

The background image is a photograph of a Venetian canal. On the left, a white building with ornate architectural details and a red banner hangs over the water. A small bridge with a metal railing crosses the canal in the middle ground. In the background, there are colorful buildings, including a prominent orange one, and a yellow bus. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water in the canal reflects the sky and the buildings.

MYTHOLOGICAL STUDIES JOURNAL

PACIFICA GRADUATE
INSTITUTE

VOLUME VI

FALL 2018

Introduction	1
Audacious Autobiographic Rehabilitation.....	2
Rewriting History Through Therapeutic Midrashic Mythmaking	
by Emily Ruch	
The Feminine Asleep and Awakening.....	15
Interpreting Sleeping Beauty	
by Maryam Sayyad	
Death and Dying	27
What the Modern World Can Learn from Tibet	
by Tanya Robertson	
Connecting to the Navel	37
Demeter and Persephone- The Endless Cycle of Rebirth and Redearth	
by Kiese M. Hill	
Meine Frau	52
The Left-Handed Archer of Hrad Houska	
by Randall Victoria Ulyate	
The Divine Spirit on Earth	72
Archetypal Resonance Between Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and the African Diaspora Tradition of Santeria	
by Hannah Irish	

Introduction

Welcome to the Mythological Studies Journal, Volume VI. This year's journal is an overview of the mythic experience of being here at Pacifica, a place of discussion, nature, and intellectual challenges of mythic proportion. Many thanks goes to our advisor, Patrick Mahaffey, and our peer review board. In addition, an extra special appreciation is due to the editorial team, Kiese M. Hill, Hannah Irish, and Deborah Maroulis. This publication would not have been possible without their teamwork, patience, and dedication. We hope you enjoy embarking on this mythic journey with us.

Randall Victoria Ulyate
Managing Editor

Audacious Autobiographic Rehabilitation

Rewriting History Through Therapeutic Midrashic Mythmaking

by Emily Ruch

The intersection between history and memory is tenebrous and intricate. In the west we tend to regard history as factual, objective, literal truth, as though it were somehow unbiased, invulnerable to subjectivity—all that memory is not. History is often treated as sacrosanct in the west (where Science is the religion of the “rational” among us) as a result, in part, of its supposed objective facticity. In part, however, history may be sanctified in the west because western culture is predominantly Judeo-Christian in origin, and “[the] biblical myth,” as Christine Downing observes, “is a myth about a god who speaks in the unique events of history” (“Subliminal Presence” 254). Like scripture, what has been “written”—whether it be the factual events of cultural or personal history—is usually “read” as the fixed and final word, as *the* (unchanging and *unchangeable*) story. Yet the Jewish tradition of midrash, the creative exegesis of scripture, teaches that there is no single story, no one true interpretation; thus the midrashic saying that “the Torah has seventy faces” (Rotenberg 4). Using midrash as a method, individuals might learn to approach their personal histories creatively, liberating themselves from merely reading the facts of their lives and claiming the audacious authority to write their own stories—to rewrite history as it were. Drawing on Mordechai Rotenberg’s *Rewriting the Self: Psychotherapy and Midrash*, I will call such rewriting—which he calls “biographic rehabilitation” or, more often, “re-biographing” (18)

—autobiographic rehabilitation to emphasize that rewriting one's history through personal, therapeutic midrashic mythmaking is an essentially autonomous act.

Exegetical rabbinic myth and mythmaking, known as midrash, emerged during the Talmudic era—first to sixth centuries CE—“when the oral law became the normative vehicle for regulating the entire spiritual and terrestrial activities of Jews, [and] a continuous need emerged to apply the Torah (the written law) to all conditions of life with its changing circumstances” (Rotenberg 5; Fishbane 95). The Hebrew word *midrash* functions as a verb (the act of interpretation), a noun (the interpretation itself), and an institution (the house or school, *Beit Hamidrash*, where interpreting is done); it derives from the word *darash*, meaning “searched” or “interpreted” (Rotenberg 5). Its plural form, *midrashim*, refers to the corpus of interpretations as a whole, to various subgroups of interpretations—i.e. halachic midrashim, homiletic midrashim, early midrashim, late midrashim—and simply to interpretations, plural (Rotenberg 5). “[W]hile the compilation of Midrashim that were believed to be a part of the transmitted oral law continued until the eighteenth century,” observes Rotenberg, and “the custom of delivering public Midrashic sermons never ceased,” there is much dispute concerning the “normatively binding significance” of these later midrashim (5).

Most significant, perhaps (at least as far as this paper is concerned), is that midrashic mythmaking remains a living tradition. Beyond the rabbinical realm, there are important forms of midrash in the humanities, such as Thomas Mann's novel, *Joseph and His Brothers*, and Anita Diamant's interpretive elaboration of the life of Dinah in her novel, *The Red Tent*.

Certain elements of Darren Aronofsky's recent film, *Noah*, can also be interpreted as midrash—central among these being Aronofsky's interpretive elaboration of the character of Noah himself. Aronofsky says of his earliest memory of the Noah story, "I thought about, What if I was not one of the good ones to get on the boat? And I recognized that there's wickedness in all of us" (Falsani). For a young Aronofsky it was a terrifying realization, and throughout the film he focuses on the ambivalence implied by original sin—there may be wickedness in all of us, but there is goodness as well (Falsani). What does this mean psychologically for a Noah chosen to save his own family but to watch the rest of humankind perish in the flood? Aronofsky interprets the post-diluvian Noah's drunkenness as an expression of survivor's guilt that provides important insight into Noah's story, which Aronofsky then uses to complicate the character of the biblical Noah (Falsani).

