable in one's own right, and acknowledging the need for Christ's saving work.

See also: [▶ Amita Buddha](#) [▶ Anxiety](#) [▶ Atonement](#) [▶ Bodhisattva](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Christ](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Confession](#) [▶ Existentialism](#) [▶ Fall, The](#) [▶ Heaven and Hell](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Kierkegaard, Søren](#) [▶ Liberation Theology](#) [▶ Original Sin](#)

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Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach

Lionel Corbett

It has become very fashionable for depth psychologists to speak of the soul, although there is great variation in the way they use this word. Traditionally, the word “soul” refers to a supra-sensory reality, an ultimate principle, a divine essence, or an energy that is essential for organic life, but depth psychologists have appropriated the word as a way of distinguishing themselves from other schools of psychology. Some writers use the word “soul” to deliberately imply an overlap between psychology and spirituality, or to imply depth of experience or a romantic sensibility. For the psychotherapist, the main importance of this word is that it distinguishes between everyday ego concerns and deeper levels of meaning. The word soul is also a useful term for that mysterious, often uncanny sense of presence familiar to all psychotherapists that occasionally pervades the therapy room.

According to Bettelheim (1983), Freud used the term “*die Seele*” not in its religious sense but metaphorically, to indicate our common humanity, or as the seat of human identity and uniqueness. Bettelheim believed that Freud

used this word for its psychological impact and to evoke mythological and humanistic resonances in the reader. Bettelheim suggested that Freud was aware of the spiritual nature of his work, but this awareness was ignored by his translators, and the word “soul” was deliberately excised or mistranslated as “mind” to make Freud’s work more acceptable to the scientific community. This, even though Freud thought that psychoanalysts could be “secular ministers of souls.”

Jung’s writing consistently emphasized the soul rather than the mind or the brain. In 1933, in the heyday of behaviorist attempts to rid psychology of words with a religious connotation, he suggested that the recovery of the soul is an essential task for us. Although he insisted on the reality of the soul as a principle in its own right, he used the term in various ways. Sometimes “soul” was used as if it were synonymous with the whole psyche, which for Jung is an irreducible realm in its own right. Because the psyche creates the reality in which we live, his ontological position is what he calls *esse in anima*, or being in the soul, meaning that our experience of the world is a combination of its material reality and the way the psyche or the soul imagines or fantasizes about it (Jung, 1971). This is an intermediate position between purely materialistic or spiritual perspectives – *esse in re* or *esse in intellectu*.

Jung also uses the term soul as if it were a kind of psychological organ which produces images and symbols which act as a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious. When we dream, or when we have a numinous experience, transpersonal levels of the psyche interact with human levels of consciousness. In this sense, the soul is that which allows us to link with spirit and perceive the sacred – what we know about the spirit comes by means of the soul. The soul casts the experience of spirit into emotions and images that are transmitted into personal awareness and into the body, a process known as the ego-Self axis.

Jung used the term “soul-figures” to refer to a female figure in a man’s dream (the anima) or a male figure in a woman’s dream (the animus). These parts of the psyche are particularly unconscious to the dreamer, more “other” than same-sex figures in a dream, so they bridge to deeper levels of the psyche. Today, we are reluctant to attribute specific gender qualities to the soul, because these often repeat gender stereotypes. What remains important is the soul’s function of linkage to the unconscious.

Hillman (1975) wrote of the soul as “a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint rather than a thing itself.” He points out that the soul is a way of talking about something that cannot be fully articulated. The soul refers to our capacity for imagination, reflection, fantasy, and

“that unknown human factor which makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, is communicated in love and has a religious concern” (Hillman, 1972). Hillman is fond of Keats’s (1958) notion that the world is a “vale of soul-making,” although he uses this term in a somewhat different sense than Keats did. Depth psychologists understand “soul-making” to mean the development of interiority, achieved by processing our experience psychologically, by casting our experience into words and images, seeing our situation metaphorically rather than literally, perhaps with a mythic sensibility. Arguably, however, it is the soul itself that allows us to do these things. If the soul is an a priori, supra-ordinate principle, we cannot “make” soul; to do so would imply something beyond the soul that is doing the making. It is more likely that the soul makes us, or makes us human. Our problem is to contact the soul amidst everyday life, whose activities, if understood properly, are a bridge to the soul, which makes the world and the body necessary.

Hillman makes much of the distinction between soul and spirit. He suggests that the soul is deep, moist, and dark while the spirit is fiery, light, impersonal, and ascending. This distinction may be carried too far, since at times the soul can also soar and feel dry, so it is arbitrary to attribute these qualities to spirit alone, not to mention the fact that there are many descent or earth-based spiritualities. But Hillman (1987) makes this distinction so that we do not confuse (soul-centered) psychotherapy with spiritual disciplines such as meditation, which aim at self-transcendence. For him, spirit prefers clarity and order, and is often aloof or image-less, whereas soul is about experiencing the soup of daily life, natural urges, memories, the imagination, fantasies, suffering, and relationships, much of which the spirit considers unimportant. Since only the soul but not the spirit suffers psychopathology, the soul is the proper province and the root metaphor of psychotherapy. For Hillman, it is important to distinguish soul and spirit when we are trying to understand the soul’s own logic, its suffering, fantasies, and fears, which is a different project than a metaphysical approach to spirit and its ultimates. While he is correct to point out the danger to the psychotherapist of excessively spiritualizing human concerns, it is also true that the soul has spiritual needs. When we think of soul and spirit as transpersonal processes or qualities, it is overly dualistic to separate them completely. Without actually conflating them, we can think of the soul as an extension of spirit into the body, soul as the way we subjectively experience spirit, or spirit inducing what we call soulful experience.

Other writers in this tradition use the term soul when referring to the deepest subjectivity of the individual,

especially to emotionally important experiences. “Soul” is often used synonymously with powerful emotion, especially among psychotherapists with a strong thinking function for whom emotions are numinous. Because emotion is the effect of the archetype in the body, and the archetype is a spiritual principle, soulful emotions such as love, hatred, terror, sadness, and joy are spiritually important to the psychotherapist.

As Jung (1969) puts it, the psyche contains a divine power, or the psyche is a metaphysical principle in its own right. The problem of dualism arises here, of how this essence interacts with the body, or how the body acts as an organ of the soul, which is a preferable attitude to traditional ideas that the soul is trapped in the body. For psychotherapeutic purposes, one can bracket this problem, which does not arise in the consulting room. Here one can think of soul and body as two aspects of the same reality, experienced differently because of the limitations of our perceptual apparatus, emanations of the same source expressing itself on a gradient of different levels of density.

In his seminal work on the soul, which is now rarely acknowledged, Christou (1976) points out that the proper field of psychotherapy is subjective experience, which is not the same as the brain, the body, or the mind. The soul is the experiencing subject, not the mind or the body that is experienced. Just as there is a difference between a physical object and our sense data about it, so there is a distinction between states of mind such as willing, perceiving, thinking, and our *experience* of these states of mind, what we do with them, what they mean to us subjectively. The language of reason and sense perception may vitiate the experience of soul, which is a reality of its own. Just as the body and mind develop in their own ways, so “the soul has its own developmental processes leading to psychic maturity and psychic plenitude” (Christou, 1976: 37).

For Christou, there is a difference between ordinary states of mind and deeply meaningful experiences, which are the province of the soul. Mind is the name we give to ideas and thought, but soul is the name we give to our ability to transform these ideas in our imagination. Mind, body, and emotions are *sources* of psychological experience, but they are not the experience itself – to fail to make this distinction is to confuse different levels. Our imagination elaborates our bodily states and our feelings, and the result is much more than simple conceptual understanding of an original experience. “Soul” therefore implies not just intellectual or aesthetic understanding of an experience, but our gut-level relationship to it, its effects on us, and the ethical demands of the

experience on the personality. We participate in soulful experience; we do not just impartially observe it.

The soul cannot be thought of conceptually, because it is that which witnesses thought going on; it is the matrix within which mental life happens. In spite of the claims of cognitive-behavioral approaches, behavior and ideas are of a different order than the order of the soul. There is a distinction between a science of the mind and the reality of the soul, which is not just about behavior. The realm of soul is the realm of meaning that is discovered when we look into ourselves, when we are inspired or deeply affected by music, art, ritual, relationship, nature, love or beauty, whatever really matters to us.

Mainstream psychology rejects the language of the soul because it seems too religious. The soul is impossible to study using empirical criteria; it needs its own methods of study. Dreams and spiritual experiences have no rational explanation, or they have their own rationale – they defy the inductive scientific approach because they produce something new and impossible to replicate, so they are anathema to positivistic approaches.

The word psychotherapy means attending to the soul, and the word psychopathology means the suffering of the soul. If the therapist does not work at the level of the soul, by default we work only with the ego, the sense of personal identity, and with the personal unconscious. But soul is the larger context of experience, so that the ego's attitude may be mistaken from the point of view of the soul. Therefore, psychotherapy that only supports adaptation to the environment may produce a "cure" that ignores the values of the soul. Accordingly, Christou suggests that the "proof of psychotherapeutic cures takes the form of 'testimony,' a 'witness,' rather than that of logical conclusions or empirical observations of an objective event" (Christou, 1976: 3).

See also: [Anima and Animus](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Dreams](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Psychotherapy](#)

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Sound

Laurence de Rosen

Sound is scientifically defined as any vibratory disturbance in the pressure and density of a medium (solid, liquid or gas) that stimulates the sense of hearing. It measures the ability to vibrate. Creation myths of a number of ancient religions – African, Australian, Polynesian, Tahitian, Hawaiian, Japanese – reflect the belief that matter is formed and life begins through God's sounds and tones. In Hinduism, the importance of sound, and particularly of chant, is firmly rooted in the belief that sound vibration is the basic nature of the universe, *Nada Brahman*: "Sound is God". The Sanskrit language is essentially a three-thousand-year-old science of sound. For the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, "A stone is frozen music, frozen sound." Hermetic principles tell us the universe is nothing than more an endless number of vibrations and rhythms.

Ancient ideas that sound and vibrations represent the fundamental nature of reality are reflected in the theories of modern particles physics and quantum mechanics.

Most objects, from subatomic particles to planets, have one or more frequencies at which they vibrate. Sound is widely used in modern science (notably in medicine, as in MRI and other technologies) in its re-sonance meaning, literally, re-sound for diagnosis and healing. When a sound wave strikes an object, if there is a match between the frequency of the wave and the frequencies inherent in the object, the object begins to vibrate (creating resonance). The same phenomenon applies at the symbolic level in psychology. The verb "vibrate" means "move, swing to and fro," which is precisely the

description Jung gave of the transcendent function, “the psychic function that facilitates a transition from one attitude to another.”

The word *persona* is made up of two Latin syllables: *per*, which means “through” and *sonare*, the verb for “sound.” Together they mean “sounding through, through sound,” an allusion to the hole in the mask worn by actors in ancient times, through which the voice was sounding, moving through.

In psychology, sound is a bridge between Spirit and matter. Through the vibrating energy that is sound, the invisible world can touch this physical plane. In a number of practices (ancient Egypt, Kabala, Sufism, and Buddhism) it is believed that the chanting of particular vowels sounds has the ability to connect the chanter with the energies of the Divine and with the mystery of healing.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mantra](#) [Music and Religion](#) [Music Thanatology](#) [Prayer](#) [Transference](#)

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Spirit Writing

Mark Greene

Spirit writing is a popular form of divination used in Taoist temples and folk shrines located principally in Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Mainland China. The Chinese name for this traditional method is *fujī* (扶乩). The *fujī* diviner uses a stick to convey messages from a god or a spirit by drawing Chinese words in a tray of sand or on a table. Once the character has been

identified, a second person transcribes it for later study so that the drawing area can be swept clean to make way for the next word. Although the guiding force behind the stick's movements is thought to be the god or spirit, the diviner participates in the process to the extent that he must be deemed deserving of the post by virtue of his good character. Spirit-writers generally appear to be in a mild trance and do not often show signs of overt spirit-possession.

See also: [Chinese Religions](#) [Taoism](#) [Wong Tai Sin](#)

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Spiritual Direction

Kenneth L. Nolen

Spiritual direction is the process of one person accompanying another person or persons on their spiritual journey, a journey that emphasizes a growing closer to God, the Holy, or a Higher Power. However, each spiritual director tends to have a modified or different definition of spiritual direction germane to his or her context, background, and experience. Currently Spiritual direction is experiencing a rebirth or resurgence in Christianity, and other faith traditions are discovering or rediscovering spiritual direction as well.

Spiritual direction consists of a director and a directee, or directees in group spiritual direction, that are in a process seeking out the operation and direction of God, the Divine, or the Holy in the directee's life. Although, modern spiritual direction has its root in Catholic and Anglican faith traditions, all Christian faith groups do not universally accept spiritual direction as a valid ministry or expression of faith. Many Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations believe that Christ is the mediator between humankind and God and that the Holy Spirit is the only spiritual guide needed. They fear that using

another person as a director is allowing that person to come between the directee and God. In addition, spiritual direction is not a uniquely Christian phenomenon. Witch doctors or shamans perform the role of spiritual guide in primitive cultures and many instances of spiritual guides may be found among eastern traditions. The ascetics of Buddhism, the sages of China and the soul guides of Sufism, with the guru in Hinduism being the closest to the Judeo-Christian concept of a spiritual director, are examples of other spiritual guides or directors.

Although spiritual direction may examine and highlight many issues of life, spiritual direction is not the same as its relative of psychotherapy. While an individual may need and use a combination of psychotherapy and spiritual direction, spiritual direction, although at times overlapping the boundaries of psychotherapy, is a different and distinct helping discipline. Spiritual directors use many of the same techniques such as active listening, compassion, and reflective open-ended questions that psychotherapy practitioners use, but spiritual direction encompasses a differing agenda and stated result.

Commentary

Spiritual direction and psychotherapy have many similarities but they are fundamentally different in content and intent. Psychotherapy focuses on emotional and mental dimensions such as thoughts, feelings, and moods, while spiritual direction focuses more precisely and specifically on spiritual issues such as prayer and the relationship to God and God's direction and work directly in the life of an individual. The intent of psychotherapy is not to facilitate the growth of persons in their relationship with the Divine, the Holy, or God. Modern psychology is valuable in that it gives hope that individuals can really grow and change. It helps to keep individuals moving in life and relationships, but psychology cannot assist in finding the direction that the directee's growth and change should take to facilitate their spirituality. Another major difference between psychotherapy and spiritual direction is that in spiritual direction, the director must be willing to be known in his or her vulnerability and limitations as a child of God, while the psychotherapist remains safely spiritually and many times emotionally unknown to his or her client.

However, it is important to understand that spiritual as used in spiritual direction is not the guidance of a person's spiritual activities alone nor is it particularly

directive in nature. The spiritual director is not like a dentist who cares for a patient's teeth or a barber who cares for an individual's hair. A spiritual director is concerned with the whole person including those issues of life that affect an individual's relationship with God and others. Spiritual direction spiritualizes all aspects and activities of the spiritual person's life, but modern spiritual directors do not give answers to their directees nor do they discipline them in the classic image of a master teacher and his or her learner.

Spiritual direction and psychotherapy differ in the degree of training and certification required. Therapists must graduate from an approved and accredited graduate program to meet state requirements for licensure. There are no educational or licensure requirements for one to become a spiritual director. Although spiritual directors may be ordained clergy holding advanced graduate degrees, they may also be laypersons or individuals who are spiritual directors as evidenced by others seeking them out for spiritual direction.

An effective and experienced spiritual director will acquire and use tools from the other helping disciplines as well as attending formation and certification programs for spiritual directors to contribute to acquiring the necessary skills that will contribute to their ministry of spiritual direction. Many of the same active listening and reflective skills used in psychotherapy will aid the spiritual director in hearing God's voice in all of the day-to-day noise experienced by the directee.

See also: [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Pastoral Counseling](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#)

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Spiritual Emergence

Hillary S. Webb

The term “spiritual emergence” was coined by Dr. Stanislav Grof and his wife Christina Grof, two leaders in the field of transpersonal theory, as a way of referring to breakdowns of meaning that lead to transformative growth and greater psycho-spiritual health on the part of the individual. It is, as the Grofs describe it, “the movement of an individual to a more expanded way of being that involves enhanced emotional and psychosomatic health, greater freedom of personal choices, and a sense of deeper connection with other people, nature, and the cosmos” (Grof and Grof, 1990: 34). The term *spiritual emergence* is often used in conjunction with “spiritual emergency” (also coined by the Grofs), a term used to describe a crisis state in which the process of growth and change stimulated by this “emergence” becomes so overwhelming and unmanageable that the individual is unable to gracefully return to day-to-day functioning.

From Breakdown to Breakthrough

The concept of the “spiritual emergence” is not a new one. The belief in the need to induce states of consciousness in

which the individual experiences an oftentimes frightening psycho-spiritual *breakdown* of meaning in order to achieve an eventual *breakthrough* into higher functioning is the *sine qua non* of many shamanic and mystical traditions around the world. Within these systems of thought, spiritual seekers are encouraged to disengage themselves from their ordinary state of consciousness through practices such as meditation, fasting, the ingestion of psychoactive substances, ecstatic ritual, and so on. Here, the teacher (“guru”) and community play a fundamental role in helping the individual move through the process gracefully and in a way that helps assure successful integration and transformation.

In contrast, Western psychological paradigms have historically tended to take a pathologizing approach to any mental state that deviates from what is considered “normalcy.” The terms “spiritual emergence” and “spiritual emergency” came about as a response to what the Grofs and others considered to be a failure in the mainstream Western mental health system to distinguish between psycho-spiritual healing crises and actual psychopathologies. They attribute much of Western psychology’s inability to see the positive value in transpersonal crises as the result of a superficial and inadequate model of the psyche used by clinicians and academicians, one that is limited to “postnatal biography” and the Freudian individual unconscious. Because conventional psychology is often unable and/or unwilling to distinguish between a spiritual *breakthrough* and a psychological *breakdown*, individuals going through these experiences are often misdiagnosed.

Says Oscar Miro-Quesada, humanistic psychologist and Peruvian shaman,

- ▶ As a clinician myself, I have found that about seventy percent of all socio-psychotic states are spiritual emergencies. The other thirty percent are psychopathological illnesses. But in the rest of these cases, if you help the client or the patient interpret his or her experience as a spiritual awakening rather than a sickness, they find purpose and meaning in the experience, rather than condemnation by societal norms (Webb, 2004: 13).

Identification and Diagnosis

Misdiagnosis is understandable, as many of the symptoms of spiritual emergence/emergency manifest in ways that are similar to those of chronic psychosis. Symptoms may include disorientation, disassociation, difficulty in communicating, and visual and/or auditory hallucinations.

An individual may be disturbed by physical feelings and emotions that are seemingly unconnected to anything. Some experience feelings of pressure, claustrophobia, oppression, tightness, restlessness, struggle, and even a sense of losing all reference points towards the self (Grof and Grof, 1990).

- ▶ Individuals experiencing such episodes may feel that their sense of identity is breaking down, that their old values no longer hold true, and that the very ground beneath their personal realities is radically shifting. In many cases, new realms of mystical and spiritual experience enter their lives suddenly and dramatically, resulting in fear and confusion. They may feel tremendous anxiety, have difficulty coping with their daily lives, jobs, and relationships, and may even fear for their own sanity (Grof and Grof, 1989, back cover).

Within the spectrum of crisis, there are various levels of emergency, which range from mild disorientation and fragmentation to a state in which one undergoes a complete loss of connection to ordinary reality. A spiritual emergence/emergency can occur on its own, or it can co-occur with conventionally diagnosed mental disorders that may, in fact, constitute pathology. In order to help clinicians identify some of the characteristic features of a spiritual emergence/emergency, the Grofs compiled what they had observed to be ten “varieties of spiritual emergency” (Grof and Grof, 1990), many of which are named according to the features that they share with emergences/emergencies found within various spiritual systems. These include: “the shamanic crisis,” “the awakening of kundalini,” “episodes of unitive (nondual) consciousness” (also referred to as “peak experiences”), “psychological renewal through return to the center (also referred to as “psychological renewal through the central archetype”), “the crisis of psychic opening,” “past-life experiences,” “communications with spirit guides,” “near-death experiences,” “experiences of close encounters with UFOs,” and “possession states” (Grof and Grof, 1989).

Influence on the Field of Psychology

The Grofs’ contribution to the field of psychology has been considerable. In his early studies of LSD and its effects on the psyche, Stanislav Grof constructed a theoretical framework for pre- and perinatal psychology, which mapped early fetal and neonatal experiences, eventually developing into an in-depth cartography of the

human psyche. This presented a new perspective on the healing, transformation, and the evolutionary potential of the human psyche, thus challenging psychiatry’s perspective on states typically seen as psychoses. In 1991, the Grofs’ organization, the Spiritual Emergence Network, petitioned the then-in-development DSM-IV to create a new diagnostic classification that would address issues that involve religio-spiritual content, arguing that such a category would increase the accuracy of diagnostic assessments in cases where religious and/or spiritual issues are involved. The proposal was eventually accepted. Current versions of DSM-IV now include a diagnostic category of “Religious or Spiritual Problems.” This change to the DSM-IV is considered to be evidence of an important and necessary shift in the mental health profession’s view of religion and spirituality as essential aspects of the human experience. The concepts of “spiritual emergence” and “spiritual emergency” have likewise become key components in Transpersonal Psychology, a field that considers the spiritual dimensions of human experience.

See also: [▶ Spiritual Direction](#) [▶ Transpersonal Psychology](#)

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Spiritualism

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Broadly defined, Spiritualism is a philosophical orientation that embraces extrasensory epistemologies, an all-knowing infinite God, and the immortality of the soul. With the mid nineteenth century flowering of interest in

the occult, however, the word came to signify a largely unchurched religion which espoused not only belief in life after death, but in the ability of mediums to communicate with the departed.

Most authorities agree that the movement first began in the mid-1840s in Hydeville, New York with the Fox Sisters' widely-publicized séances which attracted the attention of thousands. Mental phenomena associated with the movement include clairaudience, clairvoyance, and telepathy, while physical manifestations such as levitation, psychokinesis, table rapping, and any purported supernatural visitations, such as ghosts, are also included.

The writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and Franz Mesmer – although themselves, not Spiritualists – informed much of the movement's thought. Largely a phenomenon of the upper and middle classes, Spiritualism relied on periodicals and trance lectures for dissemination. Lacking both administrative and canonical cohesion and plagued by the constant ousting of frauds, starting in the mid 1920s, membership drastically declined. Although still extant today – both independently and as absorbed by various syncretic movements – it was never to enjoy such widespread devotion again.

Commentary

The modern spiritualist movement arose at a particularly turbulent time, the various scientific and technological revolutions of the age calling into question the very meaning-making matrices of the Occident. A novel resolution to the cognitive dissonance pervasive in Victorian culture, Spiritualism was a way to fuse both faith and faith in science, although efforts to prove its tenets using the latter's methodologies were met resoundingly with failure.

See also: [God](#) [Spiritual Direction](#) [Spiritual Emergence](#)

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Stern, Karl

Daniel Burston

Karl Stern (1906–1975) was born in Bavaria to an assimilated Jewish family, and received little formal religious education. After a profoundly alienating experience at his Bar Mitzvah, he repudiated belief in God, and became a Marxist and a Zionist. Stern studied medicine and neuropsychiatry in Munich, Berlin and Frankfurt, and underwent a somewhat unorthodox analytic training with a practitioner who blended Freudian and Jungian perspectives, but leaned strongly toward a belief in “Spirit.” During this period, he briefly immersed himself in Orthodox Jewish observance, but meanwhile cultivated close friendships with ardent Christians, who seemed to understand his religious longings even better than his own relatives. In 1936, Stern and his family fled Germany to London, where he continued his neuropsychiatric work. Two years later, he arrived in Montreal (via New York). After much study and reflection, in 1943, he finally converted to Roman Catholicism, and was baptized by Father Marie-Alain Couturier (Schwartzwald, 2004).

Stern's first book, *The Pillar of Fire* was published in 1951, and gives a vivid account of his childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, and the various experiences and events that led to his eventual conversion, including his close friendships with Jacques Maritain and Dorothy Day. Like his younger contemporary, Cardinal Jean Marie (Aaron) Lustiger, Stern was unable to understand why most Jews – including many old friends – regarded him as a traitor; a recurrent theme in the literature by “Hebrew Catholics.” From a Jewish perspective, of course, his pain and perplexity on this score are odd or disingenuous, since he was quite open about his proselytizing agenda. But regardless of how his actions were experienced and interpreted by his fellow Jews, it is important to note that converts like Edith Stein, Israel Eugenio Zolli, Aaron Lustiger and Karl Stern all worked diligently to overcome anti-Semitism in the Church, paving the way for Vatican II and for the Vatican's gradual recognition of the state of Israel in 1993.

In any case, *The Pillar of Fire* won the Christopher Award, became an international best-seller, and is full of illuminating reflections on the political-religious complexion of different Jewish denominations, the differences between Catholic and Nazi anti-Semitism, and of different currents within Nazism, Marxism and psychoanalysis.

In his next book, *The Third Revolution: A Study of Psychiatry and Religion* (1954), Stern explored the relationship between psychoanalysis and religion, arguing that the two are completely compatible. In his third book, *The Flight From Woman* (1965), Stern explored the pitfalls of (male-centered) Enlightenment rationalism, the denial of the feminine in society, and the roots of militarism and misogyny in the West, anticipating the insights and attitudes of many more recent feminist theorists who are not in the Catholic orbit.

Like Erich Fromm and Erik Erikson, who were also raised in German-Jewish households, Stern was a psychoanalyst who became a public intellectual. Like them, albeit in different ways, he addressed the relationship between science and religion, issues of gender identity, and the nature of religious experience. Stern is well known in Catholic circles as a formative influence on theologian Gregory Baum, another “Hebrew Catholic,” and a severe critic of Catholic anti-Semitism, and on psychoanalyst Paul Vitz, whose writings on psychoanalysis and faith are deeply influenced by Stern. Though he wrote from the perspective of a psychoanalytically oriented clinician, Stern’s books are informed by a deep knowledge of history, philosophy and sociology, and attest to the yearning for transcendence that persists in the midst of our secular society.

See also: [Conversion](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Stigmata

Charlene P. E. Burns

Introduction

From the Greek meaning “to prick; to burn in marks; brand” (Perschbacher, 2004). In the ancient Greco-Roman world, stigmata were the brand marks inflicted on slaves by their owners. The term is today most often associated with Christianity and refers to physical wounds, similar to those inflicted on Jesus of Nazareth during his crucifixion, that appear spontaneously on the body of a believer. The first use of the term in connection with Jesus appears in the New Testament, where the apostle Paul refers to his scars from injuries inflicted during imprisonment as “the marks of Jesus branded on my body” (Galatians 6:17); most scholars take his meaning to be that the scars mark him as belonging to Jesus the way a brand marks a slave. This is the sense given to the term in writings of early Christian theologians like Jerome and Augustine. Paul Orosius, a fifth century Spanish theologian, first used it in reference to the actual wounds inflicted on Jesus. In the thirteenth century an Italian monk, Br. Elias of Assisi, first used the word to refer to spontaneously appearing wounds marking the body of Francis of Assisi (Schmucki, 1991).

Historical Background

A few unsubstantiated instances of stigmata have been reported among Muslims in the form of wounds suffered by Muhammad during his efforts to spread Islam, and at least one Jewish case involving a young man who felt an intense identification with Jesus, but the phenomenon has

historically been found overwhelmingly among Catholic Christians (Copelan, 1975). The spontaneous appearance of wounds perceived to duplicate those experienced by Jesus is not reported in historical documents before the thirteenth century. There is some disagreement over whether the first witnessed case was that of a British man, Stephen Langton (1222) or the Italian monk, Francis of Assisi (1224). Since that time, the phenomenon has proliferated. Three to five hundred cases have been reported, with peak activity in the nineteenth (20 documented cases) and twentieth centuries (perhaps 100 or more claims). The most famous twentieth century cases were Thérèse Neumann (1898–1962) and Padre Pio (1887–1968). The majority have been Italian Roman Catholic women who experienced significant trauma (physical or mental) prior to first appearance of the stigmata. Sixty two stigmatics have received beatification or canonization by the Catholic Church, although the official position of the Vatican has been that only St. Francis' case is of clearly supernatural origin (Alonso-Fernandez, 1985; Carroll, 1987; Albright, 2002).

Generally, stigmatics experience pain and bleeding intermittently from wounds in the hands or wrists, feet, and one side. Not all experience the same number and type of wounds, not all wounds bleed, and not all are visible; so-called invisible stigmata cause pain in the hands, feet, and side without development of wounds or scarring. Appearance of stigmata tends to be periodic, manifesting at times associated with Christ's Passion (on Fridays or during Lent), on church feast days, or when receiving Holy Communion. Many report a drastic reduction in the need and desire for food, with some claiming to ingest nothing but communion wafers after onset of the phenomenon.

Religious Interpretations

For many devoutly religious people, the stigmata are a sign of sainthood granted to very spiritual men and women as a sign of God's grace. They are miraculous manifestations of divine love and a foreshadowing of the goal of faith-union with God. For the stigmatic, the experience is intensely humbling and painful. In some cases, individuals report having prayed to share Christ's suffering or spending long hours in meditation on the crucifixion before onset. St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) was very highly revered during her lifetime, but prayed that the wounds be invisible so that she could continue to function as an influential figure in papal and Italian politics. She was so highly regarded that her

head has been preserved in a reliquary which is kept on the altar of her church to this day.

Given the reverence accorded the phenomenon among religious individuals, it is puzzling that there are no records of stigmatization before the thirteenth century. One possible explanation leads us toward psychology and has to do with the fact that Christians did not commonly depict Christ's bodily suffering in art during the first one thousand or so years of the faith. The cross without Christ's body had become a symbol of the faith during Constantine's (272–337 CE) reign. In the early centuries, when Jesus' body was depicted, it was clothed in a shroud and usually without explicit signs of torture. From the ninth century forward, the body appears more and more often either naked or clothed only in a loin cloth, and with the twelfth century we see an upturn in graphic depictions of blood and suffering. By the late Middle Ages, representation of Christ in excruciating pain becomes the norm (Illich, 1987).

Scientific Interpretations

The first attempt to explain stigmata scientifically is found in Alfred Maury's *La Magie et l'astrologie dans l'antiquite et dans le moyen age* (1863). With the advent of scientific investigation during the nineteenth century, a discernable shift in status "from saint to patient" has transpired (Albright, 2002). Growing caution regarding the phenomenon is illustrated in the fact that only one stigmatic living in the last two centuries (Padre Pio canonized in 2002) has been declared a saint by the Catholic Church. The Church hierarchy's prudence regarding stigmata is a function of the difficult questions raised by scientific investigation of religious phenomena. Medically, the wounds are often labeled psychogenic purpura or auto-erythrocyte sensitization syndrome, which involves easy bruising that spreads to adjacent tissues and causes pain. This condition may be due to auto-immune sensitization or to purely psychogenic causes. Because stigmatics are most often devoutly religious and their wounds mimic those of Christ, the tendency among medical professionals is to attribute the condition to psychological factors.

In some cases, the wounds appear to have been self-inflicted. Wovoka (1856–1932), the Pauite leader of the second wave Native American Ghost Dance movement, had a vision of God during a solar eclipse in 1889 after which he preached a message of impending resurrection of the ancestors and end of white rule. He also exhibited the stigmata, which are thought to have been self-inflicted

in order to more closely identify his message with Christ. Clearly fraudulent cases have occurred often, with wounds and bleeding caused by everything from self-injury to using makeup or the concealing vials of red food coloring, animal or human blood beneath layers of false skin (Krippner, 2002). Faking of the wounds was substantiated in the case of Magdalena de la Cruz (1487–1560), a Spanish nun. Whereas Wovoka may have inflicted the wounds to achieve ideological goals, stigmatics like Magdalena may suffer from what is now called Factitious Disorder (sometimes called Munchausen Syndrome), the intentional production of medical symptoms. These sufferers have no discernable external incentives, like political or monetary gain, apparently needing to assume the “sick” role for its own sake (DSM-IV, 2000: 471–475).

Psychological Interpretation

Stigmatics have, since the mid-nineteenth century, most often been diagnosed with hysteria or hysterical conversion – somatoform disorder in today’s terms (DSM-IV, 2000: 445 or 451–452). In this condition, recurrent clinically significant physical symptoms cannot be explained by a diagnosable medical condition or as resulting from substances or intentional infliction. Pierre Janet (1859–1947) first noted that hysterics tend to be easily hypnotized and Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) discovered that stigmata-like wounds could be induced through hypnotic suggestion (Albright, 2002). The classic Freudian explanation is that stigmata arise due to sexual and aggressive urges originating in childhood (for an interesting Kleinian interpretation, see Carroll, 1987).

Freudian interpretations have been criticized based on the fact that many stigmatics suffered significant physical and/or psychological trauma just prior to first onset. One argument is that Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (DSM-IV, 2000: 309.81) may be more accurately descriptive. Thérèse Neumann, for example, suffered a debilitating back injury when putting out a fire at a neighbor’s home when she was 20 years old. Her physical condition deteriorated into temporary blindness, left-sided paralysis, inability to speak normally and lack of appetite. She was bedridden for 6 years, during which time she suffered a seizure and developed infected bed sores. Her condition dramatically and spontaneously improved on the day her namesake, Thérèse of Lisieux, was canonized. Soon afterward she had a vision of Jesus and developed an open wound on her left side, followed by bloody tears and wounds on her hands and feet. She claimed to

have ingested nothing but communion wafers for the next 36 years, and experienced the stigmata after entering a trance-like state nearly every Friday through Sunday for the rest of her life. In Albright’s analysis, Neumann suffered post-traumatic stress symptoms expressed in disassociative self-mutilation (2002). It must be said, however, that even if science can identify underlying psychological mechanisms at work in the lives of stigmatics, the sufferer’s faith that this is a spiritual experience is not thereby disproved. “The fact that an idea satisfies a wish does not mean that the idea is false” (Fromm, 1950).

See also: [Christianity](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Islam](#) [Jesus](#)

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Story as Scripture, Therapy, Ritual

Kelly Murphy Mason

Storytelling is known to be a primal human activity, a ritualized interaction between teller and listener that wove the fabric of earliest societies; yet our contemporary conceptualizations of storytelling have, like our societies themselves, grown considerably more complex and sophisticated. The postmodern impulse has had far-reaching implication across such disciplines as literary criticism, psychology, and religious studies, especially in developing greater awareness of the ways in which the collected stories that are constitutive of history could themselves be considered discrete constructions. Increased appreciation for narrative calls for an interdisciplinary approach that makes literature, psychotherapy, and religion more mutually informative in this era. Because humans are by nature storytellers, constructivist investigations into storytelling can reveal something significant about the various meanings ascribed to the human condition.

Constructivist approaches regard endlessly proliferating narratives as proof-positive of the human need for meaning-making (Saleeby, 1994). Many people's understanding of themselves and their larger culture has been shaped by the stories that get told frequently enough to become folklore. Even where meaning appears to be lacking – in needless suffering, for instance, or mass destruction – meaning has been devised through and derived from the stories people told to one another.

The Epic of Gilgamesh, believed to contain the oldest written narratives in history, had Sumerian origins dating to the third millennium BCE, predating the Homeric epics. "It is an old story," the epigraph declares, "but one that can still be told..." In fact, its ancient account of a cataclysmic flood is later retold in the Book of Genesis with the version of the story famously featuring Noah. Across cultures, stories have attempted to describe not only how the world had been created, but also how it had been reconstituted. Like Greek mythology, Sumerian mythology proffered explanations about what exactly separated the human from the godly, the mortal from the immortal, imbuing humans with ever greater self-consciousness.

Even as humans developed a deeper appreciation for the extent to which they were subject to circumstances such as earthly finitude, they also tried to exert individual

agency within those confines. The struggle inherent in this dual reality gave rise to tension that created the story dynamic, one that poses questions about whether people are autonomous creations or relationally defined, self-determining, or simply the pawns of fate. By the fourth century BCE, Aristotle had already recognized that stories tended to conform to certain poetic expectations in their imitations of reality. He catalogued three distinct genres emerging: the epic, the comic, and the tragic, with the tragic becoming the most developed dramatically.

Tragedy extends a kind of cautionary tale. The didactic functions of story find their expression not only in tragedies, but also in fables and parables. Stories seem to be educative the sense that they are generally perceived as somehow providing a moral (Coles, 1989). Those stories that give us our most memorable moral instruction come to comprise a kind of sacred scripture. Scripture presumes a moral universe that requires human participation. Scripture also presumes an arc of action that is purposeful. As narrative-based faiths, Jewish and Christian religious traditions maintain a profound historical sensibility that asks believers to consider themselves players in a larger story, namely in God's plan for the salvation of the world.

Although psychotherapy challenged the Judeo-Christian emphasis on the collective experience of a shared reality by privileging instead the role of the individual's inner life, it left unchallenged in the West a fundamentally narrative epistemology. In the early twentieth century, Freud introduced the modality of psychoanalysis through case histories recounting the life stories of his analysands. As the psychological disciplines developed, they framed case histories with a degree of clinical certainty that frequently risked an overdetermined presentation of past events standing in causal relation to present difficulties (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Yet as constructivist approaches such as narrative therapy suggest, persons struggling with significant problems frequently have problematic life scripts (Roberts, 1999). They may have unconsciously concluded that serious troubles have been scripted for them; their troubled re-enactments begin take on a ritualistically repetitious quality that leads them to play caricatured roles in their own lives. Such persons can operate with the assumption of a tragic outcome unchanged in the face of a changing cast of characters in various stages of their life. They live to tell their tales, but again and again. The more regularly these persons tell their tragic tales, the more powerfully they get reinforced as a personal reality.

Storytelling tends not to be an indifferent act. Rather, it evokes certain emotional states for purposive and persuasive effects (Ochberg, 1996). Generally, narratives

create an internal logic that must be preserved, often at the cost of curtailing scope and perspective. Stories establish what is and what is not relevant to a given course of action. They determine what knowledge is essential to right understanding.

This essentialism helps to explain why so many of the world's religious communities have established which stories will get told and retold in ritual settings by sealing a canon (Schussler, 1994). Yet there is a two-fold danger in this sealing: first, as stories grow old, they get told so grossly out of context as to be at times almost unintelligible and so are no longer heard in the same spirit as they were originally; and second, newer stories set in familiar contexts that would communicate the proper spirit in intelligible contexts may never be granted a hearing. In the Christian testament, the Pauline commandment to preserve the spirit and not the letter of religious teachings underscores the importance of appreciating the spirit of story, investigating whether it is sufficiently edifying to merit inclusion in scripture. Presumably, scripture offers healing stories that provide people a hopeful glimpse of possible resolutions to their own storied circumstance.

Sometimes sharing life stories provides persons in similar situations the promise of reparative experience by allowing positive identification with others. In recent decades, Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve-Step programs have basically provided recovering members the chance to construct a conversion narrative which they then testify to on a regular basis (Kurtz and Ketcham, 1992). Members make important corrections in what would otherwise be tales of woe by confessing all their past errors. With the Twelve Steps providing their narrative framework, they learn a new genre of life story that involves being both psychological and spiritual restored, the ultimate ends of recovery being sanity and serenity.

The potential of storytelling as therapeutic technique lies in its ability not only to provide people with an open hearing and cathartic release, but also to cultivate their awareness of the narrative structures they use to organize their existence. People can be encouraged to become simultaneously author and protagonist in their own stories, carefully crafting intersections of meaning around central themes that can be collected in a coherent self-narrative (Peacock and Holland, 1993). They can become the authorities on their lives as they are lived, recognizing the power of their ability to make choices in the present tense, shaping a storyline as it progresses.

Psychotherapy is usually a narrative undertaking, with persons telling their therapists the stories they want heard. The therapists have greater latitude in the interpretation of those stories if they recognize them as idiosyncratic

constructions as opposed to objective factual accounts. Constructivist approaches resemble cognitive approaches in their exploration of the assumed contexts, perceived motives, causal connections, and characterological attributions that are then enlisted as narrative strategies (Mishler, 1995). Recognizing the story as a strategy enables therapists to reframe situations so that alternate narrations become possible. These revisions frequently become far more serviceable than the original versions in the therapeutic process.

Narrative therapists listen for stories that have been that have not yet been told. They challenge the unitary truth posited in a dominant narrative by highlighting the exceptional instance when a problem-saturated story has minimized or excluded a unique outcome which can only be accounted for in a broader narrative framework, one that does not require the narrator to subjugate such realities for the sake of an overall expediency or intended effect (White and Epston, 1990). Instead of overidentifying with the problems memorialized in the story, the narrator is free to externalize the problematic story in order to investigate its narrative logic more thoroughly and modifying it accordingly. In this manner, the narrator achieves a degree of liberation through both narrative competency and self-mastery.

If such liberation is not possible, the narrator becomes stuck in the story and options suddenly seem to narrow. Lacking a sense of authority, the narrator is no longer able to make meaning in and through the story. Should the interests of the story as artifact start to supercede the uses of it as life script, should the story enlist the teller for its ends instead of the opposite thing occurring, the story itself become inviolate in the imagination and a rigid fundamentalism results. It is the letter and not the spirit that triumphs as a mode of instruction and ultimately becomes a method of indoctrination. Because stories deal with animated individuals interacting, they generally represent complicated formulae that generate more questions than they answer (Bruner, 2002). What makes stories useful is their ability to state problems in terms that establish clear analogies.

Story conventions themselves provide people a set of concepts that might otherwise be unavailable. Aristotle recognized that plots turn on both reversals and recognitions, reversals being primarily external occurrences, recognitions being primarily internal ones. The majority of modern literary work does not have an epic sweep; it betrays less fascination with a series of large-scale external events occurring in certain sequence, being more preoccupied with the machinations of inner processing by characters themselves. Point of view now figures prominently and

decisively. To an extent it never was before, Western literature has become psychologically minded. It has become an unmistakably humanist endeavor.

This humanist orientation does not mean that literature overlooks the sacred dimension altogether. Rather, modern articulation of the sacred tends to be grounded in a particular perspective rather than in disembodied omniscience. As contemporary sensibilities empower them as storytellers, people become more fully engaged not only as author/protagonists, but also as listeners. They research scriptures and question canons. Testing the spirit of stories, they begin to expect texts to be inspiring as well as inspired. Some old stories may no longer be told with any conviction, while some may need to be told in novel ways. Others in the canon stubbornly resist revision. Other old stories survive because they still invite the kind of participation that elicits personal identification and renewal on the part of their listeners. Such stories have gained credibility by being capacious; they enable connections to continue to be made today.

Commentary

The need for story is evident in young children, just as it was in earliest societies. Children, like the cultures they inhabit, exhibit preference for certain stories by urging that they be retold. Childish efforts to learn a story by heart, to have memorized it in its entirety through ritual repetition, imply a desire for mastery, a developmental drive to parse story grammar and discern the range of narrative elements at play. Some constructivists have posited that narrative is the primary mode humans have for giving the larger world coherence. Without narrative, humans might have difficulty locating themselves in any recognizable context or gaining any sense of direction.

Recognizing stories as fabrications rather than artifacts, people become co-creators capable of restory-ing their lives in meaningful ways. The decisions people make about how they will regard and meet life circumstance enable them to choose with intention the sort of story they will participate in, be it scriptural or secular, conventional or exceptional. They then tell stories that merit their assent and create a significant sense of community. Like psychotherapy itself, storytelling has long been considered as a shamanic practice, a method of channeling numinous energies in the service of human concerns and the greater good. With narrative awareness, constructivists intimate, people can communicate stories that express a conscious desire to heal themselves and their storied world.

See also: [Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#) [Communal and Personal Identity](#) [Epiphany](#) [Fundamentalism](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Monomyth](#) [Narrative Therapy](#) [Persona](#) [Purpose in Life](#) [Ritual](#) [Twelve Steps](#)

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Substance Abuse and Religion

Gilbert Todd Vance

Interest in the relationships between substance use and religion/spirituality has a long history. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, first published as a book in 1902,

William James commented on the relationship between alcohol use and mysticism. In 1961, Carl Jung and Bill W. of Alcoholics Anonymous famously corresponded concerning their perceived relationships between alcohol use, recovery from alcohol addiction, and the search for spirituality.

Certain psychoactive substances are associated with use by specific religions for mystical or ceremonial purposes. For example, peyote is associated with use by some indigenous people groups in North America. Kava is associated with use for religious purposes by people groups in the Pacific.

In modern research, an inverse relationship between substance use and religiosity (i.e., higher levels of substance use correlate with lower levels of religiosity and vice versa) has generally been observed across many studies. This relationship has been observed for various aspects of religion/spirituality and well as for the various levels of licit and illicit substance use. However, research has also shown that findings regarding the relationships between substance use and religion/spirituality depend on many factors. These include the specific aspect of religion/spirituality being measured (e.g., frequency of religious service attendance, spiritual practices, scriptural study), the specific aspect of substance use being considered (e.g., lifetime use, substance dependence, abstinence, lifetime risk for substance abuse), and the population being studied (e.g., adolescents, older adults, men, women). It must be noted that inverse relationships observed between substance use and religiosity are not merely a reflection of some religions' prohibitions against substance abuse. As Gorsuch (1995) has said, there is no single set of religious/spiritual norms regarding substance use. Precise research on the relationships between substance use and religion/spirituality requires specification of the various dimensions of religion/spirituality as well as the specific aspect of substance use being examined.

Because of the apparent protective effects of religion/spirituality in relation to substance use, some have proposed that the value of incorporating religion/spirituality should be considering in conceptualizing prevention and treatment programs for substance abuse and dependence. The success of spiritually oriented programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) suggests that religion/spirituality may play an important role for some persons in recovery from substance dependence. However, it is important to note that the overt spirituality of some AA groups can possibly be seen as a barrier to program participation for those persons who do not identify as religious or spiritual.

See also: ▶ James, William ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav

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Sufis and Sufism

Fredrica R. Halligan

- ▶ We are the flute, our music is Yours;
We are the mountain echoing only You;
Pieces of chess, You marshal us in line
And move us to defeat or victory. . .
(Rumi, cited in Mabley, 2002: 35)

Sufism is the mystical expression of Islamic faith. Numerous orders or brotherhoods (*tariqa*) have been formed over the centuries, many following well-known spiritual leaders (*shaykhs*). Best known in the West is the Whirling Dervishes or Mevlevi, a path of which Rumi was the founder. Jalal al-din Rumi (1207–1273 CE) was born in Persia and settled in Konya in present-day Turkey. His poetry speaks eloquently of love and surrender to the Divine One, and especially of the longing for mystical union (Rumi, 1975). The aim of the Sufi is to perfectly reflect the image of God in one's heart, thus to achieve union with the Divine. For two years, Rumi's closest soul-mate was Shams-i Tabrizi, and after the unexpected departure of this companion, Rumi's grief was expressed passionately as "the dance of the spheres" in which whirling motion served to heighten altered states of spiritual consciousness (Trimingham, 1998). In his longing for Shams, his spiritual companion, Rumi wrote some of his most potent poetry. For example, the longing of the soul for God:

- ▶ O, make me thirsty, do not give me water! Make me your lover! Banish my sleep! (Mabey, 2002: 21).

Likewise, the willingness to surrender to the Divine One:

- ▶ My heart has become a pen in the Beloved fingers. . . The pen says, 'Lo, I obey, for You know best what to do.'

Of Rumi it is written:

- ▶ Thus the primary goal of the Sufi is to transcend or “naught” the self or ego, which acts as a barrier or “veil” between the human heart and God, distorting our perception of reality and inhibiting our capacity to mature to our full “selfhood” in which we perfectly reflect the attributes of God. The focus is therefore on turning the soul to God; on becoming God-centered rather than self-centered; on the spiritual rather than the material, transitory world; and on inner, spiritual change rather than on the external reality of worldly status and wealth (Mabey, 2002: ix).

Sufi Asceticism

Asceticism and a life of renouncement were highly valued spiritual approaches among the Sufis in the medieval period. Many of the early Sufi ascetics were quite extreme in their behavior. Some Sufi ascetics became hermits and wandered around naked or formed communities that used mind-altering substances such as alcohol, cannabis or hashish. They also followed Islamic law assiduously, fulfilling spiritual duties including prayer, ritual, fasting, cleanliness of body and spirit.

Sufi Mysticism

Ibn ‘Arabi (1165–1240 CE) was one of the most articulate of the theologians of Sufism (q.v.). As he pointed out, all Sufis commit themselves to become lovers of God. In Islamic tradition, the ninety-nine beautiful Names of God all refer to the One. So they may describe God, in terms of many attributes, as: The Merciful, the Just, the Wrathful, the Powerful, the Active, the Creator, the Author, the Form-Giver, the Bestower, the Patient, the Separator, the Sustainer, the Wise, the Stability, the Keeper, the Gracious, the Forgiver, the Experiencer, the Self-Sufficient, the Encompassing, the Hearing, the Seeing, the Subtle, the Beloved, and so forth. All Names refer to the One who is God. And that God is infinite Love, infinite Compassion, a feeling-full Person who desires to be known. Following the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammed (the *Hadith*). Ibn ‘Arabi wrote that God’s Mercy is greater than God’s Wrath. “His Mercy encompasses everything existentially and in principle. . . . The Mercy of God flows in [all] created beings and courses through the selves and essences” (Ibn ‘Arabi,

1980: 224). In fact, says Ibn ‘Arabi, Mercy is inherent in all creation. Not only things and people but also experiences are created by Mercy. Even the experiences we would rather avoid: “Know that Mercy is inherent in all creativity, so that, [even] by the Mercy bestowed on pain, pain was created [brought into existence]” (Ibn ‘Arabi, 1980: 224).

In Ibn ‘Arabi’s psychology, he divides humans into three classes: (1) the disciples of the *science of the heart*. . . the mystics, and more particularly the perfect among the Sufis; (2) the disciples of the rational intellect. . . the scholastic theologians; (3) simple believers.” The Sufis are disciples of heart; the theologians are disciples of intellect. Never the twain shall meet. For simple believers, he holds out more hope: “Under normal circumstances a simple believer can develop into a mystic through spiritual training; but between mystics and rational theologians there is an unbridgeable gulf” (Corbin, 1969: 230). What Ibn ‘Arabi is saying is that essentially we are all blessed. Because of the blessing of our imaginative function, we are at least potentially capable of receiving the theophanies of God. These glimpses of God manifesting to humanity occur definitely, but rarely, for ordinary folk. They occur hardly ever, or are ignored by, intellectualizers who only believe what the rational intellect dictates. But for the prophets, the Sufis, the Shi’ite saints, the mystics, the door is more widely open to receive the frequent glimpses and the revelations of the Divine. Furthermore, one can cooperate with the Divine Intent by making oneself more capable of receiving these Manifestations. This is done through spiritual practices and especially through the loving prayer of the heart (*himma*).

Today, in working therapeutically with spiritually-oriented clients, we can see that Ibn ‘Arabi’s insights into the difference between heart and intellect can profoundly inform our understanding of passion versus thought in providing access to spiritual growth and development. Creativity itself is “attributed to the heart of the Sufi. . . here *himma* is defined as the ‘cause’ which leads God to create certain things, through *himma*, strictly speaking, creates nothing” (Corbin, 1969: 227). This is the power of prayer. As Ibn ‘Arabi says, *himma* is “a hidden potency which is the cause of all movement and all change in the world” (cited in Corbin, 1969: 228). When we yearn, as the Sufi does, for God and for His Mercy, and when we surrender to God’s Will, then the prayers are heard and the Divine response is according to our best interests.

See also: [👉 Ibn al- ‘Arabi](#) [👉 Islam](#)

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Sullivan, Harry Stack

Melissa K. Smothers

Harry Stack Sullivan (1892–1949) was an American psychiatrist who developed a theory of psychoanalysis which focused on the importance of interpersonal relationships. He grew up in New York State, the son of an Irish-American farmer. His childhood was an impoverished one, in which the Sullivan family often had financial difficulties. Sullivan also may have been isolated at times from other boys during his early years and experienced some degree of loneliness during his childhood. He was brought up in the Catholic faith, but left the church in his adulthood. Sullivan went on to study medicine at the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery and received an M.D. degree in 1917. It was during medical school that Sullivan first studied psychoanalysis, as well as entered into his own analyses. In the 1920s, Sullivan worked with schizophrenic patients at the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital in Maryland, which inspired him to reevaluate the current approach in working with this population. He used specially trained ward attendants to work with patients in order to provide them with peer relationships that Sullivan believed the patients had missed during the latency period of development. It was during this time that Sullivan worked closely with William Alanson White, who was interested in the influences of social sciences on psychiatry. White, along with Adolph Meyer, was looking to explain mental illness in more than just physical terms.

Sullivan viewed his patients as being acutely aware of other people, and in order to understand a patient's psychopathology, it was important to view the interpersonal field of the patient as well. He branched out from the typical Freudian approach of the time and began to conceptualize patient's distress as more interactional than intrapsychic. Sullivan asserted that human personality and behaviors are created in interactions between individuals, as opposed to something that resides within the individual. This approach of viewing the patient within the context of others was profound at the time and Sullivan believed one must focus on the past and present relationships of the patient in order to fully understand the individual.

In 1929, Sullivan left Maryland and moved to New York City, where he began work in private practice of psychoanalysis and psychiatry. He did much to advance the study of psychiatry in the 1930s. Following the death of White in 1933, Sullivan and some of his colleagues, established the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation. The foundation was originally developed to train psychiatrists in both traditional medical education, as well as the influences of sociocultural factors. He also founded the journal *Psychiatry* in 1938, which he edited until his death. In 1941, Sullivan left clinical practice to work as a consultant to the U.S. Selective Service Commission, which was attempting to improve the psychiatric evaluations of draftees. This experience assisted in the development of a series of lectures, which was published posthumously as *The Psychiatric Interview*. After World War II, Sullivan participated in international mental health seminars and organizations and in 1948, was active in developing the World Federation for Mental Health. He died unexpectedly in Paris, France in 1949 of a cerebral hemorrhage. Sullivan's work in examining interpersonal relationships became the foundation of interpersonal psychoanalysis, a school of psychoanalytic theory that focuses on the detailed exploration of the patients' patterns of interacting and relating with others. Sullivan, along with Clara Thompson, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Erik H. Erikson, and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, laid the groundwork for understanding the individual patient based on the network of the patients' relationships. Sullivan was also the first to introduce the concept of the psychiatrist as a participant observer in therapy. Sullivan acknowledged that the psychiatrist understanding of the current therapeutic interaction stems from his own past experiences. He taught that the psychiatrist must be aware of countertransference feelings within himself. Sullivan credited three well-known therapists with significantly influencing his psychiatric approach: Sigmund Freud, Adolf Meyer,

and William A. White. While Sullivan never met Freud, he was an avid follower of his writing and credited him with his fundamental orientation. Meyer helped Sullivan to view mental illness as a dynamic pattern of behavior and White assisted him with the practical aspects of therapy. Although Sullivan published little in his lifetime, he influenced generations of mental health professionals and therapists; many of his ideas and writings were collected and published posthumously.

See also: [▶ Erikson, Erik](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Relational Psychoanalysis](#)

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Sunyata

Paul C. Cooper

Sunyata is the Sanskrit term, which has been translated into English as “emptiness or voidness.” Along with *pratityasamupadha* (dependent-arising, dependent-origination), sunyata constitutes the foundational cornerstone of Buddhist phenomenology. By emptiness or voidness, Buddhists mean that all phenomena are empty of, lack, or are void of any “own,” inherent, permanent or separate existence. All phenomena arise dependently contingent on causes and conditions. Sunyata has been confused with nihilism. This incorrect view has been criticized by both Asian and American Buddhist scholars (Abe, 1985; Hopkins, 1983). On the contrary, Buddhist scholars describe both nihilism and materialism; being and non-being, as dualistic and as a misguided delusion. For example, D. T. Suzuki notes that: “When the mind is trained enough it sees that neither negation (niratta) nor

affirmation (atta) applies to reality, but that the truth lies in knowing things as they are, or rather as they become” (1949: 143).

American psychologists have also addressed this point of misunderstanding and have raised important implications for psychotherapy. For instance, Jack Engler gives an example of the potential misuse of the notion of sunyata among American students of Buddhism. He writes that: “Students may mistake subjective feelings of emptiness for ‘sunyata’ or voidness; and the experience of not feeling inwardly cohesive or integrated for ‘anatta’ or selflessness” (Engler, 1984: 39). The complimentary teaching of non-attachment, is then often misunderstood, according to Engler “. . . as rationalizing their inability to form stable, lasting and satisfying relationships” (Engler, 1984: 37).

Mark Epstein (1989) draws attention to the distinctions between the experience of emptiness associated with depression and that requires treatment and emptiness as a core Buddhist experience and religious principle.

See also: [▶ American Buddhism](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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Super-Ego

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The basic theory of the development of the super-ego, according to psychoanalytic theory, can be summarized briefly: The child is punished by its parents, either

physically or by the withdrawal of love, for indulging in certain behavior, and later experiences anxiety when it does so because of anticipated punishment. The child identifies with the parents and wishes to be like them and conform to their demands. Parental requirements are internalized and the child now feels guilty even if the parents are absent. The psychological structure which represents the parental demands is called the super-ego. In the superego has two parts: The unconscious conscience and the conscious ego-ideal.

The conscience, the bigger part, is harsh and irrational, because aggression towards the parents is redirected to the self; this is particularly likely to happen when the parents are kind, but frustrating in subtle ways. When physical punishment is used, children feel more able to express their frustration in outward aggression.

Psychoanalysts have postulated that the conscience part of the super-ego is projected on to the image of a God. This super-ego projection helps to maintain the adult's typical balance between desire, morality, and action. It may be that the internalization and formation of conscience occur with the image of God serving as a "portable punisher." B. F. Skinner observed that an "all-seeing God" is uniquely effective, because escape from the punisher is impossible. In the search for self-control, external supports are often utilized. This psychological reality is reflected in the familiar philosophical debates about whether morality is at all possible without belief in God, and in many cultures, religion is identified with law and morality.

The super-ego is likely to come into conflict with instinctive desires, particularly sexual and aggressive desires. This conflict is resolved or relieved by projection of the super-ego which now appears as God. For example, the super-ego can be projected on to a doctor, teacher, leader or priest; the repressive demands of the super-ego are then thought to be prohibitions imposed by the person in question, who is felt to be coercing and looking down on the subject. In J. C. Flugel's formulation a more radical type of projection is postulated, in which the super-ego is projected on to the Universe as a God, and the instinctive desires similarly as the Devil. Alternatively, the instinctive desires can be projected on to groups of people such as Jews or Africans who are then thought to be highly sexed and aggressive. The gains for the individual are that the conflict is reduced through being no longer an inner one, while he feels that he can deal with the situation by overt action, instead of by changing himself. The presumed role of religion in impulse control is highly relevant to test this hypothesis. Findings on the effects of religion in controlling aggression, sex, drug use

and in promoting pro-social behavior are relevant to this hypothesis.

Related to the notion of super-ego is the function of religion in relieving guilt feelings. Several psychoanalytic writers have discussed the function of religion in relieving guilt feelings, interpreted as the direction of aggression towards the self, and there is evidence that it is connected with internal conflicts between the self and the ego-ideal or the conscience.

See also: [Ego](#) [Id](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Shame and Guilt](#)

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Surrender

Fredrica R. Halligan

Surrender (and/or taming) the ego is an important theme in the mystical traditions of all the major world religions. In the Sanskrit, *saranagathi* connotes personal surrender in terms of acceptance of the Divine Will and devotion to God. It is *not* meant as surrender to another human being, nor as relinquishment of one's own intellectual discrimination. Like asceticism (q.v.) surrender fulfills the spiritual purpose of renouncing the cravings of the ego.

Psychologically, ego is important. According to Jung, ego is built up in the first half of life and performs very necessary functions as center of the conscious psyche. Spiritually, however, there comes a time when ego, with its many desires and propensity to control, must let go of the reins. As the slogan in the 12-step programs articulates it, the essence of the surrender process is to "Let go and let God." Mystics in all of the world's religions have found that higher spiritual states cannot be reached until ego-control is surrendered; the illusion of separation is renounced; and one's actions are dedicated to God, leaving the results in God's hands. This attitude implies acceptance of all aspects of life as they emerge, while continuing to strive to live a virtuous life, according to one's conscience.

See also: [▶ Asceticism](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Twelve Steps](#)

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Swamis

Nicholas Grant Boeving

One of the more ubiquitous word acquisitions from Sanskrit, its meaning can roughly be translated as “he who knows and is master of himself” – or *herself*, as the case may be, for swami is an honorific designation for men as well as women. Often indicative of one who has chosen the path of renunciation, it is more often than not attributed to someone who has achieved mastery of a particular Yogic system or demonstrated profound devotion to a god or gods. While there are a multitude of lineages, with a dizzying array of beliefs, perspectives, and loyalties, swami is a pan-traditional designation that tends to mean, simply, “master.”

Perhaps the most well known representative of Indian religion in the West to bear this moniker is Swami Vivekananda. The chief disciple of the Bengali saint and mystic Ramakrishna the man born Narendranath Dutt, was one of the early mediators between the religious traditions of the Occident and Orient, appearing before a spellbound audience at Chicago’s World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893. Vivekananda was instrumental in the founding of the Ramakrishna Order, one of the earliest Vedantic monastic sects to emerge in the West.

Continuing Vivekananda’s legacy of spiritual translation to the West was Swami Nikhilananda. Born Dinesh Chandra Das Gupta was instrumental in the founding of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York. He, like Vivekananda, was integral to the process of bringing Eastern spirituality to the West, translating many Hindu holy texts into English, among their number

the *Bhagavad-Gita* though perhaps his greatest contribution was the translation of *Ramakrishna Kathamrita* from Bengali into English published under the title *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* in 1942.

The aforementioned religious figures were integral to process of translating Eastern spirituality to West. The Occidental appropriations that naturally unfolded often used psychological concepts and language in making sense of the unfamiliar semantic terrain. The onus of this re-interpretation lay on the first generation of Westerner’s to encounter these figures who were part of a larger cultural process of psychologizing religion that continues to this day.

See also: [▶ Bhagavad Gita](#) [▶ Hinduism](#)

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Symbol

Sharn Waldron

According to Carl Jung the development of consciousness has meant that within the psychic processes of civilized humanity there is a capacity for reflection upon the differentiation between psychic and external reality, a capacity which is unknown to the instinctive mind of the primitive. Because of this the psychic system of civilized humanity engenders difficulties that traditional societies never experience. In traditional societies there is no differentiation between psychic and physical reality. The primitive’s relationship to the world is one of “participation mystique” that is, the primitive projects his unconscious onto the external environment. Jung writes:

- ▶ The fact that all immediate experience is psychic and that immediate reality can only be psychic explains why it is that primitive man puts spirits and magical influences on the same plane as physical events. . . . In his world, spirit and matter still interpenetrate each other. . . . He is like a child, only half born, still enclosed in his own psyche as in a dream (Jung, 1934: par. 682).

For the civilized human being the primitive's way of existence is no longer a valid option. Because of the development of consciousness the unconscious is no longer projected onto the external environment.

Jung writes:

- ▶ The psychic life of civilized man, however, is full of problems, we cannot even think of it except in terms of problems. Our psychic processes are made up to a large extent of reflections, doubts, experiments, all of which are completely foreign to the unconscious, instinctive mind of primitive man. It is the growth of consciousness which we must thank for the existence of problems; they are the Danaan gift of civilization. It is just man's turning away from instinct – his opposing himself to instinct – that creates consciousness (Jung, 1954: par. 388).

The primitive psychic life is concrete and symbolic at the same time. As a consequence he can speak of having a totem: a bush brother, or see himself as being a relative of the crocodile who protects him and whom he protects.

By contrast, conscious reason always seeks to find answers, to resolve apparent opposites. It takes a stand, assuming that a logical, understandable and containable answer exists. It can do this because reason is perceived as an unchanging essence. This perspective renders any symbolic view of itself redundant. Objectivity is seen as an inevitable and attainable concomitant of reason. Knowledge is defined by the interest we have in knowing it. For civilized society, knowledge is about controlling the environment, managing its vagaries for the sake of greater prosperity and security. However, reason is always relative and the concept of an unchanging essence of reason is an illusion. Reason, like the totem system, is a means to an end, a symbolic expression, although different in substance to the symbols of the primitive, of a transitional step in the path of development (Jung, 1954: par.47).

For Jung the psyche of both primitive cultures and children are closely connected to the unconscious. It was Jung's view that consciousness began in childhood and developed out of the unconscious. "One can actually see the conscious mind coming into existence through the gradual unification of fragments" (Jung, 1946: par. 103). This process is comparable to the evolutionary process of

humanity that Jung regarded as the evolutionary development of consciousness. He writes:

- ▶ Consciousness is phylogenetically and ontogenetically a secondary phenomenon. . . . Just as the body has an anatomical pre-history of millions of years, so also does the psychic system. And just as the human body to-day represents in each of its parts the result of this evolution, and everywhere still shows traces of its earlier stages – so the same may be said of the psyche. Consciousness began its evolution from an animal like state which seems to us unconscious, and the same process of differentiation is repeated in every child (Jung, 1977: 381).

The child lives in a world which is understood through the primal relationship with the mother. This relationship is one of "participation mystique." The world for the infant is the mother's body world. The infant has no initial perception of itself as a separate being. With physical touch and stimulation the infant begins to encounter physical realities which stimulate its sense of being and otherness. Therefore, when a child expresses the desire to take, to grasp, to eat, it is attempting to explore and understand the world, and it is in this process that differentiation begins.

Jung argues that if human beings lived by instinct alone, consciousness would be achieved by biological growth and ageing. This is not, however, the experience of all human cultures. It is evident in Jung's analogy of cultural development with early childhood development that Jung, being a creature of his time, perceives culture through the lens of social Darwinism and his language is reminiscent of early Australian explorers who spoke of the Australian Aboriginals as a "child race" (Waldron and Waldron, 2004).

Nevertheless, Jung's contention that intention and determination cannot accomplish psychic development is valid. Psychic development needs symbol to express and grasp realities beyond the scope of consciousness if it is to cognitively apprehend and develop those realities.

The unconscious, out of which symbols emanate, is unknowable and cannot be brought to consciousness because its content would overwhelm the conscious mind. It needs the mediation of symbol.

- ▶ A symbol expresses those aspects of the psyche that are differentiated and primal, conscious and unconscious, good and evil; the psychic opposites. Whenever such a symbol spontaneously erupts from the unconscious, it dominates the whole psyche. The symbol is a conduit by which the energy generated from the tension of opposites is channelled so that the psyche can move forward (Jung, 1948: par. 25).

Jung conjectures that the language of all human beings is full of symbols (Jung 1964: 3). For Jung, symbols are language or images that convey, by means of concrete reality, something hidden or unknown. They have a numinous quality only dimly perceived by the conscious mind. These symbols can never be fully understood by the conscious mind. In symbols, the opposites are united in a form that is “never devised consciously, but [are] always produced out of the unconscious by way of revelation or intuition” (Jung, 1964: 48).

The function of a symbol is both compensatory and integrative. It is compensatory in that it illuminates something that belongs to the domain of the unconscious. It compensates for that which is hidden from our conscious. It is integrative in that it is a union of opposites, holding in tension the different aspects of the psyche.

Jung posits individual and collective symbols. Individual symbols are peculiar to individuals. They arise out of the individual’s personal unconscious and, as a consequence, have little or no meaning to other individuals. Collective symbols are psychic images that arise out of the collective unconscious of a group, tribe, culture or nation. As such, they possess a functional significance for the community.

For a cultural symbol to be dynamic it must relate to an unconscious factor that the individuals within that culture hold in common. For the symbol to be relevant to a culture it may appear to need to have a functional meaning and this may be seen to contradict the argument that the symbol only needs to relate to unconscious factors. However, the function of meaning will have significance only because its perceived social function is based on a significance that is apprehended and given value by means of the collective unconscious. The more immediate a symbol is to the unconscious reality common to the collective, the greater the effect on that society.

Jung also perceives a “religious function” operative in the psyche, an instinctual drive for a meaningful relationship of the personal self to the transitional source of power, the reality represented by the symbol. This instinctual drive manifests itself in the spontaneous production of religious symbols or “god images.” God images are characterized by their central function, to reconcile the opposites within the psyche. In order to creatively engage with a god image it is not required to solve the clash of inner opposites but rather to work with the symbol, to explore its parameters. As we come face to face with the dark side of God, masculine and feminine, we are more able to come to terms with our own dark side and contra-sexual aspects (Jung, 1977: 367).

This transcendent function of the symbol enables a transition from one psychic state to another. Thereby, the drive for religion seems to urge the full development of the individual.

The religious symbols thus generated, become symbols of totality. The god image is an archetype and as such is a source of inexhaustible meaning and intelligibility. It has a numinous quality and cannot be explained or verified through rationale. Because the god image is a symbol it can never be reduced to its subjective origins. Like all symbols, the god image emerges spontaneously from the unconscious and is independent of an individual’s religious convictions.

The god image functions as a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious. It is a union within the psyche of male and female, good and evil and all other opposites. It is comprised of unconscious and conscious components and is an essential element in the process of individuation. The goal of the process of individuation is the birth of the Self. The Self is symbolized by the mandala, a mystical circle expressing the totality of the individual. The god image is a reflection of this psychic truth.

It seems evident that there are times when the god image ceases to be an integrative image through which the individual or culture moves towards wholeness. The potential exists for the shadow to be suppressed so that a split occurs in the psyche.

When this happens it is possible for the shadow to erupt in symbolic form. The resultant god image is not integrative but rather expressive of the shadow and suppression of aspects of the psyche. Manifest abuse of power and suppression of minorities and the defenseless elements in society or adjacent societies will demonstrate the non-integrative nature of such a split in the god image.

See also: [Archetype](#) [Consciousness](#) [God Image](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mandala](#) [Participation Mystique](#) [Self](#) [Unconscious](#)

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Synchronicity

Frances Campbell

As a practicing psychoanalyst, Carl Jung became aware of a process of meaningful coincidence between physical events and the subjective states of his patients. He termed this phenomena *synchronicity* and he came to believe that the acknowledgement and utilization of synchronous phenomena was a valuable tool in the process of understanding and interpreting the expressions and manifestations of the psyche.

The concept of synchronicity is part of a conceptual triad which Jung conceived of as essential to the understanding of the experience of the psyche. The first element is causality, best understood through Freud's ideas of how libidinal energy is managed within the psyche. Repressed energy in one area is likely to express itself in another form in order to be released. In this way the psyche maintains a balance of libidinal energy which becomes converted in response to the principles of cause and affect. Jung broadened this concept into the idea of a more generalized psychic energy. He imagined that the expression of this force is particular to the unfolding of the individual psyche. From this emerged a *teleological* view, in which the psyche contains within itself the potential for self actualization. This forms the second of Jung's developmental triad. This teleological potential for expression is contingent upon opportunities that encompass causality as well as the element of serendipity. Without supporting circumstances, the germ, that is the potential of the self, may never have the opportunity to develop. It is here that synchronicity plays a crucial role. The element of chance may enhance or eliminate opportunities for actualization of the self. Synchronicity, or meaningful chance, can be defined as a seemingly significant coincidence in time and space of two more events that are related, but not causally connected. An image, thought, fantasy or symbol presents itself to consciousness and this is reflected in a meaningful external event that appears to have no causal connection. Synchronicity, then, is the third principle by which the experience of the psyche may be understood or interpreted. Jung considered that a law of synchronicity might contrast with the physical law of causality. Causality propels the objective world, while synchronistic phenomena seems to be primarily connected to conditions of the psyche or processes in the unconscious. Synchronicity takes the coincidence

of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely a particular interdependence between objective events with the subjective state of the observer.

Jung's exploration of this concept was based on his belief that an emphasis on the rational aspects of consciousness results in a one-sided view of the psyche. This inhibits understanding of the unconscious and its expression through dreams, fantasy and other non-rational experiences. Synchronicity, as a correspondence theory in which inner events occur simultaneously with exterior events, is a reflection of a deeper perspective found across cultures in which there is the philosophical perception that parts are not only aspects of the whole but reflections of it. That is, the microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. For example, Jung recognized this concept as an aspect of early Taoist Chinese thought. Synchronous events may be generated through the activating of archetypes. These are unconscious preexistent primordial images that yield believed to be a part of the deep structure of the psyche and shared collectively and therefore might be a creation of the collective unconscious, and perhaps even the psychoid strata. The psychoid strata can be equated with a generative yet undifferentiated source that undergirds the collective unconscious. When archetypes are experienced by an individual they are often expressed through dreams and fantasies or through a conscious process Jung applied in his practice called "active imagination." In this process special attention is given to the appearance of archetypal material, and the impact of its presentation on the psyche of the individual. An archetype can act as a mediator between the macrocosm that characterizes the collective unconscious, and the microcosm which is the individual expression. The value of attention to synchronistic phenomena, then, lies in its ability to illuminate a dimension of the psyche that cannot be reached consciously. For Jung, the fullest potential of the human psyche lies in the integration of unconscious material, both personal and collective, into consciousness. This assimilation expands the individual psyche towards a fuller degree of awareness, or a conscious experience of wholeness.

Because synchronicity may seem to involve the observed as well as the observer, there two possible ways to view synchronous events. In the first there is a relationship between events that can be observed objectively. In the second, synchronicity involves the participation of the observing psyche which in some way becomes reflected in the objective material. In this case synchronicity becomes a type of psycho physical parallelism.

Expressions of Synchronicity

Two forms of synchronous expression most commonly experienced are, 1) the perception that the internal reality of the psyche is being externally manifested in the world through an experience or event. This may take the form of a) a dream, vision or premonition of an experience that has not yet happened, b) two or more external events that appear to be meaningfully, but not causally related.

Synchronous expression appears to serve a significant, if not urgent, purpose, which is to bring attention to a perception or perspective that is needed for the development of the psyche. Synchronous experience may be urgent in presentation, acting as a signpost to bring awareness to the psyche of a situation or state that is in need of attention. In contrast, it may be initially veiled, allowing an idea to be presented to the receiver in a form that will not overwhelm the conscious mind, but allow it to assimilate indirectly. Regardless of presentation, it would seem synchronous phenomena serves to bring to conscious awareness concepts of value for self development.

See also: [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Syncretism

Valerie DeMarinis

The term “syncretism” has had different denotations and connotations over time. In current usage in anthropology and religious studies it generally refers to a mixing of elements from different religious systems or traditions.

From the perspective of many religious leaders, such a mixing is often viewed as a negative process, as an abandoning of true religion. From the perspective of many anthropologists, psychologists and professionals of other academic disciplines, religious syncretism may assist in a positive acculturation process, whereby elements of different systems emerge in a new format allowing an integration of ideas and behaviors. It is important to bear in mind that whatever example of syncretism is in focus, it always takes place in a psycho-cultural and socio-political context and therefore the psychological effects of such need to include those levels of analysis. Though a central historical concept, globalization as well as the challenges of voluntary and forced migration have given birth to a re-examination of religious syncretism. As Greenfield and Droogers (2001) point to, there is a re-emergence of the concept as a tool for understanding such complex phenomena as ethnicity, postcolonialism and transnationalism. Three examples of religious syncretism are presented here. They are drawn from different cultural contexts and illustrate the complexities for understanding syncretistic systems and behaviors and their varying psychological effects.

Example 1: Syncretism as an Act of Survival

Drawing upon his fieldwork in Afro-Brazilian religions, the French ethnologist Roger Bastide (1978) has emphasized two aspects for historically understanding syncretism in this cultural context. First, attention needs to be given to the systematic way in which elements from different religious sources come together. Second, the role of power mechanisms is emphasized, especially in the contact between two categories of individuals, slaves and slaveholders. Similarity in worldview structures among African, Catholic, and also Amerindian systems has facilitated this syncretism. In this way African gods could be identified with Catholic saints and with Amerindian spirits. Catholic elements were selectively adopted and adapted through the application of African criteria, without the knowledge of the slaveholders. In practice, as strategic devices, identification with and differentiation from the slaveholders’ religion were both used for literal and symbolic survival. Thus the apparent adoption of a Catholic ritual attitude in Mass could serve as an alibi for the continuation of African ritual practices. Despite this clever illustration of a survival deception, the reality undergirding this example of syncretism is one of

supreme oppression. An examination of the legacy of this syncretism in contemporary Afro-Brazilian expressions of religiosity reveals a variety of mixtures of these religious traditions both in terms of meaning structures and ritual practices.

Example 2: Syncretism as Competitive Sharing

A second example of religious syncretism is found in the article by Robert Hayden (2002) linked to the concept of competitive sharing. This concept explains how sacred sites that have long been shared by members of differing religious communities, perhaps even exhibiting syncretic types of mixtures including the practices of both, may at some point be seized or destroyed by members of one of them in order to manifest dominance over the other. Hayden argues that competitive sharing is compatible with a passive meaning of “tolerance” as noninterference but incompatible with an active meaning of tolerance as an embrace of the Other. This confusion lies at the heart of a critical weakness of most current explanations of nationalist conflict in the Balkans and communal conflict in India. Syncretism, in this example, may be fostered by inequality and is actually endangered by equality between the groups. The term, syncretism, is problematical, however, carrying a negative charge for those concerned with analyzing or maintaining putatively “pure” or “authentic” rituals and a positive one for those who criticize concepts such as cultural purity or authenticity or favor the idea of “multiculturalism” (Shaw and Stewart, 1994). For the former, syncretism is a matter of violating or contaminating categories. For the latter, since supposed boundaries are inherently flexible, syncretism is universal and therefore not an isolable phenomenon (Werbner, 1994). As Hayden notes, the problematical nature of syncretism increases with the growth of the polarizations captured by the word “communalism” in Indian discourse and the comparable “fundamentalisms” elsewhere (Hayden, 2002: 207).

Understanding and approaching syncretism in any given cultural context is dependent upon the framework used for interpretation. Consider the contrast between the following interpretations. Bayly’s analysis (1989) has focused on a situation of “paradox” in South India noting a growing tendency for groups and large corporations to be hostile to one another yet at the same time there are persisting or reinvented overlapping religious beliefs and syncretic religious practices. That of van der Veer, on the other hand, has noted that “‘syncretism’ in India... is a trope in the discourse of ‘multiculturalism’” and that

scholarly discussion of “syncretic” phenomena such as Hindu worship of Sufi saints usually omits consideration of conflict or of the processes of expansion and contraction of religious communities (van der Veer, 1994: 200–201). One of the critical differences in these frameworks is that in Bayly’s framework syncretism represents tolerance, with a presumed stasis, while for van der Veer, time is brought into the analysis thus creating an approach to syncretism as a dynamic expression that assumes no inherent understanding of tolerance. As Hayden notes, when time is added into the analysis, “syncretism seems to be a measure at a given moment of relations between members of groups that differentiate themselves, and to see it as tolerance instead of competition is misleading” (Hayden, 2002: 207).

Example 3: Syncretism as a Postmodern Choice or Acculturation Survival Tactic

The third example is that of a functional religious/existential syncretism that can be found in what ostensibly has been labeled one of the most secular cultural contexts, Sweden. In this context, organized religious services, based on the Protestant-Lutheran faith and until 2000 expressed through the National Church of Sweden, are not well attended. However, participation in different church-based rituals and ceremonies such as baptism, funerals, and weddings are common. From a functional perspective, ethnic-Swedish participation in ritualized activities remains high though not within the context of a faith or belief tradition. Looking at the results from the multi-country World Values Survey, Sweden appears as an outlier in terms of being the most secular and non-traditional country (Inglehart, 1996). At the same time, there is a growing body of information pointing to an increasing search for existential meaning in this cultural context. The conscious or unconscious expressions of this search not infrequently result in an interesting pattern of existential behaviors and ritual practices that combine elements from different meaning-making traditions and new or alternative religious movements, a mixed existential worldview (DeMarinis, 2003). One illustration of this is an ethnic-Swedish person who may be a member of a Wiccan group and at the same time remain involved in some of the Church of Sweden rituals. Another illustration is of a person with an immigrant or refugee background, involved in both the traditional religious rituals and belief system of the home country and also participating in a religious or other meaning-making system of the new host country.

From the psychological vantage point of postmodernism as defined by Bauman, the individual must create or chose an identity. He also notes that the reverse side of identity choice is that of identity confusion (Bauman, 1998). In this kind of postmodern context syncretic religious/existential patterns are created as part of the internal choice process and expressed in the external sphere where rituals and practices are enacted and experienced. The degree of social support or negative pressure experienced by the individual from the surrounding society in relation to having a mixed existential worldview, can lead to a change in the worldview's structure. In other words, the process is dynamic and open to change.

Psychological Implications of Religious Syncretism

A classic psychological approach to syncretism as a mental function is reflected in the comparison of syncretism with the process of individual cognition (Burger, 1996), in that both create an analogy between the old and the new, and thereby facilitate an innovation acceptance. Syncretism modifies but perpetuates the essence of all impacting sectors, thereby reducing the dangers of cultural shock. Symbolic sectors such as religion can syncretize more easily than artifactual sectors. The psychological mechanics of syncretism need to be understood in relation to the psycho-cultural and socio-political dynamics taking place in the given cultural context. This may seem an obvious need when thinking about the three examples provided, as it is this deeper type of understanding that is essential for mapping the different types of psychological effects of syncretism. The analysis necessary for arriving at this type of understanding is not a standard part of the psychological process of investigation. A valuable resource here is a working approach to cultural analysis that has emerged from the field of cultural psychology (Marsella and Yamada, 2000). Culture is based on shared learned meanings and behaviors that are transmitted from within a social activity context for the purpose of promoting individual/societal adjustment, growth, and development. Cultural representations are both internal (i.e. values, beliefs, patterns of consciousness) as well as external (i.e. artifacts, roles, institutions). Changing internal and external circumstances brings about changes or modifications for shared meanings and behaviors.

Using this approach with respect to understanding a situation involving religious syncretism, the following steps can be taken. First, a cultural mapping needs to be done involving the internal as well as external

representations of the syncretistic meanings and behaviors. Such a mapping will provide a means for locating the cultural groups, religious systems, and levels of interaction involved. Second, an historical layer can then be added to this mapping with special focus placed on understanding the power dynamics and socio-political circumstances initially leading to the syncretistic expression and what has happened to that expression over time. The third and most important step is assessing the psychological effects, for both individuals and groups, of engaging in the syncretistic behaviors. Such varied syncretistic behaviors may, as in the very varied examples provided, be associated with psychological consequences ranging from individual and group trauma to a stress-relieving and salutogenic outcome. Each case needs to be assessed on its own, in cultural context, and over time. Clearly, religious syncretism has never been and will never be a simple system with a single design. For this very reason, an understanding of the psychological effects of religious syncretism needs to be approached with extreme care and with sufficient, multi-disciplinary methods.

See also: [▶ Cultural Psychology](#) [▶ Migration and Religion](#) [▶ Trauma](#)

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T

Taboo

Morgan Stebbins

Something that is taboo is so powerful that it must be approached only with the proper attitude and training, or not at all. The concept of taboo derives from the Tongan *tapu* or the Fijian *tabu*. In both cultures it carries a double meaning: it refers to what is both sacred and forbidden. That is, it indicates that which is so powerful that it is dangerous unless treated the right way, or by the right person, under the right circumstances. In original usage, taboo could refer to certain foods, to bodies of the deceased, to the resting places of powerful spirits, to tribal rulers and to warriors who have slain others, and often to women's menstrual periods, as well as even mentioning some of the above in conversation (Frazer, 1990). Thus we see that it can apply to words, objects, actions and concepts (including metaphysical actors such as divinities), and also that there is a temporal aspect, for instance in some warrior cultures we find a taboo on sex, but only before battle. In many religious traditions, the complex mythopoeic indications combined in the term taboo have been differentiated into the categories of sacred, protected, holy, ritual, and sin.

Social usage indicates that a taboo action or conversation is likely to cause shame or embarrassment within a given social group. This is likely only part of the story, since most taboo subjects that are not abhorrent carry an edge of allure or even excitement in the right circumstances, bringing the concept closer to the Tongan sense. Furthermore there are relatively few things that appear to be repugnant in all societies, these being confined to corpses and incest (and even here there is some disagreement). So most things that are taboo in one group or society are not taboo in another, showing that something about the dynamic of the taboo must be more important than the particular item, topic, or action (Durkheim, 1912).

Evolutionary biologists suggest that taboos originated from a hardwired repulsion of disease vectors (in the case

of the dead) or social bonding habits (in the case of patricide), however this explanation does little to explain the multiplicity and richness of the concept as it is found in practice or in its religious formulation (Pinker, 1997).

Sigmund Freud noticed a similarity between obsessive states and the descriptions of taboo. This connection shows that taboos can be understood as "a psychological condition that prevails in the unconscious" and states that the only two "universal" taboos are that of incest and patricide which formed the eventual basis of modern society. This conception is not far from the biological, and again does not account for the liminal quality of the concept.

Freud continues with his classic statement about taboo, one which has helped shape a generation of understanding:

► Taboos, we must suppose, are prohibitions of primeval antiquity which were at some time externally imposed upon a generation of primitive men; they must, that is to say, no doubt have been impressed on them violently by the previous generation. These prohibitions must have concerned activities towards which there was a strong inclination. They must then have persisted from generation to generation, perhaps merely as a result of tradition transmitted through parental and social authority (Freud, 1998).

So, for Freud, the incest taboo keeps the subject from doing the abhorrent, and so a more refined outlet must be found through the process of sublimation.

Jung's view of taboo (and especially the incest taboo) is typically prospective, psychological and serves to uncover progressively more subtle layers of process. On one hand it does not settle the question, but on the other it allows for the mystery, the social importance, the allure, the horror and the psychological complexity and importance of taboo. Taboo indicates, after all, that which we are inexplicably drawn to and repulsed from at the same time and in certain meaningful ways.

Concepts and impulses that arise from the unknown, regardless of the term used for that other place, are dangerous. Religious symbolic systems, including the forms and laws of the church arise due to the desire of the human subject to avoid revelatory contact with these

unconscious forces. Because of this, from ancient times to the present, societies construct ritual and taboo to protect them from the uncanny voices of dreams and the content of the unconscious in general (Jung, 1960).

For Jung, the pressure to make some personal psychological change is an automatic response to something in the psyche being stuck, like water building up behind an obstruction in a stream. In cases of stuck-ness, or libidinal obstruction (including such symptomatic descriptions such as depression and the various neuroses), the conscious mind feels threatened by an invasion from the unconscious, since the unconscious itself is pressing for a change in conscious attitude. Rather than holding this change at bay, if it is instead possible to be informed by the images that arise (that is, the symbolic form of the symptoms), then the invasion could be completed on its own terms and the conscious mind would break free of the inertia and move forward.

A similar situation is detailed in the poetry of Hölderlin – this theme can be seen as central to the theme of the German aesthetic philosophers in general from Kant to Goethe and Schiller and which is now seeing a resurgence in, of all places, the post-Lacanian work of Slavoj Žižek – particularly in his increasing estrangement from reality. “The god/ Is near and hard to grasp/ But where there is danger/ A rescuing element grows as well” (Hölderlin, 2004). This indicates that regression is an involuntary introversion, of which depression is an unconscious compensation. The psychological task, in this case, is to make the introversion voluntary, both activating the imaginal realm of the mind and lifting the depression (since it has gotten what it was after). Jung uses psychological material as well as Holderlin’s poems to illustrate that regression is actually a link with primal material. This primal material contains both the energy that is dammed up and the specific form of a new conscious attitude. However both of these must be assimilated by the conscious mind lest the primal material keep its chaotic form and produce disorientation or even, in severe cases, schizophrenia.

This very regression, being dangerous to the conscious mind as well as social norms, is the subject of taboo. However it is clear that the object of desire is rebirth, not (as in Freud’s literalist interpretation) incestuous cohabitation. In this conception, incest refers to the draw towards, and horror of, immersion in the unconscious as the source of the conscious subject. The incest taboo indicates the danger of this regression and religion aids in systematizing the canalization (or routine, even automatic use) of libido into safe and socially acceptable forms. Thus symbolism and symbol formation are civilizing processes at the collective level (such as found in religious

traditions), whereas when the symbol is engaged personally it represents an individuating and internal psychological truth (Jung, 1967). Taboo can be seen as a form of collective mediation of overwhelming unconscious forces. However, the advent of neurotic symptoms shows that this collective mediation has broken down, such as when religion no longer seems to mean anything. In these cases, a symbolic interaction with the taboo under carefully controlled circumstances (the container of analysis, for example) allows the instincts to be mediated in a new and personal way, resolving the neurotic suffering.

Finally, since the canalizations or routines surrounding symbol making and the taboo are collective (that is, shared by populations), we can see that the evolutionary instinct has as its goal the *making of meaning*. These instincts manifest also as mythological figures born to the unconscious. That is, it was not the incest taboo that forced mankind forward but rather the evolutionary instinct from which this and other taboos came. Certainly the making of meaning is most safely done in a collective setting, such as a political or religious tradition, since these structures are mediating symbol-systems that let only a small amount of the primal libido through to an individual. When a symbol-system no longer works, the individual must take special precautions not to become overwhelmed by an unconscious and unmediated flood of affect and imagery. To reiterate, the cultural injunction against introversion has led, in modern times, to the rituals of the analytic container (other responses to this injunction occur as well, from the development of the projection of the numinous out onto UFO’s to the various new age attempts to encounter the unconscious) and the methodical withdrawal of projections as a safe way to approach the numinous (life-giving but dangerous) core indicated by the term taboo.

See also: ▶ Freud, Sigmund ▶ Jung, Carl Gustav

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Talmud

Mark Popovsky

From the Hebrew verb “to learn,” Talmud refers to the central text in the vast corpus of rabbinic literature which serves as a repository of legal discussions, biblical exegesis, theology, philosophy, hagiography, legend, history, science, anecdotes, aphorisms, and humor. The Babylonian Talmud was edited over several generations by the rabbinic authorities of Babylonia, probably attaining a somewhat fixed form in the sixth century. However, individual passages included may be up to several hundred years older having been transmitted orally prior to their inclusion in the text. A second Talmud exists, edited in the land of Israel during the fifth century. Known as the Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud, it is smaller, more opaque, and less authoritative in later legal debates. The term Talmud unqualified always refers to the Babylonian Talmud which is written primarily in Aramaic though it often cites large passages in biblical or Rabbinic Hebrew.

The Talmud is structured around a second century rabbinic document called the Mishnah or “recitation.” Composed in terse Hebrew, the Mishnah compiles unresolved legal debates among rabbis on a wide range of subjects including worship, dietary laws, torts, family law, criminal law, agricultural practices, mourning customs, sexual mores, and holiday observance. These legal discussions are often surrounded by related narratives and relevant biblical interpretations. The Mishnah settles very few of the legal debates it presents and frequently suggests no rationale supporting the various opinions cited. The Talmud begins as a commentary on the Mishnah elucidating its cases and alternatively challenging or defending each of its legal opinions.

While the Talmud retains its structure as a commentary on the Mishnah, it functions much more broadly, citing new legal cases, relating stories about rabbinic figures, and opening moral or theological debates unimagined by the Mishnah. The different material included is woven together in a complicated arrangement that is only sometimes topical. Often, connections between Talmudic passages rely on free associations or any number of other non-linear progressions. The Talmud gives great weight to material from dreams, word play and the exploration of fantasy.

The Talmud’s primary method of expression is debate. No legal precedent, biblical passage, or other ostensibly authoritative statement stands immune to challenge.

Much like the psychoanalytic process, rather than attempting to avoid or resolve conflict, Talmudic discourse identifies and even elevates disputes among principles, teaching the reader to embrace discord rather than repress it. While the Talmud rarely affirms or rejects one opinion outright, ironically, it often signals its preference for one opinion over another by challenging the favored opinion more extensively. Biblical laws are almost never explicitly repealed, but, with some frequency, problematic biblical passages are interpreted through Talmudic debate to be so narrow in scope as to be practically irrelevant in contemporary society.

The Talmud is traditionally studied in pairs or small groups, reflecting the conversational question-and-answer style of the text itself. Many have argued that the process of studying Talmud parallels the psychoanalytic task as the reader is directed to infer underlying conflicts from surface level ambiguities or inconsistencies in the text. Some scholars claim that Freud fashioned elements of his therapeutic technique from methods of traditional Talmudic analysis. In modern times, the Talmud is almost always printed together with the commentary of Rashi, an eleventh century scholar from Provence, whose glosses guide the reader through the difficult text which often assumes that its readers know the entire contents already.

See also: [Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Tantrism

Kathryn Madden

Tantrism is a religious and philosophical movement appearing in India around 400 AD that existed within both Hinduism and Buddhism. In medieval India, Tantrism was a common element of all the major

religions. Tantrism focuses upon ritual aspects that involve the use of the physical in sacred and worshipful settings to access the supernatural. Tantrism also can be traced to Jainism and Bön, and elements of Tantric practice are also evident in Burma, China, Japan, Mongolia, and Tibet. The word Tantrism originates from the Sanskrit word *Tantra*: तन्त्र; which is translated variously as “weave, warp, or loom,” offering a sense of bringing together, or connecting into a whole. Tantrism is comprised of numerous texts referred to as *Tantras*. The primary philosophy and goal underlying the practice of Tantrism is that it promotes spiritual growth and leads to personal freedom.

The concept of evolution and involution are central precepts. Tantric practice leads to an outgoing current of energy as well as the return of the current, which is taken back in toward the source of reality rooted in the consciousness of the human being, revealing the pure being of the infinite. In time, with practice, the outgoing current is changed into the return current. This specific interchange is believed to release the chains created by *maya* (the illusion of the phenomenal world) and to free one from illusory existence. Unlike the more orthodox tenets of the Hindu or Buddhist religions, the Tantric aim is to engage with rather than negate reality by undergoing phases of purification, elevation, and finally reaffirming one’s identity on the plane of pure consciousness.

Tantric bodily disciplines and techniques in ritual settings are combined with the learning of specific doctrine. The practitioner of Tantrism develops a more expansive internal awareness and ideally achieves union with the divine. In Hindu Tantrism, *Shakti* is active female energy and *Shiva* is passive, male consciousness; whereas in Buddhist Tantrism, *Prajna* is the passive female element and *Upaya* the active, male element. In the Hindu tradition, *Shakti*, the active female energy is promoted as the main deity or god worshiped and is personified as the divine active force. In the Tantric tradition, clearly female energy penetrates male essence.

The doctrine of the *Tantras* claims that an individual practitioner can tap the interplay between these two dynamic universal forces, internalize these energies, and apply them in life. It is believed that the human body itself is a symbol of these universal energies. Sexual union between two persons can become a symbol of liberation when symbolically understood as the union of *Shiva* and *Shakti* or of *Prajna* and *Upaya*. *Shakti* is also understood as a profound force that manifests itself by igniting energy at the base of the spine and winding its way through the chakras (centers of spiritual power in the human body of which there are seven) toward the opening of the third

eye – the highest chakra – enlightenment. In many Tantric forms of meditation, such as *Kundalini* Yoga, the initiate undergoes a ritual in which he or she receives divine *Shaktipat* through the touch of a master who has achieved a level of union with the divine. This touch ignites the movement of *shakti* energy. The central object of the Tantric ritual, then, is to awaken *kundalini* energy and to merge with the Godhead. To sustain the activation of this vibrant energy in meditation, tantric practices focus upon the breath, or *prana*. Concentrating upon the breath relinquishes the practitioner from worldly distractions and removes obstacles from the chakras. Some tantric forms use mantras, incense, chanting, and singing to activate the breath, followed by silent meditation. Meditating upon a specific *yantra* (a geometrical diagram) or *mandala* (a circular figure symbolizing the universe) associated with a deity is a technique employed for the purpose of subjecting the body to the will. As the progressive phases of enlightenment occur and deepen, the experience becomes a mystical one, and the presence of the divinity grows ever more real as the energies of *shakti* weave their way like a double-serpent around the spine, always moving upwards. To learn these meditative practices, an initiate works the guru or a master teacher. Consistency in practice yields a greater response of the universal vibration of *shakti*. If one achieves a state of union with the divine, often depicted in symbol as the opening of a lotus, or as an illumination of the third eye, then one is considered to have become the *Ishta-deva* or meditational deity. Developing the attributes of an *Ishta-deva* is an important phase, for it means one is able to visualize oneself as the deity or to achieve *darshan*, experience a vision of the deity.

Tantric practices are also known for the ritual use of wine, meat, and rituals that involve mystical-erotic sexual practices, emphasizing the primacy of divine union. Participants were prepared in the art of controlled sexual intercourse, *maithuna*, (L., *coitus reservatus*) meaning sex without male orgasm. Through intricate training, the male partner learned to store up his own sexual fluid and to absorb through his penis the fluid engendered by his partner’s orgasm. This discipline prolonged the sexual act for an extended period of time. In this way the male partner became similar to *Shiva*, the God in perpetual union with the Goddess. The conserved vital fluids were to be stored in the man’s spinal column, working their way through the chakras to unfold into the inspiration of divine wisdom.

For both partners, the goal was to awaken the *kundalini* energy culminated in *samadhi* (contemplative rapture). Each of the persons was to be completely dissolved in the unity of the godhead represented on the earthly plane by

the energy field created by the synthesis of *Shiva* and *Shakti* in the couple. The male *linga* and the female *yonis* were symbolic of the generative powers of the two coexisting principles of nature (White, 2000). The production of fluids represented a sacred offering to Tantric deities and was described as an ambrosia-like nectar that permeated the entire spinal cord, genitalia, and brain.

Tantric sexual practices conflicted with Orthodox Buddhism, which promoted chastity and, like Christianity, split the feminine principle into virginal and compassionate, or bodily and sexual opposites. Nonetheless, variations of Tantric practices survived in both Eastern and Western civilizations through forms of goddess worship originating from early Pythagorean and Neoplatonic sources. Certain sects such as the Christian Gnostic *Ophites* performed Tantric sexual rites in devotion to the symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church, Sophia. The Orthodox Church found these practices to be promiscuous and completely unorthodox. Similarly, Islamic religious authorities condemned the Sufi sects who worshiped the feminine principle of love, although Ibn 'Arabi claimed that the most complete union possible was the sexual act between a man and woman, which he associated as a state of bliss beyond pure interior contemplation of God. Thus, Sufism achieved life in sexual mysticism. Sufism was kept alive by troubadours, self-named "Lovers," who worshiped the feminine principle as the source of divine energy. Eventually Sufi influence predisposed European troubadours, following the crusades, to found the renowned movement of Courtly Love. Courtly Love appeared in literature, poetry and song for centuries until the powerful patriarch that was simultaneously branding women as witches and devils, condemned such activity as heterodox. Although sexual practices clearly have been an aspect of Tantric rituals, ultimately the *Tantras* stressed sexual ritual more as a conduit to the underlying creative energies of the universe and were practiced by a minority of sects. The ritual sexual practices centered upon harnessing the more mundane human impulses of desire toward higher aims in order to replicate the activity of the divine couple. The sexual acts were less for pleasure and intended as an offering toward higher aspirations. The psychological symbolism of the internal male and female energies was the major focus.

Psychology

Carl Jung, along with other academics and intellectuals (Heinrich Zimmer and Mircea Eliade), examined the Hindu and Buddhist Tantric teachings. Sigmund Freud

tended to interpret all religiously-endowed and emotionally significant experience as derived from, or a substitute for basic physical sex. Religious and emotional acts were equated as irrational and needed to be sublimated, modified into a cultural higher form. Freud's emphasis was on the biological; thus, sex was primarily a biological function. Unlike Freud, Jung found that there are specific commonalities between the practice of Tantrism and depth psychology. Jung considered sexuality itself to be a symbolic, numinous experience. Analytical psychology complements the aims of Tantrism by performing a soul-seeking or soul-retrieval function within a ritualized setting that invokes the divine and effects the embodiment of imaginal transformation. This union is analogous to the notion of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in analytical psychology in which the anima and animus – (non-gender specific female soul and non-gender specific male soul) are united with spirit to form a whole, or oneness. Additionally, the internalization of the universal feminine principle is not unlike internalizing the good mother through which a person can relate positively to a feminine principle, fleshing out and healing the wound of previous emptiness of this aspect of the psyche. Tantrism and Jungian depth psychology offer methods for arriving at a more complex and intimate relationship of self (ego in Western psychological terms) with Self. The notion of Self in Jungian psychology would find its analog in the Tantric notion of unity achieved through oneness with the divine feminine. The essence of the psyche as female, following the lineage of *Shakti*, Sophia, and Courtly Love.

Jung affirmed the nature of the opposites as being bi-gendered. The anima and animus are contained within each human psyche. Like the dual-serpents of *Kundalini* energy, these two-fold aspects must be set in motion to realize psychic equilibrium. The combination of these opposites does not depend as much upon two opposite genders but is based more upon the achievement of an embodied non-dualistic consciousness. The ultimate image that guided the practitioner of Tantrism was that of a male and a female conjoined in sexual intercourse. The contemplative aspect of the practice required "meditating upon emptiness and emanating supreme immutable bliss – a state of *passionate desirelessness*," (Emery, 2005: 6); thus, a unified divine consciousness. Analogously, the *conuinctio* of anima and animus does not pertain to sexual gratification but represents an integrated expression of harmonious wisdom that surpasses mundane sexual longings. The capacity of Tantrism to comprehend the efficacy of the symbolic demonstrates how these early practices offer valuable tools to psychoanalysis in terms of

working beyond words, a helpful factor with pre-verbal patients, and dealing directly with the essential being of the person.

Tantric sexual practices more rightly might be compared to the transference between a modern day therapist and patient, although the bodily emphasis is transformed into emphasis upon the imaginal and the symbolic. If desire is ignited in a positive transference, it finds life in the imaginal and sacred realm of the therapeutic space and the third space shared by the two persons. The process of *conuinctio*, or divine marriage is a goal much like that of the early alchemists who projected upon matter symbolically to achieve transformative ends.

Tantrism and Jungian psychology place emphasis upon a *temenos*, a sacred container, and both emphasize the numinous and mystical in the physical and phenomenal realm. Tantrism strives toward internalization of the divine imago. Jungian theory likewise seeks this emphasis. The notion of individuation is analogous to the Tantric understanding of the exchange of currents, once internalized, flowing to and from the source with an ongoing reciprocity (ego and Self, or ego-self axis in analytical terms). Just as the goddess *Shakti* seeks to create an imprint or image in human form, the Self of the psyche seeks us, fueled by the divine source that fuels it. The divine intentionally comes into a human form.

Tantrism, like depth psychology, affirms the tumultuousness of the descent that the individual psyche must undergo into the chthonic realm in order to attain higher consciousness. Similar to Tantric practice, analytical psychology understands the role of the healer as one engaged in a liturgical ritual as a priest. Depth psychology presumes that the therapist, like the master in Tantrism, has sufficiently developed an element of the divine within that enables one to guide the patient in bringing an element of the divine into fruition.

Psychoanalysis in general, mirrors Tantrism, in that it has specific tenets such as the frame (time, place), and an alliance between two persons comparable to the relationship between initiate and guru/master. The authority of the therapist is not derived solely from intellectual theory, any more than the guru's power is a mere derivative of Tantric doctrine. Differences would be that a therapist would not consider himself to be equated with the divine, for this would be an inflation of narcissistic grandeur. Nor does a therapist intend to transform himself into a divinity. The guru, however, is assumed to have achieved a non-dualistic state of being.

In contrast, a therapist will struggle in an ongoing way with various issues of countertransference (individual response to what the patient induces in him or is already

a vulnerable aspect of the therapist's psyche). Unlike the psychoanalyst, for whom the transference can induce potentially negative psychic effects, the guru remains untouched by the initiate's damaging energies, having attained high spiritual awareness.

Depth psychology maintains a very structured system of ethics comparable to Tantric doctrine. Yet, unlike some Tantric practices in which the priest enacted sexual practice with virgins representing the divine goddess, a therapist adheres to a completely different code of ethics. If a therapist were to act out with a patient, this would be considered to be not only unethical, but an abuse of the patient's vulnerability in light of the therapist's authority. Further, as the alchemists would say, the bird has flown out of the vessel, meaning that such an action would entirely disrupt the growth of the patient up to this point and that the patient would need to begin all over again in the process of healing.

The downside of removing the bodily aspect from actual proximity to analytic psychology is that the body, along with the desires (*shakti*) aroused within certain psychotherapeutic transferences must find a conduit in life, or these energies will go underground again like a recoiled serpent. The separation of the body from ritual practice has promoted a split between the fields of psychology and "body-work." This split has yet to be resolved successfully in our time.

The Tantric ideals of preparation and initiation are equally evident in psychological practice. Initiation might be compared to the power of the positive or negative transference that the patient transfers onto the therapist, which changes over time as the two persons create an energy field. The individual, like the Tantric initiate, comes to the therapist/master with the projection that the person possesses the capability of changing his or her future. The very existence of the transference maintains a specific kind of authority needed by the therapist to impart "insights" comparable to the hidden truths or mysteries of the *Tantras*.