Critics of the film, including Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders, argue that Aronofsky "strayed from the Bible story and took liberties with the narrative" (Falsani)—which is true. Aronofsky's retelling is in many ways an audacious departure from the Noah story found in scripture. His intention, however, was not merely to distort for effect, but to emphasize the essence of the story through distortion (Falsani). That sounds a lot like midrash. Rotenberg might call Aronofsky's interpretive audacity "*chutzpah* power," and he cites the famous Talmudic midrash "about the Aknai Oven" to show that we have God's "permission [. . .] to use *Chutzpah* in interpreting His divine law" (7). *Chutzpah* (shameless audacity or impudence) serves an important function in midrash—Rotenberg even goes so

far as to say that according to the Aknai Oven midrash, our use of interpretive *chutzpah* is God's "wish" (7).

Psychoanalyst Ann Eisenstein and her analysand, Kathryn Rebillot, demonstrate *chutzpah* similar to Aronofsky's in their essay, "Midrash and Mutuality in the Treatment of Trauma: a Joint Account." Written together in two voices as dialogue between analyst and analysand about their ten year analysis, their essay describes a psychoanalytic treatment that emerged organically for them in the form of fantasizing—Rebillot spontaneously began to imagine Eisenstein into the memories of her childhood trauma. She writes: "At about that time [when Rebillot had an "intense wish" for Eisenstein to visit her childhood home], I had a fantasy/dream in which Ann was actually there. Not in the present, with me as an adult showing her around the house as I had wished, but in the past, at the scene of the crime" (Eisenstein and Rebillot 310). Eisenstein responds: "Kathy's image sounded like a memory she had just recovered! This is probably the moment when we first embarked on our project of creating midrash" (310-311). Many fantasies followed this one, some (like the first) based on actual memories, and others the invention of entirely new "memories." Like Aronofsky, Rebillot and Eisenstein claimed the audacious authority to rewrite the story, psychologically writing Eisenstein into Rebillot's history. "My therapy, *the coconstructed version of events*," writes Rebillot, "[was] a sanctuary for me, a place where things made sense, where I was never alone. And I know it was the work, the creation of that sanctuary together, that gave the experience its power" (315; my emphasis).

The success of Eisenstein's and Rebillot's treatment might not have been possible if they had a different philosophy of history. As Rotenberg argues, "*ideas about the course of history (not actual history) 'show themselves' by '[shaping] behavior,' and his 'phenomenological perspective assumes that philosophies of history do not merely reflect but also affect collective and individual conduct'*" (73, 78; original emphasis). If we believe history is composed of a linear progression of objective facts, that is, if we believe in the objective facticity of a singularly true linear history, then rewriting history as Eisenstein and Rebillot did can only be an untruth, a lie. Thus one historian challenged Rotenberg about his re-biographing: "So, according to your prescribed psychotherapy, you actually encourage people to lie about their past?" (qtd. in Rotenberg ix). Critics of historical objectivity argue that while the historian works with objective "facts"—historical artifacts—subjectivity always enters the process in the historian's selection of artifacts and in her *interpretation* of them (Rotenberg 61). What we think of as History is simply a narrative that a historian has constructed around a certain selection of facts—a *constructed version of events*. Claude Levi-Strauss thus writes:

When one proposes to write a history of the French Revolution one knows (or ought to know) that it cannot, simultaneously [. . .], be that of Jacobin and that of the aristocrat. [. . .] One must therefore choose between two alternatives [. . .] or alternatively one must recognize them as equally real: but only to discover that the French Revolution as commonly conceived never took place. (qtd. in Rotenberg 62)

The literal-objectivistic philosophy of history contributes to continued suffering from past trauma by “freezing” the narrative (Shay 86-88; Shulman 298-299). The frozen narrative becomes the one “true” version of events. Effectively, “history makes us,” rather than the other way around (Rotenberg 78).

According to Rotenberg, *memory* and not *history* is commanded of Israel. There is, he writes, “a consistent biblical appeal to remember the past” (85). The biblical myth is a *myth* about history, as noted in Downing above, not *history* per se. Downing agrees with Gerhard von Rad who “understands the O.T. history as *remembered* history, *interpreted* by faith” (“How Can We Hope” 40; my emphasis). She continues: “He believes that the O.T. history is really created by the *historical imagination* that uses certain images in order to create meaningful pattern out of otherwise meaningless succession” (40; my emphasis). Historical imagination, in Rebillot’s words, “constructs” a meaningful “version of events” in which “things [make] sense” (Eisenstein and Rebillot 315). This is what the psychoanalyst Donald P. Spence means by “narrative truth,” as discussed in his book, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis*. When the historical imagination creates a “well-constructed story,” the story can “[acquire] narrative truth,” writes Spence, and then “it becomes just as real as any other kind of truth; this new reality becomes a significant part of the psychoanalytic cure” (21, 31). If the Tanakh is a well-constructed story created by the historical imagination, how is it ultimately different from a well-constructed *life* story created by the historical imagination of an individual? The

resemblance between scripture and life story as *remembered* histories is emphasized by Jack Miles's interpretation of the Jewish Bible as a "biography," a *life story*, of God.

The word "history" implies not only what has come before, but what has been *written*, hence the word "prehistoric" means "of, relating to, dating from, or designating the time *before written historical records*" ("prehistoric"; my emphasis). What has been written suggests a relatively unchanging version of events as opposed, for instance, to what has been passed down through oral tradition. Oral traditions require memory, and memories change.¹ While it is not absolutely unchanging, history is by nature resistant to change. Considered in this light, the biblical refrain to "*remember the days of old*" encourages an ever-changing relationship with the past—the dynamic relationship of memory, not the static relationship of history (*Contemporary Torah*, Deut. 32.7; my emphasis). In *Healing Fiction*, James Hillman writes: "*Memoria* [memory] was the old term for both" remembering *and* imagining (41; original emphasis). Remembering is thus an act of *imaginative* interpretation. *Remembered* history changes (i.e. the *story* that we remember changes) as we continually re-interpret the "days of old" from new perspectives. In this respect the midrashic corpus represents Jewish memory changing over time, represents an ever-changing and imaginative relationship with the "historical" past. The events written in the Tanakh do not change, the text remains the same, but midrash as

¹ It is worth mentioning here that according to Jewish tradition, the written Torah and the Oral Torah (composed of the Midrash and the Talmud) are equally sacred—for example, in the eighth century CE, the Karaite sect was "excommunicated by the Jewish majority" because it rejected the Oral Torah—and "it was *strictly forbidden* to put the Oral Torah into writing" (Rotenberg 9, 14; my emphasis).

memoria allows our understanding of those events to change. The events are colored by memory, we might say. In this way, midrashic mythmaking allows the narrative construction of the Tanakh—allows the Jewish version of events—to evolve as necessary in order to continue meeting the changing needs of the Jewish people. Midrash can serve the same function in the lives and life stories of individuals.

But I must be careful not to write history out of the story, so to speak. The text of the Tanakh is believed to be “written by God” (Eisenstein and Rebillot 316)—sacred. And the events written in the Tanakh do not change, the text remains the same. Hence, there is something sacred about the unchangingness of the story, too. Something sacred about history’s resistance to change. Eisenstein writes that “[as] a therapist, this conviction that the original text is ‘sacred’ resonates with me: The story of [a patient’s *history*] has to be approached with [. . .] reverence” (316; my emphasis). Hillman argues that what he calls “historicizing” is a necessary and spontaneous behavior of the psyche: “If the image doesn’t come as history, we might not take it for real”—yet, “no matter how ‘outer’ its style,” history “is also a mode of imagining” (26, 40-46). In the context of life stories (including for us the Tanakh), Hillman believes that the “historical reality” of events (whether fact or fiction) ultimately signifies psychological “significance” (41). Put another way, “history” has a gravitas that “memory” alone does not, and this perhaps is the reason that certain details in the course of a person’s life are remembered as “history” whether they happened or not. “Freud’s crucial discovery,” Hillman writes, “that the stories he was being told were *psychological happenings dressed as history and experienced as remembered*

events was the first recognition in modern psychology of psychic reality independent of other realities" (40; my emphasis). Returning to Spence, such "psychological happenings dressed as history" have acquired narrative truth and in essence become real.

Just as midrash does not attempt to change the scripture itself, personal midrashic mythmaking must respect the historical events of an individual's life by "attributing *new existential meaning* to previously distressing phenomena" rather than attempting to write trauma out of the story altogether (Rotenberg 145; my emphasis). Jonathan Shay, psychologist for the Department of Veterans Affairs, writes in his book, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*:

Soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen [. . .] abhor being *forgotten*. [. . .] The families of combat veterans, and sometimes even their therapists, demand in frustration, "Why can't you put it behind you? *Why can't you just forget it?*" [. . .] Bewildered families, hurt and feeling cheated by the amount of energy their veterans pour into dead comrades, apparently do not realize that to forget the dead dishonors the living veteran. In asking the veteran to forget, the family asks him to dishonor himself.² (80; original emphasis)

Attempting to write trauma out of the story is the same as asking the veteran to forget—she loses herself in the process. "I need to *remember* my stories," Hillman writes, "not because I need to find out about myself but because I need to found myself in a story I can hold to be '*mine*'" (42; my emphasis). There is a necessary tension between memory and history that is expressed through the relationship between midrash and scripture. As an historical

² Hillman similarly associates "history" with "dignity" (45).

mode of imagining (or *historical imagination* as Downing and von Rad describe it), the Jewish Bible commands us to remember—to *memoria*-lize—the past, and when we *memoria*-lize our histories through the method of midrashic mythmaking, we gain the resilience to survive our “historical realities.”

“The memory dictum is by nature selective and by purpose pragmatic,” writes Rotenberg, “so that the *how* and the *why* of what occurred rather than the *what* itself will serve as impetus and guideline for future actions” (85; original emphasis). Shay observes that Homer’s Sirens are deadly because they represent purely objective history—a literal-objectivistic philosophy of history: they speak only of “knowing” and never of “remembering” (Shay 92; Charles Segal qtd. in Shay, 92). The “absolute truth” (or as Spence would say, the “historical truth”) of the Siren’s song “was utterly detached from any community that remembers and retells it”—utterly detached from community, narrative truth, and *memoria* (Shay 91). The Siren’s song is deadly because it is dead to interpretation and because it deadens the imagination. As purely objective history, what Shay calls “complete and final truth,” the Sirens can be understood as history without the imaginative interpretation of memory, the “scripture” of biography unmediated by midrash. “Complete and final truth is an unachievable, toxic quest, which is different from the quest to create *meaning* from one’s experience in a *coherent narrative*. Veterans can and do achieve the latter” (Shay 87; my emphasis). They have claimed the audacious authority, the *chutzpah*, to defy the holy writ of history-as-scripture in order to create meaningful and coherent narratives from their own experiences.

In *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, Michael Fishbane writes that “Mythopoesis is [. . .] part of the meaning of Scripture” (109). I.e. scripture *is* so that midrash can take place. History *is* so that *memoria*-lizing can happen. So that, with *chutzpah*, we can use imaginative interpretation—midrashic mythmaking—to “revitalize” (Fishbane 20) our life stories and rehabilitate our autobiographies. Judaism therefore seems to have a remarkable understanding of the necessity for imagination in the psyche’s ability to survive its “historical realities.” The tension between history and memory—between scripture and midrash—is preserved by honoring history as we honor scripture (by interpreting it creatively) and, in turn, honoring memory as we honor midrash (by recognizing its sacred/therapeutic function). The process of actively engaging or “grappling with” (Eisenstein and Rebillot 316) our historical realities through midrashic mythmaking has just as much meaning and legitimacy as our histories themselves in determining who we are. Therefore, “teaching one to retell or recount ‘his-story’” through the creative use of midrash “is not a distortion of this individual’s ‘history’” writes Rotenberg (65). “Rather, it can be viewed as a legitimate historical rehabilitation method” (65). As the Talmud says, “these and those are God’s living words” (Rotenberg 6)—there is no one “true” story. We perpetuate our suffering when we forget that we have the authority—as long as we have the *chutzpah*—to rewrite history.