Tantrism arose historically as a movement that developed in reaction against the authoritative high forms of orthodox Hinduism and Buddhism that neglected the sensation of the body, while also relegating the feminine principle to a secondary or non-existent status. Psychology emphasizes that instinct and imagination are aspects of the bodily senses and thus necessary parts of the ritual healing. Depth psychology, inclusive of both Freudian and Jungian schools of thought arose specifically as a humanistic form of healing practice in response to the inability of medicine, theology, and religion to sufficiently address many of the issues of the ailing person.

Analogous to the notion in analytical psychology that both persons in the therapeutic process undergo transformation, in Tantrism, the initiate transfers his or her in-born self-healing potential to the guru. The guru, like the analyst “holds” this potential until it becomes conscious to the patient/initiate.

Similarly, the guru assists the initiate in realizing images and symbols through the specified preparation and purification processes. Tantrism, with its openness to the instincts and emotions of the body allows considerable access to potent and numinous symbols, accompanied by the psychic energies that are freed along with making the unconscious conscious. The Tantric mind is analogous to the embodied psyche – the experience of the body being penetrated or infused by spirit.

Perhaps the most essential insight is that, in either case – imaginal or actual – desire in relation to the feminine was not despoiled in Tantric practices, but offered multiple levels of conscious spiritual attainment through practices involving mind, body, and psyche. In our contemporary world, how do we embrace the significance of phenomenal experience in relation to spirituality? Is real or imaginal affinity for the feminine figure more significant in the process of spiritual consciousness?

Tantric practice as it informs analytical psychology suggests how feminine consciousness and the inclusion of the body offers a transformational process in spiritual growth that effects the maturation of psychological and spiritual development. We differentiate ourselves through participation with otherness – what is most opposite and other than ourselves – toward a *jouissance* of being that is inclusive of spiritual embodiment.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Hinduism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#)

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Taoism

Fredrica R. Halligan

Lao Tzu wrote in the sixth to seventh century: “Every being in the universe is an expression of the *Tao*. . . The *Tao* gives birth to all beings, nourishes them, maintains them, cares for them, comforts them, protects them, takes them back to itself. . . That is why love of the *Tao* is in the very nature of things” (Lao Tzu in Mitchell, 1989: 13).

The *Tao* (pronounced “Dao”) is “The Way” of the ancient Chinese philosophers. The central idea is that harmony with nature is the way to live graciously. To live in harmony with the way the universe works is to keep in tune with natural laws. The concepts of *Yin* (feminine) and *Yang* (masculine) energies flow all through the worldview of the Taoists. The classic text, the *Tao te Ching*, is believed to have been written by the poet and philosopher, Lao Tzu. Much of Chinese culture has been deeply influenced by these Taoist ideas, including statesmanship, religion, medicine (e.g., acupuncture), physical exercise (*Tai Chi* or *Qi Gong*) and even auspicious placement of buildings and interior decorations (*Feng Shui*).

Psychologically, a Taoist perspective could be considered to be quite counter-culture in the United States today. The emphasis on yielding, for example, would be contrary to the current psychotherapeutic emphasis on assertiveness. Among Asians, however, this Taoist outlook may permeate their worldview, and the influence of Asian culture (including martial arts) has had its impact on the mainstream U.S. culture as well.

See also: [Chinese Religions](#)

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Tara

Ann Moir-Bussy

Origins

The goddess Tara, one of many female deities, was first found in early Hinduism and later was adopted by Tibetan Buddhism in the early third century BC. She is worshiped throughout Tibet, Nepal and parts of South-East Asia. Some schools of Buddhism recognize 21 Taras. The Chinese call her Kwan Yin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, her name meaning “one who hears the cries of the world.” Tara is known as the Mother of Mercy, the Goddess of Compassion, the “mother of liberation,” the “one who saves.” According to one legend she emerged from a lotus that grew in a lake made by the tears of Avalokitesvara as he wept for the world’s sufferings. There are different forms of Tara represented by different colors, including blue, green, red, yellow, black and white aspects of White Tara, reflecting her responsiveness to the needs of beings in different circumstances. The colors also represent the many facets of wholeness or balance. The Green Tara is known for her activity of compassion for all beings. Some say the Green Tara represents the night. The White Tara contains all the colors and is also the symbol of compassion, healing and serenity. The Red Tara is recognized as the fierce aspect of Tara, but the fierceness is not about destructiveness, but about magnetizing all good things. Some representations depict her as wrathful, destroying negativity, overcoming disharmonious conditions. In these pictures Tara sits in the center of a raging fire destroying the enemies within: all that is delusion and that gets in the way of liberation and enlightenment. The Black Tara is often associated with power; the Yellow Tara with wealth and prosperity, and the Blue Tara with the transmutation of anger (<http://www.crystalinks.com/tara.html>).

The Buddhist tradition has 21 different manifestations of Tara and there are mantras or songs of praise to each, describing her attributes (for reference to these see *Praises to the 21 Taras* - <http://www.fpmt.org/prayers/21taras94rdr.pdf>).

Other Manifestations

Tara can be likened to the Virgin Mary – known also as Stella Maris – Star of the Sea, or to Aphrodite, also said to

be born from water and known as the Morning/Evening Star. In other cultures there are vibrations of her name. In Polynesian myth Tara is a beautiful sea goddess; in Latin, Terra or Mother earth; the Druids’ mother goddess was Tara; in Finland the Women of Wisdom were known as Tar; in South America, an indigenous tribe in the jungle called her Tarahumara and, finally, Native American people speak of a Star Woman who came from the heavens and from whom all essential food grew (<http://www.crystalinks.com/tara.html>). As with many female deities, “Tara governs the Underworld, the Earth and the Heavens, birth, death and regeneration, love and war, the seasons, all that lives and grows, the Moon cycles – Luna – feminine – creation” (<http://www.crystalinks.com/tara.html>).

Psychological Images

From the standpoint of psychology Tara is symbolic of the Great Mother archetype, the feminine principle. Embodied in men and women, Jung refers to this feminine principle as the *anima* or *soul* (Jung, 1959). It is the principle of relationship and of feeling, eminently expressed in Tara as compassion. The mother is responsible for birth and life, for nurturing and development, for fertility and fruitfulness. “The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother” (Jung, 1982: 16). Hence the task of each individual is the development of all the qualities embodied by Tara, in order to achieve wholeness and completeness and inner wisdom. We can learn from Tara simple and direct means of discovering within oneself the wisdom, joy and compassion of the goddess as we travel along the path to Enlightenment. As a female bodhisattva, Tara, combines the spiritual with the human – heaven and earth. Each human being is a potential bodhisattva, learning to bring into balance, yin and yang, male and female, consciousness and unconsciousness, the self and no-self. The bodhisattva within each of us, challenges us to keep on the journey towards maturation, or individuation and to reach out in compassion to all other sentient beings.

See also: [Bodhisattva](#) [Buddhism](#) [Guan Yin](#) [Individuation](#)

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Teilhard de Chardin

Fredrica R. Halligan

Many spiritually-oriented individuals have as their personal aim the realization of union with the Divine. Many spiritual paths view the sense of union with all humanity as being preliminary or at least concurrent with Divine union. It is to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. that contemporary religion owes its increasing capacity to see humanity as an inter-related whole, and its will to transform religious thinking into global consciousness. Teilhard wrote:

- ▶ Across the immensity of time and the disconcerting multiplicity of individuals, one single operation is taking place... one single thing is being made: the Mystical body of Christ (Teilhard, 1960: 143).

Clearly, the earth is on a trajectory toward unification. That we of the twenty-first century can conceptualize this process spiritually is due in large part to the prophetic vision of the Jesuit mystic-scientist. (Cousins, 1985).

Teilhard the Man

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) was born into an aristocratic family in France, where he acquired both traditional Catholic piety with mystical interests and scholarly, scientific traits. He was educated by the Jesuits and ordained a priest in 1911. As a member of the Society of Jesus he briefly taught physics and chemistry, but devoted most of his life to the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Evolution was his passionate study. Involved in

many archeological digs in China and Outer Mongolia, he was a key member of the paleontology team that discovered *Sinanthropus pekinensis* (“Peiking Man”), an important early link in the evolution of humankind. (Teilhard de Chardin, 1966) Reflecting deeply on the process of evolution, Teilhard brought his contemplative consciousness to bear on what he called the “diaphaneity of matter.” In *Hymn of the universe* he wrote:

- ▶ Blessed be you, mighty matter, irresistible march of evolution, reality ever new-born; you who, by constantly shattering our mental categories, force us to go ever further and further in our pursuit of the truth.
- ▶ Blessed be you, universal matter, immeasurable time, boundless ether, triple abyss of stars and atoms and generations; you who by overflowing and disordering our narrow standards of measurement reveal to us the dimensions of God (Teilhard de Chardin, 1961: 68f).

Teilhard’s Thought

As a mystic, Teilhard viewed evolution in both scientific and spiritual light. He saw repeated patterns, with life emerging from the simple to the complex. From atoms to cells to living creatures, he recognized the processes inevitably requiring first differentiation, then unification. Human life, for example, begins with single cells that differentiate into two, then four, then multiple cells, each cell finding its purpose in the development of neo-natal life. He saw that the process is one of repeated “complexification.” Extrapolating from the intelligent, complex beings in the human species, Teilhard foresaw the next phase of development wherein humans will first differentiate and then unite into a higher level of being, i.e., humanity as a whole. This will occur, he predicted, when a shell of intellect, or “noosphere,” envelops the earth. This is an irresistible physical process, the “collectivisation” or “planetisation” of humanity (Teilhard de Chardin, 1964). To Teilhard, the endpoint of this evolutionary unification would be what he called the Omega Point (q.v.), wherein humanity would be united by the force of love. The “fire of love” as he called it, is what Teilhard thought to be the power of Christ.

Teilhard’s ideas were so radically new in the 1940s and 1950s that he was prohibited from publishing his *magnum opus*. Although Teilhard’s thoughts seemed new, they are really quite in tune with the unitive insights of the mystics both East and West throughout the ages. In 1955 the Jesuit

Order permitted posthumous publication of *The Phenomenon of Man*. Since then, his ideas have had a tremendous impact, not only on Catholic thinking, but also on scientific thought.

Global Consciousness

If Teilhard and all the great mystics are right, then there is de facto unity among us, and what is emerging is global awareness of that underlying unity. Today the internet, which was not yet known in Teilhard's life, is a manifestation of the "noosphere" or shell of intellect enveloping the earth. When Teilhard foresaw the tide of destructive forces that threaten the planet, he called upon all people to unite in building the earth. With today's threats from terrorism as well as climate change, Teilhard's call remains the same.

Our task, from a psychological perspective, is to deepen our personal awareness of the inter-connections among us, and to help others to become aware of those deep spiritual interrelationships. In so doing, we participate as co-creators in the evolution of human consciousness. The inter-religious dialogue is today a vibrant venue for such deepening awareness, helping humanity first to differentiate, to appreciate diversity, and then to integrate, through comprehending our essential spiritual unity.

Teilhard himself always saw the Omega Point in Christian terms. However others who follow him have realized that, in true global unity, no one religion can dominate all the rest. Thus a true sense of dialogue must be established wherein mutual respect is engendered. Psychology has a significant role in fostering and facilitating that dialogue. Seen in breadth and depth of perspective, the world religions have not only different theologies and philosophies but also, in essence, vastly different worldviews. (Panikkar, 1999). Toward furthering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of religious differences and similarities, psychology has the opportunity to foster understanding with persons from varying cultures and religions. In like manner, in the spirit of Teilhard, psychological understanding can facilitate globalization by dialogue addressing such problems as global warming and combating deleterious climate change.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Omega Point](#)

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Temenos

Ronald Madden

Temenos [Greek τέμενος] refers to a piece of land set aside or cut off from everyday use and assigned as a special domain for the veneration of a temporal ruler or a god. It may also be a built structure as in a *temple* that has been consecrated for a sacred purpose, such as a place of sacrifice to a deity or of worship.

A *temenos*, in a narrow sense, is a Greek sanctuary that has been constructed in a specific location that has significance for a ruler or god to be venerated. The *temenos* dedicated to the chief of the gods at Olympia is called the *temenos* of Zeus. A *temenos* may be demarcated by boundary stones possibly erected as a colossal wall or rampart. It is frequently associated with a special tree, such as the Bodhi tree (Sri Maha Bodhi) under which Siddhartha Gautama sat and achieved enlightenment and which was to become the site of the Mahabodhi Temple of Buddhism. The *temenos* may, itself, take the form of a sacred grove of trees, such as Plato's *grove of Academe* outside of Athens.

The practice of dividing the world into sacred and profane precincts is observed throughout prehistoric, ancient and civilized societies. The *temenos* universally represents a sacred place set aside from the secular or profane world. It is an integral part of so-called primitive cultures where the sacred place was seen as the center of the cosmos (the Axis Mundi) and was often marked by a sacred tree which represented death and rebirth and the connection between heaven, earth, and hell. Stone and water were usually also a part of the sacred place – stone for its symbolization of permanence and water for purification.

From Celtic spirituality comes the concept of the *thin place*, an idea that is related to that of *temenos*. A thin place is a sacred place where the veil or membrane between heaven and earth is thin, or where one can pass easily back and forth between the material and spiritual worlds. A thin place may be a specific location where great spiritual energy is experienced by many as being received, such as at Stonehenge, Glastonbury, Luxor, or Mecca. It may be situated on a mountain such as Sinai, Ararat, Machu Picchu, Fuji or Athos. A *temenos* or temple is often erected at or near the site of a thin place in response to the presence of spiritual energy that is found there. The *temenos* serves to facilitate passage between the opposing realms of the visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious, inner and outer, spiritual and earthly.

In a certain sense, the work of depth psychology, as experienced in the encounter between analyst and analysand, is soul-work. The work of this interaction is benefited by a space that is experienced by both therapist and patient as quiet, safe, and sacred, where it is possible to access the unconscious without fear of distraction from the profane world outside. The therapist's office is a form of holding place or vessel; its walls and ambiance cut it off from the rest of the world, so that the work of healing can be done. The therapy room may be seen to function as a thin place or *temenos* for the practice of psychotherapy. It might even be thought of as a sacred enclosure where a symbolic journey through death and rebirth can occur.

See also: ➤ [Axis Mundi](#) ➤ [Bodhi Tree](#) ➤ [Celtic Spirituality](#) ➤ [Communitas](#) ➤ [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) ➤ [Gardens, Groves, and Hidden Places](#) ➤ [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) ➤ [Water](#) ➤ [Western Wall](#)

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Teresa of Avila

Ann M. Rothschild

St. Teresa was born on March 28th, 1515 in Avila, Spain. She joined the contemplative Carmelite order, taking the habit on November 2, 1535. She founded her first monastery, St. Joseph in Avila, in 1562. She then founded 17 convents, all smaller and simpler and with more discipline than the traditional ones of her times.

Teresa is best known for her three main works. The first was her autobiography, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*, written when she was in her 40s and completed in 1565. *The Way of Perfection* was written a year later in 1566. Finally near the end of her life, in 1577, when she was 62 years old, she completed *The Interior Castle*, a work she considered a masterpiece, her best work. She died October 4, 1582. She was canonized in 1622. In 1970 Pope Paul VI declared her a Doctor of the Church.

St. Teresa suffered from serious illnesses. She was bedridden for years. She had emotional issues as well. From the beginning of her religious life, she faced enormous physical and spiritual challenges. She had to find her way, and she began by exploring herself. Her spiritual/psychotherapeutic journey was typically a slow, arduous journey requiring courage. Yet she was always attentive, constantly and consistently moving toward self-integration. She visited those places we might call mad or unreasonable. She noticed and then abstained from her "old passions," her neuroses. She prayed, she meditated, she contemplated, and she looked within, all the time. Her journey to God was a journey to herself. She was a strong individual and example of a woman who strived through discipline, through prayer, through contemplation, and through seeking self-knowledge, to actualize herself. We can easily apply these spiritual struggles to a psychological perspective. She has been called a "psychological mystic." Self-knowledge was very important to her. "This matter of self-knowledge must never be neglected. . ." (St. Teresa of Avila, 1960: 145).

In *The Interior Castle*, she explores her "interior" self in a journey through seven "mansions." Consistent with modern psychotherapeutic theory, houses often represent the self. This is a spiritual journey but a psychological one as well. As in therapy, it is a voluntary journey. It is also an heroic journey into the unknown. As in therapy there are stages. In St. Teresa's first three stages or "mansions" we are more active. We meet and become aware of our demons. We fight and subdue them. But after the fourth

mansion, we can become less active and more receptive. We can go deeper. In the psychological journey, St. Teresa can be a guide to finding and growing an inner self, becoming clearer and deeper room by room. Especially for those with a lack of a sense of self, or those dealing with a narcissist or a schizoid dynamic, reading St. Teresa can be very helpful.

Therapists can find a model in St. Teresa as well. Often a new therapist is very active like the seeker in the beginning mansions. As she notices by exploring her own vices, like the religious person seeing what keeps her away from God, she sees that activity gets in the way. And as she reflects on how her own dynamics contribute to excessive activity, she can become less active, able to use Freud's suspended, free floating attention. Few words are required. There is less effort, more listening.

See also: [▶ Contemplative Prayer](#) [▶ Ecstasy](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Thanatos

Nathan Carlin

The Greek word Thanatos literally means “death.” Thanatos also can have metaphorical meanings, such as the personification of death (cf. Romans 5.14 and 1 Corinthians 15.26), as well as spiritual meanings, such as eternal death (cf. 2 Corinthians 7.10). Edward Tripp (1970) notes that in classical mythology, “Thanatos was born of Nyx (Night),” and that Thanatos “and his brother Hypnos (Sleep) lived together in Tartarus” (p. 555). He also notes that “Thanatos appears in Euripides’ *Alcestis* to carry off the heroine from her tomb. Heracles wrestles with him, however, and

brings her back to life” (1970: 555). Tripp also directs us to these passages in mythology: *Iliad*, 16.453–455, 16.672–673, 16.682–683; *Theogony*, 211–212 and 758–766.

Freud and Thanatos

In psychological circles, Thanatos always recalls Freud's theory of the death instinct (some prefer the translation “death drive”), despite the fact that, as far as I know, Freud never used the word Thanatos. However, Freud (2001/1930) all but invites the term when he writes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*: “And now it is to be expected that the other two ‘Heavenly Powers,’ eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary. But who can foresee with what success and with what result?” (2001/1930: 145). On the other hand, perhaps the omission of the title Thanatos was intentional, as it could intimate that the powers of Eros are more integrated whereas the powers of the death instincts are more diffuse. In any case, in Freud's thinking, Eros is associated with the sexual and life instincts, instincts that tend to be constructive and have a uniting quality, whereas Thanatos is associated with the death instincts and have a destructive, aggressive, sadist, and even masochistic quality about them.

Freud (2001/1920) first put forth his notion of the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and he did so first in speculation to make sense of a problem with his theory of dreams. Since Freud earlier argued that all dreams are wish-fulfillments, anxiety in dreams was problematic for his theory. How, for example, could recurring traumatic dreams possibly be wish-fulfillments? What we normally think of as nightmares, on the other hand, did not pose such a problem, because Freud explained nightmares as repressed wishes coming too close to consciousness. That is, nightmares are revisions of dreams that have come too close to exposing repressed desires. But explaining *recurring* dreams that produce anxiety proved to be much more difficult for Freud, so much so that he eventually postulated the idea of the death instinct. Freud talked of this recurring as a “compulsion to repeat.” And he believed that it was an attempt to gain control over past situations retrospectively. He also likened the death instinct to the property of inertia. He observed that there is a tendency in organic life to return to an earlier state of being – in religious language, “from dust to dust.” Freud famously proclaimed, “*the aim of all life is death*,” and in this sense the death instincts and the life instincts can be thought of as a suicidal impulse. But why, one might object, doesn't all life perish

immediately? To this, Freud responded that our life instincts prevent this. And this seems to mean that the death instinct and life instinct, taken together, guide organic life to die on its own terms. The death instinct also provides an explanation for aggression. Aggression, Freud came to believe, is the projection of the death instinct. The upshot of Freud's notion of the death instinct for our purposes is that aggression is instinctual and basic to human nature. This means that attempts to eliminate particular aggressive behaviors will not solve any problems, which is why Freud argued that communism could not contain our aggressive impulses, because these impulses are not rooted in property, they are a part of human nature. Aggression cannot be eliminated; it can only be directed or channeled in better and worse ways.

Freud's views on aggression and the notion of Thanatos have been debated and applied inside and outside of medical and psychological circles (see, e.g., Menninger, 1938 and 1942; Marcuse, 1966; Ricoeur, 1970; Brady, 1974; Stepansky, 1977; Afkhami, 1985; Percy, 1987; Groves, 1999; Hutcheon and Hutcheon, 1999; Bennett, 2005; Arundale, 2006; Cho, 2006).

Norman Brown on Thanatos

One of the more interesting philosophical and theological interpreters of Freud on the death instinct has been Norman Brown. In *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*, Brown (1959) notes that in 1953 he “turned to a deep study of Freud, feeling a need to reappraise the nature and destiny of man” (p. xi). And in this book, Brown argues that “mankind, in all its restless striving and progress, has no idea what it really wants,” that “Freud was right: our real desires are unconscious,” and that it “also begins to be apparent that mankind, unconscious of its real desires and therefore unable to obtain satisfaction, is hostile to life and ready to destroy itself” (1959: xii). Brown summarizes what he took from his reading of Freud, all the while making his case for a psychoanalytical view of history. He writes, for example, “the theory of neurosis must embrace a theory of history; and conversely a theory of history must embrace a theory of neurosis” (1959: 13). Brown believed that psychoanalysis “can provide a theory of ‘progress,’ but only by viewing history as a neurosis” (1959: 18). He elaborates:

- ▶ If therefore we think of man as that species of animal which has the historical project of recovering his own childhood, psychoanalysis suggests the historical proposition that mankind will not put aside its sickness and

its discontent until it is able to abolish every dualism (1959: 52).

“The reunification of Life and Death,” Brown writes, “can be envisioned as the end of the historical process” (1959: 91).

David Greenham has written the first systematic work on the work of Norman Brown. Greenham (2006) notes that “Brown is not writing history from a psychoanalytical point of view – a study in the Oedipal motivations of ‘great individuals’ for example – but he is interpreting the very drives of history using the implications of Freud’s late metapsychology” (p. 77). And, in his chapter on Brown’s *Life Against Death*, Greenham notes that, “For Brown history has no ontological weight, it is rather only a symptom; it is neurosis pure and simple,” for “nature has not history; it just *is*, it does not *become*” (p. 64). He elaborates:

- ▶ So by the transformation of psychoanalysis into a theory of history. . . he means a theory of the *end* of history, as we find in the Bible, as well as in Hegel and Marx. Brown’s history ‘ends’ not with revelation or absolute knowledge or the dictatorship of the proletariat – though in part it is all of those things. His history ends by plunging humanity into the immanence of ‘nature’ (2006: 65).

But, it is still difficult to imagine what it would mean to plunge humankind back into the immanence of nature, and, even if one could imagine it, it is even more difficult to imagine how this might be possible. But, as noted above, Brown is clearly articulating a critique of western civilization in its denial of death, and Greenham clarifies this point made by Brown:

- ▶ So, according to Brown, humans repress their death and in so doing create history as the history of repression: civilization as neurosis. It is the human failure to recognize, at the most basic level, that life and death are the ‘same,’ one half of a dialectic; which both fuels history and is its meaning. Freud, perhaps, suggests of this conclusion when he argues that the goal of all life is death, but he shies away from the truth as Brown sees it, and retains a dualism (2006: 79).

Greenham argues that, for Brown, “Eros is the key to unlocking – and ending – history” (2006: 67), and “Religion is important for Brown not because he is putting forward any particular faith, but because he sees religion as ‘a half-way house’ to curing history” (2006: 66).

It is difficult to understand how religion can cure history in the sense that Brown is suggesting, that is, by

reuniting life and death. But another author, Robert Dykstra, a pastoral theologian, has written more clearly about how aggression – what, in the context of this essay, we might call Thanatos – ought to be integrated into the lives of Christian men.

Robert Dykstra on Aggression

In his “Rending the Curtain: Lament as an Act of Vulnerable Aggression,” Dykstra (2005) reflects on God’s own lament over the death of Jesus to address the lives of contemporary Christen men. His central theme, as his title indicates, is what is called “the rending of the curtain.” When Jesus died, Dykstra notes, the biblical text records that the curtain in the temple was torn in two. Dykstra argues that here God not only revealed Himself, but that He *exposed* Himself. Just as the Son was exposed on the cross, literally crucified naked, God the Father likewise exposed His genitals in the rending of the curtain. Dykstra draws on Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (1994) to suggest that “the veiling of God may serve as a theological legitimation of male hegemony. Unable to identify God’s sex, Israel’s men maintain their status as God’s beloved, while at the same time remaining safe from insinuation of homoeroticism” (Dykstra, 2005: 61). He elaborates,

- ▶ If Eilberg-Schwartz’s provocative thesis about ancient Judaism’s prohibitions against speculation about God’s sexual anatomy is correct, I suggest that Gospel accounts of the rending of the temple curtain change all this, and that the lament is at the very heart of this decisive, even earth-shattering change. . . . God’s own nakedness is at last revealed. In this, God the Father fully identifies with God the Son (p. 62).

Such an interpretation as Eilberg-Schwartz’s regarding God’s body – i.e., God’s body is concealed in the biblical text so as to conceal the implicit homoeroticism of the men of Israel uniting with their male God – accounts, Dykstra believes, for why there seems to be “an enduring underlying anxiety among men that faith somehow threatens masculinity” (2005: 62). However,

- ▶ God’s lament, then, drives God – and this underlying anxiety among men of faith – from the closet; an unbearable grief, shame, and rage in response to Jesus’ death compel God to step out from behind the curtain in all God’s desperate glory. In Jesus’ death, we at last get a full frontal glimpse of God. God’s lament removes the dividing line between the holy and the profane. As the

curtain is rent in two, so too the old division between sacred and profane is forever torn apart (2005: 62).

For too long, Dykstra rightly notes, “good Christians” have falsely believed that they are not supposed to express or delight in such emotions. Men are to be composed, especially in difficult times, but the result is that men “tend, as a result, to experience a diminished capacity for intimacy, mutuality, and authentic forgiveness with God and one another” (2005: 63). But because of the cross, we find “a God now suddenly revealed in lament, angry and aggressive while naked and vulnerable, a God engaging in a sacred exhibitionism,” and Dykstra’s hope is, as he so eloquently puts it, “Would that those men who have the most to lose could love a God like this, could love God like this, could finally, in the end, simply love like this” (2005: 68).

Dykstra offers one way – a compelling way, to be sure – to think theologically about Thanatos: God here is destructive and aggressive, ripping the curtain in two, while also naked and vulnerable, breaking the conventions of public decency. There are surely other ways to think theologically about the vicissitudes of Thanatos. In any case, the theme of Thanatos has persisted since ancient days and haunts us even today. Those interested in psychology and religion cannot afford to neglect these forces, whatever their ontological status may be, since they are nevertheless real mythologically and practically (cf. Menninger 1938 and 1942).

See also: [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#)

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Theodicy

David M. Moss III

The term “theodicy” was adapted from the French *théodicée* which is a compound of the Greek *theós* (God) and *dikē* (justice). Etymologically it means the “justification of God.” Generally speaking, theodicy refers to the vindication of divine government given the existence of evil.

Whatever else may be said of evil it is certainly the abuse of a sentient being, a being that can feel pain. It is the pain that matters. Evil is grasped by the mind immediately and felt by the emotions immediately; it is sensed as hurt deliberately inflicted. Evil is never abstract. It is an existential reality and has to be understood in the personal context of suffering.

In fourth century Athens the Epicureans challenged the Stoics with a trilemma: if God could have prevented evil and did not, he is malevolent; if God would have prevented evil but could not, he is impotent; if God could not and would not, why call him God? Here is the primary moral quandary for any monotheism claiming God to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. The problem is inescapable, as well as profound. *Si deus bonus, vede malum?* “If God is good, why evil?” The insistence behind this question is the concentration of theodicy, a specific dimension of Natural Theology that attempts to justify or vindicate God’s morality *vis-à-vis* the evil that infects mankind.

The word “theodicy” was coined by the German mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. In 1710 he used it as a theme and title of a book on metaphysics, *Essais de Théodicée sur la Bonté de Dieu*. Leibniz was a “theodician” who believed: some error is unavoidable in any creature less perfect than its creator; all possible worlds contain some evil; and evil reveals good through contrast. If goodness was constant, we would take it for granted without realizing the blessings of God. In this life evil is a necessary element like the shade in a picture, throwing into relief the beauty and harmony of the whole.

There are numerous dogmatic expressions of theodicy from two basic perspectives. The first emphasizes God’s ultimate goodness in spite of the existence of evil. Evil is negative but necessary. It eclipses the good which produces a contrast that ultimately clarifies God’s omniscience. Yahweh, for example, allows Job to be tortured and then rewards him. The second perspective is concentrated more on mankind’s responsibility than God’s because, in creation, the latter endowed the former with free will. The abuse of this freedom originates from within the human psyche. Injustice, cruelty and indifference are not divinely enabled but willfully enacted human behavior.

The subject of theodicy rarely appears in psychology texts or mental health journals. It is periodically addressed by grief literature and thanatology studies. The Pastoral Counseling Movement has made some unique contributions to the literature *via* hospital chaplains who minister to the terminally ill. Pastoral counseling also explores the clinical significance of theodicy and how it can be used to intellectually block the grief process.

Theodicy may be seen as an indirect denial of God’s inconceivable nature or *mysterium*. For the justification of God’s permission of evil requires a comprehension of the incomprehensible. Nevertheless, the belief in an all-good and all-powerful God naturally leads to a faith in Providence – *bonum ex nocentibus*, “out of evil good emerges.” Providence is hope that out of even the most

negative experience, no matter how evil, as long as one chooses to look with insight, beneficial results will be revealed. To quote Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "...to the height of this great argument I may assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man."

See also: [Evil](#) [God](#) [Pastoral Counseling](#)

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Theophany

Emily Stetler

Coming from the Greek *theophaneia*, "appearance of God," a theophany is a revelation of God in which the divine is mediated by sensible matter. A theophany, then, is distinct from other mystical experiences in that it involves material, rather than merely psychic, phenomenon. Indeed, in a theophany, the natural world may exhibit characteristics unable to be explained by laws of nature or unable to be replicated and verified by empirical experimentation. Further, while achievement of a mystical state oftentimes depends upon, or is at least facilitated by, entrance into a receptive emotional or psychological state, a theophanic experience does not; it seems to spring from a source external to the visionary. In scriptural accounts, theophanies seem to be an interruption of the visionary's psychic state rather than an outcropping of it.

Nonetheless, a person *can* induce a hallucination that he describes as theophanic through meditation practices or the use of psychedelic drugs.

It must be noted that a theophany specifically reveals the *deity*. A mystical vision of a saint (such as a Marian apparition in Catholicism) does not qualify as a theophany. "Theophany," thus, is a more restrictive term than is "hierophany," Mircea Eliade's preferred term for a manifestation of the divine.

Theophanies may be found in any theistic religious tradition and, in modern times, have even been reported by individuals not subscribing to any religion. From both a doctrinal and a literary perspective, though, theophanies often function to make immanent a god who is typically characterized as being transcendent.

The Hebrew Bible recounts several theophanies, including Abraham's reception of the divine visitors at Mamre, where God tells him that he will bear a son by Sarah (Genesis 18:1–15); Moses' theophany on Mount Sinai, during which God inscribes his law on the tablets of stone (Exodus 19:16–32:14), and Ezekiel's vision of the four living creatures and the wheels (Ezekiel 1:1–28). Two especially paradigmatic theophanies are Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32:22–33) and Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:1–4:7). In the former narrative, Jacob's body attests to the contact with God; after the encounter, Jacob's hip is dislocated. In the burning bush account, we see the divine utilizing the material world, yet transcending natural laws: the bush burns, but it is not consumed, as it would be by a merely natural flame.

Although inhabiting the material world, and thus less ephemeral than other mystical experiences, most theophanies are, nonetheless, temporary; after the deity has revealed his purpose to the visionary, the divine presence withdraws, and the natural world assumes its normal workings. The most enduring instances of theophanies are incarnations, in which the god assumes human (or animal) flesh and remains revealed for the duration of its earthly life. For Christianity, the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity as the historical Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God. The Eastern Orthodox churches, in fact, observe January 6 as the Feast of the Theophany, commemorating the Baptism of Jesus. (In the Western churches, January 6 is celebrated as the Feast of Epiphany and recalls the visitation of the Magi to the newborn Jesus.) As narrated in the Gospel accounts (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22), Jesus' baptism portrays a unique theophany in Christianity – one that features the manifestation of all three Persons of the Trinity: the Father speaks, "This is My beloved Son," as the Son emerges from the waters of the Jordan; and the Spirit descends in the visible form of a dove.

Hinduism, too, has incarnational theophanies in its idea of avatars. In Hinduism, a god may become incarnate more than once through the ages, and each incarnation is known as an avatar (from the Sanskrit *avatāra*, "descent"). The most well-known examples are the ten avatars of Vishnu. The versions vary slightly, but the Garuda Purana provides a standard list: a fish; a tortoise; a boar; a lion-man; a dwarf; the man Parashurama; the man Rama

(legendary king of Ayodhya and hero of the Ramayana), the god Krishna; and Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha). The tenth avatar, Kalki, is anticipated to come at the end of the present age (the *Kali Yuga*) to combat evil and corruption and usher in a new golden age (the *Satya Yuga*). In all cases, avatars become incarnate in order to respond to a specific need of the cosmos.

Although generally Islam eschews theophany in order to safeguard the utter transcendence of God, the notion of theophany appears in the thought of some Sufi Muslims. For instance, the Andalusian Sufi Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240 CE) developed a cosmology in which all of creation, including humankind, is essentially a theophany. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, God desired to know himself in others who know him. His being unknown (both to others and, as one who is known, to himself) caused him sorrow, a creative sorrow out of which he reveals himself through creation. Creation is an exhalation of God, or his shadow; God creates *within* the space of his own breath. Ibn ‘Arabī’s system is pantheistic, a world in which all is in God and is thus not totally other than God. Creation is necessarily theophanic. In particular, according to Ibn ‘Arabī, the divine Names of God are theophanic; through each Name, God reveals to his creation (and, therefore, to himself as well) an attribute of himself.

Commentary

In psychoanalytic theory, mystical experience in general can be explained as misdirected sexual feelings, the mystical ecstasy proving for the sexual energy an outlet without directly engaging the sexual. Also, the psychic struggle between a super-ego and a force placing strictures on it can bring about a theophany when the psyche surrenders to exhaustion.

On the other hand, Jung ascribes theophanies to the unconscious. A theophanic experience, then, could be explained as the active imagination probing the unconscious and assigning to the “vision” a particular theological significance.

Additionally, theophanic visions can be induced through the use of psychedelic drugs. The use of peyote in Native American ceremonies and references to *soma* in the Rig Vedas attest the widespread phenomenon of psychedelic theophanies.

Finally, a theophany may also be explained as a symptom of a psychotic or neurotic condition. Schizophrenics, in particular, may experience hallucinations that they describe as theophanic, particularly when the schizophrenia is marked by delusion, as well.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Analytical Psychology](#) [Avatar](#) [Baptism](#) [Bible](#) [Buddhism](#) [Christ](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Eliade, Mircea](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [God](#) [God Image](#) [Hallucinations](#) [Hierophany](#) [Hinduism](#) [Ibn al-‘Arabī](#) [Incarnation](#) [Jesus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Mysticism and Psychoanalysis](#) [Sufis and Sufism](#)

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Theosophy

Robert S. Ellwood

“Divine Wisdom” A system of thought emphasizing mystical insight into the inner workings of the divine nature. The term is often used more restrictively to refer to the modern movement inaugurated by the creation of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1975. The

principal founders were the enigmatic Russian noblewoman Helena P. Blavatsky (1831–1891) and the U.S. lawyer and journalist Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907).

Blavatsky articulated an ideological basis for modern Theosophy in her writings, especially the monumental *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). Olcott in turn was the first president of the organization. In his inaugural address of 1875 he referred to the conflict between religion and science which so disturbed many Victorian minds. perceiving both pulpit and laboratory as, in his day, representing shallow, dogmatic views of truth. The real solution, he contended, lay in the rediscovery of an “Ancient Wisdom” known in former times but now nearly forgotten, except to various esoteric lodges and teachers, which could show anew the oneness of matter and spirit, and the way to its realization.

Oneness and the Path constituted the essential message of the Theosophical Society. It was indicated in different words in the Three Objectives stated by the Society, agreement with which is the only criterion for membership. Abbreviated and in current wording, they are: To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity; to encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science; to investigate unexplained laws of nature, and the powers latent in humanity.

Other teachings, developing implications of these principles and found in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and other classic Theosophical writings, are also associated with the movement. One is that there are several “planes” or “bodies” in a human being and correspondingly in the cosmos. These embody different aspects of nature, but also in their interrelatedness express the ultimate oneness of reality. They are named and divided somewhat differently in different sources, but include the physical, etheric or energy field, the “astral” (roughly emotional and mental-image sphere), mental, “buddhic” or intuitive, and “atmic” or divine.

Each individual is seen as a “monad” or “pilgrim” on a long journey, the “cycle of necessity,” passing through countless aeons, worlds, and lifetimes out from the One into the realm of manifestation, therein to experience it in innumerable ways, finally returning to the One enriched by all experience.

A corollary of this teaching is that some individuals are well ahead of the common run of humanity on the pilgrimage. They serve as guides and instructors to those willing to accept their tutelage. These persons are often called Masters, Mahatmas, or Elder Brethren. It was said that Blavatsky had a close relationship with certain of them, and that they had a role in the establishment of the Theosophical Society.

Modern Theosophy’s history has been sometimes colorful, producing several divisions. All Theosophical groups have been relatively small, but have had a significant cultural influence through their promulgation of concepts important particularly to modern art, poetry, and the “new age” movement.

See also: [Pilgrimage](#)

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Traditionalism

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Traditionalism is a contemporary esoteric current that develops a philosophy critical of modernity, based on a reinterpretation of the concept of “*Philosophia Perennis*.” The notion is founded upon monotheistic theologies and it understands the world as a created reality that conceals a system of divine signs. Signs, here, are particular manifestations of the Truth; an absolute entity of divine nature manifested in all created things and beings. Perennial philosophers sustain that everything is divinely created and that an ontological metaphysical essence exists in every created being. That is to say, it has always been and therefore its existence is not historically or culturally framed. Owing to its immutability and eternity, this spiritual essence is regarded as divine. According to Perennialists, human spirituality in its diverse manifested religious forms is the way that humankind has developed to participate of this Eternal Quintessence. Since it is believed that human participation in godly essence is

entirely divine, human reasoning is regarded as not interfering in this process of divine apprehension.

From its early formulations in the late antiquity, with thinkers such as the Christian neo-Platonists Ficino and Pico, to its flourishing during the Renaissance and its later modern and post-modern adaptations, Perennial philosophy has been expressed in diverse ways, while remaining faithful to its driving ideas: Firstly, Perennial philosophy is understood to be both divinely received and beyond human action; Secondly, Perennial Philosophy assumes a divine original spirit in each being, who is aware of its originality. This process gradually distances the spirit from its source beginning immediately after Creation. When people wish to regain the absoluteness of the origin, religious experiences are meant to be open accesses to the Divine, a way of returning to the original standpoint; and, lastly, the created world is ectypal of the primordial essence; there exist various explanations – remarkably, the Neo-Platonist and the neo-Pythagorean – on how this reproduction process occurs.

History

Although this tenets have been present in western esoteric thought since the third century AD it was not since the Renaissance that the actual term “*Philosophia perennis*” was literally used. It first appears in Agostino Steuco’s (1497–1548) book “*De perenni philosophia libri X*” (1540), and it was used to describe scholasticism as the referential core from which all Christian teachings derive. The notion was later employed by the mathematician Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) who uses it to designate a universal mystical core, not only existing in Christianity but common to all the World Religions. The notion “*Philosophia Perennis*” reappears in the twentieth century in the work of the English novelist Aldous Huxley (1894–1963). In his 1945s “*The Perennial Philosophy*,” Huxley describes it as a divine metaphysical entity existing in all substantial things and beings, connecting the physical, substantial world to the Transcendent. Furthermore, for Huxley this “*Philosophia Perennis*,” is something with basics that have been apprehended and incorporated in the wisdom of peoples of every region in the world since the origins of humankind, but has only been more sophisticatedly articulated by what he called “higher religions” – meaning the main world religions: the three monotheistic creeds, Buddhism and Hinduism. Accordingly, the plurality of religions of the world is, in this view, only a kaleidoscope of diverse manifestations of one

unique Divine Truth, generally referred to – among modern authors – with the term “Tradition.” Tradition is for Traditionalists what the inner spirit was for former Perennialists, eternal, infinite, unaffected by contextual variables, cross-cultural and a-historical.

Although Huxley’s work already made use of the term to build up a criticism towards the “modern world,” it was the French thinker René Guénon (1886–1951) who popularized the turned into critique term. Thus, it can be suggested, that Traditionalism uses Perennialism to elaborate a variety of criticisms towards “the Modern.”

In Guénonian Traditionalism, European civilization has progressively distanced itself from the “Tradition” that once was part of. This lack of memory, the forgetting of Tradition makes European civilization entering a state of dementia, ultimately responsible for the supposed terminal decline in which Europe is in modern times immersed. Since it is only “Tradition” that can produce the foundation of a genuine civilization, and its wholeness is somewhat quintessentially embodied in “Traditional religions,” only the return to this common wisdom can save Europeans or Westerners in general, from the debacle. Christianity is generally discredited of being capable of such transformation. Hence, Traditionalists rely on non-western religious wisdoms with the hope of, individual by individual, return to the West, its original spiritual sense, and with it saving from the moral crisis, if not the whole civilization as such, the souls of those individual spiritually-awakened westerners.

Despite of the fact that Perennialism has a longstanding trajectory, its instrumentalization as a critical discourse is much more recent. Traditionalism as such originates in Europe in the interwar period, taking its inspiration from the writings of René Guénon. The first Traditionalist groups were established before the Second World War, and they were the seed of what was going to become a relevant movement of international dimensions. In 1948–1950, the initial Guénonian school suffered its first division, creating the scission of a group led by one of the most prominent Guénonian disciples, the Swiss Muslim convert Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998). Decades later, Traditionalism has taken three main directions: (1) the one of Schuon, who created the western Sufi order Maryamiyya, that grew in importance in Europe, North-America and uprooted in Iran led by Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933), (2) the political orientation of the Italian Julius Evola (1898–1974), who transformed it into a post Second World War fascist-inclined ideology inspiring some Italian terrorist groups of that time, and (3) the scholarly approach of the Romanian Mircea

Eliade (1907–1986), who turned Traditionalism into an hermeneutical perspective to be used for the comparative study of religions.

In Religion

Since its inception, Traditionalism has been closely connected to Western forms of Sufism. The first followers of Sufism appeared in the West at the beginning of the twentieth century – writers such as Doris Lessing and Robert Graves. There have been other famous Traditionalist converts, but it is by far the figure of René Guénon, who has been most influential in inspiring many western Traditionalists' conversion to Islam. Coming from a catholic family, it is sometimes said, although it has not been proved yet, that Guénon was first initiated into Hinduism through the line of Shankarāchārya. However, he is more famous for moving to Cairo in 1911 – where he did live the rest of his life – and where had entered Sufism, adopting the Muslim name of “Abd aw-Wahid Yahya.”

Traditionalist thought has also been crucially influential in the academic field of religious studies where instead of Traditionalists are generally called Perennialists. The school initiated by Eliade posed the notion of “mystical experience” at the center of a scholarly debate about the particular/universal nature of religious feelings. Scholars such as Rudolf Otto, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Walter Terence Stace, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Robert Forman are outspoken voices of this trend, decisive in the emergence of an academic school specialized in comparative religion. Perennialist authors have supported the idea that mystical experiences are ephemeral but ineffable, unmediated contacts with the Divine. They belong to the “One Core” though find expression in multiple forms, becoming what all Traditions worldwide have in common. Furthermore, in the hermeneutics of religious studies, the concept is commonly used to question the authority of empirical methods seeking objectivity to prioritize the value of the individual pulse and subjectivity. Today, authors such as William Chittick, James Cutsinger, Huston Smith, Harry Oldmeadow, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr use markedly Traditionalist perspectives in their scholarly works.

Critics of the Traditionalist approach suggest that Traditionalists apply Perennialist signifying layers to Sacred Texts, meanings that the Text itself does not necessarily contain; critics suggest that such misinterpretation

derives from Traditionalists' a priori loyalty to their Traditionalist ideological stance.

In Psychology

Traditionalism has supposed an important influence in the development of new trends of psychological theory, remarkably Transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology is a modality that takes into consideration some aspects hitherto neglected by the previous schools of psychological thought. Transpersonal authors wanted to promote altered states of consciousness and mystical experiences as effective tools to consummate people's potentialities. The term “Transpersonal” is here used to denote that which goes beyond the self. Hence, for Transpersonal psychologists, psychical cure can only occur by abandoning the perceived as constraining self in order to gain access to an Eternal meaningful reality of esoteric nature. This state may eventually help individuals to overcome “negative” feelings such as guilt or unease.

Transpersonal psychology is commonly known as the “fourth force,” because it aims to overcome the limitations that Transpersonal psychologists perceive in the so-called “first force” (Freudian thought), “second force” (behaviorist school), and, “third force” (humanist approach). It yearns to develop a radical new perspective by conceptualizing a leveled human psyche. Accordingly, it considers that both psychoanalytical Freudian thought and behavioral theorist have approached the lower levels of this scale, but have failed to address the higher more sophisticated stages, those of the Transpersonal belonging to the transcendental.

The work of the Greek-Armenian Traditionalist George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1877–1949) has been of particular relevance for the Transpersonal movement, specifically with regard to the insistence on a need for spiritual awakening and his theorization of “The Fourth Way” notion. Among the most prominent predecessor psychologists of the Transpersonal school are William James (1842–1910) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). In his Gifford lecture (1901) at the University of Edinburgh (published in 1902 under the title of the varieties of religious experience) James became the first in supporting the study of religious experience using psychology's hermeneutics. Well-versed in a wide variety of religiosities, ranging from Sufism, Buddhism and Vedanta, to the New Church, American Transcendentalism, the Theosophical Society, or some forms of Christian mysticism, James

perceived the depth of human psyche as primordially spiritual.

Also attracted by several forms of religiosities was the Swiss Carl Gustav Jung. A former disciple of Sigmund Freud, Jung strongly disagreed with the Freudian conceptualization of religion as an outcome of neurosis. In contrast, he considered religion as genuine expressions of the psyche's universal patterns of human behavior. He typified religious feelings (mystical, philosophical, doctrinal and so on) in accordance to the existing behavioral models. Further, in line with Perennialism, he suggested that religiosities were outer expressions of a "universal collective unconscious."

Despite these earlier contributions, it was not until the 1970s that Transpersonal psychology properly became a consistent, though controversial trend of psychological thought. The actual term "Transpersonal psychology" was for the first time employed by the Czech Stanislav Grof (b. 1931) who became famous for using LSD with his patients to help them "recover" pre and peri-natal memories. Since the 1970s, Transpersonal psychology has experienced a significant increase in popularity, when ideas of spiritual growth have extended beyond the psychological arena influencing various forms of New Age ethos and other manifestations of new spiritualities (notably, neo-paganism).

Transpersonal psychology is markedly Perennialist in that it assumes a timeless a-historical dimension common to all human beings, and it proposes a return to the original source – here labeled as "High Consciousness." It also shows a notable Traditionalist influence in that it uses a Perennialist perspective to build up its criticism on modern society in general – its materialist excesses and superficial concerns – and in particular on modern psychological trends. However, Transpersonal psychology differs from Perennialism and Traditionalism alike, in its notorious, sometimes posed as problematic and contradictory, emphasis on the self that contrasts with the claim of abandoning the self to embrace a collective wisdom. Perennial philosophy also attributed a seed of divine nature contained in every individual, but the stress the Transpersonal circles put on self-experience denotes an individualistic shift not present in Perennialist or Traditionalist discourses. Further, even though Transpersonal's Higher Consciousness entails some kind of spirituality, Transpersonal psychology is in most cases detached from the Perennialist and Traditionalist theistic component. Nevertheless, its non theistic approach has not exempted it from criticism. Transpersonal psychology's incorporation of Perennialist/Traditionalist principles into

psychology has brought about fierce criticism from more secular-oriented psychologist sectors.

See also: [Eliade, Mircea](#) [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Eastern Religious Traditions](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Gnosticism](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Jungian Self](#) [Monotheism](#) [Orthodoxy](#)

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Transcendence

Todd DuBose

Transcendence is an experience central to both spirituality and therapeutic transformation. In fact, it may be considered the most important and distinguishing factor in any form of liberation as transcendence is an experience of moving from one mode of existence to another, for various reasons, and done in a myriad of ways. Understanding the nature of transcendence as a phenomenon is essential to any theory of change.

Transcendence originally meant “going beyond or outside” one’s situation. This sense of transcendence is clarified only in relation to what was meant by “immanence.” The differentiation of transcendence from immanence was a theological concern as it became central for theologians to distinguish between the nature, relationship and place of God in contradistinction to humankind and the rest of the natural world. While these apologists sought to defend God’s existence as immutable and as the uncreated Creator of life, other thinkers took a contrary route than proposed God is immanent within, and as, nature. The latter positions became known as pantheism or panentheism. Either way, the debates, often ending in accusations of heresy, sought to understand and/or explain a metaphysical puzzle of how finite existence comes to know and relate to the infinite.

Part of the difficulty in resolving the puzzle of transcendence and immanence was the presumption that both realities were places in space and time. In other words, transcendence was a state of existence beyond or out of physical existence. Immanence, on the contrary, was finite physical existence. This raised problems for theologians, though, particularly Augustine of Hippo (354–440), who defended the belief that God could not be understood in terms of created existence in time and space because doing so would result in God’s eventual decay and mutability along with the rest of immanent reality. A decaying god is not a god at all for Augustine and other likeminded thinkers (Augustine 398/1961; Fitzgerald, 1999).

Moreover, trying to resolve the finite/infinite dilemma by stating that the ability to understand transcendence is simultaneously professing the grandeur of God and stating that the infinite mystery is simply beyond the grasp of the finite mind left a blatant inconsistency unaddressed: How can a finite person “know” an unknowable transcendent reality? Nevertheless, said other apologists, the very fact that one can even *imagine* a transcendent God

was evidence enough of the empirical reality of transcendence.

With the impact of logical positivism and naturalistic empiricism, however, transcendence as an immaterial reality is simply rejected as a viable possibility and no amount of faith in the unseen was able to squelch the need among natural scientists for observable proof as a prerequisite for assent. Empirical theologians of “The Chicago School” focused their energies on responding to the apparent scientific/religious rift, gaining particular ground with process theology based on Alfred North Whitehead’s thought (Meland, 1969). The tradition of empirical theology opened other possibilities of understanding transcendence as a natural phenomenon that is consistent with natural science convictions while remaining meaningful to human significance.

Transcendence is also understood in other ways within various religious traditions. In Judaism, for instance, transcendence has been understood as that which is “hidden” or inexhaustible, or, better yet, as the overwhelming power of the numinous. Thus, we hear of the inability to look on the face of God. What is also emphasized in Judaism is the poverty of language to capture and denote what is represented by transcendence. References to the divine are pointed differently in Hebrew or written in transliterated English as G-d. In Buddhism, we experience the possibility of *shunyata*, or emptiness, the void, or no-thing, which transcends attachments and binding images. This is achieved *within* immanence, which is unlike the Hindu goal of escaping rebirth by transcending material desires. Both Buddhism and Hinduism, therefore, see transcendence as the state of relinquishing attachments, a theme which is present in any ascetic tradition. For Islam, and other traditions emphasizing the absolute transcendence of the divine, however, any link of immanence with God drifts lands us in into idolatrous conditions and should be abandoned.

Another very interesting conundrum in the history of transcendence, a nuance of the finite/infinite dilemma, is the paradox of personalistic relationships with God, when God’s transcendence is supposedly beyond any personalistic and/or anthropomorphic representation. Nevertheless, transcendent experiences are related to prayerful and mystical experiences of intimate encounters with God as person, despite belief in the Eckhartian flavored understanding of the experience of God as beyond any conceptualization of God. Understanding of God as an enigmatic experience beyond any and all theistic conceptualizations. These challenges to understanding transcendence in theological and religious traditions join other philosophical ones.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) stood at the interstices of theology, philosophy, and psychology, and defined the transcendent as that which lies beyond what our faculty of knowledge can legitimately know, thus, placing the transcendent beyond the scope of epistemology. At the same time, Kant saw the “transcendental” as the very conditions of the possibility of knowledge itself (Kant, 1781/2008). The father of transcendental phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), borrowing from his teacher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), understood transcendence as that which is beyond or separate from the constructs of our consciousness (Husserl, 1962). Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Husserl’s student and assistant, came to a view of transcendence that reversed his teacher’s position. For Heidegger, transcendence is always and already occurring within the context of our finitude and thrownness (Heidegger, 1962). States of consciousness, therefore, are not separate from the world, but are contextual and co-constructive of experience in the world.

Transcendence, then, becomes a hermeneutical activity for Heidegger in which the interpretive process unveils authentic ways of being in the world. Jean Paul Sartre (1905–1980), the French existential phenomenologist who saw much of his work as a continuation of Heidegger’s project, saw transcendence as describing various relations of the self to the object oriented world, including our relations with others. For Sartre, the “for-itself” is sometimes called transcendence, as such a state of existence seeks the freedom to create one’s meaningful existence. This is opposed, for Sartre, to an unfree existence in which one forfeits one’s subjectivity in collusion with the other’s objectifying gaze (Sartre, 1956). Finally, the Swiss psychiatrist Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) saw transcendence as that which is beyond time and space, or what he called the encompassing, which is ultimate non-objectivity (no-thing-ness) (Jaspers, 1971).

Current discussions of transcendence continue to revolved age old dilemmas of describing the experience in ways that are respectful of freedom and transformation while attempting to resist reductionism. This is the case in theology, philosophy, and psychology. A few remaining issue merit address, however, for the future of clarifying transcendence.

Commentary

What is vital in a contemporary understanding of transcendence, particularly as it relates to immanence, is to understand it as a *qualitative* experience and not to equate it with a location in physical space and time, or as

something that can be measured. We are still squeamish about immaterial realities. The recent debates on reducing transcendence to genetics and/or neuroscience are cases in point (Hamer, 2005; Zimmer, 2005). Although it can be relieving to align with the “hard” scientists in order to receive their kind of evidence as further legitimization of transcendence. At the same time, it very well may be the inaccurate approach with which to address this matter. Something seems anti-climatic about knowing that God’s name is “Gene VMAT2!” Again, the perpetuated mistake in approaching transcendence in this way is in misunderstanding transcendence as a person, place, or thing. Transcendence is an *experience of liberation*, a type of *qualia* that is invisible, immeasurable, and incomparable, because not substantial.

Is the relationship between transcendence and immanence oppositional? Can one hold a respectable post-modern position without fusing transcendence with immanence? If transcendence is immanence then how can we discern one experience from the other? These questions presume a faulty assumption, which is that immanence and transcendence are antagonistic polarities. The morphing of our understanding of transcendence has shown the contrary to this conclusion. The relationship between transcendence and immanence is a dialectical one, and, moreover, one in which each one cannot be understood without presuming the other. Tom Driver (1985) noted how transcendence is radical immanence. As Jean-Luc Nancy (1993) has proposed, we understand freedom only in light of “thrownness.”

Finally, although discussions of transcendence as ascendance, as escape, as dissociation, or as a Gnostic extrication of our physicality mitigate against an existential conviction of transcendence within immanence, these experiences are nonetheless popular understandings of transcendence. The desire to escape one state of existence for another is at the heart of trance induction and other religious rituals. Opening ourselves to “other worlds” can give perspective to this one. Dissociating during the horrors of physical and sexual abuse can be the only freedom one may have during such a tragic time. Imagination of other worlds, other compartments, and other possibilities is perhaps the most powerful form of transcendence available to any of us, and can be considered an existential. On the other hand, transcendence as escape is the project of the suicidal candidate, though a project carried out through a narrowed attunement to possibilities. Moreover, encouraging otherworldliness as a solution to confronting the complexity, pain, and suffering in this existence can lead to a lack of concern for this life at least, and a hatred for it at best, much like Friedrich

Nietzsche (1844–1900) predicted. Agreeing with the sentiments of Nietzsche, Erich Fromm (1900–1980) noted that the pull away from life and toward a Freudian return to inorganicity is more appropriately driven by an escape from freedom. Contrary to common assumption, we often fear the freedom from which and to which transcendence delivers us (Fromm, 1941).

In fact, what may fuel the pain of this life may be the perpetual desire to transcend-as-escape it. The remedy to our unnecessary suffering, then, may be to give oneself over to another kind of immanent transcendence, which lives out life all its pathos, as Michel Henry (1922–2002) advised, and experience the paradox of transcendence: We transcend existence when we enter it (Henry, 2002). This is not an invitation to ignore oppression or deafen calls for liberation and deliverance. On the contrary, an invitation to live life in its fullness and uniqueness can very well inspire a more vivid respect and sensitivity to creating free, meaningful, and fulfilling lives for each and every person and/or sentient creation.

See also: [Daseinsanalysis](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Transcendent Function](#)

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Transcendent Function

Ann Casement

Transcendent Function is a term that first appears in a paper Jung wrote in 1916 where he states it is neither mysterious nor metaphysical but is, instead, a psychological function “comparable in its way to a mathematical function of the same name, which is a function of real and imaginary numbers. The psychological ‘transcendent function’ arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents” (Jung, 1960: 69). As Jung states, the unconscious behaves in a *compensatory* or complementary manner to consciousness and vice-versa. If consciousness is too one-sided, the unconscious may break through via slips of the tongue.

The transcendent function is so called because it enables the transition of contents from the unconscious to consciousness as well as the other way around. In analysis, the analyst can mediate the transcendent function for the analysand through the transference and in this way the patient experiences the analyst as indispensable. Jung defined his approach to transference as “constructive” which is based on evaluating the symbol via dreams and fantasies. It is the symbol that is “the best possible expression for a complex fact not yet clearly apprehended by consciousness” (Jung, 1960: 75).

In his paper on the transcendent function, Jung writes about his constructive approach to dream analysis. In order to exemplify this, he cites the dream of a woman patient in which someone gives her a wonderful, richly ornamented, antique sword dug up out of an ancient burial mound. He interpreted this as her need for the inner father she needs to relate to in order to help her disidentify with remaining in a perpetual passive childlike state. Her actual father was a passionate, energetic man and it is this energy that the patient needs to find in her inner father in order to live life fully.

According to Jung, the self-regulating function of the psyche can be helped through dreams but more importantly through fantasy which enables unconscious material to become activated through activating the transcendent function. In order to do this, he advocates the use of *active imagination* via drawing, painting or sculpting which can give expression to unconscious material which may be expressed in a mood. Critical attention must be eliminated during this process and creative formulation allowed to break through. The second, more important stage of *active imagination* is for ego not to be

overwhelmed by unconscious contents. An important way forward is the development of an inner dialog in bringing together the opposites for the production of the third, which is the symbol. Through this transcending of opposites, consciousness is widened by confrontation with unconscious contents and the transcendent function proceeds not without aim and purpose but can enable an individual to move beyond pointless conflict and avoid one-sidedness.

As Jung says, truth, law, guidance is said to be nowhere save in the mind. “Thus the unconscious is credited with all those faculties which the West attributes to God. . . the transcendent function. . . the phenomenon of spontaneous compensation, being beyond the control of man, is quite in accord with the formula ‘grace’ or the ‘will of God’” (Jung, 1958: 506).

The mediatory process of the transcendent function forms the material of construction “in which thesis and antithesis both play their part. . . in the shaping of which the opposites are united (in) the living symbol” (Jung, 1971: 480). This symbol formation through the mediation of the transcendent function in the conflict of opposites is to be found in the struggle between Jesus and Satan, Buddha and Mara, or the regeneration of Faust through the pact with the devil.

Transference, the Transcendent Function, and Transcendence

The analytical psychologist, Ann Ulanov’s paper of the above title illustrates how transference, like dreams and symptoms, inevitably introduces the transcendent function in the course of analytic treatment. “The transcendent function is part of the compensatory function of the transference” (Ulanov, 1997: 125). The analyst and analysand consciously take up what the psyche does spontaneously in producing opposite points of view in order to reach its goal of individuating or broadening consciousness. The analysand is dependent on the analyst’s involvement and Jung’s approach to the analytic process “consisted essentially in a dialogue and a mutuality requiring the emotional involvement of the analyst for change to occur” (Casement, 2001: 79). Ulanov also alerts to the dangers of analyst and analysand “bumping around in the psyche” together which can take the form of inflation, seduction, power plays, and defensive intellectualizing.

“The transcendent function inaugurates transition to arrival of the new” (Ulanov, 1997: 126). This initiates the arrival of a third point of view which surpasses the conflicting opposites and creates a space between consciousness and the unconscious wherein symbols arise. “In the process of the

transcendent function we not only struggle with opposites in ourselves, we also inhabit the opposites of our historical time” (Ulanov, 1997: 137).

Ulanov relates the transcendent function and transference which is not an abstraction but exists in the here and now. “Spirit and body go together. Transcendence always effects a striking conjunction of the particular and the universal, the awe-inspiring and the humdrum, the vast and the concrete.” She quotes Jung as follows: “Analysis should release an experience that grips or falls upon us as from above, an experience that has substance and body. . . . It must be organically true, that is, in and of our own being. If I were to symbolize it I would choose the Annunciation” (Jung, 1925/1989: 80).

Jung and Hegel

The analytical psychologist, Hester Solomon, states that

- ▶ the schema of psychological functioning that Jung developed in the *Transcendent Function* has a parallel in the philosophical vision of Hegel’s dialectic. In the immediacy of the disintegrating psychological experiences that he went through in the years between 1912–1916, Jung swung from one pole of experience to the other. . . Through this dynamic interplay, he was able to achieve a personal synthesis, a position of relative integration between the conscious and unconscious attitudes. So Jung himself was living the dialectic (Solomon, 2007).

As Solomon goes on to say

- ▶ Hegel’s grand design is an attempt to understand reality as constructed historically in pairs of opposites that are not dichotomous but are rather in intimate, dynamic, albeit oppositional relation to one another. The dialectical model allows for a twofold view of reality, on the one hand in terms of bipolar opposites in dynamic relation to each other, and on the other hand a unity of opposites towards which each strives. . . The task of dialectical philosophy is to strive for greater and greater comprehension until a kind of totality of understanding is achieved. This is what Hegel called ‘absolute reason’ (Solomon, 2007).

The tripartite structure of the dialectical process, like the transcendent function, expressed as thesis/antithesis/synthesis reflects an archetypal pattern with the third position consisting of a resolution that has the capacity to hold two apparent opposites together. It is through the tension and conflict created by the dynamic relationship that a creative, forward-moving resolution is achieved between, for example, self and another whether it be mother/infant or analyst/analysand. This is also to be met in the “Christian idea of the

threefold nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Spinoza and Descartes' threefold vision of reality as consisting of three different kinds of substance (thought, nature and God); the Socratic dialectic whereby rigid positions are confronted and thereby changed by adroit questioning. . .all attest to the ubiquitous, deep structural nature of the tripartite dialectical vision" (Solomon, 2007).

Solomon's conclusion is as follows: "Jung's concept of the transcendent function and Hegel's dialectical vision both seek to address similar understandings of psychic reality and as such demonstrate a remarkable similarity of structure" (Solomon, 2007).

Transcendent Function and Reflective Function

The analytical psychologist, Jean Knox, explores Jung's concept of the transcendent function in relation to research on the reflective function in attachment theory. She states: "The concept of reflective function has emerged to explain the vital role that the parent plays in facilitating the child's capacity to relate to other people as mental and emotional being with their own thoughts, desires, intentions, beliefs and emotions" (Knox, 2003: 10).

Jung was using the term transcendent function to describe an individual's capacity to tolerate difference in others and also in oneself. "In attachment theory it is the development of this capacity which defines reflective function, in that reflective function depends upon the awareness that other people have minds of their own with beliefs and judgments that may differ from one's own. . .Both transcendent function and reflective function are descriptions of the capacity to relate to other people as psychologically as well as physically separate" (Knox, 2003: 164).

She goes on to say:

- ▶ There would seem to be sound neurophysiological support for Jung's model of the transcendent function as a dialog between conscious and unconscious processes of appraisal. Allan Schore draws on empirical research to support his view that the right hemisphere is predominant in "performing valence-dependent, automatic, pre-attentive appraisals of emotional facial expressions" and that the orbito-frontal system, in particular, is important in assembling and monitoring relevant past and current experiences, including their affective and social values. Crucially, he extends this appraisal function of the orbito-frontal cortex to underpin reflective function itself (Knox, 2003: 198).

It is this capacity for integrating opposites, emotional appraisal, and psychological separateness that Jung was pointing to in his concept of individuation in which the

transcendent function plays such a major role. If "the ego is too unstable and weak to moderate impulsivity enough to allow for the constellation of the transcendent function. . .Shadow roles and impulses are acted out, without the appearance of a transcendent function to bring about an integration of opposites" (Stein, 1998: 124).

See also: [▶ Active Imagination](#) [▶ Dreams](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Transcendence](#) [▶ Transference](#)

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Transcendental Meditation

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Transcendental Meditation, popularly known as TM, was introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1917–2008) in 1958. Today, its programs and related initiatives are represented on six continents, claim upwards of six million adherents and boast campuses in The United States, Mexico, England, India, and China.

It was not until the Beatles went to India and met with its founder, however, that TM made its appearance on the Western stage. Subsequently, many artists followed suit and brought with them into the Maharishi's fold innumerable devotees. Such wide-spread – if fleeting – fervor was enough to win The Maharishi the cover of Time Magazine in 1975.

The techniques of meditation are claimed, by its founder to be “a path to God.” To follow this path however, TM does not require any change in either faith or belief.

TM has, since its inception, invited and encouraged scientific investigation of its claims. Because of this remarkable openness, a wealth of studies has been conducted on the salutary effects of which practitioners of TM claim to be in receipt. The first wave of these studies was published in the early 1970s and found that the techniques utilized by practitioners of TM led to a state of “restful alertness.” Subsequent studies have investigated TM’s role in reducing blood pressure, obesity, depression, and a host of other afflictions – somatic and otherwise. These results, however compelling, are far from being undisputed, however.

This scientific turn, while relatively new in the history of religions, is certainly not restricted to TM, though it is emblematic of the trend to psychologize religion and in particular spiritual praxes. TM is a particularly salient example of how the religious and psychological horizons can be imperceptibly fused in a single tradition.

Criticism of TM has been harsh – even vituperative. Former members have come forward alleging that it is a cult, entangling the unsuspecting in the insidious web of its rhetoric. Adherents, on the other hand, hail the triumph of TM as the first truly universal spiritual practice scientifically proven to aid in evolution. In any event, TM’s reception in the United States has irrevocably altered the landscape of the American religious imagination.

See also: [Contemplative Prayer](#) [Meditation](#)

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Transference

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The idea of transference is at the center of the classical psychoanalytic theory of object relations. Early

object-relations patterns, formed by our experiences within the family, become consolidated, and remain relatively fixed throughout adult life. They are revealed as emotional reactions in interpersonal situations which are highly intense and realistically speaking quite improper. Any strong emotional reaction formed quickly in an interpersonal encounter, such as love or hate at first sight represent a transference reaction, i.e., a reaction to a present object which is in reality an acting out of a childhood reaction to one’s parents or other close figures.

Sigmund Freud claimed to have discovered transference through the practice of psychotherapy according to his technique of psychoanalysis. He reported that those being analyzed by him were not ready to regard the analyst merely, and realistically, as a helper and adviser. The analysand sees in the analyst “the return, the reincarnation, of some important figure out of his childhood or past, and consequently transfers on to him feelings and reactions” (Freud, 1940: 192). These feelings and reactions are ambivalent, comprising both positive and affectionate as well as negative and hostile attitudes towards the analyst, who is put in the place of the analysand’s parents, either father or mother. The transference is made conscious by the analyst, and is handled by showing that the transference, is a re-experiencing of emotional relations which had their origin in the earliest object-relations in childhood.

Positive transference serves to create an attachment to the analyst, as the analysand seeks to please the analyst and win his applause and love. In Freud’s phrasing, it becomes the true motive force of the patient’s collaboration; his weak ego becomes strong; under its influence he achieves things that would ordinarily be beyond his power; he leaves off his symptoms and seems apparently to have recovered – merely for the sake of the analyst. Another advantage of transference is that the analysand produces and acts out a life-story, with the earliest attachments at its center.

But the transference phenomenon exists outside the analytic situation. As described by Freud, it is a universal phenomenon of the human mind, which dominates the whole of each person’s relations to his human environment. In other words, early object relations are acted out in every instance of human contact and in every instance of interpersonal fantasy.

Transference is a particular form of the more general mechanism of projection, and as we know projective hypotheses explain the contents of religious beliefs as reflecting specific human experiences and fantasies. In psychoanalytic writings, projection may be a general perceptual mode, externalizing internal processes or needs. In both cases the result is perceptual distortion. Psychoanalysis suggests an iconic correlation between the internal world and religious ideas, so that these ideas are a reflection of the

internal psychic landscape. Psychoanalytic theorists have provided us with various content hypotheses, specifying what is projected. Psychoanalysis also specified the recapitulation mechanism of transference, through which early experiences in the family are recreated as cultural products. The presumably projected humans are the “significant others”: father, mother, family relations and dynamics.

Because of the centrality of family dynamics in early childhood, psychoanalysis suggests that all religious traditions would contain projective fantasies which construe the cosmic environment in the shape of the family drama. Parental care varies in different cultures, the child’s concept of the parents will similarly vary, and so will the resultant image of the deities. Not only are the images of the gods likely to vary in accordance with early concepts of the parents, but also the means of communicating with them and soliciting their help. A more complex view of the projection process notes that religious images come before us ready-made as part of social learning, but then we as individuals, project our personal, unique experiences on them. What a religious tradition teaches is an ambiguous stimulus, and we develop it in the image of our own private history and our own parents.

See also: [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Projection](#) [Psychoanalysis](#)

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Transfiguration

Kathryn Madden

The word transfiguration derives from the Latin *trānsfigūrāre* and refers to transformation and change in form or appearance. The term is specifically used in reference to

the change of appearance in Jesus Christ as narrated in the Christian biblical accounts of Matthew 17:2, Mark 9:2–3, and Luke 9:28–36.

The gospels report the transfiguration event as Jesus taking three of his disciples – John, James, and Peter – to pray with him on a mountain top. Going up on the mountain (óros) is significant in that it is the place set aside for prayer. While he was praying at the top of the mountain, Jesus was transfigured. “The appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white” (1952, RSV).

Exegetical Origins

The original Greek term for this phenomenon was *metemorphothe*. Metamorphosis refers to a conspicuous physical and rather sudden change in one’s form or structure. In the biblical event, the disciples witnessed Jesus’ face shining like the sun and his garments a brilliant white which they described as “light,” or “glory.” In his altered form, Jesus speaks with Moses and Elijah who also “appear in glory.” Glory stresses the concept of visible light (Luke 2:9; 9:31), the divine presence as a luminous manifestation and God’s glorious revelation of God’s person as borrowed from the Old Testament concept of *kabod*.

In the gospel narrative, the disciples were “heavy with sleep but kept awake.” They witness a conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Luke tells us that they discussed what Jesus was to accomplish at Jerusalem – his death.

Then “a cloud came and overshadowed them [the disciples], and they were afraid as they entered the cloud; and a voice came out of the cloud” (1952, RSV) proclaiming Jesus to be the Son of God. The voice instructed the disciples to listen to Jesus as the “Chosen one” of God. The disciples are to tell no one of what they have witnessed.

In the image of cloud, (nephélē, néphos), we find a cross-cultural commonality in meaning drawing from the Hellenistic and Greek worlds and in biblical literature. The cloud was an image of religious significance, a theophany, God’s visible manifestation.

God indwells the cloud as indicated by the voice arising from it and invites participation. The disciples do not merely observe; they “enter the cloud,” even if only as a foretaste of the eschaton (the final event of the divine plan), the resurrected state in the afterlife and the suffering and struggle which is to precede the resurrection with Jesus’ death on the cross.

Synchronous Literacy Motifs and Influences

The transfiguration story is influenced both by Hellenistic categories, as well as by the genre of the Old Testament which also bears Egyptian and Persian influences by virtue of the exile of Israel into Babylon. Biblical scholars Helmut Koester and W. G. Kümmel place the transfiguration story in analogy with an epiphany story – Kümmel in association with the Hellenistic motif, (1990: 122) and Koester, with the Old Testament genre and Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Although Hellenistic literature often pursued a more Gnostic strain which rejects the material embodiment of the divine and speaks of the miraculous transformation of a mythical figure, nonetheless, many examples of literature in the Hellenistic religions concerned a metamorphosis. In the story of Apuleius we find persons and deities experiencing transformation and release as a first prediction before a process of suffering.

Thematic similarities also exist in early hermetic literature, in the literature of the mystery cults, in literature informed by Plato, and in parallel themes in other biblical literature. The mystery religions offered an analogous genre to the Christian biblical narrative offering stories of salvation on the basis of divine revelation.

Other literature that may have informed the transfiguration story was *Hermes Trismegistus*. Written between 100 and 200 CE, this series of tractates were astrological or magical. Some tractates contained writing that was religious which demonstrates literary connection with the Greek Old Testament. Hermes, a god, taught secret knowledge about salvation to a disciple. Those who recorded these documents believed that they had received revelation of a gospel, the difference being that the material or physical order is discounted. In *Poimandres*, powers appear before a disciple's eye, and Poimandres receives supreme vision. Receiving the benefaction of Poimandres, the disciple rejoices, for "the sleep of his body had become watchfulness of soul," and he "moves into life and light" (Barrett, 1989: 89).

Literary fragments from the Egyptian magical papyri were also comparable to the definitive style and ethos of Hellenistic magic and, in turn, analogous to themes in the transfiguration: "once purified, the body is fit to receive a ritual vestment. . . the true new body of immaculate whiteness" (Jacq, 1985: 37).

The Jewish apocalyptic literature and Wisdom literature have narrative similarities: the isolation of a special place, an extraordinary appearance (i.e., a bright, luminous light); and the self-revelation of divinity,

followed by a description of the reactions of those who are present, and finally a command (Koester, 1980: 64).

Social Need and Spiritual Longing

Clearly the narrative accounts of the Christian gospel did not arise in a religious-philosophical vacuum. The people of these times sought forms of knowledge and alternative channels of power in a situation that was dominated by Rome. Philosophers emphasized the theme of negotiating in a world that was disoriented.

Epictetus, a lame slave who was a philosopher contemporaneous to the gospel writer Luke, writes of the "universal" phase: an effort to define the free, moral persona as one who has freedom to speak freely regardless of oppressive threat. There was a collective desire for a new disposition of mind and heart. For those who felt marginalized, there was a turning inward, a relativizing of political and social circumstances. By retreating inward, one could discover being part of a principal work, "a fragment of God himself" (Barrett, 1989: 67).

Persons pursued the mystery religions seeking a personal faith that would bring them into immediate contact with deity and would promise them salvation. The inability to negotiate their outer world increased their interest in astrology, fate, mysticism, and esotericism. Many of the mystery religions and cults contemporary to the writing of the gospel literature had existed for centuries. Mostly they were of Eastern origin before Hellenized.

The mystery cult of Cybele, the Great Mother, had come from Asia, the cult of Isis and Osiris from Egypt, and Mithraism from Persia. These cults shared the characteristic of being centered about a god who had died and had been resurrected. An initiate was inducted by specific rituals and secret symbols and participated in mystical union through sacramental means to share in the experience of the god to achieve immortality.

When Mark, the earliest of the gospels was written, the tradition of Jesus had already become saturated with the outlook of Hellenistic magic. The early stages of the interpretation of the miracles of Jesus, particularly his exorcisms and healings, were understood to be magical. Jesus was understood to have entered into the central conflict of the magician's art – the struggle with evil powers.

Informed by the collective psyche of the time, the spiritual world was understood as divided into two realms of power. A battle ensues between Jesus and his foes analogous to a battle between spiritual forces and magic. The folk belief was that Jesus overcame evil by his greater

power as indwelt bodily by mana, a charge of divine energy, a vital substance that emanated from the spirit world. This power could be passed from one person to another (Brown, 1978: 560). Those who received this power would undergo an initiation that would come to them as a Pentecostal event, an “inrush of God’s kingdom.” Christ was the vessel in the event of the transfiguration, the intermediary from whom the disciples received mana directly. A foretaste of the future glory was now *in* them.

Without hesitation, the early church attacked such magical beliefs and stressed that evil power yields to the superior power of God. Jesus was different from the magicians who were concerned with the control of the supernatural by techniques to further their own desires. He desired to do the will of the Father and to teach others to submit to that will.

Spiritual and Psychological Impact

Jesus was fully aware of God’s will for him. The intention behind the transfiguration event was to show to the disciples that he would embody the reality of “glory” in the Resurrection. He demonstrates that glory is more than a temporary contact to the divine presence. Glory is a reality that is revealed as a divine mode of being but a reality that is not visible to itself. It is a reality that must be witnessed by an “other.” This perception is analogous to the belief in the practice of psychotherapy that healing is most efficacious in that two persons form a relationship in which healing occurs.

Jesus’ inclusion of the disciples as witness to the event of the transfiguration indicates the potential of metamorphosis inherent in each person. Analogous to the long years one undergoes psychoanalytic or analytic reflection in the process of therapy, Jesus teaches that the transfiguration is a culmination of a long process and that we have to awaken from our “sleep,” our dullness of “seeing and hearing,” and recognize the light of the invisible source – the eternal life of the soul in a transfigured reality.

The manifestation of common images in the oral and written traditions point to how these images represent universal motifs that arise within the human psyche. When a people in history find themselves in a disenfranchised state in which their personal identity is in question or depersonalized, the human psyche reacts by development of a common theme of divine manifestation. From the depths of the human psyche a healing, guiding, presence makes itself known and offers the potential for efficacious change.

The deepest, most far-reaching change possible for human beings is expressed by the word metamorphosis. When we undergo metamorphosis, we are changed at the depths of our being and completely. Psychoanalysis, at its best, works at this level. The deeper psyche becomes the transformative ground for the original unity of soul and spirit. We know that we are in the terrain of deeper psyche when primal archetypal images and symbols grasp us and startle us beyond what we typically know and experience. Aspects of human existence replete with both light and dark sides begin to penetrate our personal consciousness, analogous to the experience of persons in the first century and in all centuries.

From a psychological perspective, in metamorphic change, the ego may feel displaced as it changes experientially into new form informed by new knowledge emerging from the psyche as the unconscious becomes conscious. The ego may feel distraught, uncomfortable, as if it is dying unto its new role and existence.

Like the disciples realization in Jesus’ transfigured form, the ego in psychological analysis comes to recognize two layers of being. What the ego has known as self is not all that it is. This realization is accompanied by the profound awareness that archetypes and archetypal images do not veil the eternal world. They lead to it. An archetype can arrest us in a mood or a state of biophysical seizure as it announces the new, taking hold of our entire personality, as if, like the disciples, we were entering a cloud. Such in-breakings of the unconscious can transcend the injuries of our childhoods and fuel us with an experiential faith, one that convinces us with impenetrable faith that some precious aspect of our being is impenetrable to death. The psychological movement we make between each image, each point of being, each glimpse of transfigured reality, leads us eventually to a world beyond mere material surfaces.

Transfigured Transfiguration

As the ego surrenders to this process of awareness, we come to realize that an archetype can present itself only in a numinous way if it is clothed in an adequate symbol; a cloud, a mountain top, a cross, for instance. Symbolic expression originates in the body and presents itself as a self-portrait of instinct. As we begin to relate to the unconscious products of dreams, waking imagination, and symbols, our consciousness is ignited into motion. Dreams point to that which is not yet ready to be born but also to the advent of new birth and the eternal.

In modern depth psychological terms, the notion of transfiguration and metamorphosis translates into the

goals of the fully individuated individual which emerges in the Self-ego relationship, a psychological reality that finds an analog in religious terms with Christ as exemplar and internal guide. The disciples proclaimed such lived experience and accepted revelation as an ongoing unfolding of divine presence in their lives. They discovered that through the mysteries of the transfigured Christ there is spiritual character that may be embodied in the conscious and visible world that transcends the manifest.

Similarly, the reflective and sacred space of therapy can become the transformative vessel for reaching toward the divine. Human deficiency and lack, as it appears in our most cast off and vulnerable parts may be the source of our greatest offerings. Our depletion may be the stable of incarnation, life that translates into more life in contrast to evil which can translate only into poverty. Therapy is analogous to a parent communing to a child whose healing is greatly aided in feeling “chosen” by a loving, attentive presence.

The transfiguration event attests to the fact that a transformation mystery exists in which the vessel character of the archetypal layer of the psyche houses a creative principle. By means of receptivity, we are enabled to bridge the two worlds of consciousness and unconsciousness. Our receptivity is the only thing that can recover to some form of healing human suffering and despair and give meaning to the inevitability of tragedy, death, dissociation, and developmental traumas. Love has the power to break through our defenses. As the great story teller Ovid once said of metamorphosis, “let me die loving and so never die” (Maidenbaum, 1993: 679–724).

See also: [Archetype](#) [Christ](#) [Christianity](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [Great Mother](#) [Jesus](#) [Osiris and the Egyptian Religion](#) [Prayer](#) [Psychotherapy](#) [Resurrection](#) [Theophany](#)

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Transitional Object

Philip Browning Helsel

The term, first coined by analyst D. W. Winnicott, refers to the object that a child might confer with special significance, such as a piece of string, a teddy bear, or a blanket. A popular representation of the transitional object is the “security” blanket that the character Linus always carried in the Peanuts cartoon. In the treatment of this object, the child enacts the love and rage that results from the bond with, and inevitable separation from the mother. Thus, the object can be the treatment of abuse, affection, or idealization and role-play, with the function of allowing the child to create, in a liminal space, a relationship that is reciprocal with and at the same time a working-through of the original mother-child environment. The liminal space in which the object is created by the child is neither the mother-child environment, nor the child separate from the mother, but is the intersection of both settings in the space of play (Winnicott, 2005: 3). The fact that the child chooses the object, uses it and abuses it, but the object continues to exist, represents the child’s creativity and the endurance of the earliest bond in spite of inevitable frustration and separation.

Winnicott argued that the space in which the transitional object is chosen, and thereby “created” by the child, is the same space in which culture is developed in adult life. It is not coincidental that Linus, in the Peanuts cartoon, is the character who is the most capable of philosophical reflection. The realms of art, religion, and literature reflect the play of imagination and the “holding” space which is necessary for this play (Winnicott, 2005: 4).

Religion is grasped in a manner similar to that which a child grasps and manipulates the earliest object. Frequent metaphors of “wrestling” or “struggling” with religion are reflective of the child’s testing of the object in the liminal space, in which the object’s permanence ensures that it will outlast even the rage of the infant. This permanence is reflected in forms of religion which tolerate doubt and even hatred of the deity, reflecting the fact that even after such a powerful struggle with the object, the object will remain.

While the believer may grasp religion as the child holds onto the transitional object, she may simultaneously have the sense of being grasped in relationship to her religion. This reflects the manner in which the psychic object echoes the earliest relations. Forms of Christian Platonism reflected how God seemed familiar to the soul, and seemed to be “recalled” by it even in its encounter with God (Turner, 1995: 70). While religion might be “used” by the adult in a similar manner to which a child uses a transitional object, it also has the quality of an encounter, especially in its mystical forms. In religion, when one may feel enveloped by or chosen by an object which has connotations of fascination, desire, or the uncanny, this sense of resonance with something “beyond” may be reflective of the pre-history of the person, in which mother and child existed in a relationship which predates the historical awareness of the person or personality (Bollas, 1987: 24–25).

See also: [Winnicott, Donald](#) [Woods](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods, and Religion](#)

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Transpersonal Psychology

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Often referenced as the Fourth Force of psychology (the previous three being behaviorism, psychodynamism, and

humanism) Transpersonal Theory refers to the intellectual movement and its attendant therapeutic praxes that attempt to redress the perspectival imbalance of its predecessors by integrating the insights of the world’s wisdom traditions with the psychological concepts, theories, and methods of the West. Whereas traditional theoretical orientations tend toward the reductive end of the interpretive continuum, transpersonal psychology seeks to include within its purview those regions of the human experience overlooked and unexplored (or utterly reduced/collapsed) by other models. These “higher” states – for curiously, the lower ones are only rarely engaged – are the primary domains with which it is concerned. Transpersonal psychologists are explicit in their mission to unite under one rubric both psychology *and* religion, or, more accurately, psychology and spirituality, however nebulously defined and protean in character the latter may be.

Fueled by the American (read Californian) counter-culture of the 1960s, the transpersonal turn was part of a wider cultural process of turning away from the perceived-to-be crumbling Occidental edifices of Church and State. Still, the project was essentially an extension of Enlightenment ideals, its earliest incarnations attempting to wed the methodologies of science to the experiential epistemologies described in various mystical (read Eastern) literatures. The consequence of this spiritually positivistic stance (e.g., there is one unitive ground of all being that can be accessed/realized by practitioners following the various prescriptive technologies described in the various non-dual systems) was the effulgence of all-encompassing meta-theories replete with competing ontological claims. These theories subsumed, into one Ultimate or another, the insights of orthodoxy, Eastern spirituality, indigenous traditions, contemplative prayer, holistic medicine, non-ordinary states of consciousness, ecstatic dance, shamanic trance, yogic breathwork, and spiritual emergencies – to name but a few, as they have arisen in the historical pageant of the world’s religious systems.

Transpersonal psychology draws heavily from the hermeneutics of the humanities, such as existentialism, phenomenology, humanism, ethnopsychology, and anthropology and is characterized by its kaleidoscopic inclusion of differing scholastic orientations. Such a promiscuous intermingling of ideas and epistemologies from both psychology and religion, have led many to erroneously conflate it with The New Age, although admittedly, there is much overlap.

Much of Transpersonal Theory is indebted to the pioneering work of William James and Carl Jung, though as a discipline it did not emerge until the late 1960s as a

unique efflux within the humanistic school of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, the latter whom, in conjunction with Stanislav Grof, founded, in 1969, the first academic journal devoted exclusively to the exploration of the aforementioned themes, *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*.

The two towering pillars of the tradition, however, are undoubtedly Ken Wilber and Stanislav Grof, although Wilber has since distanced himself from the movement in favor of his own epithetical Integral Psychology.

Wilberian Theory views the Kosmos, and by extension the development of consciousness, as a series of unfolding stages, with higher levels superior to lower levels arranged in a progressive paradigm of transcendence and inclusion. His most significant contribution to the field has been his non-dually based spectrum of consciousness.

Grof's model, in counterpoint to Wilber's, is a more laterally oriented approach and arose from his research experiences as one of the first experimenters with LSD. Regression to pre-egoic states is understood in his model to facilitate psychical integration of the individual. At first, these states were encountered with the aid of entheogens, but later with Holotropic Breathwork, a trademarked technique of posturing and breathing designed to activate the same non-ordinary states as its chemical counterparts.

Other theorists of note include: Ralph Metzner, Michael Washburn, Roger Walsh, Frances Vaughan, Robert Assagioli, and Jorge Ferrer. Ralph Metzner's pluralistic model eschews all linearity, while Washburn's calls for a helical process of graduated integration culling insights from both Jungian and psychoanalytic thinking. Jorge Ferrer has reevaluated the entire transpersonal project and is believed by many to have liberated it from the tyranny of any one metasystem, calling for a plurality of intersubjective epistemological grounds instead of the various intrapersonal models to which previous theorists had wholeheartedly subscribed.

Criticisms from outside the movement have typically taken several different forms, chiefly among them (1) that transpersonal theorists are guilty of sloppy scholarship, (2) that in selectively privileging certain religious systems over others they unfairly skew the data to support their individual models, and that (3) its continued lack of engagement with the problem of evil impoverishes any attempt to comprehend the Psyche as an integrated whole.

Perhaps most damaging of all, however, is the unfortunate fact of its being mostly ignored by both the academy and the general populace, although evidence is beginning to emerge that this may, indeed, be changing.

Commentary

Although couched as an academic discipline, transpersonal psychology really signifies the dawning of a new species of religiosity – psychology as religion.

This alternative expression of the numinous seeks to expand our understanding of the individual outside of the egoic insularity of previous psychological systems. In doing so, it dually uses psychology to read religion and religion to read psychology, neither reductively nor dogmatically collapsing one into the other.

See also: [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Rogers, Carl](#) [▶ Wilber, Ken](#)

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Trauma

Todd DuBose

Trauma is the description given to an overwhelming, uncanny, or absurd experience, usually involving some kind of violence, abuse, or loss, that threatens death of injury to oneself or another, and that resists one's capacities to process, make meaning of, or schematize the occurrence in typical or familiar ways. Traumatic experiences can be short lived and acute or chronic and seemingly unending. Often accompanied by various experiences and components of fear, worry, anger, and crises of meaning, traumatic experiences are encounters with the overwhelming and the overpowering.

Traumatic experiences are often considered experiences that "shatters assumptions" (Janoff-Bulman, 2002; Kauffman, 2002), or belie expectations of how life events

should occur. We naturally personalize traumatic events in our lives as we operate from a web of meaning that presumes life is ordered, fair, and benevolent. We live out our existence viewing chaos, chance, random destruction and absurdity as flaws in life rather than as experiences inherent to the very composition of life. The etymology of the word “traumatic,” in Greek, means “to incur or inflict a wound or injury.” Traumas, or traumata, can be physical, psychological, environmental, and/or spiritual, and can be immediate, acute, chronic, or delayed in their impact. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR describes a traumatic experience as evoking feelings of being overwhelmed and helpless (2000).

It is important to note, though, that a trauma is not only the event itself that occurs, but is shaped as well by how the event is understood by those undergoing it, and how one is cared for before, during, and after such events. Any imposing of generic templates on others of what is considered traumatic should be critically analyzed (Bracken, 2002). What is traumatic for one person may not be so for another. Developmental levels of vulnerability, exposure to life-world situations, meaning-making skills, and cultural sensitivities are all aspects to consider in assessing the nature and intensity of traumatization. Due to its imposing and intimidating nature, traumata evoke our needs to organize, categorize, and make sense of them, even though traumata are by definition experiences that resist these processes. This point testifies to our nature as meaning-making creatures. For instance, habitual ways of defining traumata as horror laden, such as war trauma, rape, physical violence, accidental dismemberment, and so forth, often enframe our definitions of trauma such that we inattent to “positive traumas,” such as winning the lottery, being proposed to, finding out your pregnant with triplets, and other experiences.

Psychological perspectives on trauma have included Sigmund Freud’s (1856–1939) explications of hysterical neurosis and repetition compulsion (Freud, 1895/2000, 1920/1990) and Otto Rank’s (1884–1939) views on birth trauma (Rank, 1929/1994). Much of the field of trauma studies has focused on the neurophysiology of traumatic and post-traumatic reactions as well as on multicultural issues within traumatic experiences and situations, particularly in regards to displacement and torture among refugees. Standard of care for psychological treatment of trauma includes post-traumatic stabilization, integration, and post-integration or reinvestment in relationships and projects in life.

It is the liminal characteristic of traumatic experience, though, that lends itself to comparisons with religious

experience. Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) noted how experiences of hierophanies, or the “inbreaking” of the holy, often leave one disoriented, feeling threatened, and “thrown” into an encounter with limitlessness (Eliade, 1959). Rudolf Otto’s (1869–1937) descriptions of encounters with the numinous as wholly other include a mixture of awe-filled fascination and terror (Otto, 1917/1958). Gerardus van der Leeuw’s (1896–1950) description of the divine as “power,” in the sense of profound, impressive and exceptional confrontation with incomparable otherness, concurs with these other phenomenologists of religious experience (van der Leeuw, 1933/1986).

These descriptions of numinous experiences are nearly verbatim of what others have said about traumatic experiences. The traumatic experience is also numinous in its ultimate, encompassing, and boundary oriented in nature, to use Karl Jaspers’ language, or “peak experience,” to use Abraham Maslow’s phrase (Maslow, 1970). For Jaspers (1883–1969), boundary situations, namely, guilt, chance, suffering, conflict, and death, are experiences in which everything is unstable and in flux (Jaspers, 1919/1997; Schlipp, 1981). Traumatic experiences are also apophatic encounters with radical Otherness in that one often finds attempts as description ineffable. When undergoing a traumatic experience, one’s very ground of meaning is deconstructed, as evidenced by alienation, guilt, irrevocable loss, and the loss of identity. During the meaning-making crises created by trauma, it is hard to determine the level of existential loss of faith operative. Yet, Stanislov and Christina Grof (1989) have provided extensive scholarship on differentiating spiritual emergencies from spiritual emergence, and how care for each respective phenomenon is different.

Ritual abuse explicitly links traumatic experiences with religious symbolism and ritual in such ways that the religious artifacts and activities are themselves traumatic. In classifying post-traumatic experiences, spiritual abuse is often overlooked, dismissed, or renamed, and can range from sexually and physically violent ritual abuse to proselytizing and theological battery, resulting in devaluation of one’s worth and well-being at one’s core and banishment from the rejecting community. Although the most overlooked traumatic experience, spiritual abuse may indeed be the most devastating, necessitating a most unique and compassionate response.

Commentary

How one becomes traumatized, *what* is considered traumatizing, and *how* one cares for traumatized individuals

remain central to any discussion about trauma. Several issues embedded in these concerns are often overlooked or at least tacked on as supplementary to standard of care protocol regarding traumatic experience. Survivors of traumatic experience often refer to how their spirituality helped them cope. Although researchers such as Kenneth Pargament (2001) have so aptly shown the benefits of religious rituals and beliefs as coping mechanisms, equating spirituality with coping mechanisms can often miss the phenomenology of religious experience on which such coping mechanisms are predicated. Numinosity is inherent in the experiential structure of traumatic phenomenon and not merely a tool of consolation tool that can be chosen or not on an as needed basis.

Another unanalyzed aspect of traumatic experience is a tendency to explain such experiences solely in terms of neurophysiology and cognitive schemas, rather than disclose the phenomenology of the experiences themselves through descriptive analysis of its significance as lived by those undergoing or having undergone such experiences. The field has tended to generically template, categorize, and collate what is counted as a traumatic experience, and how someone should react to it. For instance, a traumatizing experience is not just “caused” by a prior happening in one’s immediate or distant past. For an experience to be traumatic, multiple factors have to occur and situations have to provide an arena for traumatic experiences to come into existence, including much that is chance, random, unsolicited, and undeserved. The genericizing of traumatic events and reactions runs the risk of missing the unique and incomparable meaning-making that resists classification. Moreover, addressing trauma requires more than challenging globalizing cognitive distortions. An encounter with the traumatic, much like an encounter with the numinous, is “irrational” in Otto’s language (1917), and “absurd” in Camus’ (1955) language, and neither experience is a distortion of reality. Life, at times, does not make sense and side-swipes us in undeserved ways. Thinking otherwise is actually the distortion needing correction.

A final point often minimized or not thought about in therapeutically working through traumatic experiences for persons is how prevalent the problem of evil is for traumatized persons, including the often disenfranchised group of traumatized persons: the traumatizers. Whether or not one is theistic, atheistic, or non-theistic, traumas raise the question of the justice, fairness, and benevolence of existence, particularly for the one undergoing the trauma, and therapeutic care must face this often unspoken issue upfront. To do so requires much of the therapist, and given so, one must attend to the perils of vicarious

traumatization (Nouwen, 1979; Steed and Downing, 1998). Yet, the model of the wounded healer has guided us though these dark valleys long before the field of trauma was formally conceived. It is often that in caring for those who have survived the undeserved and unexpected visitation of unmitigated destruction that an antidote is offered to soothe the horror. The antidote does not deny that suffering is a part of life, and at the same time, it, too, is undeserved, unexpected, and uncoerced. The antidote may very well be simply the grace of having one’s resilient capacities borne witness to and celebrated in order to not only cope, but also to thrive.

See also: [Abyss](#) [Chaos](#) [Dissociation](#) [Evil](#) [Existential Psychotherapy](#) [Existentialism](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Hermeneutics](#) [Holocaust](#) [Homo Religiosus](#) [John of the Cross](#) [Liminality](#) [Lived Theology](#) [Meaning of Human Existence](#) [Phenomenological Psychology](#) [Spiritual Emergence](#) [Theodicy](#) [Vicarious Traumatization](#)

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Trickster

David A. Leeming

The trickster is a common character in mythology and in certain religious traditions, especially, but not exclusively the animistic – spirit-based – religions of Africa and Native North America. Typically male, the trickster usually has extreme appetites for food and sex. He is immoral, or, at least, amoral, and he is, more often than not, a thief. Yet he often uses his inventiveness to help human beings and is sometimes, in effect, a culture hero. Often his inventiveness interferes with creation, however, and causes such realities as pain and death. The trickster is a shape shifter. He can change shapes at will and, in that sense, is perhaps a mythological relative of the shaman.

In the ancient Greek Religion, Hermes, as a child, has trickster aspects, as, for instance when he steals Apollo's cattle. In India, the great man-god Krishna, the most important of the avatars of the god Vishnu, constantly plays tricks – some of a sexual nature, as when he steals the clothes of his bathing female followers. In these cases, however, the trickster aspect seems to reflect essential inventiveness and creativity and points to later more important achievements. The same is true of stories of tricks played by the boy Jesus in some of the apocryphal gospels.

More typical tricksters are those such as the Native American Coyote and Raven and the African Ananse (the Spider). The fact that these figures take animal forms coincides with their unbridled appetites. Coyote is an expert seducer of women and he constantly steals food from others more needy than himself. The West African Ananse even steals the high god's daughter. Like Hermes and Krishna, these tricksters are highly creative, but their creativity almost always causes trouble for themselves or others.

Tricksters such as Erlik in Central Asia are often close to the creator and manage, while pretending to help, to undermine creation, allowing evil in. In this sense, Satan, in the Abrahamic tradition, is a trickster. A fallen angel, once close to God, he enters the new creation – Eden – as a serpent and uses his natural guile to infect that creation with sin – sin immediately associated with sexuality.

The trickster is a clear representative of an id-dominated ego un-tempered by superego. He is the narcissistic child, whose physical appetites are uppermost in importance. Jung saw the trickster as “an earlier, rudimentary stage of consciousness” (1969: 141) and an expression of shadow, the primitive, irrational “dark side” of the unconscious, but also, in his creativity and inventiveness, as a hint of a later positive figure who takes form, like the Great Hare of the Native American trickster tradition, as a culture hero-savior.

See also: [▶ Animism](#) [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Culture Heroes](#) [▶ Devil](#) [▶ Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Tulku

Paul Larson

In Tibetan Buddhism a tulku is an individual who is deemed to be the current holder of a long chain of lamas who direct the circumstances of their reincarnation

through choice, leaving clues to their next incarnation for the students of the lineage to seek out and help train the new embodiment of spiritual power and authority. Reincarnation is a core belief of both Hinduism and Buddhism and is found in many Western esoteric traditions as well. The general view of Buddhism is that all sentient beings are on a wheel of life, endlessly living lives, dying and becoming reborn in another body. There is a broad assumption of an evolutionary process where greater spiritual accomplishments result in moving up the scale of beings. The Mahayana concept of ‘bodhisattva’ is relevant here, since they postpone their complete enlightenment in order to continue to work for the enlightenment of all sentient beings. The tulku, as a bodhisattva continues their life stream across particular incarnations in order to facilitate the enlightenment of all. In Tibetan Buddhism, the god realm exists, but enlightenment can only come through a human reincarnation, making it a precious gift. The specific Tibetan twist on this general doctrine of reincarnation involves this special ability of highly developed spiritual leaders; they can direct their own reincarnation and have prescience as to the circumstances so as to be able to guide their followers in finding their next form.

The most widely known of such lineages of lamas is the Dalai Lama, currently held by the 14th lineage holder, formerly known as Tenzin Gyatso. The oldest such lineage line, however, is the Karmapa (head of the Kagyu lineage) which is one of the four major lineages within the monastic community (in order of origination they are Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug). Each of those lineages, as well as many early teachers within each lineage have now recognized lineages of tulkus who are the thread of continuity in spiritual leadership.

Until recently only Tibetan children were recognized as instances of a lineage line, but there are several young Western children who have now been recognized, and whose parents have allowed them to enter monasteries to receive training in Tibetan Buddhism and the specific traditions of their lineage. Individuals who are recognized as reincarnated lamas are generally referred to with the honorific title “rinpoche,” or “precious teacher.” But this title is also granted to other significant teachers who are not recognized as part of a reincarnated lineage.

These tulkus are themselves manifestations of other transcendental beings. The Dalai Lama, for example is viewed as an embodiment of Chenrezig, the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. All of the great teachers and initiators of lineages are seen as tied to these transcendental Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The doctrine which provides

the theology for understanding this is the “trikaya” (Skt), or three bodies theory. The transcendental Buddha has the capacity to be in three types of bodies, the Dharmakaya body is the truly transcendent realm beyond duality; the Sambhogakaya body, or “enjoyment body” is the realm of high bliss as one would experience in the god realm, and the Nirmanakaya body is the “body of transformation,” which is how the Buddha manifests in earthly human form. The Buddha’s most recent embodiment was the Indian prince Siddhartha Gautama, or Shakyamuni Buddha. Tibetan Buddhism shares the deep involvement in the reality of a pantheon of transcendental Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with the Mahayana tradition found in East Asia.

See also: [▶ Bodhisattva](#) [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Dalai Lama](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Rinpoche](#)

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Twelve Steps

Jennifer Amlen

The 12 step program was founded in Akron, Ohio in 1935 by Dr. Bob Smith (known as Dr. Bob) and Bill Wilson (known as Bill W.). It is based on the 12 steps and 12 traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is an anonymous (using first names only) self-help program based on the goal of attaining sobriety from alcoholism.

The 12 steps are:

1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

The 12 step program aims at helping individuals achieve sobriety by modifying the dysfunctional patterns and defenses of behavior, developing and strengthening their adaptive coping mechanisms, building new supportive social networks through telephone calls and meetings, and utilizing community resources. It teaches individuals to address the feelings that they have avoided through the use of alcohol. It is a non-profit organization based on fellowship of members who share the same goal, a desire to stop drinking.

Total abstinence, in combination with utilizing the tools of the program, is the program's goal for recovery. The tools require one to make a thorough process of working through the 12 steps by obtaining a sponsor (one who has more experience in the program, has long term abstinence and acts as a mentor/primary support). The program stresses the need to help others in order to maintain one's own sobriety. In addition, there is a wide variety of literature that members are encouraged to read daily. Meetings are a strong part of the program, ranging from topic (i.e., serenity, honesty, forgiveness) steps (any one of the 12 steps), and qualification (usually a 20 min description of one's story focused on sharing experience, strength, and hope with fellow members). In the meetings, each member is encouraged to share for 3–4 min, keeping the focus on the solution rather than dwelling on the problem.

According to Carl Jung, alcoholism in Latin is "spiritus" and one uses the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. Before Alcoholics Anonymous was established, doctors and psychiatrists didn't have any cure for the alcoholic. It was suggested that many doctors referred to

William James statement that religiomania is the only remedy for dipsomania (Cheever, 2004).

In 1931, it is written that Carl Gustav Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, told his patient Mr. Rowland H. that the only solution for his recovery from addiction would have to be a religious or spiritual experience. Jung refers to craving for alcohol, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language: the union with God. Jung further elaborated that the only cure for alcoholism is a full-fledged religious experience. Rowland H. joined the Oxford Group, led by an old Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Showemaker, in England. The Oxford Group was a nondenominational evangelical movement, accepting the simple common denominators of all religions that would be potent enough to change the lives of men and women.

The practices of the Oxford Groups were:

1. *Admission of personal defeat (you have been defeated by sin).*
2. *Taking personal inventory (List your sins).*
3. *Confession of one's sins to another person.*
4. *Making restitution of those harmed.*
5. *Helping others selflessly.*
6. *Praying to God for Guidance and the power to put those precepts into practice.*

One of the most important requirements of the Oxford Group was to recruit more members to the group. It was only through helping others selflessly that one was cured. This doctrine was adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous. It was Ebby Thacher that carried the message of the Oxford Group to Bill Wilson in 1934, depicting that a spiritual awakening in combination with the spiritual principals could cure the alcoholic. Bill Wilson teamed up with Dr. Bob Smith and wrote the book for Alcoholics Anonymous, known as the "Big Book." Originally, there were 6 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, similar to the 6 steps of the Oxford Group's, which were later developed into 12 steps along with the 12 traditions. The 12 step programs stayed true to the tradition of the Oxford Group, remaining nondenominational, using terms as "higher power" and "God," as we understand him.