Works Cited

The Contemporary Torah: A Gender-Sensitive Adaptation of the JPS Translation. David

E. S. Stein, rev. ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006.

Downing, Christine. "How Can We Hope and Not Dream? Exodus as Metaphor."

Preludes: Essays on the Ludic Imagination, 1961-1981. New York: iUniverse, 2005.

--. "The Subliminal Presence of the Goddess in Hebrew Tradition." *Preludes: Essays on the Ludic Imagination, 1961-1981*. New York: iUniverse, 2005.

Eisenstein, Ann, and Kathryn Rebillot. "Midrash and Mutuality in the Treatment of Trauma: a Joint Account." *Psychoanalytic Review* 89.3 (2002): 303-317.

Falsani, Cathleen. "The 'Terror' of Noah: How Darren Aronofsky Interprets the Bible."

The Atlantic. 26 Mar. 2014. 11 Mar. 2015 <<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/03/the-terror-of-em-noah-em-how-darren-aronofsky-interprets-the-bible/359587/>>

Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*. Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 2011.

Hillman, James. *Healing Fiction*. Putnam: Spring, 2009.

"Prehistoric." *Oxford English Dictionary*. 14 Mar. 2015 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/150120?redirectedFrom=prehistoric#eid>>

Rotenberg, Mordechai. *Rewriting the Self: Psychotherapy and Midrash*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004. Rpt. of *Re-biographing and Deviance: Psychotherapeutic*

Narrativism and the Midrash. New York: Praeger, 1987.

Shay, Jonathan. *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. New York: Scribner, 2002.

Shulman, Dennis G. "Pushing the Psychoanalytic Envelope: An Introduction to Eisenstein's and Rebillot's 'Midrash and Mutuality in the Treatment of Trauma: a Joint Account'." *Psychoanalytic Review* 89.3 (2002): 293-301. 11 Mar. 2015

Spence, Donald P. *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1982.

Works Referenced

Diamant, Anita. *The Red Tent*. New York: Picador, 1997.

Mann, Thomas. *Joseph and His Brothers*. Trans. John. E. Woods. New York: Everyman's Library, 2005.

Miles, Jack. *God: A Biography*. New York: Vintage, 1996.

Noah. Screenplay by Darren Aronofsky and Ari Handel. Dir. Darren Aronofsky. Perf.

Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly, Anthony Hopkins, Emma Watson, Logan

Lerman. Paramount, 2014.

The Feminine Asleep and Awakening

Interpreting Sleeping Beauty

by Maryam Sayyad

In comparing Bruno Bettelheim and Marie-Louise von Franz's approaches to the interpretation of *Sleeping Beauty*, a dialogue emerges that is at once a debate between two psychologists and one between a man and a woman. And through their particular dialogue, another universal one is articulated: the timeless and ongoing discourse between the masculine and feminine principles, both of which are desirous of definition at this time, particularly since, everywhere, we apprehend ideas about the feminine awakening, the feminine expressing and the feminine seeking vindication. Bettelheim reads *Sleeping Beauty* as though the feminine has not yet awakened and still can be addressed as though she is not in the room, while Von Franz both explains her sleep and encourages the awakening of the feminine principle.

Bettelheim's hermeneutical key to fairy tales is psychological. Fundamentally interested in child psychology, he reads *Sleeping Beauty* as the story of puberty and its inherent problem of sexual awakening. Beauty's sleep, says Bettelheim, is the "long period of sleep at the start of puberty" (225) symbolic of the narcissistic period of adolescence in which the child becomes self-involved and turns away from others. Since adolescence is a period of transition and fraught with confusion, "narcissistic withdrawal is a tempting reaction" (234) while, simultaneously, parents attempt to postpone the child's sexual

awakening. Thus the prolonged period of Beauty's sleep also symbolizes her parents' attempt to forestall the inevitable arrival of sexual fulfillment.

Bettelheim works primarily with the Brothers Grimm version of the story titled "Briar Rose." He interprets the thirteen wise women as corresponding to the thirteen-phase lunar calendar which in turn corresponds to the menstrual cycle and therefore the "curse" of the thirteenth fairy is the biblical "curse" of menstruation. The spinning wheel belongs to "woman's occupation," the prick of its needle draws blood and blood is the last thing Rose sees before going under. He says the child's unconscious associates these images with menstruation and since the princess is overcome by its arrival and falls asleep, the rest of the story indicates the dormant period between nascent sexual desire and its fulfillment. During this period, the princess is "protected against all suitors—i.e., premature sexual encounters—by an impenetrable wall of thorns" (233). The child is at the threshold of something completely new, unknown and therefore a problem as impenetrable as the briar patch. The tale's message to the confused adolescent is not to worry or hurry, that "when the time is ripe, the impossible problem will be solved as if all by itself" (233). The impenetrable wall opens effortlessly implying natural readiness for sex, love and marriage. The kiss awakens the adolescent to the other and therefore to the outer world, drawing her out of her narcissistic withdrawal and the child reader is impressed by how traumatic events such as menstruation and sexual encounter have a "happy ending" (225).

Bettelheim's argument begins convincingly and is harmless if perhaps a touch conservative—realistically sexual awakening need not conclude in the happy ending of love

and marriage. But he soon turns a corner into a zone that is no longer convincing and decidedly not harmless. He expands his interpretation of the Grimms' version to include an earlier version of the story, Basile's "Sun, Moon and Talia." In this story, the princess is not awakened by her lover but by a baby which is conceived and born as she sleeps so the self-proclaimed lover does considerably more than kiss the princess. Also his "kiss" does not awaken her. Talia sleeps through intercourse and childbirth only to be awakened when the baby sucks a magic splinter from her finger.