Although the 12 step programs are rooted in American Protestantism, it is not exclusive to Christian or theistic belief. Eastern spiritual practice such as Transcendental meditation, Native American spirituality, such as sweat lodges, and rituals of singing and medicine circles, are widely practiced, as well. All these spiritual models share a belief that the path to recovery lies in the first 3 steps, which emphasis a belief and a readiness to turn one's will over to

a higher power. Other groups have been founded throughout the world based on the same principals: Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, Nicotine Anonymous, Al-Anon, Overeaters Anonymous, etc.

Commentary

The most common theoretical approach to curing addiction at the early stages in psychotherapy has been Cognitive Therapy, Behavioral Therapy, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The theory involves adapting new behavior from old behavior, adjusting one's irrational and faulty thinking to a healthier thought process. It is achieved by setting up a schedule and a contract with a therapist, developing new activities, keeping a journal of feelings and behaviors, cravings and/or triggers. It also involves using positive reinforcement and addressing negative consequences of destructive behavior (Cooper and Lesser, 2002). In the later stages of recovery, ego supportive and ego-modifying work can be undertaken. Many people with substance abuse lack certain ego functioning, such as a state of identity, impulse control, good judgement, frustration tolerance, and object constancy (Goldstein, 1984). Like the ego psychological perspective, the 12 step program promotes growth in ego functioning and ego synthesis, even though the language may be different.

Sigmund Freud's structural theory of the id, the superego and the ego refers to drives by the id's need for immediate gratification, the superego's often punitive and moral perspective of society and the parent, and the ego which acts as the mediator of both the id and the super-ego. Freud's theories address the treatment of addiction in his discovery of the early defense mechanisms, such as denial, projection, and rationalization. In the 12 step program, steps 1 through 3, address these early defenses of denial and require a willingness and belief in a source (higher power) outside of one's own self. Step 4 through 9, require the review of one's impulses (id drives), address the consequences to oneself and to others, and require taking responsibility for one's actions. This step process requires awareness (observing ego) with a willingness to be able to adapt and modify one's thinking and behavior. Step 10 is a constant review requiring the ego to regulate these drives on a daily basis and to continue to take responsibility for one's actions. Step 11, prayer and meditation, continues to remind the ego to practice further self awareness. Step 12 provides a moral structure for helping others, resisting the potential for grandiosity and narcissism, by focusing on one's strength in order to benefit newcomers to the program who are in need of help.

See also: [Body and Spirituality](#) [Compulsion](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Ego](#) [Faith](#) [Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [God Image and Therapy](#) [Healing](#) [Id](#) [James, William](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Religion](#) [Religion and Mental and Physical Health](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Phenomenology](#) [Meditation](#) [Personal God](#) [Prayer](#) [Psychospirituality](#) [Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [Substance Abuse and Religion](#) [Super-Ego](#) [Religious Experience](#)

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Twice Born

John Pahucki

Categorical term in the psychology of religious experience developed and described by William James in his classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The description is obviously rooted in the exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus in the Gospel of John (3:1–21) where Jesus comments that a man must be “born again” in order to enter the Kingdom of God, although James seems to have directly appropriated the term “twice born” from Francis W. Newman's *The Soul; Its Sorrows and its*

Aspirations (1882). The twice born type is the counterpart of the first born personality, who represents an instance of what James describes as “the religion of healthy-mindedness.” These individuals are characterized by a shallow optimism in regard to religious belief and, in extreme cases, an almost pathological aversion to the reality of suffering and evil. In contradistinction to this type, the twice born has passed through the experience of what James describes as “the sick soul,” where the individual’s greater awareness of manifest evil forestalls the formation of religious conviction. The twice born type has successfully navigated the challenge of religious pessimism, represented by the sick soul, proceeding to an affirmation of life and development of a religious outlook that fully retains its experience of the darker aspects of existence.

The twice born personality, therefore, never represents a relapse into the religion of healthy-mindedness, which is characteristic of the first born type, but indicates a more comprehensive and integrated religious perspective. In this sense, James’ description of the twice born bears some resemblance to the successful integration of the shadow in Jungian analytical psychology.

See also: [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Shadow](#) [▶ Theodicy](#)

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Unconscious

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Whether structured like a language (Lacan), the submerged base of an iceberg (Freud), or the ocean upon which the iceberg itself is afloat (Jung), the unconscious is that vast “region” of mind that operates below (or para to) the limen of awareness, interacting with, affecting, and determining, to a certain degree, both our actions and our experience of consciousness in a myriad of ways only subtly perceived.

The discovery of this chimerical “entity” and the term which describes it has often been credited to Sigmund Freud, though articulator is perhaps a more fitting distinction. Innumerable authors have described and foreshadowed what we today call the unconscious, among their number Paracelsus, Schopenhauer, Leibniz, Spinoza, and Shakespeare, but it was Freud who first gave us a language and lattice-work with which to both read and describe it in the form of psychoanalysis.

In the history of psychology, it was this integral insight that shaped the discipline’s theoretical orientation(s) and made therapy possible. Much of therapy consists of the seemingly Sisyphean task of unraveling the private mysteries of neurotic conflict, unearthing their roots and exposing these sources to the light of consciousness, and ideally, via the process of therapeutic engagement, successfully working through them.

In the psychology of religion, it is equally important.

Freud’s reductive view was rooted in his hydraulically based psychodynamic understanding of the unconscious, believing the entirety of humankind’s religious expression to be the glorious, though illusory, processes of projection, psycho-sexual conflict and sublimation. This model has since been applied to virtually every God(dess) and his or her religion that scholars have come in contact with. Freud undoubtedly drew heavily from the work of the German theologian Ludwig Feuerbach, whose cataclysmic pronouncement was that the essence of Christianity (and by natural extension *all* religion) was simply

our collective projections of all that is best in us as a species onto the intrinsically non-existent cipher of “God.” Although writing long before Freud and the coining of the term “unconscious,” the concept is clearly operative in Feuerbach’s analysis. Object-Relations Theory further developed these ideas in the context of idealized parental figures, while Jung believed the dazzling infinitude of religious expression could be read as permutations of a pantheon of archetypes.

The reception of these theories has historically been reductive, but recent re-workings of the psychoanalytic method have since seen that this unconscious process known as sublimation is precisely that – sublime. And that the erotic, which so often acts as both medium *and* message in the realm of the unconscious, cannot be collapsed into sex any more than three dimensions can be collapsed into two. And as embodied beings, it is the erotic dimension through which we seem to contact and express our experience of numinosity in its arborescent unfolding throughout the play of time.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Lacan, Jacques](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Psychology of Religion](#)

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Underworld

[▶ Descent to the Underworld](#)

Urantia Book

Daniel E. Tyler

The Urantia Book was published in 1955 by the Urantia Foundation in Chicago, Illinois. Urantia (you-ranch-ya) is the name assigned by the book to planet Earth, and the book purports to describe the physical and spiritual history of this world and the greater universe. By its own admission, the book claims to be a revelation. The 196 chapters that constitute the 2,093 page text are credited to a variety of angelic and celestial authors. The exact process by which the book was created is a mystery though much is known about the people involved with the publication of the Urantia Book. The central figure in the book's long (by some accounts, almost 50 year) gestation was a prominent Chicago physician and author, William S. Sadler (1875–1969). Sadler; his wife, Lena Kellogg Sadler, also a medical doctor; his son, William, Jr., and his adopted daughter, Emma Christensen, formed the core “contact commission” to whom the contents of the book were first manifested. According to Sadler, a fifth person whose identity has never been revealed was utilized as the agent through whom the information was transmitted by a process never explained. Much of the information imparted by the celestials was in response to questions posed by people associated with the Sadler family, a group known as the “forum.” The forum met on a weekly basis for many years to formulate questions and study the material.

The book is organized in four sections: the central and superuniverses; the local universe; the history of Urantia; and the life and teachings of Jesus. The first chapter is titled “The Universal Father” and the book emphasizes the personal and parental nature of God. Consistent with Christian theology, the book is also trinitarian. Jesus is identified as the human incarnation of a divine creator son, Michael of Nebadon. According to the book, Michael incarnated on Urantia as Jesus for many reasons, chief of which was to reveal the nature of God to man. Upon completion of his mission on Urantia, Michael assumed full authority as the supreme ruler of the universe of his creation (Nebadon) which consists of more than three million inhabited planets. From a psychological perspective, the book stresses the unique quality of each person and the evolutionary nature of mortal development. Human beings are ascending creatures on a long journey back to God. Spiritual progress comes as the individual discerns and accepts the will of God. To assist in this process, God has given each human a fragment of Himself

called the thought adjuster, which guides a person toward perfection. When an individual has progressed sufficiently to have accepted God's will as his or her own, then the soul and personality fuse with the thought adjuster and the individual attains immortality.

Personality is also a gift from God and every person is a unique and unrepeatably expression of the divine personality, fully endowed with free will. The soul is the product of the personality and thought adjuster working together; human beings create their own souls as they choose to express the divine will, the essence of which is love. The book describes seven psychic circles of advancement a person must attain to achieve immortality, which equates to an eternal existence of learning and service in worlds beyond. Upon mortal death, a person is resurrected on another world consistent with person's spiritual development. The Urantia Book has been translated into a dozen languages and several hundred thousand copies have been printed.

See also: [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Jesus](#)

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Uroboros

John Eric Killinger

Introduction

Uroboros (often *ouroboros*, sometimes *ourovoros*) is a transliteration of the Greek οὐροβόρος (οὐρηβόρος). It has appeared in Latin as *ourvorax*. Uroboros is a composite word meaning “devouring its tail.” It is also synonymous with δράκων (*dragon*) and occasionally” ὄφις (*ophis*). Whereas the gnostic Ophites and even contemporary snake handling sects within Pentecostal Christianity (originating in Appalachia) continue to exist

sporadically throughout the Southern United States, these are perhaps more derivative of Minoan snake goddess cultic worship than uroboric devotion.

A Powerful Primordial Symbol

Uroboros means “tail devourer.” Devouring the tail indicates the eating of one’s own flesh (without swallowing – yet). Tertullian (1989) and Chrysostom (1989) remark of the “autocannibalism” within the Eucharistic meal, the Lord’s Supper wherein Jesus instituted the bread and cup of wine as his body and blood which his followers are to take, eat, and drink in anamnesis of him. Not only this, but he himself eats his own flesh and drinks his own blood and applies the alpha and omega (the first and the last letters in the apocalypse of John) to himself.

The uroboros is the most dynamic and primitive of all symbols representing the self-sufficient primordial deity. There is a connection between the uroboros and *khut*, the sacred snake that coils around the sun and marks the travel of the solar disk across the heavens in hieroglyphic representations of Ra within Egyptian theology and mythology. Uroboros as a sun depiction in Egyptian papyri is considered a *lemniscate*, or figure eight, the symbol for infinity. In such depictions, the uroboros appears in double and indicates volatility, is associated with the magician card in the Tarot deck, and has affinity with the one-sided Moebius strip that came to symbolize anxiety for Lacan (2004) because of its non-orientability. Representations of the lemniscate uroboros also appear in alchemical texts.

It is a round element, not unlike the Greek α , and because it is a round element, the uroboros is also *omega* (Ω). The eat and be eaten aspects (life and death) are the hallmarks of the uroboros’ sustaining of the cosmic process. Not only has it affinity with the Eucharistic meal, but the uroboros is equivalent to the Holy Spirit because it is both actor and the acted-upon and producer and product simultaneously.

There are incidences of triple uroboroi, as well. Charbonneau-Lassay (1991) includes a woodcut depicting such a symbol from a sixteenth-century Italian shield. This insignia is a good ancestor of the Borromean knot mathe in Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory of the interconnection between the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic – this despite the lack of the fourth ring (the *sinthome* or Σ) that would hold the entire knot together should a piece of it be cut. Lacan points out that in the traditional Borromean knot of three interlocking rings, cutting any one of the rings would undo the knot entirely. The presence of the *sinthome* (etymological ancestor of the *symptom*)

would keep this from happening. It is worth noting that with this fourth ring we would have not only a quaternity symbol, a squaring of the circle, but also the fourth within the alchemical axiom of Maria Prophetissa (one becomes two, two become three, and out of the third comes the One as the fourth).

Throughout the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament or Hebrew bible, the uroboros appears in various guises as $\delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omega\nu$ (*dragon*). There is the serpent in the Garden of Eden; there are epithetical comparisons of the uroboros/dragon to Babylon in the prophets; the uroboros is synonymous with Leviathan whom God tames, makes of it a plaything, and eventually destroys; uroboros/dragon is also epithetically used to describe the pharaoh king of Egypt using the metaphor of the Nile crocodile; and it appears even in apocryphal texts of the prophet Daniel in the stories of Bel and the dragon to be slain as a means to attempt a paradigmatic faith shift in the serpent cults of Babylon.

Interconnections have been made between the triad Leviathan-uroboros-Christ, since the uroboros is viewed as being a *homoousia*. That is, it is of one substance, as Christian creedal statements have attempted to clarify in the relationship between God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit in trinitarian formulae. This is, of course, a throwback to the archetypal incest motif associated with the uroboros. Father, mother, son, and daughter are of the same substance, so that what happens to one happens to all. This ties in with the understanding noted in the Chrysopoeia of Cleopatra in the Egyptian *Codex Marcianus* (Berthelot & Ruelle, 1888) wherein a light and dark uroboros surrounds the Greek phrase “en to pan” ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$), “the One, the All.” This is indicative of the uroboros being at one and the same the sacrificer and the sacrificed (i.e., God and Christ), alchemically represented by the spirit Mercurius and his role as both uniter and divider.

In the New Testament, the imagery of the uroboros/dragon appears specifically in the apocalypse (Revelation) of John. In Revelation 12 (Aland, et al., 1998: 654–656), this dragon has been observed to be analogous to the mythologems of Apollo killing the Pythian dragon at Delphi and Zeus’ immobilization of Typhon as though to indicate the commonality of the need to overcome/overthrow/imprison/slay the dragon as offending beast. Indeed, it became common practice in the Middle Ages to dub a knight in the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George as a symbol of Yahweh’s overthrowing the great sea serpent Leviathan and making it a plaything – not to mention the obvious affinities with the subduing of Satan by Michael in the Revelation of John. Such imagery also denotes the links the uroboros has with twinship, for

example, the story of Castor and Pollux, the pillars of Hermes (Mercurius!) and Hercules (and the Kabbalah's Jachin and Boaz columns), the Mithraic Cautes and Cau-partes, as well as the Hero Twins in Pueblo lore: monster slayers and transformers of the old to the new. W. R. Bion (1950/1967) alludes to the poisonous nature in the swallowing of the analytic twin. Ode 22 of the pseudepigraphal *Odes of Solomon* (Charlesworth, 1985: 755) recalls the "poison" of the dragon which is its dark half.

The uroboros motif is also present in the third chapter of the Johannine gospel wherein Jesus and Nicodemus broach the subject of the serpent lifted up by Moses. This is an overt allusion to the lifting up of the Christ on the cross, the sacrifice by the sacrificer for the renewal and redemption of human beings. In this same chapter of John's gospel, the uroboros image first appears in the call to be born from above (water and the spirit). Uroboros is associated with water (as in the Genesis story of creation), and it is affiliated with Okeanos, which has the dual meaning of life (*zoë*) and death (*thanatos*). That the uroboros is capable of fragmenting, separating, and dividing is indicative of life, since *zoë* is an epithet for Dionysos, divine archetypal symbol of fragmentation. But the uroboric dragon is also a symbol of perpetual renewal, which is also indicative of *zoë* as rebirth follows death.

Uroboros in Gnosticism and Mystical Judaism

In gnostic writings, such as the *Pistis Sophia* (Mead, 1921/2005), the body of the mysterious serpent is divided into 12 aeons, corresponding to the 12 months of the solar year. Within the dialogue with the resurrected Christ, Mary Magdalene inquires about the nature of outer darkness. Jesus' response is that the outer darkness is a great dragon with its tail in its mouth outside the whole world and surrounding the whole world. This may well be the same outer darkness into which the improperly attired guest is cast in Jesus' parable of the marriage feast in Matthew 22. Thus the light and dark attributes of the uroboros correspond to the *agathadaimon* (spirit of good) and the *kakadaimon* (spirit of evil), respectively. This is because as serpent, the uroboros gives and sustains life as well as removes and destroys life.

It is important to consider the issue of emanations when speaking of the uroboros. The gnostic texts that comprise the Nag Hammadi codices contain a number of references to the uroboric nature of the creation and dissolution of the cosmos which spring from emanations of the great serpent. These are, psychologically speaking,

projections. Whether we put up barriers (β -screens) to block or repress these projections is something worth taking into consideration. As knowledge of the uroboros is eventually related to the squaring of the circle (which allows us to discern God), contains the union of the opposites (tying it to the hierosgamos [q.v.]), and is, all in all, immune to injury, it is analogous to W. R. Bion's epistemological notion that knowledge leads to absolute reality, which he designates as "O." Put another way, knowledge respectfully leads to the indescribable ultimate reality, godhead (not *imago Dei!*), or "O," remembering that knowledge and ultimate reality are not synonymous.

Referring to Torah, Rabbi Yochanan ben Bag (Ben Bag Bag in the Babylonian Talmud) urges in *Pirke Avot* 5:22, "Turn it and turn it again, for everything can be found therein." It is the uroboric nature of Torah to reach out and draw the world into itself and project it. The same could be said of Kabbalah, since the uroboros is synonymous with Leviathan and this same tamed sea serpent and plaything of God is therein the name for *Yesod* and *Tifereth*.

Uroboros in Psychology

With the uroboros, there is still turbulence, for it encircles the Void or abyss of chaos. This bears on Bion's (1977/2000) concept of emotional turbulence in the analytic encounter – indeed, within any encounter between human beings. This turbulence/chaos holds events that are discernible, and it is up to us to pick our way to them and draw them out. Films (e.g., *Stargate*) have capitalized on the uroboric interconnectedness between other galaxies and times, aeon fluxes, and the like. Joyce (1939/1967) produced an exceptional uroboric text in his *Finnegan's Wake*.

The uroboros is the one that devours, fertilizes, begets, slays, and brings itself, like the phoenix, to life again. It is hermaphroditic and the container of the opposites: poison and panacea, as well as basilisk and savior. As a sexual symbol, the uroboros in fertilizing itself is thus related to hierosgamos. Charbonneau-Lassay (1991) mentions the existence of a gold ring in the form of a uroboros. A wedding band in gold (the highest not-color color both symbolically and alchemically) is already a uroboros, further connecting it with the hierosgamos, or sacred marriage, acted out within the wedding rite.

Despite its lemniscate and Borromean emanations and derivatives, the uroboros is usually depicted as a serpent devouring its tail, ring shaped, a circle without beginning and without end. It's a symbol of infinite time,

of death and rebirth, regeneration, dying in order to be born anew. Geometrically, the topology of the uroboros is that of a torus, a donut defined by two circles – one revolving about an axis coplanar with the other. Lacan used the torus to speak of the effect of the irruption of the Real into everyday life. With the torus, there is no inside or outside: only two voids by which to articulate request and desire which never quite find fulfillment and end up creating a spiraling chain of veiled originary remembrance. Because our lives and the world form a continuous order within the toroidal uroboros, when the Real irrupts, it does so everywhere at once, subjecting everything to change. Since the uroboros serpent not only signifies emanation/projection and dissolution but also life-giving and life-taking, such an irruption is threatening because of the potential for the dissolution of everything in its presence. The uroboros is thus a sublation (progress, qualitative change), the sort of *Aufhebung* used in Hegelian terminology. Nevertheless, whatever change occurs is essentially an enantiodromia. There is a return to the originary and the movement is not static but dynamic.

See also: [▶ Apocalypse](#) [▶ Bible](#) [▶ Bion, Wilfred Ruprecht, and “O”](#) [▶ Genesis](#) [▶ Gnosticism](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Kabbalah](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Symbol](#)

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V

Vatican

Anthony J. Elia

The Vatican is a 108-acre territory and independent city-state located in the center of the Italian capital of Rome. It is headed by the Pope, as supreme governor, and administered through the Pontifical Commission. It has its own legal system, based upon the *2000 Fundamental Law of the Vatican City-State*, which was promulgated by Pope John Paul II, as well as a penal system, two jails, a post office, electric plant, bank, and publishing house. Canon law also presides, and in the cases where canon law does not apply, the laws of the city of Rome are employed. Originally, the term “Vatican” referred to the area of Rome called “mons vaticanus,” which was a hill sloping away from the center of the ancient city near the Tiber, and a location that was sacred for early Christians, who believed it to be the burial place of St. Peter (Allen, 2004).

In common usage, the terms *Vatican*, *Holy See*, and *Roman Curia* are often interchanged imprecisely. Whereas the Vatican refers specifically to a physical location, the *Holy See* and *Roman Curia* refer to authoritarian and administrative roles. The *Holy See* is the centrality of authority, power, and jurisdiction, coming from the Latin *sedes*, or *seat*. It indicates the “proper term for designating the authority of the papacy to govern the Church. It is a non-territorial institution, an idea rather than a place” (Allen, 2004: 23). The *Roman Curia*, which originally referred to a seat in the ancient Roman Senate, is the “bureaucratic instrument through which the Pope administers the Holy See and carries out his function both as supreme governor of the Catholic Church and as a sovereign diplomatic actor” (Allen, 2004: 28). This said, the use of the term “Vatican” continues to function in media and general discussion as a catch-all for references to the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

Freud, Lacan, and the Vatican

Freud visited the Vatican Museum, and was positively enamored by its wealth of art. As Ernest Jones, Freud’s biographer writes, “he [Freud] was. . .in the Vatican Museum and came away from it exhilarated by the beauty of what he had seen” (Jones, 1955: 20). But his feelings about the Vatican as a representative of the New Rome, which he recognized as the empire of Christian Rome, were negative. Unlike Lacan, who is sometimes described as “un cattolico non ortodosso” and a great admirer of Baroque Rome and its Catholic trappings, Freud was greatly conflicted over this new Christian Rome localized in the Vatican, especially as a tension rooted in his vision of Judaism in conflict with the Church (Amati, 1996).

Psychology and the Vatican

In the late nineteenth century, individuals such as Hermann von Helmholtz, Wilhelm Wundt, Pierre Marie Félix Janet, and Sigmund Freud were introducing experimental and clinical methods into the discipline of psychology. It was most significantly Freud, whose writings and psychoanalysis were to become anathema to the Catholic world (Gillespie, 2001). In a 1952 TIME magazine article entitled “Is Freud Sinful?” there is clear consternation from some Vatican officials, but these assertions are notably neither official nor dogmatic. One of the most vocal opponents of Freud was Monsignor Pericle Felici, an official of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments, who “loudly attacked ‘the absurdity of psychoanalysis.’ He stated flatly that anyone who adopts the Freudian method is risking mortal sin” (TIME, 1952). The general concern of most critics, though, had to do with any Freudian issues of sex and sexuality. The Vatican’s official status on psychoanalysis in 1952 was expressed in the statement: “should psychoanalytic treatment be judged harmful to the spiritual health of the faithful, the church would not hesitate to take adequate steps to brand it as such. Nothing, so far, indicates that

such steps are about to be taken” (TIME, 1952). Felici continued to criticize the role of psychology and his assertion that “the psychoanalytical school can easily become a school of corruption” resulted in controversy (Gillespie and Kevin, 2001: 19). The official response to the storm over psychoanalysis came when Pope Pius XII spoke at the First International Congress on the Histopathology of the Nervous System, where he vigorously cautioned against “psychotherapeutic treatments that seek to unleash the sexual instinct for seemingly therapeutic reasons” (Gillespie and Kevin, 2001: 19). The following year, on April 13, 1953, Pius XII addressed the Fifth International Congress of Psychotherapy and Clinical Psychology, saying

- ▶ be assured that the Church follows your research and your medical practice with her warm interest and her best wishes. You labor in a terrain that is very difficult. But your activity is capable of achieving precious results for medicine, for the knowledge of the soul in general, for the religious dispositions of man and for their development (Pius XII, 1953).

In more recent times, there have been attempts at mollifying the historically tenuous and misunderstood relationship between psychology, psychiatry, and the Vatican. In 1993, Dr. Joseph T. English, then president of the American Psychiatric Association, led a delegation of prominent psychiatrists to meet with Pope John Paul II. The New York Times noted that there was a time when such an event “would have seemed unlikely, if not absurd” (Steinfels, 1993). Some of the issues that were considered in this encounter dealt with the belief by some Catholics that psychological ills are simple moral failings and, thus find psychotherapy something to be shunned (Steinfels, 1993). Five years after this discussion, Pope John Paul II referred to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in a message on the sacrament of Penance, where he indicated that “the confessional is not and cannot be an alternative to the psychoanalyst’s or psychotherapist’s office. Nor can one expect the sacrament of Penance to heal truly pathological conditions” (John Paul II, 1998). In the twenty-first century, the Vatican has become more involved in the psychological disciplines, primarily through the work of pastoral care and counseling.

See also: [Confession](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Lacan, Jacques](#) [Pastoral Counseling](#) [Rome](#)

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Vedanta

Fredrica R. Halligan

A philosophy of classical Hinduism, *Vedanta* means “the culmination of the *Vedas*,” referring to the *Upanishads* as the final portion of that scripture. In essence *Vedanta* is theology, with its main concern focused on divine power. In the past 100 years, *Vedanta* has been popularized in the West, a movement initiated by Swami Vivekananda who carried the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna from Calcutta to Vedanta Society centers in many major cities of the world.

Principal teachings embody the harmony of all religions: “As many faiths, so many paths.” With its aim to experience the oneness of all creation, *Vedanta* preaches kindness to all, non-violence and service to others (*seva*.) God (*Brahman*) can be known as form or formless. In form, for example, God can be found in Divine Incarnations (*Avatars*) and as the Indweller of every human heart (*Atman*). As formless, God is perceived as all-pervading and as pure consciousness.

See also: [Atman](#) [Avatar](#) [Hinduism](#) [Ramakrishna Paramahansa](#) [Vivekananda](#)

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Vestments

David A. Leeming

Vestments are the garments worn by priests and other religious leaders in the performance of sacred rites. The term is used especially by Christian denominations which place particular emphasis on the sacrament of Holy Communion, the liturgy of the Eucharist. Thus, priests of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and most of the Anglican Communion, wear vestments while celebrating the “Mass” or “Great Liturgy.” Vestments of various types and colors, depending on the liturgical season of the church year, are worn. The most common and most visible Eucharistic vestment is the chasuble, a poncho like garment that originated in Roman times.

The psychology behind vestments would seem to have to do with the priest’s need during the sacred liturgy (service) to cover his particularity and individuality behind a “uniform” – a recognizable symbolic garment – so that he (or she in some traditions) may become the representative of his church as a whole. It is not Father X saying Mass; it is a representative of Christ and His Church, as the vestments indicate.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Ritual](#)

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Via Negativa

Philip Browning Helsel

The Latin term, which means the “way of negation,” refers to the stream of Christian theology which emphasized the unknowability of God and the inability of positive theological attributes to define God. Also known as apophatic (literally “denial”) theology, this way of thinking can be seen in the writings of those who would later be known as mystics. The *via negativa* paradoxically uses language to describe what is indescribable, but prefers adjectives of

cancellation to those of positive attribution, claiming that positive attributes drawn from human experience can not reflect the divine. This stream of thought, far from being divorced from what preceded it in Christian theology, was present throughout Christian theology, and could be seen as a direct reflection of a strong emphasis on the transcendence of God (Turner, 1995: 1). Rejecting the positive naming of God found in Bonaventure and Aquinas, apophatic theologians emphasized the ineffability of God. Drawing from Pseudo-Dionysus, who in the fifth century described God as “dazzling darkness,” thinkers such as Meister Eckhart and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* describe God in terms of negation, reflecting in their language the inexpressibility of God. However, it is important that the *via negativa* not be objectified by a discussion of it, since it resists fixation and attachment upon it as a particular “correct way.” Apophatic theology is also an important stream in Islamic theology, which states the names of Allah, not as direct analogies to Allah, but as “veils put on the mystery of God” (Borrman, 1993: 63–64).

If, in theistic religions, the *via negativa* is a reflection of the otherness of God, in a non-theistic religion such as Buddhism, the *via negativa* could be thought of as a radical immanence. Especially in Zen, the *via negativa* is strongly exemplified in the use of the prefix “not” in such phrases as “no-mind” and “no-self” and in the tendency to cross out even sacred terms such as *sunyata* (“emptiness”), emphasizing the limitations of language (Abe, 1995: 51). In Buddhism, the *via negativa* resists being put into the service of higher goals, or transcendence. In the Zen koan, the paradoxical approach of negation reflects the fact that the practitioner must grapple with the negation and senselessness of the riddle in order to approach meaning which is not positive or negative but transcends dualities (Suzuki, 1927: 250).

The *via negativa* is not merely semantics, but it points to something central to mysticism, the overcoming of dualities and all notions of the pursuit of sense or purpose. The challenge of apophatic theology is a challenge that is directed against both religion and language, but also inseparable from them.

Commentary

Just as Freud’s discoveries unseated the omnipotence of the will and conscious thought, and therefore caused people to look deeper for the complexities of meaning, the *via negativa* also involves suspicion for the potential of positive language to clearly point to reality. The illuminating character of *parapraxes* echo negative theology in both

the slipperiness of language and the sense of a deep reality being glimpsed. Jung built his theory of opposites upon a valuing of the supposedly paradoxical and contradictory sides of experience. His formulations emphasized mystery and resonated with the *via negativa* in their suspicion that there maybe something more true than language can explain. The *via negativa* could be seen as a corollary to depth psychology in its attempts to seek to understand deeper aspects of experience, in its emptying of categories with an openness to what is beyond.

At the same time, the *via negativa*, in the Christian tradition, seems to rely upon the distance of God, and thus could be seen to imply the distance of the believer from her object of worship. Feuerbach critiqued all expressions of a *via negativa* as really implying a failure of faith (Feuerbach, 1957: 220). Negative theology could be analyzed as implying doubt or disappointment with a faith object in which one attempts to trust, and thus placing that object beyond all reach. Psychologically, this could be understood as reflecting failure in the earliest environments in which the psychic potential of faith is established for the child. However, apophatic theology should not too quickly be identified with disappointment or loss, or with what John of the Cross called “the dark night of the soul,” since it cannot simply be equated with an experience of depression or a purgative stage of faith through which one passes. It is best understood, in theistic settings, as an important stream of thought alongside positive mysticism. In non-theistic traditions, it is the relativity of language in service of non-duality. In either case, it refers to something which certainly has psychological components, but retains its own religious logic and should not be flattened to fit psychological categories.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Christianity](#) [Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [Doubt](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Islam](#) [John of the Cross](#) [Koan](#) [Meister Eckhart](#) [Sunyata](#) [Zen](#)

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Vicarious Traumatization

Lori B. Wagner-Naughton

Defined as the indirect transmission of distressing symptoms following exposure to an individual who has directly experienced a traumatic event. After empathic and spiritual engagement with a traumatized individual, the listener may experience symptoms consistent with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These responses can include: distressing imagery or reexperiencing of the event; persistent avoidance and numbing of stimuli, thoughts, or feelings reminiscent of the trauma; increased physiological arousal; somatic ailments; and significant impairment (DSM-IV-TR). In essence, the listener functions as the “container” for the uncomfortable thoughts and feelings that are elicited through exposure to another individual’s recollections of traumatic material. The listener may attempt to alleviate these distressing emotions through spirituality or religious affiliation. Shaw, Joseph, and Linley (2005) describe how, “religious beliefs may provide a framework to aid reappraisal of threatening situations as less of a threat and more of a challenge” (p. 3). After reframing the trauma within a different context, the listener can begin to process existential conflicts and seek alternate meanings about life experiences (Frankl, 1984).

See also: [Trauma](#)

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Violence and Religion

James W. Jones

All the religions of the world contain storehouses of symbols and metaphors of war and violence. At the beginning of the sacred history of the Bible – the fountainhead of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – God “Himself” hardens Pharaoh’s heart to set the Egyptians up for slaughter. The first born child of every Egyptian family is slain until every Egyptian family knew death. Bloody stories of warfare, pillage, rape and conquest fill the opening books of the *Torah*. Such texts lay the basis for the Holy War tradition in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The *New Testament* contains bloody portrayals of Jesus’ suffering on the cross, Paul’s metaphors of continual spiritual warfare, and the horrific images in the *Book of Revelation* so dear to apocalyptic Christians. The crusades, the inquisition, and the European wars of religion following the Reformation are all part of the history of Christianity. Islam tells and retells the stories of the Prophet’s battles and conquest and there is the history of Islam’s bloody sweep across the Middle East and North Africa. The Pali chronicles contain many tales of the wars and conquests by Buddhist kings, tales that are told and retold among the Buddhists of Sri Lanka in their campaign to subdue the Tamil population there. In 1959 a Sri Lankan Prime Minister was assassinated by a Buddhist monk. Tibetan Buddhism also has many stories of warfare and its divine pantheon contains countless images of bloodthirsty deities and semi-divine beings. And there is a long lineage of warrior Buddhist monks in China and Japan. The Hindu epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are full of epic battles and warrior heroes. No world religion is without a storehouse of more than enough texts and tales to justify any and all acts of brutality, bloodshed, and terrorism. Historically and textually there are many, many connections between religion and violence. In the sweep of human history there is no evidence that any one world religion is bloodier than any other (Juergensmeyer, 2000; Stern, 2003).

No serious contemporary psychological study has found any evidence for diagnosable psychopathology in those who commit acts horrific violence in the name of religion (see, for example, the review in Horgan, 2006). Most extraordinary acts of inhumanity are committed by very ordinary people. Theologians have said this for

centuries; many social psychologists are coming to the same conclusion.

Most contemporary psychological investigations of the connections between religion and violence are done by social psychologists, often in the context of more general investigations into violent behavior. Such studies almost always locate the causes of violent behavior in the dynamics of groups. The two most widely cited social-psychological experiments in the literature of genocide – Milgram’s obedience to authority and Zimbardo’s prison experiments – illustrate this. In the early 1960s, Stanley Milgram recruited a cohort of forty ordinary men from New Haven, CT and told them to inflict increasing electric shocks on a subject, in response to the subject making mistakes on a word association test. The subject was, in fact, part of the experiment and did not receive any actual shocks. In response to the experimenter’s requests, the majority of the participants inflicted increasingly severe shocks on the subject as a punishment for his wrong answers to questions. Even when the subject portrayed signs of severe distress, participants were willing to inflict what they were told was a near-fatal shock to the subject in obedience to the experimenter’s commands (Milgram, 1974; Bass, 1999).

In 1971 at Stanford University, Philip Zimbardo recruited a cohort of typical college male undergraduates and randomly assigned one group to play the role of prisoners and the other to play the role of prison guards. He set them up in a mock prison setting. Anyone with noticeable psychological problems was screened out. Within days, a third of those assigned to be guards became increasingly cruel, sadistic, and tyrannical towards the prisoners, whom they knew were really just fellow undergraduates like themselves. This brutality escalated so rapidly that the 2-week long experiment was stopped completely after 6 days (Zimbardo, Maslach and Haney, 1999). These experiments demonstrate the ease with which violent groups can elicit cruel and sadistic behavior even from those not otherwise inclined in that direction.

Waller (2002) suggests four social-psychological factors that permit ordinary people to become perpetrators of extraordinary evil. The first factor claims that all of us have certain genetic predispositions shaped by natural selection that make us susceptible to committing vicious deeds. Religious leaders and institutions are particularly adept at manipulating these inherited inclinations towards ethnocentrism and us-versus-them thinking. Waller’s second factor refers to the ways in which these inherited traits are shaped by culture to make us even more potentially available for heinous actions. Among the significant “cultural belief systems” are religious

beliefs about the role of authority, about the dichotomy between the ingroup and outgroup, and the demonizing of those considered outside the true fold. Religious beliefs also serve as justifications for killing. By reinforcing ethnocentrism and scapegoating outsiders, religion can facilitate a “moral disengagement,” through which we cease to see a horrific deed as immoral, and may redefine, and re-label otherwise abhorrent actions into something justified and even meritorious (Bandura, 2004). The third factor is “a culture of cruelty” in which individuals, already predisposed in this way by genetic inheritance and religious and cultural training, are directly trained as killers. Through escalating commitments (in which an individual is gradually introduced and desensitized to more heinous acts) and a ritual initiation, the individual’s conscience is gradually numbed or repressed. Initiation into such violent groups allows for a diffusion of responsibility, creates an ethos of “deindividuation” in which individuals can act with anonymity, and makes them subject to an almost irresistible peer pressure. Religious groups can become cultures of cruelty in this sense. Waller’s fourth factor concerns the way in which potential victims are dehumanized, labeled as beyond the pale of human compassion and empathy. Religion has many powerfully effective ways to dehumanize and delegitimize opponents. Religion may be, in fact, one of humanity’s most powerful means to the “social death” of the other (Waller, 2002).

Bandura emphasizes that people need a moral justification before they will engage in reprehensible actions. He argues that “the conversion of socialized people into dedicated fighters is achieved not by altering their personality structures, aggressive drives, or moral standards. Rather it is accomplished by cognitively redefining the morality of killing” (Bandura, 2004: 124). Bandura points out that “religion has a long and bloody history” as one of the major vehicles for providing that moral justification of mass bloodshed (Bandura, 2004: 125).

The current psychological discussion of the origins of violence is mainly located here. Most recently published, psychologically oriented articles focus on the group processes and induction procedures by which individuals are recruited to perform violent actions (cf., Miller, 2004). However, not every member of a society from which religious violence arises joins a violent group and not every member of such a group actually commits a violent act. This suggests that the psychology of religious violence cannot completely ignore individual factors.

The clinical question is why certain individuals resonate with the messages of religious violence. In a study of religious violence across three traditions (Muslim jihadist, the Japanese Buddhist group Aum Shinrikyo, American

apocalyptic Christianity) I argue that religions give rise to violent actions when they emphasize shame and humiliation, when they dichotomizes the world into warring camps of the all-good against the totally evil, when they demonize those with whom they disagree and foment crusades against them, when they advocate violence and blood sacrifice as the primary means of purification, when their devotees seek to placate or be unified with a punitive and humiliating idealized figure or institution, when they offer theological justifications for violent acts, and when they promote prejudice and authoritarian behavior (Jones, 2008). Psychological dynamics such as splitting, the rage for purification, the need for absolute certainty, the drive to externalize aggression and demonize an out-group – dynamics historically investigated by clinicians – may predispose individuals to find violent theologies meaningful (Jones, 2002).

From a clinical perspective, religion leads to violence when universal religious themes such as purification or the search for reunion with the source of life or the longing for personal meaning and transformation – the classic instigators of spiritual search and religious conversion – become subsumed into destructive psychological motivations such as a Manichean dichotomizing of the world into all-good, all-evil camps, or the drive to connect with and appease a humiliating or persecuting idealized patriarchal Other. The result is the psychological precondition for religiously sponsored violence. Some factors that might serve as warning signs that a religious group has a high potential for violence are: (1) profound experiences of shame and humiliation either generated by social conditions outside the group and potentiated by it or generated from within the group (Gilligan, 1996), (2) splitting humanity into all-good and all-evil camps and the demonizing of the other, (3) a wrathful, punitive idealized deity or leader, (4) a conviction that purification requires the shedding of blood, and (5) often a fascination with violence (Jones, 2008).

In a book whose title – *Violence and the Sacred* – says it all, Rene Girard offers an account of religion arising out of acts of violence (Girard, 1977, 1996). In tribal societies, violence threatens the entire social order. The solution arrived at by our ancestors, Girard suggests, is the whole society coming together and channeling the urge for violence onto an object, person, animal – the scapegoat – who is then rejected, exiled, and killed. With the scapegoat sacrificed, the community is again reconciled, at least temporarily. The sacrificed victim, bringer of a new order of peace and harmony, is now regarded as a savior, a god. Scapegoating and sacrifice acquire the penumbra of the sacred by their power to contain and mute the devastating possibilities of violence. Because of the

scapegoat we are reconciled. Thus the scapegoat comes to be worshiped. So religious ritual develops. For Girard, religious ritual comes after the sacrificial deed, not before it. Religion develops out of the sacrificial action rather than sacrificial rituals being an expression of some religious impulse.

The sacrificers, now bound together by this bloody act, vow not to repeat the violent crime that led to the escalation of violence that only a sacrifice could stop. Thus prohibitions – “thou shall not kill” (unless it is a ritual sacrifice) – arise and become established. Eventually this process must be explicated; it must enter into language and so a narrative grows up to explain the ritual. Thus myth arises and it is established. Here then are the core processes of religion – ritual, prohibition, and myth – all arising out of what Girard calls the “scapegoating mechanism.” Religion becomes the major way of containing violence; that is its first and most basic function. So religion and violence are inextricably linked.

A complete psychology of religion must include the psychology of religious violence. Psychological processes such as shame and humiliation, splitting and seeing the world in black-white terms along with the inability to tolerate ambivalence, the dynamic of projection and demonizing the other all contribute to violence apart from religion. But the history and psychology of religion make clear that such dynamics are not only central to the evocation of violence, they also lay close to the heart of much religious experience. By demanding submission to a deity, text, institution, group, or teacher that is experienced as wrathful, punitive, or rejecting, religions inevitably evoke or increase feelings of shame and humiliation that are major psychological causes of violent actions. By continually holding before the devotee an overly idealized institution, book, or leader, religions set up the psychodynamic basis for splitting and bifurcating experience. By teaching devotees that some groups are inferior, evil, satanic, condemned by God, religions encourage the demonizing of others and their “social death,” making their slaughter seem inconsequential, justified, or even required. For these reasons any turn to violence is not accidental but is rather close to the heart of much of the religious life (Jones, 2008, 2002).

See also: [Apocalypse](#) [Bible](#) [Christianity](#) [Evil](#) [Jihad](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Sacrifice](#)

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Virgin Birth

Jeffrey B. Pettis

In myth and religion virgin birth is central to the life and coming into existence of the divine child. The Buddha, for example, descends from the higher realm into the womb of his mother the Great Queen Maya. He appears in the shape of a milk-white elephant. The conception in her womb occurs without defilement, as he is born coming forth from her side under the shining constellation of Pushya. The birth is miraculous, like those of other Hindu heroes such as Aurva and Prithu, for he does not enter the world in the usual manner. Similarly, Jesus is conceived through the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. The conception and birth are acknowledged and celebrated by the cosmos, the Magi from the East, and by Mary herself (Matt. 1.18–2.11; Luke 1.26–58). The virgin as divine bride is set apart from the collective element as a preparation and requirement for divine conception. *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* tells of Mary who as a child was in constant prayer, and that the angels of God spoke with her often. She is called “blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of her womb” (9). The mother of the Buddha is also marked as having special qualities.

According to Buddha legend, she is the Great Queen Maya, splendid, steadfast, and having the beauty of a goddess after whom she is named. She seeks seclusion in the pure woods where she meditates continuously, and she suffers no discomfort during the birth of the Buddha child. In these examples, both virgin and child are trans-relational and have double-sided natures. The mother, having conceived through *pneuma*, now herself has a sacredness which exists along with her body which gestates, nurtures, and contains the infant child. Likewise, the child conceived as *pneuma* takes on flesh, becoming mortal and collective along with all human beings. This dual nature creates an implicit tension between the divine and human natures which may get played out in the external world. Mary the mother of Jesus is to be divorced by her betrothed Joseph and liable to death by stoning as an adulteress (cf. the Vestil Virgin of Rome who is buried alive for being unchaste). The divine-figure Jesus will be mocked by the mob and executed as “King of the Jews.” The Buddha will realize Nirvana only by entering into the suffering and poverty of the collective, mundane world. Virgin birth may be understood ultimately to occur as an act of divine imperative. The virgin’s womb becomes the means – the vessel – of divine will and purpose. A spiritualization of matter and the maternal takes place through/ by *patēr*-animus. Virgin birth alternately may be seen to be pre-patriarchal in nature, not relying upon sexual intercourse and male human initiative. The virgin mother occurs as the “Great Mother,” the “Earth Goddess.” She is the true creator, as becomes the Egyptian goddess Isis who re-creates her dismembered husband Osiris, and begets her son Horus to whom she gives the elixir of life.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Great Mother](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Mary](#) [▶ Virgin Mary](#)

Virgin Mary

Anthony J. Elia

The Virgin Mary (Heb: *Miryam*; Grk: *Maria*) is the mother of Jesus Christ in the New Testament texts (most notably, the gospels of Luke and Matthew). Throughout history the importance of the mother of Jesus Christ has been interpreted broadly by religious traditions, including Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianities, and

Protestant denominations, as well as theologians within each of these traditions. Each has contributed to a deep hermeneutical tradition of Marian studies. The Virgin Mary is often referred to as “Maria” (*Ave Maria*), “Mother of God,” “The Blessed Virgin,” “Mater Dolorosa” (Mother of Jesus providing maternal care at crucifixion), (Pelikan, 1996: 14–15), “The Second Eve,” and “Mother of the People.” In Eastern Christian traditions, Mary took on the title of “Theotokos,” which has often been understood in translations from the Greek as “Mother of God,” (Latin: *Mater Dei*; German: *Mutter Gottes*), but is more precisely translated as “the one who gave birth to the one who is God,” (Slavic: *Bogorodica*; Latin: *Deipara*), (Pelikan, 1996: 55).

Mary in Islam

In Islam there is favorable discussion about the Virgin Mary (Arabic: *Maryam*) in the Qur’an where she is seen as one of the holiest women to walk the earth. References to the Virgin Mary occur prominently in suras 3 and 19, though the earlier sura 3, which is considered part of the prophet’s Medina period, appears to focus on the negation of Jesus’s divinity. In contrast, sura 19 strongly draws parallels between the prophet Muhammad and the Virgin Mary as each being bearers of the word of God (Pelikan, 1996).

Cult of Mary

The cult of Mary is relatively absent in the church until about the fourth century C.E. Some scholars (Ashe, Carroll) have noted the rise in the cult at this time to be attributed to changes in the social strata of Roman society. The emergence of the cult of Mary in the fourth century has been partially attributed (in psychological terms) to an increase of proletarian Christians coming from father-ineffective families, which are marked by a “strongly repressed desire for the mother” (Carroll, 1986: 83). The psychoanalytic origins of the cult of Mary have been explained by Freud as a compromise where unconscious desires are redirected through an activity representing disguised fulfillment of the unconscious desire (Carroll, 1986).

Mariology

The scholarly and theological study of Mary, most often through Catholic perspectives, is called *Mariology*.

The history of Mariology dates back to late antiquity, and includes works by Irenaeus of Lyons, Ambrose of Milan, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Mariology developed in a more Thomistic vein in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, specifically beginning with Jesuit scholar Francis Suarez (1548–1617). Francis de Sales (1567–1622), Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), and St. Lawrence of Brindisi (1559–1619) also contributed to the development of philosophical and highly erudite Mariological texts in the Thomistic tradition.

Of the major theological aspects of Mariological history, there are four dogmas of the Catholic Church which underscore the Mariological narrative and its importance. These are (1) the Perpetual Virginity of Mary; (2) Mary as Mother of God; (3) the Immaculate Conception of Mary by her mother St. Anne; and (4) Mary's Assumption into Heaven. Mary's *Perpetual Virginity* was discussed in Patristic literature (notably Augustine, in his *De Virginitate*, Augustine), and continually reasserted Mary's virginity throughout her entire life. The role of *Mother of God* emphasizes a divine maternity and the unity held between Mary and Christ incarnate. This was first defined ecclesiastically at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The *Mother of God* Feast Day is January 1st. The doctrinal understanding of the *Immaculate Conception* of Mary is not to be confused with the *Virginal Conception* of Jesus. The *Immaculate Conception* is the belief that the Virgin Mother was always without original sin, and specifically, that her mother (traditionally St. Anne) conceived Mary without sin. On December 8th (*Immaculate Conception* Feast Day), 1854, Pope Pius IX solemnly put forth this dogma in a constitution titled *Ineffabilis Deus*. The fourth dogma, the Assumption, was executed in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, and defines that the Virgin Mary was assumed in body and in soul into heaven at the time of her death. August 15th is the Day of Assumption. An additional Feast Day of Marian importance is Annunciation Day, which is March 25th, commemorating the day when the angel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mother.

Jung's Interpretation

The Assumption of Mary is an important aspect of the Marian narrative, which effectively explicates the death of Mary (often referred to as the *dormition* or “falling asleep”) and her ascent into heaven. In this context, Mary is often given the title “Queen of Heaven” (Pelikan, 1996). Carl G. Jung's assessment of the Marian Assumption, published in 1952, was in basic agreement with Pius

XII's 1950 apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, which defined the dogma of Assumption (Pelikan, 1996). For Jung, Mary is “the pure vessel for the coming birth of God,” but also both the daughter, bride, and mother of God, who is free from all original sin. As the bride of God, Jung establishes Mary as the incarnation of her prototype, Sophia, also being a mediatrix, or the one who leads humanity to God and assures immortality (Jung, 1954). Jung also describes the relational aspect of Mary to her son as a closeness where they are not real human beings, but gods. In the twentieth century, the role of Mary as the *coredemptrix*, or one who has an “active collaboration with Christ in the redemption of the world” has been central (Miegge, 1955: 155). These theological roles as *mediatrix* and *coredemptrix* emphasize the *mother as divine* character.

Psychoanalytic Interpretation in Art

Glorification of the Virgin Mary through art has been popular for over a millennium. Marian art has been assessed by the prominent psychological traditions, notably Freudian and Jungian analyses, and includes both analyses of the artists themselves and analyses of symbolism, for example. Psychological interpretations of Renaissance art depicting both Mary and the holy family, including St. Anne, are prominent. Images of the Virgin Mary can be seen in works as varied as Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque art. Prominent artists, who depicted the Virgin Mary include Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390–1441), Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), Hans Memling (ca. 1433–1494), Raphael (1483–1520), Michelangelo (1475–1564), Titian (ca. 1485–1576), Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Rembrandt (1606–1669), El Greco (1541–1614), as well as more modern artists, such as Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) and Salvador Dali (1904–1989).

Freud himself touched upon Marian studies in his attempt to explicate the painting of the Virgin Mary with Child and St. Anne by Leonardo da Vinci. In this work, (entitled *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, 1910), Freud analyzed the painter through da Vinci's depiction of the Virgin Mary (Freud, 1957: XI). Scholars have studied Freud's own analysis as the first application of psychology to art, and interpreted his study with insight into Freud's inferences that Leonardo depicted two mothers of the Christ child, the biological mother and the stepmother. Other scholars have commented that Freud's mistakes in his analysis of the Da Vinci painting are equally as important as the initial

analysis itself, because these errors underscore the role of the analyst in making observations (Thanopolous, 2005).

Marian Apparitions

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary have been numerous and recognized for several centuries. These include apparitions in Guadalupe, Mexico (1531), the French Alps (by Benoite Rencurel) from 1664–1718, Paris (1830), LaSalette (1846), Lourdes (1858), Knock, Ireland (1879), Fatima, Portugal (1917), Beauraing (1932–1933) and Banneux, Belgium (1933), Necedah, Wisconsin (early 1950s), Garabandal, Spain (1961–1965), Zeitoun, Egypt (1968–1971), Bayside, NY (1970), Cuapa, Nicaragua (1980), and Medjugorje (1981).

The study of practitioners of the cult of Mary ranges from Freudian analyses of worship (*latría*), veneration (*dulia*), and hyperveneration (*hyperdulia*) – reserved strictly for the Virgin Mary – to Protestant explanations of visions in psychological terms (Miller, 1992). Psychoanalytic hypotheses have detailed aspects of the relation between the *machismo* complex and the prevalence of the cult of Mary in southern Italy and Spain. Additionally, the concepts of *identification* (defined as “the process of adopting the characteristics of someone else, including only in one’s mind”) and *sexual attachment* are considered part of the hypothetical schematic for some Marian worship (Carroll, 1986: 52). This continues in the vein of Oedipal frameworks and the sexual explanations of both male and female relationships with the Virgin Mary (Carroll, 1986). In the case of excessive Marian devotion by men, some scholars (including Freud) have suggested an association between this excessive devotion and masochism, though evidence is not strong (Carroll, 1986).