Bettelheim insists on reading Basile's story with the same eye for happy ending that he reads the Grimms'. The princess is violated, becomes pregnant, gives birth and through another sequence of events marries the king who had violated her and becomes queen of his kingdom. So the baby becomes her means to sovereignty or, according to Bettelheim, her means to achieving "complete selfhood". He writes, "complete selfhood comes only with having given life, and with nurturing the life that one has brought into being" (235). Then he adds his prescription for "perfect femininity" (237) saying, "these stories enumerate experiences which pertain only to the female; she must undergo them all before she reaches the summit of femininity" (236). His interpretation has cracks and through them seeps the ooze of a worldview that is now thousands of years old. What is objectionable is not Bettelheim's assertion that "the world awakens anew as a child is nurtured into it" (236). But one may feel reluctant to call the childbirth a happy ending of rape. It is unlikely that Bettelheim is actually in favor of raping sleeping maidens yet ultimately there is little difference between his happy ending conclusion of 1977 and Basile's conclusion six

hundred years earlier which reads, "Lucky people, so 'tis said, are blessed by Fortune whilst in bed" (228).

Because the story ends on the note of marriage, family, and sovereignty, Basile and Bettelheim apparently feel that the means are redeemed by this happy end. Furthermore, according to Bettelheim, happiness must always be paired with moral righteousness. He writes, "the happy ending requires that the evil principle be appropriately punished and done away with: only then can good, and with it happiness, prevail" (230). The king's crime thereby occasions not only happiness but goodness as long as the evil principle is destroyed. In "Sun, Moon and Talia," the evil principle is surprisingly not the king who violates the princess but the king's murderously jealous wife who objects to his infidelity. Basile is a literary man of his day whereas the Grimms' "Briar Rose" was told by a peasant who also happens to have been a woman. In her telling, the antagonist is one of the kingdom's wise-women. But because she curses the princess, Bettelheim dubs her "the evil fairy" (230) and decides that since this evil fairy goes unpunished, the Grimms' story is thereby "deficient" (230). Presumably he would maintain that Walt Disney corrects the 'deficiency' by vanquishing his Malificent.

When Marie Louise von Franz reads *Sleeping Beauty* from her psycho-mythological perspective, she too sees a fundamental deficiency but not in the same way that Bettelheim does. To her what is deficient is the very point of view represented by Bettelheim, a point of view that has neglected if not punished the feminine principle for thousands of years. In her book titled *The Feminine in Fairy Tales*, she explains that Christian Europe—in which the

tale originates—associates women with the evil of Eve and the divine feminine with the singularly benign figure of the Virgin Mary. Meanwhile a multitude of feminine aspects remain undifferentiated, unexpressed, and unexplored in the collective consciousness while western women feel ashamed of their natural behavior. Her Jungian premise is that fairy tales arise directly from the collective unconscious. They give expression to unconscious content and therefore compensate for all that goes unseen by collective consciousness. Accordingly, the fairy tales of the Christian west fill a void left by the collective consciousness and give greater “expression to the neglected feminine principle” (*The Feminine* 9).

Once upon a time, a multitude of pagan goddesses represented the many faces of the feminine and included her darker aspects or what we would consider dark, hateful, and shameful in femininity. Aphrodite is promiscuous, Hera jealous, and Demeter vengeful—to name a few from the Greek pantheon. The tale of *Sleeping Beauty* evokes these three feminine godheads and more. The figure of a sleeping princess echoes the archaic motif of the maiden who disappears into the underworld to reappear in spring as does the goddess Persephone. Mythologist Carl Kerényi notes that whenever a girl figure of the Persephone type shows up in a story, she is typically linked with a mother figure. So even though Persephone is the one abducted by Hades, the story belongs equally to her mother Demeter who grieves so deeply at the loss of her daughter that she gives up her divine radiance and transforms into an aged crone. She comes to embody not only loss and sorrow but revenge as well when she learns how her brothers and even her own mother

Gaia conspired to abduct Persephone and did so without consulting her or taking her feelings into consideration. Von Franz writes, "Demeter stands for fertility...but when she has lost her daughter, she becomes the goddess of revenge and sorrow" (24).

The tale of "Briar Rose" likewise links fertility with revenge. The king and queen are caught in a sterile condition which prevents them from having a child until a frog— itself a traditional symbol of the primal feminine—appears to the queen and announces fertility. The queen, in other words, becomes pregnant. She then gives birth to a baby girl who is "blessed by a certain number of mother figures and cursed by one of them" (24). So with fertility comes a wounding, a wounded woman, revenge and the abduction of the girl into the underworld of sleep. The wounded fairy becomes the goddess of sorrow and revenge because she—like Demeter— is left out of consideration. In her grief and anger, she transforms into a crone on the girl's fifteenth birthday and sets off the curse. Von Franz says that goddesses "personify elemental emotional feminine reactions" (25). In their elemental state, jealousy and rage are infinite, primitive, chaotic, and unreflecting—as are the opposite reactions of mercy and charity. Emotions are not necessarily good or just but they are true and natural. Human beings are not given the authority to overrule such natural truths by consensus or as Von Franz writes, "you cannot just decide by sitting at a round table how a god has to be ruled" (33).

She primarily uses the Grimms' version of the story to make her case. The king does not deliberately leave the thirteenth wise woman out of the feast for any personal reason, meaning she had done no former harm for which she was now denied participation. The

excluding factor is that the palace only has twelve dishes and the king does not consider what affect exclusion may have on the feelings of the uninvited thirteenth fairy. It can be said that the king lacks the capacity to include the entirety of the feminine principle in his feast. Ultimately, *his* neglectful *action* is as unreflective as her *reaction* and another typical narrative motif. The neglect of the fairy is akin to the “motif of the forgotten god or goddess” in mythology (28). Psychologically, gods represent universal unconscious contents so when a god or goddess is neglected, some specific psychological content or natural behavior is ignored, and the unconsidered natural content then erupts in what appears as revenge. The meaning of “curse” becomes clarified in this context. Von Franz writes, “one has to find out what has been ignored and is now ‘cursing’ the whole personality” (30).