Psychological explanations of apparitions range from intentionally fraudulent claims to those manifested by illness. The reasons provided by modern psychiatry include psychological projection, hallucinations, and hysteria (Miller and Samples, 1992). Other explanations of such apparitions, which scholars have deemed illusions, include feelings of anxiety induced by war, such as with the case of the Pontmain, France apparition of 1871, which contextualized, has been understood as a family’s deep anxiety produced around its three sons going off to fight in the Franco-Prussian war. The nineteenth century novelist Émile Zola considered the future saint Marie-Bernarde Soubirous (the visionary at Lourdes) to be an exceptional case of hysteria, who suffered a degenerate heredity (Perry and Echeverría, 1988). The example of

Zeitoun, Egypt is considered to be an illusion, as an unusual visual stimulus was detected by a large number of observers (Carroll, 1986), while in other cases with fewer observers, the designation has been given as hallucination.

Feminist Perspectives

Freudian analysis of theology and symbolism in contemporary Catholicism through a feminist perspective has yielded an interpretation of Marian femininity as inhibitory to psychological development and a continuation of the dominant patriarchal social structure (Harrington, 1984). The spectrum of feminist approaches to Mariology have been broad, and include such scholars as Elisabeth Gossmann, Daphne Hampson, Elizabeth Johnson, Patricia Noone, Rosemary Radford Reuther, and Catherina Halkes. The underlying and central themes in these perspectives are the issues of passivity, sexuality, gender, and dynamics of hegemony and power (McDonnell, 2005).

See also: [Christ](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Islam](#) [Jesus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Mary](#) [Qur’an](#) [Sophia](#) [Virgin Birth](#)

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Vision Quest

Richard W. Voss · Robert Prue (Sikangu Lakota)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▶ <i>Ate wiohpeyata</i> | Father, to the West |
| <i>nawwajin yelo.</i> | I am standing. |
| <i>Waayanka yo!</i> | Behold me! |
| <i>Ite Otateya nawajin yelo</i> | The wind blowing in my face. |
| | I am standing. |

Vision Quest Song (Lakota Ceremonial Songs, 1983)

Introduction

The term “Vision Quest” describes a psychological metaphor based upon or inspired by the spiritual practice among Native American Indians. As a psychological metaphor the “vision quest” has been used by some clinicians to illustrate the journey of understanding one’s dreams and experiences in terms of archetypal symbols related to self understanding and individuation (see Temagami Vision Quest Program, <http://www.langskib.com/outdoor-programs-for-adults>). However, as the indigenous, American Indian practice, “vision quest” is what the traditional Lakota call the *Hanbleceya* or “crying for a vision” ceremony (see B. Elk in J. E. Brown, 1953; Lame Deer, J. (Fire), 1972; Lame Deer, A. (Fire), 1992). Elsewhere, this ceremony is also called a “pipe fast” since the individual faster seeking to complete the vision quest often does so holding a “loaded” pipe, filled with a tobacco mixture that has been prepared by the individual (often a medicine man or holy man, see B. Elk, 1953: 45) who has agreed and committed to assist the individual complete his or her commitment to undergo this ordeal. Native Americans have used ceremonies to encounter the spirit world for

thousands of years, and the *Hanbleceya* (pronounced, han-bi-lech-ia) is such a ceremony.

Hanbleceya: Crying for a Vision

“Are you ready to die?” was the question posed to the first author when he spoke to a medicine man about his desire to complete a *Hanbleceya*. That question reflects the traditional indigenous perspective that the “vision quest” or *Hanbleceya* is not something one undertakes lightly or casually. It is something one does under the careful supervision of a recognized medicine man or shaman or spiritual advisor (*Wicasa waken*) who serves as one’s spiritual guide and interpreter of the spirits (Little Soldier, 1998, personal communication). Traditionally, only males conduct the *Hanbleceya* ceremony. No “fees” are charged for the ceremony – although a star quilt is generally given to the medicine man in gratitude for the ceremony and there is often a *wopila* or thanksgiving feast which concludes the ceremony where everyone is fed a meal, often comprised of meat (beef or buffalo) soup, fry bread, and chokecherry or berry sauce (*wojape*) by the faster. Traditional beverages offered at the meal include mint tea, coffee, cool aide or gatoraide.

One does not enter into a *Hanbleceya* without proper guidance and preparation. Generally, the preparation requires a year, during which time the individual faster (as he or she is called) gathers all of the materials required for the fast, which includes hosting a feast or closing meal for all those who helped with the ceremony or served as supporters and assistants, as well as prepares spiritually for the ordeal. It is important to note that completing a *Hanbleceya* ceremony does not make one a medicine man.

The *Hanbleceya* may be done by anyone, traditionally it was only done by males, this has changed in recent years where women also fast. Generally, the vision quest or pipe fast ceremony is undertaken by an individual who is drawn by a dream or a spiritual inclination to undergo this ceremony which incorporates a rather strenuous physical ordeal – a total solitary fast from food and water which may last anywhere from a half day or night, up to four days and four nights. The medicine man chooses the location of the ritual site because of the spiritual significance or value rather than “natural beauty” of the place. Typically such sites are often in a remote place without the intrusion of any outside interruptions or distractions. There are some well known sites in North America where Indigenous people seek visions, however, because of extensive exploitation of Indigenous rituals, one should not journey to those locations unless accompanied by a recognized

spiritual leader from an Indigenous community. The individual faster's own vision or dream is also taken into consideration in selecting the appropriate site for the fast. For example, one may dream of praying inside the earth, in a pit – close to the Unci (grandmother, Earth) or on a hill close to the Tunka'sila (grandfather) Sky. So, all of this is discussed with the medicine man who then prepares the suitable place for the fast.

Often, people will refer to the entire experience as “going up on the hill” or “going up to pray” which reflect the common location for the *Hanbleceya* as a high elevated point. However, the site or location may also be in a pit or a hole dug into the ground which is then covered with tarps and earth so that the space is completely darkened. One may also complete the fast in an *Inipi* or Sweatlodge, which a small, low lying dome-like structure. So, there is considerable variation here (Little Soldier, 1999, personal communication; Lame Deer, 1992: 190–200). The *Inipikaga* or purification ritual (also called a sweatlodge ceremony) is usually conducted prior to and after the *Hanbleceya*.

After the faster has decided to undergo the *Hanbleceya* or Crying for a Vision Ceremony, he or she seeks out a medicine man-shaman, or spiritual leader (*Wicasa Wakan*) who is willing to take on this responsibility – it is important to note the relational quality to this ceremony. The medicine man who accepts the commitment of a faster also assumes a very serious responsibility for them, and to the spirits, as also, opens himself up to the spiritual consequences of such a commitment. If the faster is not sincere or undergoes the ceremony for the wrong reasons or is not prepared, negative consequences could result. Fr. William Stolzman has prepared an excellent instructional book, *How to take part in Lakota ceremonies* (1995) which has a detailed description of the Vision Quest Ceremony (pp. 23–39). The book is a non-Indian view of the ceremony and provides helpful advice to the non-Indian interested in learning more about the ceremony or if ever asked to assist in such a ceremony. Of course, this does not replace the instruction provided by the medicine man or spiritual advisor, who will give very specific instruction on the way he conducts the ceremony. It is very important if one is taking prescribed medications to inform the medicine man so that this can be taken into consideration in the preparations.

The *Hanbleceya* is often repeated, the second author has participated in numerous vision seeking ceremonies: on the hill, in an *inipi* (sweatlodge) and in isolated locations for periods from two to five days. Having a vision is important for most Native Americans in the Plains of North America, but having a vision does not make one a shaman or medicine man (Benedict, 1922; Little Soldier,

1999, personal communication). The vision quest is often the precursor to participate in the *Wiwang Wacipi* or Sundance (Standing Cloud, 1987, personal communication; Little Soldier, 1999, personal Communication).

The *Hanbleceya* has the capacity to be a powerful adjunct to psychotherapy (Hawk Wing, 1997), but should not be facilitated by anyone not properly sanctioned to do so. Native American medicine men are the psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers of their communities. The responsibility of facilitating these rituals often involves as much training as is involved with the training of a sanctioned clinician, and it would be irresponsible to practice or lead Indian rituals without obtaining the proper training and permission to lead them.

It may be very difficult for non-Indians or individuals not familiar with the traditional ways of native people to comprehend this and other ceremonies. The ceremony is not a “show” or an adventure or some other kind of “personal enrichment experience.” It is a real spiritual encounter, which has concrete effects. “Are you prepared to die?” sums up the seriousness of these effects. There have been instances where the spirits “came for the individual” where the faster actually died while undergoing this ceremony (Little Soldier, A. 2001, 2006, personal communication), so the ordeal of the vision quest is very sobering and needs to be understood as such. One does not enter into this without due consideration of the possibility that one may not come back or that one may come back changed by their vision – it may not be the vision that one *wanted*. Archie Fire Lame Deer discusses this, how he went on a vision quest and when he told his visions to the medicine man learned that he was *heyoka* or a contrary, a thunder-dreamer, which meant he would have to do the opposite (1992: 193).

It is important for the non-Indian to be aware of the profound spiritual significance of the Vision Quest ceremony for traditional American Indians, particularly if it is used or appropriated without proper authorization or permissions and preparation as a clinical method or metaphor – realizing the depth of tradition associated with this ancient ceremony.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Dream](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Shamans and Shamanism](#) [▶ Symbol](#)

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Visions

Nicholas Grant Boeving

Metaphorically, visions are often evocations of a scene – whether sordid or sublime. Whether they be of syphilitic agony, paradise or bliss, the word is wedded to an infinitude of metaphor. More prosaic still, visions may refer to nothing more than mere hallucinations or the faculty of sight itself. But in the history of religions, visions are inspirational renderings, often experienced by shamans or prophets, that serve to guide and gild communities of faith.

The Bible is replete with descriptions of visionary encounters. Ezekiel dramatically recalls his experience of witnessing the Lord as a chariot wrought of living creatures with four faces and calf's feet. *The Apocalypse* of Saint John (canonically known as the *Book of Revelation*) describes in phantasmagoric detail the final struggle and apotheosis of the faithful. The previous two examples, along with Paul's vision of Christ while on the road to Damascus, are but three of many visions recorded in the canonical Old and New Testaments.

In later theological developments the concept of The Beatific Vision came to be of central importance. First expounded upon in painstaking detail in the thirteenth century by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summae Theologiae*, the Beatific Vision is understood to be the undistilled perception of the unrefracted light of God.

Visions suffuse the literary legacy of Western Esotericism as well. Emanuel Swedenborg's complex theology was both born from and unfolded through a series of visions in which he vividly witnessed the wonders of Heaven and the horrors of Hell. Jakob Bohme (another central figure in the history of Western Esotericism) similarly experienced an ecstatic vision of light reflected in a pewter dish that led him to construct his own mystical philosophy.

Vision Quests are integral to the mechanics of shamanistic societies; in many tribal cultures they herald one's transition from boy or girlhood into the arena of adults. Often this unfolds along the following axes: He or she, upon reaching puberty, sets off into the wilderness to seek a vision, a vision that will direct his or her path for the duration of the life course. Frequently these visions appear in the form of animal teachers, or totems, that become private spiritual guides and shape, in effect, the future of their charges. Once the newly-minted man or woman reintegrates him or herself into the tribe, they are seen as extensions of the vision they experienced and their life's work will unfold accordingly.

Various theoretical apparatuses have been advanced within the field of psychology to account for the occurrence and persistence of visions. Psychoanalysis tends to view them as externalizations of neurotic conflict or simply wish-fulfilling fantasies. Cognitive theories hold them as aberrations of normal mental functioning. Jungian psychology views archetypal images that are regarded as visions crucial to the process of individuation. Newer non-reductive psychoanalytic approaches view visions as transformative and psychically integrative within the interpretive paradigm of psychodynamism.

See also: [Bible](#) [Dreams](#) [Hallucinations](#) [Vision Quest](#)

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Vivekananda

James H. Stover

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), born Narendranath Datta, became the most influential disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He carried the torch of his guru and established the Ramakrishna Order as well as the Ramakrishna Mission. Arguably the biggest hit of the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, he introduced Hinduism to America. As a great reformer and spiritual teacher, he has been called the “patriot saint of modern India.”

Living only 39 years, Vivekananda remains one of the most influential people in the history of India and the history of religion. His journey, though brief, was deep and varied. He joined the Brahma Samaj in college, dedicating himself to its social reforms. Although his interest in social action never waned, he left the Brahma Samaj, seeking a more spiritual path, ultimately taking Ramakrishna as his guru. Trained in Western history and philosophy and passionate in his search for God, Vivekananda portrayed a keen duet of rationality and spirituality. He often challenged his master who, notwithstanding, appointed him as his spiritual successor. Today, the Ramakrishna Order and Ramakrishna Mission provide charitable, educational, and spiritual services in India and almost 50 other countries. These centers carry out the social and spiritual mission of Vivekananda, with special focus on the teaching of Vedanta.

The basis of Vivekananda’s teachings has been characteristically grounded by four themes: the understanding that ultimate reality is non-dual, the soul is divine, existence is unified, and religions are really in harmony with each other. Vivekananda proffered both spiritual freedom and spiritual democracy as ideals to be lived by. He saw the various religions as all sharing the same goal – an experience of God. Replacing secular humanism with spiritual humanism, he taught that serving others was coterminous with serving God, who is visible in all beings. Humanity is one (Adiswarananda).

As a writer he is most recognized by his four classics of Hindu philosophy: *Jnana-Yoga*, *Raja-Yoga*, *Karma-Yoga*,

and *Bhakti-Yoga*. However, he has an immense collection of lectures and other writings. Throughout both his works and his life, he displayed a rich connection between service to man and contemplation of God. Besides Sri Ramakrishna, he publicly praised Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and many others. He has been honored by such people as Gandhi, William James, and Max Mueller (Nikhilananda).

Commentary

The challenge of Vivekananda is the challenge of Vedanta – realizing unity and tolerating diversity. He invites us to see the divinity within each individual and therefore relinquish the fear and ignorance caused by differences. From Vivekananda we can learn to give up our attachment to things, realize the need for community, and find a basis for genuine love and service to humanity and God. Jealousy and selfishness become obstacles to be overcome in the realization that injury to others is also injury to oneself. With Vivekananda, the differences are given less attention than the oneness that unites us.

See also: [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Ramakrishna Paramahansa](#) [▶ Vedanta](#) [▶ Yoga](#)

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Vocation

Carol L. Schnabl Schweitzer

Career or Calling?

A brief examination of dictionary entries for “vocation” reveals almost immediately the absence of any religious connotation that was once associated with the term. It is

associated with a chosen career, trade or profession which *may* include a call or summons to a religious profession or one of public service. Nevertheless, the emphasis is placed upon a paid profession or career track. How one determines precisely what that call to a paid profession is in twenty-first century North American culture is largely determined by a combination of self-interests: strengths, which may be considered gifts, abilities, or personality traits; salary or compensation packages (which include benefits and paid time off); and, the prestige associated with the profession (Schuurman, 2004: xii). There are personality inventories and aptitude tests administered to those with uncertainty, or those experiencing a life transition seeking a new career. The focus is on career as opposed to a call or vocation; and, as Masterson observes “[m]ost people who come to therapy with problems relating to career decisions fall into three categories” (Masterson, 1988: 9–10). In short they are individuals who are: (1) indecisive about what they want to do; (2) successful but don’t enjoy their work; and, (3) are able to decide what they want to do, have reason to believe they would be successful but are unable to take the initiative. A shortcoming of vocational testing, meant to identify strengths and abilities, is that it often becomes determinative instead of descriptive; thus, testing becomes restrictive rather than liberating and as Masterson demonstrates, testing will not provide motivation or tell those who engage the process what they *want* to do.

Discernment or Pursuit?

Individuals with a strong sense of self (Kohut), ego (Freud), or identity (Erikson) and a clear sense of purpose frequently *pursue* a vocation with determination. Yet this very act of pursuit is often determined to be an act of violence against the self because one cannot pursue what was given as a birthright from God. One needs to listen to the self or seek guidance from within (Palmer, 2000: 4–10). Here one begins to witness the tension between work and career as a pursuit, and work as a vocation or calling, which is discerned by careful listening to one’s inner voice. This inner voice may be understood as the unconscious, a stranger, innate talents, identity, or the mark of one’s baptism. If one accepts Palmer’s thesis that pursuit of wealth and success, or career is what jeopardizes the soul because the pursuit itself wreaks violence against the soul, then by analogy, one can draw comparisons with Freud’s work on “uncanny strangeness” (Freud, 1919: 220) or Kristeva’s on the “stranger”

(Kristeva, 1991: 181–188). The act of striving for success may silence the “stranger within” or set us at odds with our true self. We may live with what Palmer calls a dividedness that becomes part of our personal pathology because we don’t acknowledge our own identity while attempting to affirm another’s (Palmer, 2004: 3–11). This is an indication that we have not learned to make peace with the stranger or foreigner which is our unconscious. There is a strange familiarity when we meet an other who reminds us of the hidden self that lives in conflict with our public role or paid profession. The result of this meeting with the other who is strangely familiar may be that the other is now viewed as enemy. Why? We project our discomfort upon the other so as not to have to acknowledge our own inner conflict.

Faith and Vocation

This is not to argue, however, that wealth and success are necessarily in conflict with vocation but if the pursuit of these things is a denial of true self, the cost may be untenable leading to the undermining of personal “morale, relationships, and the capacity for good work” (Palmer, 2004: 17). The cost of living this way leads to an individual’s inescapable feelings of disingenuity, depletion, emptiness, loneliness and despair. These feelings may then become the source of our projections which lead to further isolation. In order to manage living a divided life one may put on a mask which inevitably becomes a sign or symptom of a deeper personality disorder. Even within Protestantism, as Shuurman asserts, there is no univocal agreement upon the meaning of vocation. He cites Christian theologians and ethicists who contend that it is unbiblical and “wrong” to bestow religious meaning or significance upon a secular life (Schuurman, 2004: xii). The point of conflict here is between vocation as a calling solely to a church related occupation and the meaning of vocation as a calling to one’s work whatever the occupation or career may be. Those who concur with Shuurman contend that “[v]ocation sets the obligations of one’s social locations within larger ethical frames, such as God’s revealed law, natural law, and the common good” (2004: xii). Shuurman sees “evoking a sense of God’s call” for Christians in all aspects of their lives as a central task in pastoral ministry. Thus Christians discern God’s call in their lives “when the heart of faith joins opportunities and gifts with the needs of others” (2004: 4). One may want to raise the question: Are faith and vocation mutually exclusive of paid profession? Or, may life itself

be interpreted as vocation? Paul Pruyser, in a discussion of alienation and religious beliefs, sees a convergence particularly when one is speaking of those who are called to a religious profession in that “the actual occupational role one plays in everyday life is one way through which to help realize the kingdom of God on earth” (1974: 35). If one takes the position that all career choices, paid or volunteer, religious or secular, are vocations then all of life may indeed be interpreted as vocation. This would be to conclude with Schuurman that all of life is vocation and infuses the everyday and mundane with religious significance.

See also: [↗ Consciousness](#) [↗ Ego](#) [↗ Projection](#) [↗ Self](#) [↗ Soul: A Depth Psychological Approach](#) [↗ Unconscious](#)

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W

Waiting

Ann M. Rothschild

Our current uses of the word “wait” carry derogatory meanings. Words used to define waiting: delayed, stopped or slowed down, postponed, put off, all seem at odds with our Western preoccupation with doing, getting done, action. Holding patterns are a waste, time that doesn’t count. Passively receiving or being available rather than achieving diminishes one’s dignity. There is discomfort in the ambiguity and disorientation of transitional periods involved in waiting. But in religion and psychology, waiting has not only been necessary and valued, it has been promoted. It is admired and considered a courageous state. Not that it is easy or even wished for, but all major religions and most psychological theories agree that waiting is usually needed and a respected aspect of the search that growth, faith, and change, require.

Often in the spiritual search as well as the psychological one, the changes we are trying to make require that we wait. Making change is never easy. Unless we take time, we repeat patterns, use excessive will, find counterfeits. Religion and psychology suggest we honor the process by waiting. In a new study, psychologist Walter Mischel, found that children who can wait, who can delay gratification, are more likely to be successful adults.

Every religion promotes waiting. Often we hear about the “Slow work of God,” the work of the spirit. In the Bible we read “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (Ps. 27:13–14). St. John of the Cross is writing about the difficulty of waiting when he describes the *Dark Night of the Soul*. Jews wait for Elijah at Passover. Every week in silent meeting Quakers “wait in the light.” The East has developed techniques for waiting. Buddhists sit in silent meditation. The Tao Te Ching asks “Who can wait quietly while the mud settles?” (Lao Tsu, 1989). Sufis wait for God. References to waiting abound in Islam. In the Qur’an, 2:153 says, “Surely Allah is with the patient.” 2:155 admonishes, “Give good news to the

patient.” And 3:200 says, “Be patient and excel in patience.” Great saints and heroes have always waited. Their “arrested” lives have inspired the world. Pauses can be divine gifts not to be avoided.

All therapies promote waiting by both patient and therapist. Self-realization, discovery, exploration of one’s path, share the common thread of waiting through all such inquiry. One must stay in the uncomfortable “in between” and wait. Hurrying through the process seems to defeat it and fosters not only mediocrity but a false answer. Haste implies lack of interest and compromise. Waiting honors, and implies caring and hope.

In Spanish the verb to wait, esperar, is the same as to hope. Hope and waiting are intertwined. Waiting is required of both patient and therapist. Is it a coincidence that clients are called Patients and that they often come through “waiting rooms”?

Therapists too must wait. D. W. Winnicott talks about waiting for the patient to make the interpretations. Otherwise it is “stealing something away.” As therapists it seems that we regret taking action more than we regret waiting. Waiting for things to emerge, the patient is able to reach for a more profound awareness. Waiting creates the time and space so necessary for this work.

See also: [Christianity](#) [Ego](#) [Erikson, Erik](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Kohut, Heinz](#) [Self](#)

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Water

Andrew J. P. Francis

Water is an essential element for life, and of deep spiritual and religious significance. It is an integral part of the ritual practice and symbolic structure of religions throughout the world. Used since antiquity for physical, psychological and spiritual regeneration, water is sustaining, cleansing and rejuvenating. Consistently in creation myths, water is the first principle and *prima materia* from which all else derives or is given birth. As such, it also provides a common and useful metaphor for the origins, evolution and processes of human mind and consciousness, at the level of individual and species. Humans have developed complex relationships with water as natural resource, commercial commodity and religio-spiritual symbol, and there is often conflict between the needs and aims of groups and individuals differentially invested in these various relationships. Most centrally, with respect to its spiritual and psychological significance, water is not only a mirror to our own nature, but also a Levinasian *Other* with which to interact.

Elemental Properties

Along with, variously, earth, fire, air, aether, metal and wood, water is one of the five classical elements present in classical Greek, Hindu and Buddhist philosophies amongst others. Water is unique as an element because it may exist (sometimes simultaneously) in multiple states or “phases”: liquid, gaseous (vapor) and solid (ice). As such, it is commonly characterized as the most mutable of the classical elements.

In its liquid state it is flexible, flowing and malleable, taking on the shape of whatever contains it. The surface of liquid water is often translucent or mirrored, reflecting the viewer and concealing much that lies below. In a gaseous state water takes on an ethereal, transitory and insubstantial quality, able to move into confined spaces and range freely over wide expanses. As ice, water becomes fixed and solid, brittle and sharp. Toward theological and psychological points of reference, it is water in its liquid state which most commonly forms the basis for themes of correspondence, metaphor and symbolism, and will be the primary focus for discussion here.

In many theological frameworks, in addition to its physical properties, water is also vital and alive, containing “elemental force” and some varied properties of

consciousness and selfness. As an elemental force, water has been the subject of worship and deification from prehistory to current day.

As Part of Ritual Practice and the Symbolic Structure of Religions

Water is the most common physical solvent and cleansing agent. In many religious and spiritual contexts also, water is cleansing and purifying. Water is sprinkled over objects, people and places in order to bless and purify them. Amongst its many ceremonial uses, immersion of individuals in water (or the washing of water over some part of the body) to symbolize a renewal, rejuvenation or rebirth of the self into a new spiritual status is one of the oldest, most familiar and powerful of water rituals.

In Christian faith, the central sacrament of baptism washes away the stain of original sin and opens the gateway to spiritual life; in the New Testament, Jesus begins his ministry following his cleansing by John the Baptist. The ancient Celtic goddess Cerridwen would immerse fallen warriors into her magical cauldron (also known as “the grail of immortality”) to restore them to life. For Indian Hindus, ritual bathing in the Ganges River (a goddess deity itself) washes away sin and lessens the karmic burden for the next life. For Jews the mikvah bath is used for a range of purification purposes, some pertaining to ritual practice (e.g., consecration of priests, conversions to Judaism) and others, for example, to cleansing following menstruation, sex or the eating of certain foods. Also in Islam, Shinto, Taoism, Rastafarianism and other major faiths, ritual washing and ablutions are an important part of regular ritual practice.

At a symbolic level, immersion in water is initiation, regeneration, death and rebirth, spiritual and psychological renewal. In immersion (or a token thereof), we return and regress to the waters from which we were born, to the sea, the briny abyss and undifferentiated chaos from which life itself first stepped forth. As such, a ritual immersion and emergence re-enacts creation mythology.

Creation myths and cosmologies, describing how the universe came into being and humanity’s relationship to the universe, are cultural artifacts which reflect the most essential theological framework of a collective. Since these myths are ultimately the projected products of human minds, they may be considered to reflect in a very real sense the structure of human nature at its most basic level. Thus in the cosmologies of ancient and contemporary civilizations we see versions of a theory of human nature, a description of how it is that the human psyche has arisen and is structured; we see in creation myths the emergence

of human consciousness and self awareness from the undifferentiated unconsciousness of the animal mind.

One of the most ancient creation myths is that of the Babylonians, transcribed in the *Enuma elish* approximately 2000 BCE, and recording a much older oral tradition. In this myth, Tiamat (also known as The Deep) is the originator deity: darkness and primordial chaos, the watery abyss and cosmic sea, the womb from which all else has come. Personified as a sea-dragon, she battles with her progeny, the Gods, in Babylonian myth. Leading the host of younger gods against her is Marduk, principle of light and order. Marduk ultimately slays Tiamat, forming from her body the dome of the heavens, and the other half he lays down to make a floor over the deep. Thus do the younger gods mount of an order of creation, including humanity.

In its essential form, as an archetypal struggle between order and chaos, there is clear parallel in the Babylonian creation myth to the Hebrew account of creation later recounted in Genesis and many others from cultures across the globe. The hidden depths of water – dark, mysterious, chthonic and destructive, are typically associated with the unconscious roots of the human psyche and instinctual energies; in contrast to the *en-light-ened*, celestial and manifesting qualities of a rational and differentiated consciousness.

In Jungian terms, the struggle between these forces, and the eventual victory of Logos over Eros, represents a fundamental ontogenetic process. In each of us, as we progress through cycles of individuation, there is a natural and necessary emergence and further development of individual consciousness and selfness from the undifferentiated abyss of unconscious material. So too does this inner human struggle between light and dark, mythologized in ancient, watery cosmologies of creation, also represent the phylogenetic progression of mind evolution (and which ontogeny recapitulates). Thus does the animal mind, instinct-driven, largely unconscious and undifferentiated, evolve into a human, differentiated, directing and self-aware consciousness.

As a Mirror to Human Nature, and as a Levinasian Other with which to Interact

Mirrors are a common symbol for self-realization and knowledge of self. In everyday living, the reflective surface of water provided a tool for early humans to engage in self-examination, fostering self-awareness and the development of self-consciousness.

In becoming self-aware, our most basic human attribute, we develop a realization of separateness and duality – person from environment, individual consciousness from

undifferentiated unconsciousness, self from universe and deity. With this separation can also come estrangement and alienation, and in certain spirito-religious and psychological paths of development and therapy we find the means to “reconnect” these separated parts once more, to experience the divine within and to communicate between the different levels of a multilayered psyche. This conflict between the human drive to individuate on the one hand, and the pull to reconnect with that from which we have separated is reflected in many myths from antiquity, with water again providing the symbolic narrative.

Narcissus of Greek mythology, for example, boasted a watery lineage: born from the dark river nymph Liriope who had been ravished by the river Cephisus. Narcissus is most beautiful, and his mother keeps from him any mirror or reflective surface lest he might see himself and become vain from his own beauty. When Liriope asks of the prophetic seer Tiresias whether her son would live to a ripe age, he answers “yes, if he does not come to know himself” (Ovid, 1955: 83). Narcissus, in his pride, scorns all and sundry amorous advances from boy and girl alike until, one day, separated from his companions in a forest hunt, he finds his way to a pool of water deep in the forest. It is a place, Ovid relates, undisturbed by bird or beast – a place of seclusion and aloneness. There, quenching his thirst in the heat of the day, he catches sight of and is enraptured by his own reflection in the pool. At first he does not realize that it is his own reflection he sees and attempts time and again to embrace and kiss the ravishing beauty he sees before himself, but eventually he recognizes the reflection for his own self and despairs. By the pool he eventually dies of unrequited love and starvation, unable to draw himself away from his own reflection, even for the talkative nymph Echo. In coming to know himself Narcissus thus fulfills the prophecy of Tiresias.

At the surface of this myth is a moral tale warning young boys against the dangers of scornful vanity. But it is also a metaphor for the journey taken toward self-discovery and transformation. Born from the waters of the abyss, and being in a state of “not knowing of his self,” Narcissus represents the undifferentiated and undivided unconscious. In coming to know himself through seeing his own reflection, he undergoes the transformational process which is the defining moment of all humanity – differentiation, individuation and consciousness. Immediately thereupon he yearns for that which he has lost, and finds oblivion in the further transformational process of death (of the conscious self).

In this way water reflects our own nature, allowing us to see our self. But from a religious perspective water also has its own nature and vitality, and has been deified and worshipped in various forms throughout human history.

Extending Emmanuel Levinas' theory of "the face," water can thus be understood as an Other with whom humans interact. More than projection and reflection, water also has its own selfness and divinity.

See also: [▶ Abyss](#) [▶ Celtic Religions](#) [▶ Chaos](#) [▶ Christianity](#) [▶ Creation](#) [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jesus](#) [▶ Myth](#) [▶ Religious](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Symbol](#)

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Watts, Alan Wilson

Robert S. Ellwood

Alan Wilson Watts (1915–1973) was an Anglo-American writer and lecturer on religion, spirituality, and psychology.

Born in Chislehurst, Kent, England, Watts married an American woman, Eleanor Everett, in 1938, moving to New York the same year. He was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church in 1944, but left that vocation in 1950 to pursue the study and practice of Eastern mysticism. During his Episcopal years he had written *Behold the Spirit* (1947), an uneven but sometimes profound synthesis of Eastern and Christian mysticism, and *The Supreme Identity* (1950), articulating a highly monistic mystical philosophy. In 1951–1957 Watts was a member of the faculty of the American Academy of Asian Studies in San Francisco and, under a grant from the Bollingen foundation, in 1956 published *The Way of Zen*, perhaps his best-known book.

With this influential study as a launching-pad, Watts became an independent writer and speaker or, as he liked to call himself, "philosophical entertainer." He produced an unceasing series of lectures, radio addresses, and articles, together with such popular books as *Nature, Man and Woman* (1958), *"This Is It" and Other Essays* (1960), *Psychotherapy East and West* (1961), *The Joyous Cosmology* (1962), *The Two Hands of God* (1963), *Beyond Theology* (1964), *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (1968), and *In My Own Way* (autobiography; 1972). Serendipitously flourishing in the years the "Beats" of the 1950s and the celebrated "counterculture" of the 1960s were rediscovering the mystic East and going some ways to revolutionize the American spiritual quest, Watts quickly emerged as a major figure in popular culture. Whether speaking or writing, his flow of words was polished and elegant, with never an awkward phrase, and generally informed by just the right metaphor or image to make the piece sing.

Watts knew how to make hearers or readers feel he was letting them in on a great cosmic secret, something sacred hidden behind the scenes that turned the universe and one's life as a part of it into a great and joyous dance. To be sure, in his later books he was sometimes repetitious from one work to another, and his depictions of the God of personal monotheism, whom he clearly disliked, often amounted to caricature. But many found his sparkling evocations of the divine within, realizable in moments of timeless mystical awareness and making all of life holy, to be wonderfully liberating.

Watts' basic ideas were few and simple. Drawing from Hinduism, Zen, and perhaps above all Taoism, he emphasized over and over that we are all parts of the universe, like waves rising and falling on the sea. The universe itself, unceasingly flowing and changing though not "going" anywhere, is expressing itself through us; minds and bodies alike are natural parts of nature. The dualistic

Spirit and Matter of philosophical Idealism and Materialism are mere abstractions. The cosmos in its wholeness cannot be reduced to either, but is what the Buddhists call “Suchness,” that indefinable, infinite reality enveloping both consciousness and form. It is known best not by words but, on the human level, in wordlessly joyous activities like meditation, swimming, or dancing, wherein one can feel its flow. All these exercises are rightly done just to be doing them, not for the sake of any extraneous idea of “growth” or of attaining some outside goal. The swimmer does not swim just to get to other side of the pool or lake, or the dancer dance only to reach the end of the number, but for the joy of the activity itself. Meditation too should not be thought of as a task or technique, but as pleasant way of attaining deep and quiet consciousness disconnected from bondage to past or future, and thereby one with the consciousness of the universe.

The good life, then, maintains a sense of joyous wonder toward the unfathomable mysteries of the universe, while enjoying good things as they come. The gift of spontaneity, and of living in the moment, is greatly to be prized. A way of life such as this must steer carefully between true freedom and the deceptive “freedom” of undisciplined self-indulgence. Watts had his inner demons, and was not always responsible in family and other relationships, or in the use of alcohol. But at his best he manifested the exuberant liberty and spiritual excitement of which he could write and speak so eloquently. He died at his home in Marin County, California. His books have remained in print long after his death.

See also: [Buddhism](#) [Hinduism](#) [Taoism](#) [Zen](#)

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Western Wall

Lynn Somerstein

The Western Wall, in Hebrew, *Ha Kotel haMa'aravi*, is the remaining wall of the Jewish Second temple, the most sacred building in Judaism. It was built on the site of the first temple, also called Solomon's Temple, which was erected in the tenth century BCE. The Gate of Heaven is said to be located directly above *Ha Kotel*. Because it is so near to heaven, people inscribe prayers and wishes on pieces of paper and place them in the cracks in the walls in the hopes that their requests will be granted.

The Dome of The Rock, built in 691 CE, is directly above Ha Kotel. It contains the rock which is considered the foundation from which God created the Universe, and later, where Abraham prepared to slay Isaac. Jacob is said to have slept on this rock and dreamt of a ladder leading to heaven, with angels going up and down on it. In Islamic belief this is the rock from which Muhammad ascended to heaven.

HaKotel is also sometimes referred to as “the Wailing Wall,” a derogatory term that refers to Jews wailing about the loss of the temple and other many hardships.

Tisha b'av, the Ninth day of the month of Ab, commemorates the destruction of the temple and is a Jewish religious Day of mourning. The temple is supposed to be remembered in times of joy, too. For example, a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony includes the breaking of a glass, which among other things symbolizes the destruction of the temple. The temple represents irreplaceable joy, an idealized vision of past perfection.

See also: [Jewish Mourning Rituals](#) [Judaism and Psychology](#)

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Wicca

David Waldron

Primarily the formation of Wicca, as a sub-category of pagan revivalist movements emerging in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is the product of the efforts of Gerald Gardner's attempts to construct an authentically "English" religious system that could revive the traditional religious and cultural practices of England's rich and diverse pagan heritage. It is also a religious tradition replete with archetypal forms, mythological structures and appropriated alchemical models of ritual and religious practice that closely correlates with the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, and in this sense, is extremely significant to the development of psychological theory.

Gerald Gardner and the Origins of Wicca in British Romanticism

Being heavily influenced by nineteenth century Romantic representations of "merry England," Gardner integrated the ideas surrounding Pagan beliefs and practices into a coherent, structured and practical format. Particularly pertinent in his research was the theory of Pagan survivals as propagated in the methodology and historical analytical practices of the Folklore Society in which the rituals, legends and folklore of rural England represented cultural fossils of a primordial pagan past. Similarly, in creating the rituals, symbols and practices of his Wiccan belief system, Gardner drew upon a broad range of established lore and ritual from the occultist and ritual magic traditions of English society. He integrated these strains of English culture within the ideological and cultural matrix of English Romanticism and, so doing, created a body of religious and magical practice that celebrated the Romantic idealization of the countryside, opposition to Enlightenment industrialism and the ideal of an authentic and eternal English national culture. Particularly important in Gardner's Wiccan religion was the centrality of the divine feminine as manifested by a triple aspect lunar goddess of Maiden, Mother and Crone set in symbiotic duality of a nature God, usually associated with the Saxon deity Cernunos (Hutton, 1999; Gardner, 1959; Crowley, 2002).

In the formative period of the 1940s wiccans, like their predecessors in the nineteenth century pagan revivalist movements, legitimized their beliefs by appropriating a variety of romanticist histories and interpretations of

folklore. Writers such as James Frazer, Jules Michelet and Margaret Murray were perhaps the most principal exponents of this approach. In this context, Gerald Gardner claimed that Wicca was a linear descendant of a pre-Christian Pagan fertility cult, persecuted during the witch hunts of the late middle ages. This model of witchcraft and Wiccan history, as postulated by Gardner, was an almost literal reconstruction (albeit with some significant departures) of the model of witchcraft persecutions presented in Margaret Murray's *Witch Cult in Western Europe* (Murray, 2000) and manifested in a wide array of English folklore (Gardner, 1959; Gardner, 1954; Bishop and Bishop, 2000).

Wicca and Jungian Analytical Psychology

Whilst there is little evidence that psychological theory influenced the construction and evolution of Wicca during its formative phase, the imagery, rituals and religious expressions of Wicca resonated with powerful psychological symbolism. From the eternal duality of the sacred God/Goddess (anima/animas) duality to the use of powerful archetypes developed in romantic literature, folklore and mythology, Gardner's Wiccan movement profoundly illustrated examples of archetypes associated with Jung's collective unconscious. Similarly, the rituals and religious practices of Wicca drew extensively on alchemical traditions relating sacred numbers, geometry and mythology in forms and patterns that closely paralleled that of Carl Jung's use of alchemy as a representation of the search for psychological wholeness (Crowley, 2002; Adler, 1986/1979).

Jungian Archetypes and Wiccan Historicity

Whilst the parallels with Jungian thought are very evident in the powerful and pervasive imagery, ritual and mythology associated with Wicca, the practices and analysis of Wicca only became directly associated with analytical psychology at a much later date. The collapse of the historical and anthropological claims associated with Wicca in the 1970s was closely linked to the perception that empirically verifiable historical antecedents were peripheral to the experience of being a Wiccan. In this context, many Wiccan writers, most notably Starhawk, Vivianne Crowley and Margot Adler, inspired by the increasing popularity of Jung's work in the 1960s and 1970s, took an alternative approach. Using Carl Jung's

theories as a tool for understanding the role of the symbolic and the spiritual in human experience, and relying on his concept of the collective unconscious, they described witchcraft history as representative of universal psychic truths, independent of empirical history. From this perspective, the increasingly problematic fixation on empirical history as the primary legitimizing factor in religious belief could be eschewed and the rich network of symbolism, mythology and spiritual belief could be explored in terms of psycho-cultural resonance of religious archetypes and mystical experiences (Adler, 1979; Starhawk, 1989/1979; Crowley, 1989).

Jungian understanding of the nature and function of the symbolic has proved to be an invaluable model for the legitimation of Wiccan rituals, mythology and historical narrative as well as profoundly enriching the understanding of its religious practice and mythology. By giving priority to the psychic significance of symbols that have arisen from the collective unconscious, Wicca had attained a means of legitimating ritual outside of empirical history, whilst at the same time ensconcing itself within the framework of a coherent and relatively respectable psychological and epistemological framework. In this, it has found a contemporary authentication for Pagan beliefs and practice. From this perspective, the rituals and symbols of the neo-Pagan tradition are not so much valued in terms of their indexical relationship to a particular Pagan tradition of the past but rather as indexes of a development into psychological maturity. If radically different cultural traditions are integrated together, such as those of Native Americans and pre-Roman Celts, it is not perceived as a violation of cultural authenticity but rather, recognition of the common source of mythological symbolism in the collective unconscious and the universal search for psychological development.

The Use of Jungian Analytical Psychology in Wiccan Practice

Vivianne Crowley's textbook for Witches, *The Old Religion in the New Age*, is a particularly pertinent example of Jung's impact on the neo-Pagan movement. While the book is certainly based on Gerald Gardner's Wiccan movement and the history of Murray's *Witch cult in Western Europe*, Crowley also incorporates Kundalini meditational practices and Hindu rituals into the practice of Witchcraft. As a practicing Jungian psychoanalyst, she bases the rationale for her work firmly in Jungian theory. She argues that the capacity to integrate the practice of Wicca with the symbols, mythology and rituals of other

traditions is a metaphor of a person's rise to self-fulfillment through the attainment of psychological integration. For Crowley, the growth of neo-Paganism is intrinsically linked with its appropriation of Jungian discourse, even as one's struggle to find religious expression is intrinsically linked to a search for psychological wholeness, Jungian discourse readily translates into the language of magic and mythology and the language of Jungian analytical psychology flows naturally for practicing neo-Pagans because it "reflects back to them their own spiritual experiences." She also argues that from a neo-Pagan perspective, the central issue in Jung's model of religious experience is that of *religare* or rejoining. Through mythology and the embracing of the unconscious, as manifested through deeply resonant archetypal symbols, one can find wholeness and a sense of reconnection in a fundamentally alienated and disconnected world (Crowley, 2002).

From the perspective of the Wiccan appropriation of Jung, the collective unconscious is a common, shared symbolic heritage to all human beings that gives meaning to people's experience. There are certain shared symbols or archetypes that are perceived to represent universals in all human psychic experience. Perhaps the most common example is the concept of *anima* and *animus*, the masculine and feminine components of the human mind, possessed by both men and women. In Jung's analysis there are certain aspects to social and cultural behavior that can be ascribed to universal masculine and feminine qualities that are distinct from gender. These represent unique universal qualities common to both men and women. Crowley illustrates the use of the archetypes of masculine (*animus*) and feminine (*anima*) from a neo-Pagan perspective as the underlying psychological truth of the Wiccan postulate that divinity is manifested in a symbiotic God and Goddess, representing universal masculine and feminine qualities intrinsic to both the psyche and the natural world (Crowley, 1989). This is particularly well illustrated in Wiccan author Cassandra Carter's, comment on the significance of Pagan ritual in terms of its capacity to explain Jungian models of psychic development.

- ▶ In Jungian terms the descent of the Goddess teaches the need for a woman to go on her own quest in search of her *animus* – not waiting for the knight on a white charger who will rescue her from the need to make her own choices, but going to confront the Dark Lord and solve his mysteries – going of her own choice and will into the Kingdom of the Unconscious mind. For a man, he has been successful, with the help of the Goddess, his *anima*, in exploring and winning the battles within his

own unconscious, and he and she are happily reunited in the underworld of the unconscious (Carter, 1992: 6).

Wicca and the Search of Psychological Wholeness

For many Wiccans the struggle for psychological wholeness and connectedness is a struggle against the enlightenment definition of progress and universal taxonomization, rationalization and industrialism. It is, at the same time, a re-shaping of the psychic experience of the present as a means to progress. Similarly, Wicca, as a religious tradition tends to be intensely focused on representations of the past and the mythological as a means of coming to a sense of integration of aspects of the self and the *imago dei*. In this context, is not surprising that Wiccans have recognized aspects of Jungian theory with which they could identify and, consequently, incorporate into their own religious framework. This identification and incorporation has also provided the neo-Pagan movement with a teleological orientation, a vehicle that enables their existence to span both the past and the future with intellectual and conceptual integrity.

See also: [▶ Anima and Animus](#) [▶ Female God Images](#) [▶ Femininity](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Ritual](#) [▶ Symbol](#) [▶ Witchcraft](#)

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Wilber, Ken

Leon Schlammm

Wilber's Integral Psychology

Ken Wilber (1949) is the most influential writer in the field of transpersonal psychology (Wilber, 1977, 1980, 1981a, b, 1983a, b, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000a, b, 2002, 2006), having for more than two decades been widely acclaimed as its preeminent theoretician. Working self-consciously in the tradition of such systematic philosophers as Hegel, Schelling, and Habermas, he has presented his readers with a cartography of *the spectrum of consciousness* which, in spite of much elaboration on his original speculative model of the development of consciousness, has continued to be one of the defining features of his *integral psychology*. Drawing upon an impressive variety of sources from the world's mystical traditions (particularly Hindu and Buddhist contemplative traditions, as well as twentieth century Indian mystics such as Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo), developmental psychology (e.g., Alexander, Arieti, Broughton, Graves, Kegan, Kohlberg, Loevinger, Lowen, Piaget, Sullivan, Wade), psychoanalysis (principally Freud and Erikson), analytical psychology (Jung and Neumann), humanistic psychology and psychosynthesis (Maslow and Assagioli), the history of Western philosophy, anthropology (e.g., Beck, Gebser, Lenski), and physics (e.g., Bohm, Capra, Jeans, Pribram), Wilber has consistently argued that human consciousness possesses a hierarchical structure. There are many different psychological and spiritual levels of development, and each level both integrates the properties and achievements of the lower level and transcends its limitations. Identifying an underlying metaphysical pattern assisting integration of the natural and human sciences with the spiritual perspective of the perennial philosophy (e.g., Coomaraswamy, Guenon, Huston Smith),

Wilber introduces the concept of the *holon* which is simultaneously both a whole (in relation to the parts that are at developmentally lower levels) and a part (of a greater whole that is at a higher developmental level). According to Wilber, all human experience (individual and collective) is evolving through a hierarchically organised great chain of holons (or “Great Chain of Being”) toward the self-realisation of spirit in non-dual mystical experience, although evolutionary fixation can occur at any developmental level (Wilber, 1977, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000a, b, 2006; Cortright, 1997; Rothberg, 1998; De Quincey, 2000; Visser, 2003; Reynolds, 2006).

Wilber’s Cartography of the Spectrum of Consciousness

It is this vision of *holarchical integration* and the evolution of consciousness (including the correlation of ontogenetic with phylogenetic stages of development) which shapes Wilber’s assessment of the relationship between psychological and spiritual development. Wilber identifies many universal, *deep* structures (distinguished from *surface* structures) of consciousness which transcend all cultural conditioning: the prepersonal, prerational, preegoic (fulcrums 0–4: *primary matrix* [pleromatic, urobic non-differentiation]; *sensoriophysical* [autistic, symbiotic, psychotic]; *phantasmic-emotional* [identification of the ego with the body, typhon, Freudian primary process, sexual energy, libido, *prana*, magical world view, narcissistic-borderline]; *representational mind* [impulsive, self-protective, punishment/obedience, preconventional, mythical world view, psychoneuroses]; *rule/role* [concrete operational, conformist, conventional, approval of others, law and order, mythical world view,]), the personal, rational, egoic (fulcrums 5 and 6: *formal reflexive* [formal operational, individualistic, conscience, postconventional, identity neuroses]; *centaur* [*vision logic*, integration of mind and body and of conflicting points of view, planetary consciousness, gateway to transpersonal]), and the transpersonal (or spiritual), transrational, transegoic (fulcrums 7–9: *psychic* [nature mysticism, body-based spiritual practices as in shamanism and *kundalini-yoga*, paranormal abilities]; *subtle* [deity or theistic mysticism, as in Christian mysticism, Sufism and Indian *bhakti*]; *causal* [formless mysticism celebrated by Hindu and Buddhist canonical literature]), beyond which lies the *non-dual* ground of all experience, of unmanifest formlessness and manifest form (often identified as level 10, and typically associated with the *sunyavadin* tradition of Mahayana Buddhism).

Moreover, he argues that, by integrating the materials of western depth-psychology and developmental psychology with those of the Hindu and Buddhist contemplative traditions, he can delineate the different developmental competences and pathologies of each level of the spectrum of consciousness. Wilber claims that competing schools of psychotherapy and spiritual emancipation (with their different treatment modalities) address different levels of the spectrum and different developmental problems. Since depth-psychology and developmental psychology address the prepersonal and the personal structures of consciousness and mystical traditions are concerned with the transpersonal levels, no school of psychotherapy or spiritual liberation is marginalised. Each is understood to convey partial and complementary truths about human consciousness (Wilber, 1977, 1980, 1981a, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000a, b, 2006; Cortright, 1997; De Quincey, 2000; Ferrer, 2002; Visser, 2003; Reynolds, 2004, 2006).

The Role of the Ego in Transpersonal Development

It is Wilber’s claim, that all types of psychotherapeutic and spiritual practice can be graded by being integrally embraced within the holarchical spectrum of consciousness, which has provoked such intense controversy among transpersonal psychologists. The issue at the heart of this controversy is Wilber’s understanding of the role of the ego (the personal self) in transpersonal development. Wilber argues that the ego (fulcrum 5), with its capacity for detached witnessing of the conventional world, is not dissolved but preserved, and typically strengthened, by transpersonal structures. Although exclusive identification of consciousness with the ego is transcended (and thereby dissolved) during spiritual development, the ego, with its rational competences and its scientific worldview, is included within, and utilised by, all transpersonal levels of consciousness. This means, for Wilber, that the acquisition of the ego, as well as modern rationality and science, should not be viewed as an obstacle to spiritual development (the cause of alienation of consciousness from spirit), but rather as a very significant spiritual achievement, a necessary, evolutionary step toward spiritual maturity, a movement of spirit toward spirit. Accordingly, Wilber argues, the spiritual function of science and modern rationality is to strip us of our infantile and adolescent, prerational views of spirit, to dismantle the transitional, *archaic*, *magical* and *mythic* worldviews associated with the prerational or prepersonal fulcrums, in order to make room for the genuinely transrational insights of authentic mystical

traditions. Such a critique by modernity (and postmodernity, as in the *vision logic* of fulcrum 6) of premodernity enables us to realize that mysticism is evolutionary and progressive, not devolutionary and regressive, and thus lies in our collective future, not our collective past (Wilber, 1981b, 1983b, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2006; Washburn, 1988; Cortright, 1997; Grof, 1998; Kremer, 1998; Rothberg, 1998; Walsh, 1998; De Quincey, 2000; Visser, 2003; Reynolds, 2006).

Wilber's Pre/Trans Fallacy

Moreover, it is this linear model of psychological and spiritual development and the pivotal role of the ego in spiritual transformation which leads Wilber to another defining feature of his integral psychology: his persistent disjunction of spiritual evolution from psychological regression. He criticises many contemporary writers who confuse or equate spiritual development with regression, by obscuring the differences between prepersonal and transpersonal states and stages of development. Because prepersonal and transpersonal states and stages appear to share certain characteristics (e.g., the quality of fusion or union and the lack of a primary focus on rationality), these writers confuse or equate them, and thereby commit what Wilber calls the *pre/trans fallacy*. The pre/trans fallacy can assume two forms. The first (ptf-1) claims that transpersonal, mystical experiences are nothing but a regression to prepersonal, infantile states. It is Freud and his followers who are charged with ptf-1: the fallacy of reductionism. However, Wilber engages more passionately and persistently with ptf 2 than ptf 1: the fallacy of *elevationism*. He argues that Jung and the Romantic movement (and more recently much of New Age and countercultural spirituality) are responsible for the elevation of prepersonal, infantile fusion states (in which a stable personal ego has not yet emerged) to the transegoic and transrational "glory" of mystical union (in which the personal ego has already been transcended). More specifically, Wilber charges Jung with several types of elevationism leading to the misidentification of psychological regression with spiritual evolution: (1) the confusion of primary matrix (fulcrum 0) with causal level, formless mysticism (fulcrum 9), (2) the confusion of magic (fulcrum 2) with psychic level, nature mysticism (fulcrum 7), (3) the confusion of mythic images (fulcrums 3 and 4) with subtle level archetypes (fulcrum 8). Wilber has repeatedly censured Jung for his failure to adopt a linear, evolutionary perspective which differentiates between the "ape side" and the "angel side" of human nature, the prepersonal and the transpersonal levels of the collective unconscious. For

Wilber, this elevationism is particularly evinced by Jung's assumption that archetypes are images of instincts, and by Jung's failure to discriminate between experiences of prepersonal mythic images (which are more self-centric and narcissistic than egoic experiences) and those of transpersonally located archetypes. Wilber concludes that Jung's archetypes are actually a pre/trans fallacy mixture of divine and primitive psychic contents, which "wobble between transrational glory and prerational chaos" (Wilber, 1983b, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2002, 2006; Washburn, 1988, 1998; Grof, 1989, 1998; Odajnyk, 1993; Cortright, 1997; Visser, 2003; Reynolds, 2004, 2006).

Challenges to Wilber's Integral Psychology

Many transpersonal psychologists have challenged the metaphysical, soteriological, and psychotherapeutic assumptions of Wilber's *integral psychology*. Wilber's Neo-Perennialism, in particular his reification and elevation of deep structures of consciousness to transcendental status, has been questioned because it is not susceptible to empirical verification and falsification, but rather appears to depend on Wilber's experience of meditation for its authority. The essentialism and subtle objectivism of Wilber's metaphysical perspective, which perpetuates false dichotomies between universalism and postmodernism, imposes severe constraints on the variety of forms of spiritual evolution, leading to a misleading homogenization of religious traditions and an unjustifiable privileging of non-dualistic religious traditions. Wilber's claim that progress through the transpersonal levels or fulcrums of consciousness is sequential and unalterable (from psychic to subtle to causal to non-dual) has been challenged, because it is supported neither by clinical materials nor by those of the world's mystical traditions. In the spiritual domain a single invariant sequence of development does not appear to exist. Moreover, some transpersonal psychologists have insisted, contrary to Wilber, that regression can be a powerful tool for spiritual transformation; spiritual evolution typically does not follow a direct linear trajectory, but involves a combined regressive and progressive movement of consciousness. Because the therapeutic process addresses the prepersonal (including the biographical) and the transpersonal bands of the spectrum of consciousness simultaneously (rather than progressively), it is impossible to clearly delineate between psychotherapy and spiritual development (Washburn, 1988, 1998; Cortright, 1997; Grof, 1998; Heron, 1998; Kremer, 1998; McDonald-Smith and Rothberg, 1998; Rothberg, 1998; De Quincey, 2000; Ferrer, 2002).

See also: [▶ Altered States of Consciousness](#) [▶ Analytical Psychology](#) [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Consciousness](#) [▶ Depth Psychology and Spirituality](#) [▶ Ego](#) [▶ Enlightenment](#) [▶ Freud, Sigmund, and Religion](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Jungian Self](#) [▶ Mysticism and Psychotherapy](#) [▶ Nonduality](#) [▶ Psyche](#) [▶ Psychology and the Origins of Religion](#) [▶ Psychospiritual](#) [▶ Psychotherapy and Religion](#) [▶ Reductionism](#) [▶ Religious Experience](#) [▶ Transpersonal Psychology](#)

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Winnicott, Donald Woods

Jaco J. Hamman

Donald Woods Winnicott (1896–1971) was a prominent British pediatrician and analyst who came to prominence, especially in North America, only after his death. Using understandable terms, he introduced concepts and phrases such as: “the good-enough mother” (Winnicott, Winnicott, Shepherd and Davis, 1987), “the true and false self” (Winnicott, 1994), “holding environment” (Winnicott, 1993; Winnicott et al., 1994), “the transitional object and transitional phenomena” (Winnicott, 1993), and, “there is no such thing as a baby” (Winnicott, 1994). Winnicott never established a school of thought, but his

ideas inform especially psychoanalytic thinking about the pre-Oedipal child and the importance of the parent/infant relationship.

Object Relations Theory

As an object relational theorist, he joined others (most notably Margaret Little, W.R.D. Fairbairn, Charles Rycroft, and Masud Kahn) to form the Middle or Independent Group within the British Psychoanalytic Society. This group argued that seeking relationships, and not intrapsychic drives, constitute the fundamental building blocks of mental life.

Described as the master of the in-between (or paradox), Winnicott found a home between the opposing viewpoints of Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. Winnicott's in-between character and especially his interest in transitional objects, transitional phenomena, and the intermediate area of experiencing led him to dialogue extensively with culture.

Area of Faith

Winnicott grew up in a Christian (Methodist) family, but as a self-identified non-traditionalist, showed little interest in religious doctrine. Rather, he stated that tradition and doctrine are things persons should grow out of. Scholars have identified an "area of faith" (Eigen, 1981) in Winnicott's thought. The area of faith is the transitional space between objectivity and subjectivity from which music, art, and religion receive their power to transform. It is an area where transitional experiencing takes place and it speaks to difference and aliveness amidst patterns of destructiveness and survival which lead to new psychic awareness. The area of faith addresses the capacity to project the existence of a god and to experience relationship with that god.

Capacities and Maturity

Winnicott identified six developmental capacities, each enriching our understanding of maturity and the area of faith. Achieving these interrelated capacities requires a nurturing holding environment and is for most persons a life-long maturational process: (1) *The capacity to believe* (Winnicott, Winnicott, Shepherd and Davis, 1986) speaks to being trustful and loving, being able to engage the world confidently with one's complete being: body, mind, and spirit. (2) *The capacity to imagine* (Winnicott, 1993) describes the ability to address realities that are neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but

transitional in nature. Seeing imaginative activity as healthy, Winnicott distinguished himself from the classic psychoanalytic tradition and seeing religious belief as infantile or neurotic. (3) *The capacity for concern* (Winnicott, 1994) addresses the integration of one's constructive and destructive potential. It describes an individual that cares or minds and both feels and accepts responsibility. (4) *The capacity to be alone* (Winnicott, 1994) in turn, speaks to being alone in the presence of others while experiencing significant emotional, spiritual, and relational anxiety. It is overcoming loneliness and experiencing solitude without fleeing into false relationships. (5) *The capacity of object usage* (Winnicott, Winnicott, Shepherd and Davis, 1994) is the ability to discover others for who they are, resisting projection and other projective mechanisms as ways of knowing. In usage, an object becomes valuable when it survives our destructiveness. (6) Lastly, *the capacity to play* (Winnicott, Winnicott, Shepherd and Davis, 1994) indicates entering a sacred space where a person can effortlessly move into the intermediate area of experiencing.

Achieving these capacities implies becoming an emotionally, spiritually, and relationally mature person who can live life with hope and creativity. For Winnicott, a mature person can engage all aspects of culture as forms of play of the imagination. This includes participating in a religious tradition and experiencing religious symbols, and recognizing the relationship between transitional phenomena and religious experience.

See also: [Active Imagination](#) [Mother](#) [Music and Religion](#) [Object Relations Theory](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Psychology of Religion](#) [Self](#) [Transitional Object](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods, and Religion](#)

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Winnicott, Donald Woods, and Religion

Kathryn Madden

Being and the Feminine Ground

Winnicott grounds his theory on the female element of being as the center of gravity in the relationship between mother, child and environment. “Holding” is important in that it helps the baby to integrate experience and

prepares the foundation for what becomes a self experiencing “being.” Holding, for Winnicott, refers to the mother’s capacity for identification with her infant as well as the literal physical holding of the child—feeding, bathing, dressing—in the phase of “absolute dependence,” which includes the mother’s empathy, touch, and attentiveness to the infant’s sensitivity to falling.

Winnicott also believes that the mother should embrace the infant figuratively in her own being to prevent holding from becoming a mechanical act. Without this experience of being, the infant can feel quite empty. The baby may experience unthinkable anxiety, primitive agonies, or the experience of falling and annihilation. The baby’s subjective experience of being merged relies upon the mother’s flexibility, which promotes a continuity of being. This merger or un-integration offers a state of rest crucial to creativity and play. As the child integrates the experiences of un-integration and being, these contribute toward doing.

Even before the merger of subject and object, Winnicott speaks of “being” as antedating the merger state because the infant “is” before it feels. Thus, having a good holding environment gives the infant an ability to “be,” an experience that contains the child during the period of “absolute dependence.” The mother being in a state of “primary maternal preoccupation” provides the ground for this complete dependence. Most important in the early experience of feeding is being and the female element. When a mother offers her breast, and the baby responds to this offering, they share in this element. If the mother does not or cannot provide the baby with a breast that “is” but only with a breast that “does,” the child may develop with a crippled capacity to be. The early mother-infant container of un-integration and merger lays the foundation for projective and/or introjective identification and leads to a healthy separation between subject and object, “me” and “not me” in which the object-mother becomes more objective: an “objective-object.” As the infant matures, it moves out of the world of subjective-objects, recognizes objects as external to itself and as outside its “omnipotent control.” From this sequential development, the child becomes a self who feels real, and who can experience empathy based upon the experience of being at the beginning of his or her own life.

The female element that Winnicott stresses as a crucial container of being for an infant from the beginning moments of life lays the foundations for a strong sense of self. Undergoing human development within a good-enough mother and a sensitive “facilitating environment” gives us access to the creativity that contributes to the formation of culture. In contrast, those who have not known the freedom of healthy omnipotence within the transitional space of early life may experience life as empty

compliance to an external reality that is devoid of value and meaning.

Dependence as a Concept of Being

Winnicott's concept of being and the feminine principle has specific developmental shifts or stages through which an infant evolves. In the first to second stage—from absolute dependence to relative dependence—the infant adapts to the failures of the mother in gradual, manageable increments. Provided there is good-enough environmental provision, these first two stages usually are negotiated adequately toward the third stage of independence. This stage lasts roughly into adolescence and adulthood. The external world begins to reflect the person's internal life of external-others. Ideally, the individual develops a sense of confidence in his or her maternal environment and has introjected these memories, which has allowed him to take over part of the mother's function.

The concept of dependence and its stages offers the infant the opportunity to get what he needs because he has *created* it. This function provides the necessary omnipotence to grow and move beyond the subjective-object stage of merger, followed by the psychological ability to use the object ruthlessly (objective-object), and the development of the capacity for creativity, and play.

Being and Doing

The facilitating environment also refers to the id and its instincts and the ego defenses that relate to the instincts but are developmentally important only in the context of the overall relationship with the mother. The infant has to have gone through absolute dependence and the successful negotiation of the subjective-object stage for the instinctual demands to become experienced as part of the self. This successful negotiation gives the infant a strong-enough ego to house the id instincts. Otherwise, the growing child can feel that something is coming “at-it” from outside, which transforms from id-excitement and is experienced as traumatic and without meaning.

In Winnicott's view, being informs doing, the drives as male elements, which come later than being. The male element comes into play as the infant begins to separate from the mother. With the process of separation, there also comes the experience of instinct-backed drives and with this, frustration and anger when the child's id satisfactions are not met. The male element evolves along with the formation of the objective-object and

how the child internally is or is not able to bring together the two aspects of mother.

The Developmental Sequence in the Use of the Object: Two Mothers

Winnicott addresses the development of what happens in infancy in terms of the use of the object. His idea of the facilitating environment includes maternal care as well as the instincts and ego defenses. In this dual context, he originated the theory of “two mothers.” The mother of the holding environment is the “environment mother” and the mother of the drives and the objective-object stage is the “object-mother.”

The environment mother is experienced by the infant when he is in an un-integrated state, a state associated with rest, being, quiet and an environment that is safe and empathic. The mother receives the infant and is one with him.

The object mother is experienced as the one who the infant knows in his excited states. The mother is fully present to him, as she is in the un-integrated state, but now becomes the target for his crude instinctual-tension, his raw aggression, and his ruthlessness. Both of these aspects of “mother” are needed to modify each other intrapsychically. The mother of eros, resting, and feeding is not sufficient enough to empower the child with all the aggressive energies needed for life.

The object mother introduces the masculine element. The goal, for wholeness and health, is for the infant to achieve fusion internally while separating from the real mother. Fusion represents the primary unity that Winnicott believes precedes the development of infant ego. To acquire fusion – to have both aggression and eros – the baby has to become aware that the two mothers in his fantasy experience are the same mother.

Winnicott conceptualizes how fusion plays out in infantile life by speculating upon what happens internally for the baby during its feeding time at the breast. The infant ego experiences an instinctual id impulse which is spontaneous and impersonal, imaginal and physical: the nipple is in front of the baby and he feels the urge to bite it. The actual breast is not destroyed. Both parties may experience destructive impulses but mostly in fantasized (although sometimes actual) attacks. The mother's survival from these “attacks” helps the infant to separate fantasy from objective reality. The mother is placed outside the arena of projections, outside of the infant's omnipotent control. This separation helps the child to develop an external arena in the sense of relating to objects outside his subjective world.

Further, after the ruthless biting- sucking feed, he not only becomes apprehensive about the hole he has created, he grows anxious about what feels good and what feels bad. An adult example of this anxiety might be going to the grocery store and filling a cart with mounds of incredible food and then, suddenly, feeling really empty, anxious, and awful at the check out stand. Such a feeling relates back to infantile anxiety: "I am feeding, I am fed, I feel good, but there is this hole. I think I feel good, but maybe I feel bad. Now there is stuff coming up from my stomach, and I really feel bad. Or, do I feel good? I am being held. I am being. I am. I think I am?"

An infant has to surrender to his environment. The body is totally hooked into the internal psychic process and vice-versa. To assist with this perceived hole and the struggle which becomes overly personified at the adult level, the mother needs to hold, receive and accept whatever gifts, "good and bad," that the baby gives: his burping, elimination of food, his cries. What is going on in his body is an important part of the development of a psychosoma unity.

This maternal acceptance is crucial in the joining of the two mothers, aggression and eros. The mother's receiving helps to heal the imagined hole he made in her breast. If she accepts his biting as a gift, no matter how messy, or sloppy it is, this facilitates his gift gesture in being reparative in terms of lessening his anxiety. As with the other instinctive gestures, his anxiety is accepted and tolerated so that he can join the two mothers inside, in fusion, eventually to see the mother as outside, external. This developmental achievement informs the child's capacity to give because he has been helped to sort out the good and bad in the struggle with anxiety that he has experienced within himself. He can tolerate the imagined holes he creates with his instinctual impulses and yet, there is reparation available because these energies have been housed as acceptable. The mother's tolerance enables him to be able to imagine that something can be done about the hole he has created.

In the evolution of this early ruthlessness and aggression, as associated with the fusion of the two mothers, comes a stage of concern. If the mother has been good-enough, the infant comes to experience concern for her even while he becomes aware of his aggression toward her. A healthy guilt begins to form in relationship to his aggression and destruction toward his mother. He learns how to repair when he bursts out with impulses of excitement by giving in social situations.

If the mother is perceived as not surviving, for instance, punishes the baby, the infant can experience her reaction as impingement. The infant fantasizes that his

spontaneous impulse-energies have destroyed his source of sustenance and, in its place, he has created a hole. At a baby level, this induces raw anxiety. If the growing ego cannot house this impulse, the infant experiences its own impulses as assaults, which leads to the establishment of a compliant, false self. The false self develops out of what a child is punished for – what is bad or wrong – and this badness is internalized.

Thus, infant development first begins with the subjective-object world and then the objective world which is destroyed, but survives. The infant's aggression serves a developmental purpose. His developing ability to use her as an object fuses instinctual love (aggression) and erotic love (appetite) in him in the act of dependency at the breast. The infant is not aware of his ruthless, destructive intent toward his mother during the first two years or so but at this stage of primitive ruthlessness is simply expressing and releasing instinctual tension.

The importance of aggression is that if there is no space for housing aggression and the destructive, the bad gets split or dissociated. This is extremely difficult to work out in one's body. In adult life, without aggression at the ego's disposal, one has to keep thinking up instances to keep the other person bad. This necessity for projective living is exhausting and uses up energy that could be used more constructively. Without the good-enough mother and environment, primitive ruthlessness and aggression can become anti-social. The child, and later, the adolescent can become destructive in reaction to frustration based upon what he did not receive in terms of mothering.

The ego space of early childhood needs to grow big enough to house these destructive impulses so they do not become permanently un-housed. In such cases, one day one's id impulse might arise in a therapy session. This impulse will need to be received as a spontaneous gesture to help repair the dissociation. Only when attention has been given to the destructive impulses in both love (erotic) and aggression (hate, destruction, instinctual love) can the aggressive drives (masculine) become wedded to vulnerable eros (feminine) and become circulated more consciously into a whole-object existence.

Social and Religious Implications of Being and Doing

How do Winnicott's stages of dependence relate to religious concerns and social issues? For us to be able to give continuity of being to another, we have to have experienced it ourselves. If we have not experienced this

connection, Winnicott emphasizes that we need to go back to the place of original hurt and suffer through the feelings and images of loss and relive the missed part in the present for the first time.

If we are to engender and pass on an embodied image of a world that “mothers others,” we need to internalize the capacity for being. Then, without resentment or envy, we can pass it on and give it to others. Without accepting our needs for dependence, we miss the healing efficacy of gratitude. Gratitude is acknowledged dependence. Our ability to introject unconditional loved enables us to mature into a fourth stage: interdependence, a mutuality of giving.

Winnicott’s stages of dependency with the added fourth – interdependency—is a ground for thinking about how to work our way in and out of experiences of resentment within our communities. For clergy persons, faith communities, educators, and caregivers in the psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic field, the issue of dependence and being informs our means of survival. If we deny our dependence on God and each other and pretend to be able to hold ourselves, our “false self” independence can result in all sorts of disasters, in the body, or in the psyche as a result of our pride. When we cannot get our dependency needs met, we are left frightened. One of the best defenses against fear is pride.

Winnicott’s emphasis upon being as an inherited potential has implications for religion if we consider the human individual to be created in the image of God. As we grow and develop toward living in the image of God, we are dependent upon a quality of transcendent Being that makes it possible for us to develop outward from an internal reality. For example, a seed finds incarnation because it has been housed by being in the first place. Otherwise it has no life.

With religious concerns such as mission and outreach, Winnicott’s “without being, doing is irrelevant” is a pertinent phrase: who do we include and exclude in social justice concerns? Do our motivations toward fairness arise from being or from doing?

The concept of being pertains to the depth of prayer. Do we pray for things to be done for us, to be on earth as they are in heaven? We cannot do to our neighbor unless we first have been done to. Offering acts of reparation and compassion that are not rooted in being can make our actions superficial and lacking in integrity. If we “are” before we “feel,” we can act out of a subjective reality that proceeds to objective reality and then extends to otherness in the world. Thus, “doing unto our neighbors as we would have done unto ourselves” means we do because we have “been,” not because we have been “done to.”

Winnicott’s notion of fusion and the two mothers pertains not only to our relationship to God but our images of the divine. Prayer is not just passive. Relating to God through prayer, which often includes imagery, expands to become both erotic and aggressive. We begin with whatever images we have and, suddenly, the free-flow of instinct-backed impulses can carry us into the most fleshly, tangible places, infusing the wounded body with long-lost energies.

In faith communities, clergy persons might include some healthy aggressive impulses in their sermons and not just tip-toe through the tulips. If a pastor cannot house aggression and eros, such a split can lead to watered-down programs and ineffective sermons: God with no sex appeal. Clergy need to recognize the constructive need for opposition. Conflict plays an important role in objective-object differentiation. We need a certain amount of resistance or disagreement to develop our aggressive potential and for healthy aggression to then lead to a community of concern. Sometimes we have to hate and create a hole in the breast before love can occur.

Too much opposition, however, may prevent fusion, in that it can be received as impingement, a disruption of being. Then we get reactivity instead of responsiveness. Ideally we should be able to use our neighbor for some good and healthy opposition in an interrelated network of dependency.

On an even larger scale, pride, as it is informed by fear can play into big political systems. Instead of working through our inner fantasies of fear of merger, we instead buy into some autocratic or authoritarian mode of political control. For certain groups and individuals, the energies of ruthless aggression needed for healthy development have been forcibly held down by nations, other groups, hierarchies, and/or governments. For those who never had the opportunity to have this stage negotiated, to just forgive may mean a recapitulation of centuries of compliance.

Hostility, anger, and their consequences have roots in maternal/environmental frustration. The mother helps the infant to house aggression, assisting the transformation of this instinct into reparative functions (guilt, giving). In adulthood, if this developmental function is absent, the gap can lead to a defensive splitting of love and hate creating further polarization. The result is that love has less aggression and hate gains more destructiveness. Hostility (racial and relational), can become perpetuated endlessly. We see the unfortunate results of such splitting in Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, Palestine, in gangs clustered around urban environments, and in hundreds of other national and global situations. Most unfortunately, if negotiating the ruthless-aggression phase

failed, we cannot say, “I’m so sorry that you are deprived. Here, take this hundred dollars and buy yourself a pair of Nikes, or take this welfare check, or accept this affirmative action job and now go get your destructive aggressive energies together.” This action does not work and relies upon understanding a much more complex intrapsychic insufficiency.

Winnicott believed that the fear of dependence, specifically absolute dependence, is behind the fear of women and discriminatory acts against them. This fear can pertain to the feminine in either sex and arises in the phallic phase of development according to classical psychoanalytic theory. Dread of the feminine arises particularly in persons who never passed through the stage of absolute dependence successfully with sufficient trust of the primary parent. Or, perhaps the mother was depressed or physically absent for the early months of the child’s life because of her own life-traumas. Such a gap can leave a residual apprehension rooted in the primordial fears of our early years.

Winnicott speculates that there exists a male envy of the feminine based upon the fantasy that women possess the female element and can take it for granted. Envy, however, has to do with failure in being and failure in the maternal environment. Both sexes need both elements. Either sex suffers when we lack being and the feminine because being fuels and informs profoundly-grounded doing.

Within the context of depth psychology, much could be done to enable people to better house instinctual impulses and aggression toward fusion within the various maternal/environmental containers we have available in the way of faith communities, social services, therapeutic containers, and social institutions. Both polarities must be housed: eros and aggression. Otherwise, we might buy into a graduate educational institute or a psychoanalytic training institute that needs to dominate the psyche based upon secular modes of doing while interpreting feminine modes of being, passion, and creativity as unresolved pre-Oedipal needs.

If we can tolerate our destructive impulses, we can learn to enjoy ideas, creative projects—religious, social, personal—which include destruction. The body is involved because the bodily excitements that belong to destructive id impulses get activated and add gusto to a person’s creative endeavors. This kind of ruthless commitment in the passionate, creative act, receiving and destroying and allowing things to break, carries over to many other creative enterprises in life. Different from Freud’s pleasure-seeking principle, the sexual act is considered not so much the erotic desire that needs an object but more the aggressive destructive element of the impulse towards

fusion. In mature love, there needs to be enough space for aggressive penetration and we need to know that the object survives our ruthlessness.

This experience of being leads to a continuity of generations. Being is passed on between generations through the female element of both men and women. We hold as we were once held. Our ability to bring these two elements together provides us with the potential for living creatively. If either of these elements is split off, this dissociation interferes with the resources that inform productivity. We do not want to miss the fullness of experience that feminine being has to offer.

See also: [▶ Active Imagination](#) [▶ Defenses](#) [▶ Eros](#) [▶ Mother](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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Wisdom

Kelly Murphy Mason

Wisdom is a virtue that combines proper understanding with the prudent application of knowledge; it is often believed to be a product of right relation with the Divine. In psychospiritual terms, wisdom melds both acceptance and insight and thereby results in judicious action. Often, wisdom is characterized as having a feminine dimension. It has also been associated with elders at the end of life. Throughout the ages, wise ones have been revered not only by their peers, but also by successive generations who recognized the wisdom of previous generations as timeless wisdom.

Personifications of wisdom have abounded for millennia. In the Greek pantheon, Athena was the

embodiment of wisdom; her totem was the round-eyed owl that was able to see through darkness and at wide angles (Warner, 1985). In her nativity myth, Athena springs fully formed from Zeus' head, suggesting the relation of wisdom to flashes of insight. She is a feminine archetype of good counsel, sound strategy, clear thinking, and practical solutions, all of which have frequently assumed to be masculine aspects (Bolen, 2004); rather revealingly, she is the only of the Olympian goddesses to ever be depicted wearing armor.

In the Hebrew scriptures, Wisdom makes several appearances as a goddess-like figure (Cole Ronan and Taussig, 1996), most notably as Hokma in the Book of Proverbs. "Is not Wisdom calling? Is not Understanding raising her voice?" (Ps 8:1). Throughout Proverbs, Wisdom is simultaneously inviting and insistent. "All the words from my mouth are upright, nothing false there, nothing crooked, everything plain, if you can understand, straight, if you have acquired knowledge," she proclaims. "Accept my discipline rather than silver, and knowledge of me in preference to finest gold" (Ps 8:8–10).

Preciousness and primacy alike are repeatedly stressed as characteristics of Wisdom. She declares: "Yahweh created me, first-fruits of his fashioning, before the oldest of his works. From everlasting, I was firmly set, from the beginning, before the earth came into being." Essentially, Wisdom represents the thought that is first creation; a consort of the Creator God, she knows the ways of God and the children of God who constitute humanity (Schroer, 2000).

Proverbs is classified with other "Wisdom books" in the Bible as part of a larger sapiential tradition, including Job, Psalms and Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes (Crenshaw, 1998), as well as Ecclesiasticus/Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom contained in the Septuagint. In the Book of Wisdom, King Solomon, the greatest sage of ancient Israel and its purported author, exclaims: "Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades. By those who love her, she is readily seen, by those who seek her, she is readily found. She anticipates those who desire her by making herself known first" (Wis 6:12). Her accessibility and nurturing spirit again make Wisdom a maternal figure who is glad to take into her tutelage those who remain educable.

In the Greek New Testament, in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, Jesus identifies himself as child-student of Wisdom in the Jewish tradition (Fiorenza, 1994). He understands Sophia to be the lost mother of Israelites who have tragically forgotten their parentage. "Yet," Jesus concludes, "Wisdom is justified by all her children" (Lk 7:35). His Sophia bears less resemblance to a Hellenic oracle than to those Hebrew prophets who promulgate teachings

that ultimately prove counter-cultural and occasionally counter-intuitive.

Biblical scholars have noted that Sophia subsequently receded from early Christian writings, becoming a more esoteric figure, almost a theological obscurity. Despite the metaphors depicting Wisdom as mother and sister, bride and wife, Wisdom represented knowledge that refused to be domesticated for convenience or to conform to conventional thought. What has been termed Sophiology quickly became submerged. In the dominant Christian religious discourse, Sophia was replaced with Logos, popularly translated as "the Word" but perhaps more aptly rendered as "the Reason." Effectively, a masculine principle of knowledge supplanted a feminine one.

Medieval mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen exhibited an attraction to the Divine Feminine they saw expressed through Sapia (Newman, 1987). They understood Wisdom to midwife the manifestation of God's intention, in many senses to actually be the mother of/to God. In Orthodox churches, devotion to Ouisa-Sophia, the Spirit of Wisdom, was once open and institutional (Bulgakov, 1993); icons of her were venerated and Hagia Sophia built in her honor. Only recently have feminist theologians begun to reclaim these stands of thought from the weave of historic Christianity (Camp, 1996; Johnson, 1999).

With the recognition of major world religions as "wisdom traditions" has come greater permission to translate more freely what those traditions might have to say to people in the modern era. Wisdom is still heard speaking through various religions, Eastern as well as Western, and seeking after it is seen as a powerful antidote to the existential anxiety that pervades contemporary society (Watts, 1951). Indeed, one of the ten Buddhist perfections is panna; in allowing its practitioners to witness events with great detachment, panna curbs human affliction.

Perhaps those who most explicitly seek after wisdom in America today are member of a movement that bills itself as spiritual and not religious, members of the programs of 12-Step recovery modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. In a redaction of a longer prayer authored by theologian Reinhold Neibuhr during the Second World War (Sifton, 2003), those in 12-Step programs pray: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." The Serenity Prayer has become formative in both popular and psychospiritual formulations on the meaning of wisdom.

What the Serenity Prayer seems to recommend is that people become reconciled with those things they must reconcile themselves to and resist those things they ought to, either for their own good and for the greater

good (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952). Wisdom becomes grounded in a radical acceptance of a sometimes stubborn reality. The challenge is one of discernment: how can divine guidance be channeled to direct (or at times, correct) the course of human events?

Ultimately, Wisdom occupies the intersection of horizontal and vertical concerns, where the highest human ideals meet the most immediate demands of the here-and-now. In her Biblical personifications, Wisdom is hard-working and intimately engaged, calling out to listeners busy with the activities of daily life. Wisdom remains quite distinct from either contemplation or resignation.

In his schedule of virtues, psychoanalyst Erik Erikson positions wisdom as the terminal virtue, maintaining that its antithesis is disdain. In a life review of insights gained, Erikson contends, persons have the choice of adopting an attitude of disgust or a philosophical outlook that leads to deeper understanding of the human condition. The last of the major stages in psychosocial development allows adults to develop into “elders,” those defined by being both older and wiser, not merely aged (Erikson, 1982).

According to Erikson, not all elderly persons are able to master this final developmental task and attain wisdom. They are asked to fulfill a demanding grand-generative role, to teach successive generations to live with integrity and die with dignity. This involves a willingness to acknowledge the life cycle itself as somehow purposive, despite the considerable hardships encountered the later years of life, the losses that must be endured. Wisdom is marked by a capacity to vigorously construct some unifying meaning of what may at times appear to be disparate events and experiences; in the end, it serves an integrative function.

Borrowing from Eriksonian schema, psychologist James Fowler posits that wisdom emerges in the penultimate stage of his six theoretical stages of faith development over the lifespan, the stage which he terms “conjunctive.” Conjunctive faith is sensitive to the organic interrelatedness of things in a dialogical reality (Fowler, 1981). It blurs boundaries, recognizing how context-dependent and provisional much of human knowledge is, how dimly it apprehends the scope of that which is truly transcendent. Wisdom contains both a comprehension and appreciation for all that is not currently known and may never be known. It may even question what is knowable, humbled by its acquaintance with mystery, simultaneously tolerant and aware of its limits.

Recent psychological research has tried to operationally define and quantify wisdom, but has not yet succeeded in standardizing any metrics or even in delimiting its subject matter satisfactorily. The field of positive psychology has exhibited special interest in wisdom as a “core

virtue,” exploring material that once seemed to be the purview of transpersonal psychology and acknowledging the possibility of transcendent experience (Cloninger, 2005). Research has suggested that wisdom seems to involve maintaining a sense of perspective, especially in the face of adversity, and maintaining a degree of emotional equanimity; it does not necessarily appear to be an age-related trait, although people can be educated by experiences that accumulate over a lifetime.

Commentary

Personifications and definitions of wisdom appear to share commonalities, mirroring the affective and cognitive aspects alike. Wisdom generally reflects a highly relational way of thinking, one that has stereotypically feminine features. It is often characterized as an experiential mode of knowing.

In sacred scripture, Wisdom is intimately acquainted with the Divine and always desirous of connecting with humanity on a deeper level. The work of Wisdom is to speak some eternal truth in a vernacular that can be easily understood in context, some truth that bears repeating to others. Wisdom simultaneously recognizes and dignifies the human predicament.

In psychological terms, wisdom is demonstrated by a higher comfort level with mixed emotions and ambiguous situations. Those whose sagacity is noted by others are able to put their knowledge base to pragmatic use. They serve a larger cause than narrow self-interest, exhibiting a capacity to take a long-range view of matters, often taking into consideration the welfare of future generations. They have the power to facilitate moral uplift in others.

By exercising empathy, wise persons are able to be tutored by others’ experience, as well as their own. For this reason, in many spiritual traditions, the wise are commonly directed to keep the company of the wise. As a religious concept, Wisdom is often represented as somehow accounting for the compendium of all human experience, and in doing so, achieving Ultimate consciousness. Presumably, even the wisest people can only glimpse this.

See also: [Biblical Narratives Versus Greek Myths](#) [Biblical Psychology](#) [Twelve Steps](#)

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Witch, The

Ruth Williams

The witch is a character or image of a spell-caster associated with night and death which has manifestations in every world culture and epoch.

Examples include (*inter alia*) Euripides' *Medea* in Greek Mythology; Shakespeare's triumvirate in *Macbeth*; cinema has innumerable versions, notably *The Witches of Eastwick* (Dir. George Miller II, 1987), *The Wizard of Oz* (Dir. Victor Fleming, 1939) and *Batman Returns* (Dir. Tim Burton, 1992) where in modern guise the witch has been merged with her "familiar" and becomes "Cat-woman." Pearson (2002) provides an impressive review of (*inter alia*) a raft of artistic and cultural variants.

There are likewise copious fairy tale witches which help children cope, psychologically with feelings of envy and hatred (e.g., Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella).

Witches feature in certain religious traditions such as Voodoo, of which there are several geographical variants.

The images and emotions associated with the witch are generally repellent.

In Mythology and Fairy Tale

The Greek moon goddess Hecate (goddess of witches) is sometimes depicted as having three heads; one of a dog, one of a snake, and one of a horse. Cerberus, the three-headed hound of Hades, is said to have belonged to Hecate. Mythologically witches are often depicted in groups of three. Hecate is said to hold dominion over heaven, earth, and under the earth and this triune quality is often represented in statues showing her as a threefold woman (Harding, 1935/1955: 218) (see, e.g., the frontispiece to Harding (1935/1955) depicting the "Hectarian of Marienbad" from Pausanias, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, 1890). A Classical Jungian amplification of this image (a method whereby an image is filled out by exploring the mythical/fairy tale and archetypal associations to it) might go on to think about this threefold nature as pointing towards the *Moirai*, or Fates, which might suggest there is something *fated* about such a connection, linking also to "past, present, and future" and Karma (Harding, 1955/1971: 218). Hecate is also usually seen with two ghost hounds that are said to serve her. Hecate is sometimes known as "sender of nocturnal visions" (Harding, 1955/1971: 114).

Classical Jungian writers explore the witch in the guise of her many mythical and fairy tale manifestations (e.g., Birkhäuser-Oeri, 1977; von Franz, 1995 and 1999, see also Koltuv, 1986). The most significant Jungian work in this area has been done by Ann and Barry Ulanov in *The Witch and the Clown* (1987).

The witch is seen as appearing in a gap in time. Until the Middle Ages the witch was known as a "hagazussa", meaning the one riding on the fence (Duerr, 1978/1985: 243, n14). According to Duerr (German anthropologist) "the witch is born on the boundary" is a Dinka (African) saying (Duerr, 1978/1985: 243, n14.). (Hecate is known (*inter alia*) as a goddess of thresholds.)

Psychological Exploration

Dykes' (1980) hypothesis is that the witch occupies the most remote aspect of the psyche making it difficult to access in any psychological exploration (see *psyche*). Dykes describes the mental paralysis associated with the witch's menace as less destructive than aimed at the *prevention* of life (1980: 52). This connects with the

witch's mythological solitude (perhaps the source of her loneliness which may fuel her negativity) when she malevolently broods on the objects of her envy and hatred, hatching plans for revenge and retribution. Her bile and envy are represented symbolically in certain examples of witch (e.g., Wizard of Oz) by a green face. She is seen as irritable, power-hungry, malevolent, and greedy.

Jung describes the Shadow, under which rubric the witch would be categorized, as “the thing a person has no wish to be” (1946: par. 470) (see *Shadow*).

Bührmann makes a link to depression (1987b: 276). Bührmann reports that the victims of witchcraft feel that life is being crushed out of them and they are facing complete annihilation (1987a: 142). This corresponds to the problem when dealing with the witch as an intrapsychic phenomenon in that, during possession, there is similarly a feeling of *metaphorically* being crushed and annihilated.

In Psychoanalysis

Heinemann (2000) provides an excellent psychoanalytic deconstruction of the phenomenon of the witch trials of the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries, arguing against Freud's “hysterical” formulation. She sees the witch as both a “phallic mother” and an early superego imago.

In witchcraft transmission of the witch is seen as being inherited through the maternal line.

In a paper looking at (1) the witch/vampire, (2) the spider and (3) the shark, the images are seen from a psychoanalytic perspective as “three symbols of overwhelming terror” (Lane et al., 1989: 326). Theoretically the images are seen by Lane et al. as symbols deriving from: “the earliest levels of human development [c.f. Dykes, 1980], originating in the preoedipal phases of life. Each symbol expresses a dimension of oral sadism. The witch/vampire bites, the spider stings, and the shark devours its victim totally. All three symbols rely heavily on the use of splitting mechanisms and the polarization of principal identifications (e.g., parasite/host, victim/attacker, idealized/demonic)” (c.f. Dykes, 1980).

The witch is also, more usually, seen as a phallic image: “with a pointed, peaked nose, sharp long fingernails, and a broom between her legs; she is capable of flying or of going up. She struggles to be like a man and engages in mannish behavior, rivaling and threatening men, argumentative, controlling, casting spells over the potency of men, and the fertility of women. Her evil deeds are carried out by the devil, *the man who resides within her*.

Her dark and dirty side is this masculinity” (c.f. Dykes, 1980) (emphasis added).

Further papers in the psychoanalytic literature which talk of a witch mother are Fenichel (1931), Dahl (1989), Lawson (2000), and the witch as nightmare figure (Jones, 1931 and 1949).

And Sexuality

The image of the witch carries vital characteristics of dark sexuality (her voracious and aggressive appetite, her insatiability and love of control as opposed to vulnerability and intimacy) and for a woman's place in society as an aging crone or shrew with all that implies about her viability as a sexual being.

Brinton Perera views engagement with this “dark” aspect of femininity as being of profound importance in retrieving repressed values (1981: 15). She discusses the feminine by amplifying the Sumerian myth of Inanna whose process into the underworld metaphorically parallels the psychological individuation process. Brinton Perera concludes that it is only by embracing the full, even demonic, range of affects associated with the “dark” feminine, that a woman can truly individuate and make a soul connection in her partnerships on an equal footing (1981: 94).

Mythology

Baring and Cashford (1991) like Neumann (1955) elaborate in exhaustive detail accompanied by copious images, the “eternal feminine” in her many historical manifestations from Palaeolithic times. They amplify the image of the witch in her many guises from Ereshkigal (Inanna's “dark” sister and Queen of the Underworld in Sumerian mythology) to Hecate (Queen of the night in Greek mythology), to Lilith (their counterpart in Hebrew mythology) (1991: 192) as well as Medusa (who quite literally petrified).

Jungian Shadow

De Castillejo places importance on taking responsibility for the Shadow. She believes that, with all women, if you scratch the surface, you would find a witch. She sees the witch in terms of a power complex which perhaps paradoxically often manifests in women in the guise of giving (De Castillejo, 1973: 42).

In her study of *Athene* in tracing the heritage of the feminine, Shearer highlights the importance of the psychological work and regards the need to understand the dual nature of the feminine as being an inescapable task: “in the great cycle of creation we now live in the Kali Yuga, an age as dark as the age of iron” (1996: 52). The Kali Yuga refers to the Hindu goddess Kali (Yuga meaning age or era in Sanskrit), and invokes the dark goddess who is depicted as a destroyer:

- ▶ [s]he stands on a corpse and wears a necklace of skulls . . . She is devourer: her long tongue thrusts out to lick up the blood of sacrifice, her fearsome laughter shows her dreadful teeth, her maw receives all that is created. . . . In one of her hands she wields a sword and in another she carries a severed head. She is always young, bursting with blood, and always ancient, an emaciated hag, whose hunger will never be satiated. She stamps on the body of Lord Shiva (1996: 54).

Shearer tracks the denigration of women and their so-called wickedness which linked them to witchcraft down to the very Fall of Man and her creation from a bent – defective – rib (1996: 165), as did Roberts (1985).

Medusa

Shearer goes on to discuss Medusa (whose severed head Athene wore on her breast) who forms part of yet another triumvirate, the Gorgon sisters:

- ▶ They are a manifestation of the ancient moon goddess (as the Orphics knew when they called the moon ‘the Gorgon’s head’). The sisters’ names honor their power – Steino means ‘strength’, Euryale ‘the leaping one’, and Medusa herself is ‘Mistress’, ‘Queen’, ‘Ruler’ and ‘the Cunning One’ . . . they have great brazen wings, staring owl-like eyes, serpents for hair and sometimes for girdles as well, tusks like boars and long lolling tongues (1996: 64).

Neumann (in his *magnum opus The Great Mother*) links the negative pole of the feminine with all the dark mythological witch characters so that snake-haired Medusa is seen as belonging to this realm in that “to be rigid is to be dead” (1955: 266), with blood-drinking slayer-of-men, Kali (1955: 72) who is also represented as having three eyes, said to symbolize past, present, and future (“Kala” in Sanskrit meaning time), “mad-making Hecate” (see above) and licentious Ishtar. These are placed in direct opposition to “mother” and “virgin”; Mary, Demeter, and Sophia. Although each of the former

category are seen as “negative”, there is also a transformational quality inherent in the symbol. For instance from Medusa’s dead body the giant Chrysaor and the winged horse Pegasus (her son by Poseidon) sprang forth; the blood from Medusa’s severed head was given to Asclepius (god of healing) and while blood from the veins on the Gorgon’s left side brought harm, that from her right side could raise the dead (March 1999); Kali’s usual proximity to cremation grounds where all worldly attachments are dissolved points to the cycle of birth and renewal.

Mother, Depression, Aging

Jung, with his own problematic relationship to his personal mother as described in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1963), was himself only too aware of the dual aspects of woman:

- ▶ Not in vain are little children afraid of their own mothers in the night. Primitive mothers can kill their children. It is absolutely incompatible with the daytime, for then they are most devoted mothers. But in the night they take away the mask and become witches (Jung 1984: 144–5).

On a more ordinary level, a depressive mother may be seen along a continuum which leads to the “Terrible Mother” which links to the witch, particularly in the aging process and menopause.

Bührmann makes the connection between the Terrible Mother and depression when she records:

- ▶ This regressive pull of the elementary feminine is also seen in serious depressions. The ego suffers marked loss of libido, lacking drive or will power, inability to concentrate on work . . . It can be said that the ego is drained of energy, that it is being submerged in the negative world of the elementary feminine in its terrible or devouring aspect (1987a: 151).

Aging women in certain circumstances tend to take on characteristics which are associated with the archetype of the witch. (This has been a cliché in popular culture but perhaps has more serious ramifications.) This can occur when the lacunae associated with this stage of life mean that one is left alone, or children leave the nest, or disappointments build and death comes into one’s thoughts. This can be associated with lack of sexual fulfillment, perhaps metaphorically connected to the witch’s remoteness from society and engagement with life.

There are also neopagan “white” witches influenced by Wicca.

The nearest equivalent to the witch for men is the vampire, devil, sorcerer, wizard or warlock.

See also: [▶ Archetype](#) [▶ Devil](#) [▶ Fertility](#) [▶ Individuation](#) [▶ Shadow](#) [▶ Wicca](#) [▶ Witchcraft](#)

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Witchcraft

David Waldron

The Politicization of Witchcraft History

Witchcraft and its associated imagery is one of the most powerful, pervasive and multi-faceted symbols in western culture. That being said, evaluating the complex webs of representations associated with the image of the Witch and Witchcraft is an enormous task. The issues raised by the historical experience and study of Witchcraft further compound the bewildering array of symbols and themes associated with it. Of particular importance in establishing the links between representations and symbols of Witchcraft with the historical phenomena is the intensely anglo-centric domination of Witchcraft studies and literature, not least of which is the broad association of multiple divergent themes, images, ideas and mythic forms under the category of Witch, despite radically different cultural and historical contexts and localized meanings (Ankarloo and Henningson, 1990). Similarly, studies of Witchcraft in both its historical context and as a form of archetypal representation, have long served as a battleground between different sectors of society according to a wide array of ideological agendas and religious beliefs (Purkiss, 1996).

Despite this problem of over generalization and politicization, representations of Witchcraft do share certain common themes that link both the term and archetypal image of the Witch together. Essentially, the Witch represents an iconic form of the feminine other and as such lies at the center of a network of social forms, morality, constructions of gender and social order, thus serving as the focal point of a wider array of social projections. Typically, the Witch is associated with the organic, the feminine, the disorder, and there is a close association with the anti-rational and the supernatural (Purkiss, 1996). In this sense, the Witch is both reviled as threat to the social order and associated with anti-human practices and vices yet at the same time can be held up as an iconic antidote to the social ills wrought by sources of authority and social structures symbolically associated with patriarchal control (Briggs, 1996). Similarly, the association of Witchcraft and Witchcraft beliefs with the anti-rational and the supernatural has served as a rallying point for enlightenment models of social structure, warning of the dangers of religious thinking overwhelming the rational/scientific world view with the shadow side of unrestrained superstition and mass hysteria. This contrast is very evident in

anthropological interpretations of Witchcraft, especially in the African and Polynesian contexts where the superstition of Witchcraft beliefs is unfavorably contrasted with white rationalism, and Witchcraft is used to label magical practices associated with organic or endemic powers applied emotionally distinct from the learned skills of the sorcerer (Marwick, 1970).

The Witch as a Symbol of Genocide and Oppression

Another important model of Witchcraft is the use of representations of the Witch trials of the early modern period as a vehicle to understand the contemporary experiences of genocide via the work of Norman Cohn (1975) and of the patriarchal oppression of women, primarily through the work of Mary Daly and Robin Morgan (Daly, 1979; Morgan, 1976). In both cases, while the historical parallels are extremely dubious in empirical terms and are subject to much criticism, they have both become pervasive mythologies in contemporary western culture, holding significant emotional appeal and symbolic resonance. Indeed, the images of martyrdom and sexualized tortures implied to both have had a deeply powerful visceral and psychological impact which has afforded this construction of Witchcraft significant popular appeal. Similarly, the model of Witchcraft as a surviving pre-Christian fertility cult, established by Margaret Murray and popularized into modern Wicca and Witchcraft revival movements, also has enormous visceral impact and popular appeal despite the theory being largely discredited in historical terms. In these cases Witches, as the ultimate manifestation of the feminine other, have served as both the projected shadow of mainstream culture and a rallying point for those disaffected by the mainstream social order and patriarchal systems of authority (Purkiss, 1996). Additionally, in much psychological literature and recent anthropological analysis Witchcraft, as a form of demonization and persecution is interpreted as a social feedback phenomenon created out of social anxiety, rumor and gossip akin to phenomena like the Satanic Ritual Abuse panic of the 1980s, McCarthyism of the 1950s and recent panics over suspected terrorists (Stewart and Strathern, 2004; Hicks, 1991).

The Witch in Western Culture

The Witch is a particularly unique figure in western symbolic construction as it is the iconic symbol that stands astride the romantic/enlightenment divide of western

culture. For some sectors of society the Witch represents superstition, evil, irrationality and the primitive, i.e., that which limits the potential for human progress and autonomy from nature. To others, the Witch represents beauty, nature, freedom and cultural autonomy from the corrupting and limiting influences of scientific rationalism, commodification and industrialization. In both constructs the Witch serves as the iconic underbelly or shadow side of Western enlightenment associated with femininity, the tribal other, religious superstition, the anti-rational, the magical, sexuality and our organic relationship with nature. As such its psychological impact is enormous and its emotional and archetypal significance is one of the most pervasive and powerful of contemporary symbols emerging from the underbelly of the past.

See also: [Femininity](#) [Wicca](#) [Witch, The](#)

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Women and Religion

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

The Basic Findings

The greater religiosity of women, demonstrated in numerous and consistent research findings over the past 100 years, is arguably the most important fact about religion. Most research on religion is in reality research

about women, who are the backbone of religion globally, and are actively supporting, maintaining, and sometimes keeping alive religious establishments, institutions, and organizations everywhere. If we do some ethnographic observations, and visit churches in Rome, Paris, New York City, or Moscow, we will immediately realize that (older) women make up the majority of those in attendance. Anthropological observations in India indicate that women make up the majority of those attending Hindu temples. Only in those traditions where ritual attendance by women is discouraged, such as Islam and Judaism, the majority of those attending will be men.

In the Islamic world, while women are discouraged from attending mosque services, they dominate among those who follow various popular practices, such as pilgrimages to saints' tombs. In these sanctuaries, a popular "women's religion" is practiced, but men are not officially excluded. Television rituals are the perfect opposite to pilgrimage, but we know that among viewers of US televangelists, women are quite over-represented.

When we look at data on levels of religiosity for men and women in all cultures that have been looked at, women are more likely to describe themselves as religious, as compared with men. When it comes to beliefs, the differences between men and women in belief are not always large, but they are the most consistent. Women are more conservative or orthodox; they more often say they hold rather firmly to the central and traditional beliefs in any religion. The differences are especially striking in cultures with an overall low level of religiosity, such as post-Communist Russia. When we look at those with little or no religious beliefs, agnostics and atheists, the probability of finding women among them is extremely low.

The generalization is statistical, which means that not all women are more religious than all men, but any woman chosen randomly anywhere in the world will be more religious than a man similarly chosen. The findings are clearly not tied to Christianity or Western culture, and are just as pronounced in such cultures as India, Japan, China, Israel, Ethiopia, and Turkey.

Research has supported the notion of differential meanings in religion, with women holding different images of deities. For them the gods are seen more as supportive rather than instrumental, and as loving, comforting and forgiving, while males see him as a supreme power, a driving force, a planner and controller.

Activities which are often non-institutionalized, but nevertheless express a belief in a world inhabited by spirits, invisible powers, and miracles, do not differ psychologically from officially recognized religiosity. This view is increasingly found among contemporary theorists.

When it comes to popular and para-religious beliefs, the differences between men and women are even more robust than those relating to institutional religions. Women are the majority of customers for all magical coping practices. The global, and thriving, business of fortune-telling, miracle drugs (alternative medicine), spiritualism or "spiritual channeling," etc. caters mostly to women. They are the customers of practices which offer unofficial contacts with the world of the spirits or claim to operate with the help of invisible powers and energies. Women are much more likely to report beliefs in "telepathy," "psychic healing," and "fortune-telling," as well as being readier to believe in various "miracle drugs."

Explaining the Findings

The greater religiosity of women is often viewed as a puzzle and a paradox. That is because religious organizations, institutions and traditions are developed and controlled by men. Cross-culturally we can say that women are rarely in positions of power and influence in religious institutions and organizations, and in many cases they are formally excluded from positions of liturgical and clerical leadership.

Religious pantheons, which include gods, angels, saints, demons, founders, prophets, priests, and mystics, have little room for women. It is the creation of men, reflecting their wishes and fantasies. When it comes to what religious doctrines everywhere say about women, the content and nature of male fantasies is clear and uniform. Women are the target of taboo and derision in many traditions, described as evil and impure. If the world of religious figures and ideas was created by men, reflecting their wishes, why are women so willing to adopt this masculine universe and commit themselves to it? Attempts to create an alternative female pantheon (Goddess religions) have clearly failed to attract women. If religion is created by the male psyche, does it reflect the male psyche or the human psyche (which should be more female than male)? Our challenge is to explain the significant receptivity of women to messages of the miraculous in various guises, where the common denominator is the illusion of control or understanding.

The most common explanation for female religiosity refers to the reality of deprivation and victimization. Most women in this world are poor, powerless, and have little or no education. We should keep in mind that a 7-year old illiterate Dalit (untouchables) girl in India, already working from dawn to dusk to help her family, is a true representative of womanity and of humanity, rather than a woman with a Ph.D. living in the United States. When

we speak of women's religiosity, the Dalit girl is the one we have to understand.

It is clear that while both men and women share the human condition, their location, real and imagined, in human power structures are far apart. Men control all human institutions and organizations, and the status of women in religion, both in the imagined pantheon and in real organizations, reproduces the lot of women in most human collectivities.

Sexuality is the area where women are most deprived and victimized. Women in all cultures suffer from predatory male sexuality. Coercive sexual experiences create lifelong suffering. Early childhood sexual abuse is a relatively common occurrence in the life of too many girls. This is a shattering experience, leading to depression and other problems. This victimization naturally leads to increased fear and insecurity, reinforcing any earlier dispositions.

Religion sometimes offers women a shelter from the male way of defining and controlling sexuality, which views women as sex objects and regards unattached women as easy prey. Religion sacralizes maternity, which is another shelter from male advances. We know that in some religious movements founded or dominated by women (see the Shakers), chastity becomes the rule, and sexuality is avoided. Such groups will have few male members.

Women are more commonly diagnosed as suffering from disorders of internalized conflict, such as anxiety and depression, cyclothymic disorder, panic disorder, attempted suicide, and phobias, with men suffering from acting-out disorders, such as completed suicide, substance abuse or schizotypal, narcissistic, and antisocial personality. Women are more than twice as likely as men to suffer from stress-related disorders, including major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and several anxiety disorders. The lifetime prevalence of PTSD for women, about 10.4%, is more than twice that for men. Females are more prone than males to panic disorder with agoraphobia and to phobias about animals. Data from large scale epidemiological surveys indicate that panic disorder is 2.5 times more common in women than in men.

There is much evidence for significant personality differences between men and women; some of which may be relevant to the differences in religious activity. Men and women differ in emotion processing, including perception, experience and expression. Women clearly are readier to express feelings and admit dependence. They are also readier to demonstrate interpersonal caring, sensitivity, and warmth. In all cultures males are less nurturant and less emotionally expressive, while women are more submissive and passive, anxious and dependent. Empathy, defined as the vicarious affective response to another person's feelings, is more prevalent in females.

The greater empathy of women acts to reduce critical thinking, and female neuro-hormones lead to the suppression of negative emotions or judgments. Love is the enemy of critical judgment, and creates acceptance, especially when there is a yearning for consolation, reassurance, and some hope for the relief of suffering.