In *Sleeping Beauty*, the ignored one is a goddess and therefore an aspect of feminine nature which is now wounded and seeks revenge. Since the story is not personal but collective, it speaks to and about an entire civilization, namely the Christian civilization. Von Franz asks, “what in feminine nature is ignored in the Christian era?” (32). She answers unequivocally that the aspect of feminine nature *most* ignored in the Christian era is sexuality. This repression, she says, afflicts women more than men because women in general “need to be more natural and less one-sided in their development” (33). They cannot tolerate harming their nature as much as men can and therefore are more sensitive to sexual repression than men. In women, nature cries out— it takes revenge. Von Franz coins the term “the revengefulness of nature” to characterize the goddess of revenge as a

personification of "natural consequence" (39). Nature's revenge or punishment is not the kind wrought by humans for nature is not judgmental. If one drives a car off a cliff, it will certainly crash to the ground. Nature will exact a price for a confrontation with gravity. This equalizing response of nature often appears as "the dark aspect of the feminine nature goddess" (39) who is utterly impersonal yet is experienced on the personal level as cruel and vengeful. Nature in this light is immoral and in a worldview where the Godhead is moral and benevolent, nature becomes an abomination.

The girl herself is another aspect of femininity. Her death at the age of fifteen would mean that she is allowed to develop "as far as the juvenile plane" (43) and no further. A civilization that ignores sexuality as a biological need does not allow the feminine to reach adulthood and participate in the world as nature intends. Sexuality is relegated to the realm of play and fantasy, fodder for romantic poetry, for carnivals and entertainment but is repressed again, or neglected, when it is time for more "serious things" like order and family. Her sleep drives the repressed contents underground for a hundred years after which they will reemerge. Kerenyi says that reemergence of content is part of the Demeter motif. He writes, "to enter into the figure of Demeter means to be pursued, to be robbed, raped, to fail to understand, to rage and grieve, but then to get everything back and be born again" (qtd. in Jung 123).

When it comes to the return or awakening of the princess, Von Franz writes, "the solution to the story is strange" (*The Feminine* 55). Like Bettelheim, she maintains that the attitude of patience and waiting are what the problem requires and nothing more. Neither

thinker fully delves into the meaning of the masculine prince figure although masculinity and femininity are never accidental in fairy tales. Von Franz herself elaborates on the motifs of masculine and feminine in fairy tale kings and queens in another work titled *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. She explains that every civilization has a dominant worldview and the king in fairy tales represents the worldview, logos, or truth of a civilization. The queen represents the dominant feeling tone that accompanies this worldview. She is its “emotions, feelings” and what Von Franz calls the “Eros style” in a society (54). The queen is therefore the way a society loves, but it can be said that she is also *what* a society loves. In other words, she is a civilization’s standard of beauty. The queen is often described as a great beauty and the princess *always* is. Together, king and queen can be seen as the truth and beauty of a civilization.

The prince is not yet king; as prince, he is a courageous hero and savior. This motif of a male savior who rescues an unconscious girl also appears in the tale of “Cupid and Psyche” told by Apuleius in the second century. In this story, Venus assigns Psyche with the task of fetching a casket of beauty from the underworld and warns her not to look in the box, but Psyche cannot resist. She looks in the box and, as a result, falls into a deep sleep. Cupid flies to her side and awakens her with a prick from his arrow. One thing leads to another and Psyche herself is promoted to divinity. Like the princess in *Sleeping Beauty* then, Psyche must slip into unconsciousness before her lover can come to her aid and escort her to her high destiny. In his interpretation of the tale, Jungian scholar and psychologist Erich Neumann asks why Psyche fails at this task and answers, “because she is

a feminine psyche" (Neumann 121). Her failure "gives [Cupid] the possibility of encountering her again on a new plane, as savior and hero" (124). Like Bettelheim, Neumann appears to celebrate the chauvinistic meaning he has stumbled into as one that is happy, good, and prescriptive. The feminine psyche *must* be helpless and in need of salvation. Striking a note similar to Bettelheim's twenty years later, Neumann perceives that "the perfection of femininity" is in Psyche's "abandoning herself out of love" (126).

Von Franz agrees that in the story, Psyche must weaken in order to win the affection of her male suitor, but she additionally tracks another line of interpretation. She focuses on the narcotic effect of beauty and is a train of thought well-suited to our story which is—after all—a tale about beauty and sleep. That Psyche risks all to attain a bit of divine beauty discloses her addiction to beauty. Our civilization is likewise addicted. We believe "that beauty is divine and that it goes with goodness, whereas evil and ugliness belong together" (*Golden Ass* 130). Consequently, beauty is to be worshipped and ugliness punished.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, when Rose was born, the king became so enthralled by her beauty, we are told, that he "almost lost his senses" (*Feminine* 12). Thrall to beauty then presages his wounding of the thirteenth fairy and indirectly causes his daughter's descent into sleep. The narcotic power of beauty lies in the fact that its worship leads to rejection of the ugly, just as the insistence upon the virginity of the divine feminine creates a disdain for feminine sexuality, and Mother Mary's absolute mercy leaves no room for her justice. The feminine, as a result, becomes lifeless. Rose slips into sleep with the unconsciousness of the girl-child and wakes up with the wisdom of a hundred-year-old woman, i.e. the wisdom of

the crone. She is young, beautiful, and harmless on the outside; ugly, reactive, and powerful on the inside. Bettelheim and Disney believe her ugliness and therefore her crone wisdom must be destroyed for a good and happy life. Here is where Von Franz contrasts definitively with their formula. She writes, "life in every respect is a pair of opposites. It is beautiful but also ugly, and both poles belong to reality" (*Golden Ass* 132).

Ultimately the Grimms' version told by a peasant woman does not punish feminine ugliness but allows the fairy to avenge herself which then simultaneously gives the masculine time to develop in courage. The realm of the prince develops for a hundred years while the princess sleeps and during this time, one prince after another rides toward the castle and is killed. By the time the last prince rides, bodies have piled up. He is the most developed in courage for he rides where ninety-nine have failed and the princess has turned crone on the inside. This prince will be king one day and the reigning truth of an era. In him, truth evolves to allow more of the feminine—both in her beauty and in in her ugliness and therefore is a truth more in line with nature. In the interpretive act, while Dr. Bettelheim prescribes more punishment, Dr. Von Franz reminds us that we have neglected and punished the wounded fairy inside us all.