Some personality differences seem to be innate, such as greater male aggressiveness, verbally and physically, and risk-taking. Males are much more likely to die violently and to commit homicide and suicide at any age. They are responsible for 90% of violent acts in all cultures. Males exceed females on physically risky forms of sensation seeking and these in turn correlate significantly with a variety of physically dangerous activities such as involvement in crime, dangerous sports, injury proneness and volunteering for drug experiments and hazardous army combat. The difference in aggressive tendencies together with the greater conformity of women is reflected in the large differences that have been noted in the occurrence of anti-social behavior, which is so much rarer among women.

Studies of the reported contents of dreams have consistently found females to be significantly more interpersonally oriented than men. Women's dreams involve relationships and loss, while men are likely to dream about fighting, protecting, and competing, almost always with other men. And when ready-made fantasies are consumed, as in watching television, women constitute the audience for soap operas, while men watch aggressive sports (or follow political and economic news, which are often far from fantasies). In popular romance novels, women vicariously live family and relationship conflicts, as well as happy endings.

David Bakan described the dichotomy of orientations in females and males as communion versus agency. Communion is the tendency to be concerned about closeness to others, while agency is the tendency to be self-interested and assertive. Evolutionary psychologists have observed that women feel threatened by isolation and diminished intimacy, while men feel threatened by anything that smacks of diminished prestige and authority.

Looking at the involvement of adult women in the world of spirits, invisible powers, and miracles, we find that many of their activities have little to do with eternal damnation or bliss, but with counter sorcery ideas such as the removal of the evil eye and securing good fortune for one's family. The human condition puts us all in situations of risk and insecurity. Our anxiety and helplessness leads to coping through ritual and fantasy, rather than instrumental action. Men do engage in such acts sometimes, but the challenge is to explain why women do it more often.

The feminine coping strategy may be characterized by anxiety, risk avoidance, and a search for real or imagined

security, using comforting others. The male psyche, on average, will be dominated by developmental vulnerability, risk taking, aggression, independence, and relative skepticism, showing the effects of masculine neuro-hormones. Reacting to distress men will react by externalizing, sometimes harming all involved. In the female psyche, fear, which leads to aggression in males, will lead to attachment, internalization, and help seeking. Low aggression, empathy, suggestibility, guilt, and sympathy will lead to love, but taking care of children and men, and tending to their needs, rather than one's own, is a heavy burden, growing with the victimization of women by violent men.

Turning to the world of supernatural agents and miracles fits with many “feminine” traits and conditions. Women's people-orientation leads to dependence on real and imaginary objects, from fortune-tellers to angels. Those who nurse and nurture humanity seek their compensation in imaginary objects in the absence of real support and the presence of much deprivation. We should think again of Dalit females in India, who may hope for a future incarnation as a male Brahmin (the official version of their own “Pascal's Wager”), but will settle for much less than that, protection from evil spirits for their own children. Any illusion of control will serve to relieve their constant desperation, as the world of spirits and miracles expresses indeed the sigh of the oppressed creature.

See also: [Femininity](#) [Gender Roles](#) [Islam](#) [Shakers](#)

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Wong Tai Sin

Mark Greene

Known in Hong Kong as Wong Tai Sin (the Great Immortal Sage Wong), where his cult of worship has been flourishing since the 1950s, Wong Cho-ping was born in Zhejiang Province, China in the late third century. Legend has it that under the tutelage of a mountain-dwelling Taoist deity, he mastered the alchemical process of refining cinnabar into a drug which when ingested conferred immortality. Although temples dedicated to Wong Tai Sin

exist in Canada, the United States and Mainland China, it is the Wong Tai Sin Temple in Hong Kong – after which the surrounding neighborhood is also named – that annually attracts over five million visitors who seek the god's blessings, proffer donations and thank him for previous kindnesses. The Cantonese pronunciation of his name is Wong Tai Sin (黃大仙) whereas in Mandarin, it is pronounced Huang Daxian.

In the early 1890s, when both Guangzhou and Hong Kong were beset with outbreaks of the bubonic plague, a group of seekers made contact with Wong Tai Sin by means of spirit writing. The god's early messages indicated his original intention was to save humanity. Worshipers believed that the spirit of Wong Tai Sin prescribed combinations of herbs that would invariably cure those who sought his help. Availing themselves of the free prescriptions and traditional Chinese medicine provided by the temple, a large following of commoners who could not afford to see a doctor when ill began to form in his name. From several reported healings, Wong Tai Sin's reputation grew.

The legendary miracle attributed to Wong Tai Sin is his having transformed an outcropping of rocks on the side of a hill into a flock of sheep after his older brother – who had spent years trying to locate him – inquired as to the whereabouts of the flock entrusted to the younger Wong as a teenager. After witnessing his powers, the elder brother became Wong Tai Sin's pupil and eventually also attained immortality.

Within this modern day cult of worship can be found a rich legacy of alchemical imagery that thematically informs worshippers' requests for transformation across spectra including luck, riches and health. The cult of Wong Tai Sin has enjoyed a recent surge in growth on the Mainland since 1990. Due to the mass destruction of most Wong Tai Sin temples and shrines in the 1950s (some dating back 1000 years), it is interesting to note that images of the god in most of the new and reconstructed Mainland temples are emblematic of the Hong Kong version of the cult.

See also: [Astrology and Alchemy](#) [Chinese Religions](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav, and Alchemy](#) [Spirit Writing](#) [Taoism](#)

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Worcester, Elwood (Emmanuel Movement)

Curtis W. Hart

Worcester's Life

The Reverend Dr. Elwood Worcester, an Episcopal priest, was the inspirational force and prime mover behind the Emmanuel Movement located at the Emmanuel Church in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood where he was Rector from 1904 to 1929. Worcester was born in Massilon, Ohio into a clerical family. He was educated at Columbia College in New York after which he attended the General Theological Seminary where he completed the 3 year course of study leading to ordination in 1 year as opposed to the normal 3 years. Beyond his theological training he received a Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Leipzig in Germany. There he studied under the great experimentalists Wilhelm Wundt and Gustav Fechner. After returning to the United States he took up a position at St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia where one of his congregants was the eminent neurologist Weir Mitchell. Worcester records in his autobiography, *Life's Adventure*, (1932) that it was in conversations with Mitchell that he became stimulated to think intentionally about the church's role in the care of the mentally ill or sick of soul. Upon coming to the Emmanuel Church in Boston he became acquainted with Richard Cabot, M.D., then Chief of Medicine at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Isador Coriot, M.D., his psychiatrist colleague who endorsed his idea of a clinic for treatment to be housed at the church. With the support of his clerical colleague at Emmanuel, the Reverend Dr. Samuel McComb, who, like Worcester, was both a priest and a psychologist, the doors opened of Emmanuel for

treatment in November of 1906. On the first day there were 198 persons awaiting consultation. The numbers grew as did public interest and use of the clinic. Its success far exceeded any expectation. Worcester wrote and spoke to both professional and lay audiences about the Emmanuel experiment and its program was replicated in several cities across the United States. Its prestige and success were such that it drew heavy criticism from the psychiatric establishment most notably in the person of James Jackson Putnam, M.D. who questioned the use of non-medically trained persons in the provision of treatment. In spite of these objections the Emmanuel Movement continued successfully until Worcester's retirement in 1929.

Worcester's Achievement

Worcester and Emmanuel's accomplishments and contributions were wide and varied. He was ahead of his time by at least a generation in the area of pastoral counseling where he employed a variety of therapeutic techniques that demonstrated his resourcefulness, skill, and familiarity with psychoanalysis. He was able to utilize the processes and perspectives of uncovering, dream analysis, and catharsis as well as more short term approaches to therapy in the case of treatment for grief reactions. The Emmanuel Movement appropriated small group techniques that resemble contemporary modes of psycho education. And the Emmanuel Movement became the scene for use of small groups for addressing issues in alcoholism several years before the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935. The Emmanuel Movement and Worcester in particular also took a dynamic interest in public health matters related to prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in their urban environment and an open interest in and concern for non-Western religious, most particularly Buddhism, and what they might have to say regarding religion and health.

Emmanuel's Legacy

Worcester and the Emmanuel Movement are largely forgotten in the contemporary world. Their legacy emphasizes the importance of the cooperation between clergy and other health care professionals and the potentially beneficial role of religious institutions and clergy in relation to issues of both mental health care and public education. Palpable signs of their historical influence may be best seen in the way numerous pastoral counseling

centers and 12 step groups find a home for their activities within the walls of churches and other religious institutions. Though it is unfortunate that the Emmanuel Movement could not survive without Elwood Worcester's inspired leadership its symbolic importance and actual contributions should never be forgotten or overlooked.

See also: [▶ Pastoral Counseling](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#)

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World Center

[▶ Axis Mundi](#)

World Tree

[▶ Axis Mundi](#)

Wounded Healer, The

Bonnie Smith Crusalis

In 1972, a Catholic priest and psychologist, Henri Nouwen, wrote a book that urged ministerial counselors to make their own emotional wounds a source of healing for those

they counseled. He called this book *The Wounded Healer*. While the concept of the wounded healer wasn't new, the book's title captured, in a phrase, a perspective of the therapeutic relationship that crosses counseling theories and treatment modalities. Research of the literature suggests that regardless of the counseling theory or technique in play, a therapist who is aware of, and has worked to accept his own wounds, has much to offer a client.

Historical Framework

The concept of the wounded healer is quite old. Seen throughout ancient Greek mythology, healers are portrayed as inseparable from their own persistent wounds. The figures of Chiron and Asklepios are especially prominent as Greek gods and healers who themselves are wounded. Chiron, a centaur, and master of the healing arts, was hit with a poisoned arrow by Heracles. He could not heal himself and thus gave up his immortality. Asklepios is struck by lightning while trying to raise the dead; Asklepios' son is wounded in battle while striving to heal others (Kirmayer, 2003). The concept of the wounded healer appears in medieval Europe in the myth of Parsifal and the Fisher King. The Fisher King, who despite possessing the Holy Grail which can cure all ills, cannot cure his own wound until the Holy Grail is liberated (Miller and Baldwin, 2000). In many primitive societies, the concept is visible in the tradition of the shaman, a healer and often a priest, who represents the wounded healer. In Shamanism, being wounded is linked to knowledge, and the display of wounds represents an authenticity of skills (Miller, Wagner, Britton and Gridley, 1998). According to Miller and Baldwin (2000), the shaman might be referred to as the "ultimate" wounded healer because he is viewed as actually taking on himself the wounds and illnesses of his people. One of the first of the modern healers responsible for advancing the wounded healer paradigm was Carl Jung. "Only the wounded doctor can heal" (Jung, 1951, as cited in Miller & Baldwin, 2000: 246). In 1985, psychologists Remen, May, Young and Berland described wounded healers as those with resolved emotional experiences that sensitized them to working with others (as cited in Gladding, 2004).

Polarities

Fascination with the polarities of life, along with attempts to resolve and connect them, is as old as recorded time. Many cultures created single deities to name opposites,

such as *Kali* in India, the goddess of both pox and the healer (Miller and Baldwin, 2000).

The bridging of these polarities in one's personality is of central importance in the wounded healer model. Jung suggests the critical nature of these bridges often, especially in his writings referring to embracing the "shadow," the distinct, "bad/ineffective/wrong" part of one's personality. According to Jung, it is necessary to accept and embrace the shadow as a step toward self actualization (Dunne, 2000). In considering the bridging of polarities as a facet of healing, it is useful to mention the origin of the word "heal," which derives from the Anglo-Saxon word *hal*, meaning whole. To heal is to make whole through a process of unifying all of the elements in a person, good and bad, sick and well (Miller and Baldwin, 2000). Gestalt therapy, with its emphasis on unification, and alcohol and drug counseling, where often the most effective counselors are those who have themselves survived addiction, are examples of this process (Miller and Baldwin, 2000).

Environments in the counseling setting that support wholeness in healers, however, are often difficult to come by. A survey of 229 nurses who experienced depression revealed that 30% did not disclose their condition to their colleagues even though as individual nurses, they expressed the importance of healing from within as having great potential to make an impact on the healing of patients (Jackson, 2004). In a study by Cain (2000), 10 psychotherapists with a history of psychiatric hospitalization reported the stigma associated with their psychiatric histories as the reason for not revealing their illnesses. According to the study's participants, reduced stigma would encourage the disclosure of one's problems and thereby increase the possibility for therapists to explore their own wounds as a means of self-healing and as a technique to use in their professions.

The Inner Healer Archetype

Another concept that emerges in the wounded healer paradigm is that of inner healer. This is the concept that describes a part of the process that promotes healing in either a patient or therapist. It is labeled an archetype because it implies an elemental or universal quality that reflects basic human patterns (Kirmayer, 2003). The archetype of the inner healer is activated whenever a person becomes ill, and healing occurs only if the patient gets help from his inner healer (Guggenbuhl-Craig, 1978, as cited in Miller and Baldwin 2000). This does not always happen, however, according to Grosbeck (1975, as cited in Miller and Baldwin, 2000), because the discomfort of his

wounds blocks the patient from reaching an awareness of his healer within. The patient instead projects the responsibility of healing onto the therapist. The task of the therapist, then, is to help release the inner healer in the patient, a process characterized as "activating dormant or malfunctioning mechanisms of healing and resilience" (Kirmayer, 2003: 250). He says alternately the healer can acknowledge his own wounds as a way of helping the patient to mobilize his inner healer. However activated, functioning inner healers are vital in both the patient and therapist (Miller and Baldwin, 2000).

Wounded Healers

Cain's study (2000) of psychotherapists with personal histories of psychiatric hospitalization reports that Carl Jung was just one of several mental health theorists who sought help in a quest for mental well-being and relief from suffering. Others include Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, and Henry Stack Sullivan. Jung might be considered the classic example of the wounded healer, because much of his work was devoted to describing his life struggles or wounds and how he used these struggles to develop his skills as a healer (Dunne, 2000). In her recent biography of Jung, Dunne (2000) describes the wounds and later the healing associated with Jung's troubled childhood, his break with Freud who had designated Jung as his heir apparent, and Jung's efforts to establish his own psychological theories. Albert Ellis (2004) describes himself as "anxious" in an essay entitled "Why I (really) became a therapist." He says that while he wanted to help others and in so doing create a better world, foremost in his choice of psychotherapy as a career was to study and experiment with techniques to help himself. He describes a childhood and adolescence rife with phobias about speaking in public and rejection by girls. He says that having figured out how to solve these phobias in himself, he was able to develop a theory and techniques that could be applied in the healing of others.

On "Wounded" Healing

Carl Jung's view that only wounded doctors can heal is shared by Miller and Baldwin (2000), who say that only healers deeply touched by personal experience of illness can truly heal, and that vulnerability is an integral part of this process (Miller and Baldwin, 2000). They say that an awareness of one's own wounds or conflicts leads to a state of vulnerability which in turn connects the patient and

therapist. According to Kirmayer (2003) that connection, and the woundedness and healing in both the patient and therapist, serve as a mechanism for mobilizing the all-important inner healer of each.

It is intuitive that someone who has been afflicted and survives is in the best position to understand illness and cures (Kirmayer, 2003). Kirmayer describes five stages in the development of wounded healers. The first is the healer who will not, can not, or does not confront his own woundedness and instead identifies with the power of healing, seeing himself as different from the patient. The second stage brings the healer into contact with his own problems. The third describes an overwhelming and dark stage where the healer sees himself only as his wounds, loses his identity as healer, sees himself as incurably wounded, identifies with the patient and seeks help. The fourth stage describes the acceptance of the wound which invokes the inner healer. In the fifth stage, the healer realizes that wounding can only be partly healed and that he must descend again and again into his suffering. He realizes that his strengths and weaknesses are one and the same. It is important to note that healing does not occur as a result of the healer describing his own pain or stories about illness and pain to the patient (Nouwen, 1972). Nouwen says healing happens when healer and patient are able to *share the depth* of pain and together experience the action of rising from it. It is this connection, at its deepest level between therapist and patient that is responsible for healing the wounds universally caused by alienation, separation, isolation and loneliness. “I recognize some of the same issues that I grapple with for myself and I discover our shared human condition, even though it is lived somewhat differently by each of us” (van Deurzen, 2001: 49). Thus, a clinician’s willingness to remain in contact with the parts of self that are wounded or in pain allow him to meet the patient where the process of true healing may begin (Kirmayer, 2003).

Implications of the Wounded Healer in Counseling

A major concept, which must be emphasized when discussing the wounded healer in the counseling setting, is that of self-knowledge. Miller and Baldwin (2000) describe a medical resident who had grown up with an alcoholic father and who was unsuccessful in counseling an alcoholic patient because of his own anger. Mander (2004) says self-awareness, evidence of the ability to empathize, and life experience are major qualities sought

in candidates applying for professional counseling training programs. Mander (2004) notes that while on the surface there seems to be a recognizable difference between those wanting to study to be therapists and those who want to enter into therapy, both groups are in fact quite similar because both express a desire to understand the psychic process, to explore internal conflict and to repair life wounds.

In the counseling setting, if the wounded side of the healer is devalued, the clinical experience is likely to be distorted (Kirmayer, 2003). Thus it is vital that counseling training and practice environments encourage safety for the expression of a clinician’s wounds and vulnerabilities (Mander, 2004) and that practitioners regularly be not only encouraged, but required, to engage in regular self-care behaviors (Jackson, 2004).

Another side of the wounded healer which must be attended to is that of unresolved conflict. A healer’s own neglected wounds can result in an inability to activate the inner healer in both the therapist and the patient and in the pathologizing of a patient by the therapist (Kirmayer, 2003). In addition, therapists must always be watchful for their own motivations in the counseling relationship and recognize whether a wish to help is really motivated by immature narcissism (Mander, 2004). The great challenge for healers is to learn to live with their brokenness as a blessing rather than a curse (Nouwen, 1972).

Study findings clearly support the value of “wounded healers” in the field of counseling because consumer/professionals have the potential for modeling collaborative treatment and recovery (Cain, 2000), and because an acceptance by the therapist of his own wounds, through conscious awareness of his own vulnerability, leads to wholeness, which enables a patient to achieve wholeness too (Miller and Baldwin, 2000).

Kirmayer (2003) paraphrases a Pablo Neruda poem when he says that to accept the power of the archetypes of inner healer and wounded healer, we must turn inward to our darkest place and experience confusion until that which hides in us comes out.

- ▶ A bough of fruit falls from the sun on your dark garment.
The great roots of night
Grow suddenly from your soul
And the things that hide in you come out again.
(Neruda, 1969, as cited in Kirmayer, 2003)

See also: ▶ [Archetype](#) ▶ [Daimonic](#) ▶ [Dark Night of the Soul](#) ▶ [Forgiveness](#) ▶ [Holy Grail](#) ▶ [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) ▶ [Psychotherapy](#) ▶ [Shamanic Healing](#) ▶ [Shamans and Shamanism](#)

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Y

Yahweh

› God › Judaism and Psychology

Yggdrasill

› Axis Mundi

Yoga

Magda Schonfeld

As yoga has swept the west, it is now estimated that nearly 20 million people in the United States practice some physical aspect of yoga. But beneath yoga's modern popularity lies an ancient tradition that illuminates knowledge of the Self.

Definition of Yoga

Yoga deals with the most profound of mysteries, the essential nature of the human being in relation to the universe. The term Yoga has its root in the Sanskrit word “yuj” which means to yoke, unite, integrate. What is being united? Yoga is the union between the individual soul and the universal soul. It is the split between the two that is viewed as the root of all suffering.

Many paths evolved in the yoga tradition, originating in India. These include: bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion, karma the yoga of selfless service, jnana yoga, the yoga of wisdom, and raja yoga, also known as the “royal union.” Within the umbrella of raja yoga is the eightfold

path (astanga yoga) outlined by the great sage, Patanjali, in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, a treatise written about 200 BC. Astanga Yoga, the eight limbed path offers a systematic way of cultivation of the mind so as to ultimately achieve liberation. The first four limbs guide the seeker on a path toward evolution of consciousness, including: yamas, ethics and morals that teach about living in relationship, niyamas, individual practices necessary to build character, asana, physical postures, and pranayama, breath control. The second four limbs teach the path of involution and relate to the true state of Yoga. These include: pratyahara, withdrawal of the senses, dharana, concentration, keeping the mind collected, dhyana, meditation, and Samadhi, profound meditation or complete absorption.

It is interesting to note that Patanjali pays only passing attention to the practice of asana, the third limb of yoga, also known as Hatha yoga. Yet, it is Hatha Yoga, the practice of postures, or asana that has so gripped modern attention. Many individuals are initially drawn to hatha yoga for truly tangible benefits such as stress reduction, increased flexibility, stamina, improved concentration, and overall health and well-being. Hatha Yoga, also refers to the yoga of willpower. It is the way toward realization through rigorous discipline. The power aroused by this discipline clears the energy centers of the body/mind so that union with the supreme is possible.

Patanjali defines yoga more specifically, as *yogas citta vritti nirodahah*: yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. What are these mind fluctuations? All the stuff of the mind, memories, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, judgments, the many objects of awareness. It is identification with these objects of awareness that causes suffering. In his yoga sutras, Patanjali shows us a way to free ourselves of this suffering.

Is Yoga a Religion?

Is Yoga a religion? BKS Iyengar (1979), master teacher of Hatha Yoga, whose book *Light on Yoga* has been a foundation text for the practice of Yoga, says the following:

- ▶ Yoga is a subject which cultures the mind and the intelligence of the individual to develop religiousness through practice. It has nothing to do with the man-created religious order; yet it is a religion of human beings, a religion of humanity, as it is filled with the message of goodwill to one and all.

Instead of prayer to a particular god, Patanjali's sutras offer a pathway towards opening to the divine. This divine is referred to as Ishvara, the Universal Soul. This divine essence is not bound by place, space or time, not subject to cause and effect, not subject to suffering or the seeds of suffering. This divine nature is, however, not of this religion or that. It is instead a universal truth understood by all religions.

Yoga and Psychology

Patanjali, in a clear, systematic way put forth a treatise to help us understand the nature of mind, its many pitfalls and misidentifications that are the roots of day to day suffering. In modern psychology, we try to comprehend the impact of trauma, archetypal defenses, dissociation as a form of survival, projection, individuation, etc. We have on the other hand, an examination of the mind written centuries ago that sheds light upon the nature of the psyche. But Patanjali takes us beyond psychology to a path of freedom from the entanglements of the mind.

The Five Afflictions

Patanjali enumerates five afflictions (*klesas*) that disturb the equilibrium of consciousness and perpetuate a state of bondage or suffering.

The first is ignorance, *avidya*, which is the root cause of all affliction. This is the ignorance of our own true nature. We make the mistake of identifying that which is impermanent as permanent. It is taking the day to day self we know, the self that works each day, the self that raises children, the self that succeeds in the world or fails it, the self that takes pride in great accomplishment and the self that feels defeated; it is believing that all these various selves are more real than that which unites them into wholeness.

The second affliction is *asmita*, or pride, ego, which is called an affliction when we misidentify with the ego. A sense of confidence and belief in who you are, is essential to accomplish anything in the world. But ego can trap you into "you're not good enough; you don't deserve to be here," or "you're so great, they don't know anything."

The ego can ensnare you in the "greatness" of your accomplishments, or minimize you into a small suffering being, and lead you into endless comparison between you and the rest of the world. Patanjali warns us not to get ensnared by these voices of ego, for these voices affirm separateness rather than wholeness.

The third and fourth afflictions, *raga and dvesa*, attachment and aversion, likes and dislikes, can easily rule our lives and utterly exhaust us. We run toward what we like and run from what we don't like. Once we attain the possessions we long for, we fear losing them. In order to avoid the pain of what we don't like, or avoid the pain of past suffering, complex defense systems might surface, like acting aggressive when you feel vulnerable, dissociating, disappearing when threatened, turning to addictions like food or alcohol when life doesn't offer what you long for. Chasing after what we long for and running from what we wish never came, keeps us in a state of agitation, restlessness, yearning. Yet if we can practice stillness, witnessing mind with its potent pull in one direction and another, if we can, as referred to in Jungian psychology, hold the tension of the opposites, freedom from misidentification, freedom from suffering is possible.

The fifth and final affliction, *abhinivesah*, is clinging to life or fear of death. It is the subtlest of all afflictions. Even the wisest of beings are plagued by this affliction and naturally so, it is our instinct to stay alive at all costs. "While practicing Yoga, the aspirant penetrates deep within himself and realizes the life-force, active while one is alive, merges with the universe when it leaves the body at death. Through this understanding, the aspirant can lose his attachment to life and conquer the fear of death" (Iyengar, 1996).

In summary, Patanjali discusses the false identification of thoughts and Self. He teaches that false identification is at the root of all misery. He further teaches that the practices of yoga are about dissolving this false identification.

Asana Practice or Hatha Yoga

Since the western world has embraced yoga as a mainstream activity, it is worthwhile to examine the nature of asana practice. How can the practice of asana teach us about false identification? Often as we move into a pose, the various tight and resistive places in the body reveal themselves. These places of resistance can easily stay hidden from us, if not challenged by touch, movement or some method of conscious awareness. The body,

connected to matter, to earth, readily houses our struggles in patterns of tension. These patterns deepen over time and if left unaddressed (unconscious) long enough, will ultimately lead to disease. The body is an extraordinary reflection of the mental/emotional patterns of mind. Yogic practice can help heal the split between the two.

Tightness and resistance can come from many sources and often interweave with one another: (1) physical – structural tightness, injury, repetitive wrong actions, habit patterns, overdoing, (2) chemical – improper diet, drugs, environmental toxins, (3) emotional – distressing thoughts, feelings, memories, anxieties, (4) spiritual – disconnection from the source of one's being.

Whatever the source of resistance is, the body will attempt to express it, often in the manifestation of pain. Whenever we resist the present moment and try to deny what we are experiencing, a split occurs. This split holds energy. It holds tension. It manifests as suffering. By connecting to the body, by witnessing the split, this cut off energy can return to us as wholeness. Asana practice offers us the opportunity to return to ourselves.

Sometimes in practicing an asana, we want to come out of the pose, to jump away from the discomfort that might rise. Or we use too much willfulness and harden the body so that we overdo. Here lies a marvelous analogy to Jung's "holding the tension of the opposites." This has to do with the willingness to be in the pose, the willingness to be with the difficulty or ease and not identify with either. "If we are able to be with what rises, that is remain still long enough to perceive the discomfort, rather than react to it, we can begin the path toward union, Yoga" (Lasater, 2001).

Asana practice can change physiology, brain chemistry and organic function. Backbending poses open the heart, forward bending poses support the digestive organs, twists ring out toxins from the liver and kidneys, inversions support circulation, clear the mind and rejuvenates one from fatigue. "Yoga was invented by our sages in order to overcome bodily impediments, emotional and environmental disturbances of the mind and the wavering qualities of the intelligence, so that the practitioner comes closer and closer to the Self" (Iyengar, 2001).

How can asana bring one closer to the Self? For example, we can look at adho muka virasana, (downward facing hero's pose, sitting with legs folded under you and forehead to the floor); if done with full presence of being, this pose evokes a sense of humbleness. The pose has its own offering.

Another pose, Virabhadrasana II translated as warrior pose, where one stands with legs wide apart, arms fully extended, legs firm, chest and heart open, expansive.

The pose itself invokes a sense of power, extension, and stability, the feet rooted and core of body centered over the pelvis. When fully entering this pose, empowerment manifests, inertia is shed, a sense of energy and will to go forth into the day with vitality rises up.

The notion that poses generate particular patterns in the mind is a more modern interpretation of the powers of yoga. Such ideas are not mentioned by Patanjali. Yet as asana practice has evolved in modern times, we can see that each asana has the capacity to teach us the art of silence. Silence in the brain allows for effortless work. If the effort offered to a pose is done wholeheartedly, effortless practice manifests.

Yoga and Jung

Our past experiences, perceptions impact the nature of our practice. These experiences, instincts and hidden or subliminal impressions make up what is known in Sanskrit as samskaras. If these imprints are good, they act as stimuli to maintain the high degree of sensitivity necessary to pursue the spiritual path. If the imprints are not good, rooted in trauma, abuse or neglect, the seeker has a more complicated journey of learning to see, to perceive habitual reactions to life's events. This might be paralleled to Jung's notion of the "complex," which when activated, triggers an individual to react in a way similar to the initial imprint of wounding. The process of integrating past impressions, so that they no longer trigger unconscious behavior is an important goal in psychotherapy. The yogic tradition understood this long ago. As long as one stays rooted in reactivity to life's phenomena, one is caught in the wheel of "dharma," or an existence bound in cause and effect.

But through practice, these imprints can be transformed. Practice involves the eight limbs of yoga discussed earlier, asana practice being the third limb. Practice, abhyasa involves repeated, committed, devoted effort. Patanjali points out that one must not only practice, but practice with detachment, "vairagya" the discarding of ideas which obstruct progress. Vairagya is a practice where one learns to gain freedom from desires and to cultivate non-attachment to things which hinder pursuit of union with the soul.

It is important here to clarify the difference between the psychological term dissociation and the use of detachment in the sutras. Sometimes withdrawing sense awareness, turning inward, practicing yoga, meditation, silence, can appear as if one was withdrawing from the world at large, retreating from society. This withdrawal,

this penetration into silence is necessary to hear the internal voice, the voice of the soul.

But if one gets so captivated by that silence, or so dependent upon it that withdrawal becomes the end of the journey rather than a pathway, the seeker has then cultivated withdrawal as an end rather than the means of realizing the Self.

Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness. This sutra brings us back to Pantanjali's earlier definition of yoga. Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. Whenever the mind is fully focused, one pointed, and one is acting in harmony with the nature of all things, one is practicing yoga. Life is filled with moments to enliven this practice.

See also: [▶ Hinduism](#) [▶ Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [▶ Psychotherapy](#) [▶ Self](#)

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Z

Zazen

► Koan ► Zen

Zen

Paul C. Cooper

“I need to repeat that Zen refuses to be explained, but that it is to be lived” (Suzuki, 1949: 310).

Limitations of Explanation

Keeping the limitations of explanation and the value placed on the primacy of experience in mind, the following will provide an outline sketch of Zen Buddhism. Zen is the Japanese translation of the Sanskrit term, *dhyana*, which means concentration meditation or meditative absorption. Zen is also known as C’han (Chinese), Thien (Vietnamese), and Seon (Korean). However, as Zen is not a monolithic structure, it is important to keep in mind that while there is an historical continuity between C’han and Zen, and that the terms are typically used interchangeably, there are many fundamental socio-cultural and doctrinal differences between these systems as they developed regionally and that integrated various influences of indigenous religions. For example, C’han incorporates elements of Taoism and Confucianism. Recently, a rapidly expanding “interfaith Zen” movement in the United States has integrated many Christian elements (Johnston, 1976; Kennedy, 1996).

History

Historical accounts attribute the Indian monk Bodhidharma with the introduction of C’han into China during

the sixth Century. Bodhidharma taught what has been described as a mind-to-mind transmission, outside scriptures, and which does not rely upon words or letters. His teachings were then transmitted through a series of Chinese patriarchs. Given this emphasis on direct transmission, the role of the teacher is essential and supercedes the study of the scriptures. This direct teacher to student “dharma transmission” follows a lineage that can be traced back to preceeding generations to the historical Buddha. Thus, not unlike psychotherapy, Zen is interpersonal, experiential and relies on direct dialog.

Practice and Religious Salvation

The primary experiential activities of Zen are zazen (sitting meditation), dialogues with a teacher, koan study, and moment-to-moment mindfulness during all daily activities and chores. Zen practices engender a liberating awareness of reality through an alteration of perception that includes the derailment of cognitive linear thought. From the Zen perspective, this liberating awareness can be known or intuited experientially, but not known in the cognitive sense. This salvational intention, expressed in the notion of *satori* (enlightenment, literally: “to understand”) and engendered through personal experience, qualifies Zen as a religious endeavor. However, it is not a religion in the sense of the word that religion is typically understood in a Western civilizational context. On this point Masao Abe writes, “In one sense, Zen may be said to be one of the most difficult religions to understand, for there is no formulated Zen doctrine or theological system by which one may intellectually approach it” (1985: 3).

This soteriological intention along with supporting practices defines Zen as a religion. The striving for *satori* (enlightenment) reflects this salvational goal and has resulted in an emphasis on the wisdom or insight aspect of meditation. This emphasis has generated a critique of quietist leanings among certain Buddhist sects. Without an emphasis on the wisdom aspect of zazen, such critics assert that meditation becomes an empty and useless endeavor that can be equated, for example, as “polishing a brick to make a mirror.”

Regarding salvation, the Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki notes: “As I have repeatedly illustrated, Buddhism, whether primitive or developed, is a religion of freedom and emancipation, and the ultimate aim of its discipline is to release the spirit from its possible bondage so that it can act freely in accordance with its own principles” (1949: 74).

Zen and Psychoanalysis

The influence of Zen has run through psychoanalysis for over a half of century as a result of D. T. Suzuki’s involvement with Eric Fromm (1950, 1956), Fromm, Suzuki & DeMartino (1960), Karen Horney (1945), Harold Kelman (1960), and others. This group of psychoanalysts have approached Buddhist religious experience and associated meditation practices with the true spirit of open-minded inquiry distinctive of the psychoanalytic dialog that Freud fathered and began to look eastward in a search for expanding their psychoanalytic vision. Karen Horney, for example (1945: 163) discusses the “impoverishment of the personality” and refers to the Buddhist notion of “wholeheartedness” or “sincerity of spirit.” Susan Quinn (1987), Karen Horney’s biographer, chronicles a close association between Horney and D. T. Suzuki.

Harold Kelman, a close colleague of Horney argued in his paper “Psychoanalytic Thought and Eastern Wisdom” (1960), that psychoanalysis is experientially “eastern.” While deriving from fundamentally different theoretical assumptions, Kelman observed that Buddhist thought and technique can deeply enhance psychoanalytic technique, particularly regarding the analyst’s attentional stance.

Erich Fromm, who was deeply interested in Zen Buddhism, also shared a close association with D. T. Suzuki. He included detailed meditation instructions in his very popular book, *The Art of Loving* (1956). Fromm believed that meditative experience can expand the psychoanalytic process through a positive conceptualization of human potential that goes beyond addressing symptoms. When asked about the benefits of Zen meditation in relation to mental health, Fromm reportedly responded that “It’s (Zen) the only way to enduring mental health” (quoted in Kapleau, 1989:14). He viewed both systems as potentially mutually enhancing. A thirst for expanding their vision and looking eastward to do so forms a common thread that ties together the above representative psychoanalysts. They thus paved the way for contemporary contributions, which has expanded to include a wide range of applications from a Zen-influenced short-term crisis intervention (Rosenbaum, 1998) to depth psychoanalysis that

integrates basic Zen principles with contemporary Inter-subjectivity theory and Self Psychology (Magid, 2000).

An examination of the “foundational” (Nagao, 1989) Buddhist principles of emptiness and dependent-arising reveals parallels to the “totalistic” (Kernberg, 1976) understanding of countertransference and can serve as a link between classical and totalistic models. That is, that all experience, including the psychotherapeutic encounter emerges contextually, subject to causes and conditions.

The thirteenth Century Japanese monk Dogen’s notion of *gujin* or “total exertion” holds important treatment implications for the psychotherapist who is informed by Zen practice. That is, as the philosopher Joan Stambaugh writes, “Looked at from the standpoint of the situation itself, the situation is totally manifested or exerted without obstruction or contamination” (1999: 6). With regard to the psychoanalytic situation the notion of goal or a stance of removed passivity both contaminate the situation and interfere with presence. Stambaugh asserts that, “The person experiencing the situation totally becomes it. He is not thinking *about* it; he *is* it. When he does this, the situation is completely revealed and manifested.” (1999: 6). Thus total exertion refers to an opening that calls for a response that “. . . is never anything passive but can be quite strenuous” (Op. Cit. 1999: 7). From this perspective, the psychotherapist’s activity becomes decisive, clean, clear and precise, not encumbered by guilt, anxiety, convention or goals.

In recent years, the conversation between Zen and psychotherapy has been continuously expanding and holds promise for a mutually beneficial cross-fertilization through the open-minded spirit of inquiry that characterizes present studies.

See also: [▶ Buddhism](#) [▶ Chinese Religions](#) [▶ Koan](#) [▶ Psychoanalysis](#) [▶ Self Psychology](#) [▶ Taoism](#)

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Zionism

Kate M. Loewenthal

What is Zionism? Does psychology of religion have anything to offer to the understanding of Zionism?

What is Zionism?

The term Zion has traditionally been viewed as synonymous with Jerusalem (Roth and Wigoder, 1971). The most commonly understood use of the term Zionism is the belief that the land of Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, and every effort is to be made to return Jewish people to the land. There is a detailed biblical definition of the territory in Numbers 34, 1–15, and the territory was then expanded in the time of David and Solomon.

The historical precursors of Zionist ideology are to be found in Jewish history from biblical times, including promises that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) will inherit the land of Canaan, the process of Jewish settlement of the land, and various persecutions and forced movements of population. Despite the destruction of the second Temple in 70 CE and the creation of diaspora Jewish communities in the former Roman Empire there continued to be Jewish communities in Israel (called Palestine by the Romans) until the present. This included the retention of important Jewish intellectual centres.

Thousands of Jews in Jerusalem were killed by the Crusaders in 1099, who accused them of helping the Arabs. During the later Middle Ages the holy sites in the land and particularly Jerusalem were the focus of pilgrimages and the Jews who lived in Palestine were supported by charitable donations from diaspora communities. References to Israel, Jerusalem and Zion, and the hoped-for return, occur prolifically throughout Jewish liturgy and sacred texts, and the direction of prayer has been towards Jerusalem following a verse in Daniel (6: 11).

In the sixteenth century the northern city of Safed became an important intellectual center, with leading scholars of all traditionalist aspects of Jewish thought among its inhabitants, and this became a significant model for later Cultural Zionism. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the pace of Jewish return to Israel speeded up with the expansion of the settlements of pious Jews (Hasidim, and also followers of the Vilna Gaon), particularly in Safed, Tiberias and Jerusalem. The Hibbat Zion (Love of Zion) movement was prominent in supporting such settlements philanthropically. Later in the nineteenth century, in the face of persistent pogroms and other persecution in the European diaspora Zionism passion assumed a new, politicised form, sometimes known as “synthetic” Zionism, with active attempts to achieve a political solution, and to develop and support Jewish agricultural settlements. “Cultural” Zionism developed Jewish national awareness and support for the Jewish homeland among diaspora Jews. Landmarks in the history of modern Zionism include the first Zionist congress in 1897 in Switzerland, the Balfour Declaration (1917), asserting the support of the British government for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, the founding of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1925, the UN vote to partition the land between Arabs and Jews (1947), followed by war since the Arabs did not accept the partition, and the declaration of the state of Israel (1948). This beleaguered state remains the focus of Jewish immigration from all parts of the diaspora, and also of hostility and repeated attacks from surrounding Arab neighbours. Zionist philosophy has continued to develop pragmatically in response to these developments (Seliktar, 1983).

Secular forms of Zionism, sometimes with a socialist flavor, sometimes purely nationalist, proposed that Jewish religious observance was only needed to preserve Jewish identity (and longing for Zion) while in the diaspora. But once in the Jewish state, Jews were said to no longer need religious observance in order to maintain their identity as Jews. Some observers of the contemporary Israeli scene believe that secular Zionism is no longer the force that it once was, and love of the land is

tempered by the complex political difficulties with Arab neighbours, particularly the urgent need to keep peace and survive. Thus modern secular Zionism may entail a willingness to make territorial concessions for the sake of peace. Religious Zionism is based on the philosophy of Rabbi Kook (e.g., 2005), and involves settlements in territories that fall within the biblically-defined boundaries of Israel. Religious Zionism is associated with the view that national security is best served by preserving the biblical boundaries.

Zionist Attitudes

Anti-Zionist attitudes have been noted among Jews. Some strictly orthodox Jews, mainly associated with the Satmar group of Hasidim, believe that the time for the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel is premature, and can only happen after the coming of the Messiah. At another point on the religious spectrum, early Reform Judaism eliminated references to Jerusalem, Israel and Zionism from its liturgy in an attempt to produce truly acculturated citizens of Germany. However, the founding of the State induced a contrary trend. Attitudes which are generally consistent with Zionism have been reported among the majority of Jews. In Seliktar's (1980) study, 75–81% of the 700 young Israelis surveyed were committed to each of the five aspects of Zionist ideology (enumerated below). The majority of American Jews in Cohen and Kelman's (2007) survey considered that "attachment to Israel is an important part of being Jewish," though the percentages agreeing with this statement declined with age: 80% of the over-65s agreed, 60% of the under-35s.

The themes and concepts of Zionism have had a strong impact outside Judaism. In the United States, Zionism is an important feature of fundamentalist Christianity, in which it is held that the settlement of Jews in Israel is foretold by biblical prophecy and is a precursor to the coming of the Messiah. This in turn has impacted on foreign policy attitudes (Cummergen, 2000). In sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Swaziland, Zionism is widely practiced as a religion. African Zionism was based originally on Christianity but incorporates many indigenous practices and beliefs including animism (Guth, Fraser, Green, Kellstedt, Smidt, 2000).

Zionism and Psychology

What light can the psychology of religion throw on Zionism? There has been negligible study of Zionism as such by psychologists of religion. Nevertheless there are

psychological perspectives which may be brought to bear on Zionism among Jews.

Territorial claims are often strongly bound up with national and religious identity: social identity theory offers important discussions on this theme (e.g., Hewstone and Stroebe, 2001).

Band (2005) has discussed the dilemmas faced by religious Zionists in relation to their identities, amid the political complexities of twenty-first century Israel. For example, their pragmatic and religiously-founded wish for peace conflicts with their pragmatic and religiously-founded need to maintain the boundaries of Israel.

The frequent Jewish liturgical and textual references to Israel and Zion reinforce the package of Jewish identity, spirituality and love of the land. In Jewish sacred texts, the land of Israel is given to the Jews and said to be imbued with a special level of holiness (e.g., Genesis 15:18; 2 Chronicles 6, 5–6; Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 1973) and given by G-d to the Jewish people. There are many specific religious commandments associated with the land, for example relating to its agricultural produce, such as observance of the sabbatical year, specific blessings to be pronounced on fruits for which Israel is renowned, and the priestly blessing, recited daily in Israel, and only on festivals in the diaspora. The quantity and spiritual force of biblical and other references to the sacredness of Israel deserve closer study, perhaps using discourse or other linguistic analysis, particularly with the view to the question of the uniqueness of Zionism as a form of nationalist philosophy.

The possible impact of liturgical and religious textual references was supported in a careful study in political psychology examining the socialisation of Zionist ideology among young Israelis: Seliktar (1980) studied the cognitive and affective aspects of five features of Zionist ideology: loyalty to the state of Israel, continuity (of Israel) across time; unity of the Jewish people; Israel as a Jewish national center; the integrative role of the State of Israel (in absorbing new immigrants). Respondents indicated extent of agreement and of emotional commitment to statements relating to these five features (e.g., "We should always think of Israel as a continuation of the ancient kingdom of Judea"). There were significant effects of family religious observance, and of religiosity of the school attended, on strength of commitment to Zionist ideology.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be seen that Zionism in all its forms contains powerful ideas about the sacred status of the land of Israel. Although the psychological and spiritual impact

of Zionism have not been studied by psychologists of religion, there are conceptual frameworks – for example in social identity theory, attitude theory, and forms of linguistic analysis – which may facilitate closer study.

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See also: [▶ Judaism and Psychology](#) [▶ Psychology of Religion](#)

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Zoroastrianism

Sam Cyrus

Zoroastrianism, also called Zarathustrism, Mazdeism or Parsism, is the religion founded by Zoroaster in Ancient

Persia, with approximately 150–250 thousand believers worldwide, mainly concentrated in India and Iran. It is in the *Zend-Avesta*, which literally means *Commentaries on Knowledge*, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, that one can find the principle assertions of this faith. The *Avesta* is divided in the three parts: *Yasna* (sacred *Liturgy* chapters), *Visperad*, *Vendidad* (constituted of purifications laws), and *Khorda*.

Zoroaster's Early Life

Zoroaster (or Zarathustra, as He is known in the West, or Zartosht in Persian), is the founder of Zoroastrianism, considered one of the first non-panteistic and monotheistic religions. Zoroaster apparently lived in ancient Persia, at an uncertain time in the first millennium before Christ. Joseph Campbell (1962) describes Zoroaster as “the earliest prophet” (7–8). According to Fatheazám (1972), even at the age of 15, He was respected by His fellow countrymen because of His charity work and His kindness to the poor and to animals. At 20 He left His house, spending 7 years in solitude in a cave in the Persian mountains. His family origin, lineage and the context of his birth are unknown, nonetheless it is said that He was born of a virgin mother, like Krishna and Jesus. Campbell pinpoints the mythological birthplace of Zoroaster beside the river Daiti, in the central land of the “seven lands of the earth.”

Zoroastrian Cosmology

Arguing that tradition stagnates and knowledge is movement, Zoroaster preached doubt and the need for inquiry to attain knowledge. At the age of 30, he received divine illumination through seven visions that confirmed Him as a demiurge. After 10 years of preaching, miracles, cures and only one confirmed disciple (His own cousin), Zoroaster was incarcerated for disturbing tradition and for the influence and confusion His laws and spiritual and scientific principles caused among the people. Among these laws was the concept of spiritual duality or cosmic dualism, between the spirit of good Ahura Mazda (or Ormuzd) – meaning Supreme Knowledge – and the spirit of evil Ahriman, both preexistent spirits (according to Dual Theology), or twin brothers born of Zurvan (according to Zurvanism). From this dualism comes the “complete freedom of choice exerted by spirits and the consequent responsibility that corresponded entirely to

this choice” (Ling, 2005: 87–88). It is this concept that would distinguish Zoroastrianism from Judaism, Christianity and Islam, inasmuch as individuals in Zoroastrianism were not mere receptacles of superior decisions, but the lords of their own destinies, free to act before life’s conditionings, what could be seen as “a vision of intentionality” (Frankl, 2002: 214), “without the fundamental supposition that man, simply, ‘is’, but that he always decides what he is going to be at the next moment” (Frankl, 2001: 73). Decisions are individual responsibilities, hence it is this individual responsibility that permits his spiritual, mental and psychic growth.

Possibly the concept of duality is Zoroastrianism’s greatest contribution to modern civilization, manifesting itself in the manifold areas of human knowledge. It is, nevertheless, interesting to note that, perhaps due to Persia’s geographical and historical position, we have now what we could speak of as two forms of dualism: oriental dualism, characterized by the intrinsic relationship of good and evil, as in the case of yin and yang, the idea that inside good there is evil and vice versa, according to the principles of mutations; and occidental dualism, in which evil and good are inter-excluding, until, for instance, the final victory of God over the Devil. In the field of psychology, one can find examples of human duality in such concepts as Rotter’s internal and external loci of control, Freud’s principle of pleasure vs. principle of reality, Piaget’s symbolic and logical thoughts, Jung’s anima and animus, Nuttin’s object-mean and object-end, and Roger’s ideal and real self, among others. It is important to underline, however, that these examples are not mere replicas of Zoroastrian dualism. Rather, they are simply useful to illustrate that human thought structure appears to be rooted in the concept of categorization by opposition, a reflection of Zoroastrian cosmology.

Human and Social Progress

Another traditional Zoroastrian element, as quoted here from the *Zend-Avesta*, is the need of three things for human progress: “I celebrate my praises for good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. . . . With chanting praises I present all good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and with rejection I repudiate all evil thoughts, and words, and deeds” (Yasna 11, 17). In short, the three elements – thoughts, words and actions – should be coherent and congruent. This idea can be found in the lines of Rogerian psychological thought, which postulates the principle of congruence as based on the need of the

therapist to feel and express these feelings to the client, as in the work of Messer and Winokur (1980) whose objective is to be able to help the patient to convert *insight* into action.

In Christianity, in the words of Saint James (2:17) “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” and, in the Bahá’í religion in a text that Bahá’u’lláh forwards to a Zoroastrian, “Words must be supported by deeds, for deeds are true test of words. Without the former, the latter can never quench the thirst of the yearning soul.”

The effect of Zoroaster’s vision was stupendous in human history. It allowed the moral, agricultural and economic development of Persian society, inasmuch as its assumptions were based on logic and ethics. Zoroastrianism’s best known symbol is fire, an example of the articulation between the material and the immaterial spheres: fire symbolizes true human integrity, in which Zoroastrian psychology is rooted. It is by observing the virtues of fire, the symbol of constancy, purity and sustainability of life created by Ahura Mazda, endowed with movement and creative capacity, that human beings can obtain a true example to follow.

In this sense, hell could not be a place dominated by fire, but by a state of pain:

- ▶ On the very first time when that deed has been done, without waiting until it is done again, down there in hell. The pain for that deed shall be as hard as any in this world: even as if one should cut off the limbs from his perishable body with knives of brass, or still worse; down there the pain for that deed shall be as hard as any in this world: even as if one should naildoubtful his perishable body with nails of brass, or still worse; down there the pain for that deed shall be as hard as any in this world: even as if one should by force throw his perishable body headlong down a precipice a hundred times the height of a man, or still worse; down there the pain for that deed shall be as hard as any in this world: even as if one should by force impale his perishable body, or still worse. (Vendidad, Fargard 4, IVb., 49–53)

Hell is a state and not a place, because it is a consequence of incorrect thoughts, words and actions that should be prevented before they happen again.

- ▶ The first step that the soul of the wicked man made, laid him in the Evil-Thought Hell; the second step that the soul of the wicked man made, laid him in the Evil-Word Hell; the third step that the soul of the wicked man made, laid him in the Evil-Deed Hell; the fourth step that the soul of the wicked man made, laid him in the Endless Darkness. (Hadhokht Nask [2], 33)

A wise person, therefore, is defined as one who chooses the path of good thoughts, says good words and practices good actions and does not possess useless thoughts, speak lies or practice unjust actions.

At the social level, Zoroastrianism is perhaps the first religion to recognize total equality among all, regardless of creed, race or gender. Zoroaster was also the author of a letter of animal rights and taught that forests should be open, and lands cultivated. At an individual level, He also implemented five daily obligatory prayers, preceded, each one, by ablution.

Zoroastrian Influence in the West

Zoroastrian cosmology, philosophy and faith have had definite historical influence. In Christian culture, besides the previously described confluence, we find in a brief passage in Matthew (2:1–13), the figure of the Wisemen or Three Kings, possibly members of the sacerdotal order of Magi who, according to some historians, were looking for the “Holy Saoshyant” (Visperad, 22:1), an awaited prophet. Historical sources would mention different versions, describing the Magi as being from Persia, Arabia, Chaldea, Yemen, China and other oriental regions, but the term “Magi” itself suggests the astronomically-oriented sacerdotal/philosophical order that articulated, syncretically, Zoroastrianism with its preceding paganism. Ancient paintings and mosaics depicted the Magi in Persian outfits, as in the cases of the Basilica of San Vitale and the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, the Nativity Church in Jerusalem, and Rome’s subterranean catacombs.

During the first century of the Christian era, another development of Zoroastrianism resulted from a meeting of Persian and Roman traditions. The result was a form of Mithraism, in which Mithra and Ahura Mazda seemed to be associated with the gods Apollo and Zeus, respectively. This new movement became popular among the Roman soldiers who propagated it, through their legions, in Britain, Germany, and elsewhere (Zeppegno, 1980). The sense of fraternity, hope for a new and better life, and equality among all humans before one single God of love seems to have captivated parts of the Roman population (Spoto, 1995). For Romans, Mithra was a divinity born from immaculate conception, on December 25th, the day of the Winter solstice, the same day that, later on, was

defined as the birthday of Jesus. Thus, Zoroastrianism possesses influence, even if indirect, in the context of the yet to be born Christian theology.

In the Hellenic and Greek world it has been suggested that Socrates was in contact with Zoroastrian clergymen, and also with Hebrews in Palestine, assimilating, there, the principles of divine unity and the soul’s immortality, concepts foreign until that period to his own cultural background. In his turn, Heraclitus defined *arché* (world’s constituent element) as fire and described both divine reality and human existence as possessing dual vision by affirming that we *descend and don’t descend in the same rivers* or that God is *day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-hunger*.

See also: [Analytical Psychology](#) [Campbell, Joseph](#) [Christianity](#) [Frankl, Viktor](#) [Freud, Sigmund](#) [Islam](#) [Jesus](#) [Jung, Carl Gustav](#) [Locus of Control](#) [Monotheism](#) [Pantheism](#) [Psychoanalysis](#) [Religion](#) [Taoism](#) [Virgin Birth](#) [Winnicott, Donald Woods](#)

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