Works Cited

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass or Metamorphoses*. Trans. E.J. Kenney. Penguin Books. London, England. 1998. Print.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York, New York. Random House, Inc. 1977. Print.

Jung, Carl G. and Carl Kerényi. *Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis*. Trans. by R.F.C Hull. "Kore" by C. Kerényi. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press. 1969. Print.

Neumann, Erich. *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine: A Commentary on the Tale by Apuleius*. Princeton University Press: New York, New York. 1956. Print.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *The Golden Ass of Apuleius: The Liberation of the Feminine in Man*. Revised Ed. Boston, Massachusetts. Shambhala Publications. 1992. Print

—*The Feminine in Fairy Tales*. Revised Ed. Boulder, Colorado. Shambhala Publications. 1993. Print.

—*The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Revised Ed. Boulder, Colorado. Shambhala Publications 1996. Print

Death and Dying

What the Modern World Can Learn from Tibet

by Tanya Robertson

I grew up with death and the impermanence of life. Spending summers on my grandparent's farm in Germany, I was as in tune with the natural rhythm of life and death as I was with the sun rising and setting each day. Animals were born to be slaughtered, seeds grew into vegetables to be harvested and, in the tiny town of my youth, the flowers on my ancestors' graves were watered daily during warm weather. My German ancestors know how to die, often saying odd goodbyes before dying in their sleep on an otherwise normal night. Something in my bones tells me this is the way my mother will die when she is ready. No fanfare, no hospitals—she will simply go to sleep and not wake up.

As comfortable as I am with death, I am surprised to realize that I know very little about dying. It is not a subject talked about often or in great detail. In my experience, the act, and the art, of dying seems to be explored on an as-needed basis without a lot of preparation or foreknowledge. Even my German family glosses over the act of dying, often referring to a dying person in the same tone as if a plant were dying. In some ways this reflects nonattachment to life, a basic Buddhist principle. However, my family's nonattachment is laced with avoidance and a desire to remain stoic and unemotional. Dying is something that happens to everyone, but we do not really want to talk about it unless we have to.

In comparison, Tibetan Buddhism addresses death and dying head on, regardless of the stage of life a person is in. Tibetan Buddhist belief incorporates the awareness of one's own death and the impermanence of life into everyday existence. For example, it is believed that by meditating on death daily, a person lives a happier more fulfilled life. Tibetan literature offers a wealth of diverse material related to death and dying, ranging from daily meditations on death, to recognizing the signs and stages of death, to what happens after a person dies. Books, sermons and poetry are written as instruction manuals and inspirational tools to assist in not only the process of living, but the act of dying as well. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is perhaps the most well-known piece of Tibetan Buddhist literature. Written in the eighth century by the Buddhist scholar, Padmasambhava, the book is intended to be read aloud to the dying and recently deceased. However, it doubles as an instruction manual for the living as well, teaching the impermanence of life and inseparability of death. Living, dying and death are intertwined and interdependent in Tibetan Buddhism.

The idea of reincarnation supports the Tibetan Buddhist cycle of birth, life, dying and death. If there are many lives to be lived, then this life is inherently impermanent. Death is not a final act, but rather a necessary step towards the next life. Life and death are not separate, rather, death is viewed as a continuation of the cycle of life. The life-death-rebirth cycle is a continuous flow of energy, like a stream of water, which ends when enlightenment, or liberation, is achieved. Each lifetime, or incarnation, provides a person one more opportunity to overcome ignorance and unconsciousness and move toward liberation.

There is no original sin or punishment in Tibetan Buddhism as there is in Christianity. Sin and suffering are caused by “the belief of self or ego as the center of existence. This belief is not caused by innate evil, but by unconsciousness, or ignorance of the true nature of existence” (Fremantle and Trungpa, xviii). Thus, it is the mind’s attachment to self or ego which leads to suffering.

In contrast, my father believed that this current existence was his one and only chance to redeem himself from the original sin he was born in to. My father, a staunch Southern Baptist, feared death not because of death itself, but because of the sentencing he would receive upon his death. He believed in a final judgement day. He believed he was a sinner and would be reckoned guilty when the day came. Having nearly died of polio in his late twenties, he also knew that death was inevitable. He could speak of his own death as a final act, yet he feared the actual process of dying.

Had my father been aware of Tibetan Buddhist practices, he would have been meditating on death in order to prepare him for his experiences, both his near-death early in life and his actual impending death more than half a century later. These meditations are aimed at both surrendering at the time of death as well as fortifying oneself against early death, such as when my father contracted polio in his twenties. A Tibetan Buddhist would have been versed in literature explaining the signs and stages of dying and would have a guru or teacher reading to him and guiding him through the final stages of life and ushering him into death, or the bardo, which is the gap between lives. As a Westerner, my father had

none of that preparation. Fate intervened instead and an unlikely, unprepared guide appeared at his death: me.

The phone call that I was unprepared to take came from my mother shortly after 3:00 am— “come home, your father is dying”. I was at San Francisco International Airport several hours later catching a flight to Florida where my parents lived. I was lucky to be able to fly. According to the doctors, I was lucky to be alive. Only ten days earlier, I was the one dying of a mysterious respiratory virus I had contracted in Australia. I had been sick for over three months. My illness culminated in a fever that spiked to, and stubbornly remained at, 104 degrees Fahrenheit. I was in respiratory failure. (We later suspected I had contracted an early, undiagnosed case of H1N1, otherwise known as Swine Flu.)

During those final hours of my illness, I was in constant communication with an unseen cosmic presence I called god. My soul floated away from my body into the most beautiful, peaceful, loving presence imaginable. There was no fear, no pain, no suffering. Only overwhelming love and lightness of being. The introduction to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* speaks of a “completely encompassing peace, immovable, invincible peace...that has no age, no end, no beginning” (20). I entered a sense of luminosity which occurs upon entering the bardo state, or the gap between life and death, death and rebirth. In this state, a person “begins to perceive a beautiful idea of wideness and openness and blissfulness, which invites the notion of oneness with the universe” (Fremantle and Trungpa, 19). I felt as though I was melting into the universe and into divine oneness. It was transcendent.

As much as I wanted to remain in that state of luminosity, I was unable to. Time after time, the cosmic hand of the universal presence around me pulled me back into my searing, wretched body before I drifted too far away. I was angry. I wanted to die. Living, breathing and being in this body had become too painful. The presence I called god calmly told me it was not my time to die. He stationed other unseen beings I called angels around me to comfort me and make sure I did not go too far. I eventually began breathing on my own again. It was deemed a medical miracle.

Less than two weeks later, barely recovered myself, it was my father's time to die after a sudden onset of pneumonia. I walked into the ICU, took one look at him and knew exactly how he felt. Barely able to speak, each breath shot searing pain through his pneumonia-laden lungs. I took his hand and told him it would be okay. I told him that I knew how to handle this and we would do it together.

He was transferred into an in-hospital hospice unit where he quietly slipped into a morphine coma. I was still in a luminous state myself—only half present with my consciousness floating in and around unseen beings. I called in the presence I called god and asked for help. I called in the unseen being of light which I called angels. I asked them to take my father's hand and show him the way. He telepathically told me that he was not dead yet and to give him a moment. I laughed, relaxed and told him to take his time. I sat with him for a day and a half while my mother and sister fidgeted and floated in and out of the hospice room. I told them to take a break and leave, which they gladly did. They could not just sit there waiting for him to die. I could.

In Tibet, a dying person is read to daily by a monk or teacher. The process of death is explained in great detail to the dying person. Everything from the sights and sounds to feelings and varying stages and realms is explicitly outlined in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Even after a person dies, the consciousness of the individual continues to receive instruction for forty-nine days until the soul is reincarnated into another body.

Tibetan Buddhists believe that the state of mind a person is in at the time of death and shortly thereafter impacts the quality of their next life. Should a person enter the bardo, or state between death and rebirth, "in a negative state of mind we trigger...negative karma instincts and are led to a miserable rebirth" (Mullin 32). The opposite is believed to be true as well. Should a person die with a positive state of mind, then a positive rebirth is assured. In his *Advice on Dying*, the Dalai Lama suggests that the dying person not be upset by family and friends as this will cause "more attachment or [stir] up anger and hatred" (223-4). When sitting with a dying person, "do not bemoan their departure, grasp at them, or cry in their presence" (224). The living can assist the dying person by "helping them to depart meaningfully" (224) and helping to manifest a spiritual attitude by softly speaking into the dying person's ear.

I knew nothing of Tibetan Buddhism at the time of my father's passing. Unskilled and untrained, I simply followed my instinct and did my best. I sat with my father as he was dying and told him stories of our life together, told him that living is the difficult part, dying is easy. I told him about the angels and the awesome love and freedom from suffering that was waiting for him when he was ready. I told him he had done his best and there was

nothing left for him to do. I promised him that we would reunite in future incarnations, believing as the Tibetan Buddhists do, in rebirth.

During the night, I had a dream in which I could feel my spirit leave my body and travel semi-consciously through a dense, dark vapor. There were no mileposts, no signs pointing the way and yet I somehow knew exactly where I was going. An inner, innate instinct drove me steadily forward on this long, long journey. Suddenly, a white light shot past me like a shooting star with a vapor trail that died out in the darkness, and the roar of a thousand thunder claps reverberated through my soul. I stopped and turned to make the journey home. At the end of the dream, I slid through a long tube and landed heavily in my body. Sitting up in bed, fully conscious, I realized I had slept through my alarm. My mother heard me stirring and came into my room. My father was gone. She had just returned from the hospital. She tried to wake me, but I was sleeping so soundly that she checked my breath, fearing I had passed away in the night with my own respiratory issues. I then realized that I had been with my father, in spirit, at the time of his passing. He was the shooting star that burst past me in whatever nether-region we were traversing in my dream-like state. My near-death had opened in me a shamanic channel through which I could usher my father into his death.

In Tibetan Buddhism, it is believed that the eternal consciousness of the dead remains around the body for three days after death. During this time, the body is not disturbed. A monk or teacher continues reciting oral instructions to the soul of the dead regarding what it is experiencing, what attitude to take and what to expect next. Ironically,

in the state of Florida where my father passed away, the body cannot be cremated for three days, even if organs are donated and an autopsy performed. The reason my family was given is that it was a safeguard to ensure the dead individual was truly dead. However, after studying Tibetan Buddhist philosophy on death and dying, I am left wondering if the three-day waiting period is more than coincidence. Perhaps some aspect of the collective unconscious is aware that consciousness remains with the body after death? It is difficult to know for certain.

I had a dream approximately three days after my father's death. I believe it was the day he was cremated, although I cannot be certain anymore. In the dream I merged with my father. We were two separate consciousnesses in one spiritual container. We watched in horror as my father's naked body was pushed into the fiery crematorium on a cold metal plate. I was acutely aware of his trauma and panic over the incident and only slightly aware that his trauma was separate from my own consciousness. I awoke in a cold sweat, feeling ill and shaken. I immediately called in the universal beings I called god and the angels to help my father with the loss of his physical body. Now I realize my father could have been spared that trauma had I known the proper words to say, poems to recite, and rituals to enact. Even though neither one of us is Buddhist, I believe it would have helped him tremendously.

My father was fortunate, in spite of both his and my lack of knowledge and preparation. Through an inexplicable twist of fate, I was bestowed with the skills to be his guide at death. He was able to let go of his earthly attachments relatively quickly, in spite of his fears of hellfire, damnation and judgement day. I am not a shaman or a Tibetan

Buddhist. I cannot pretend to know what I was doing. Nor do I think I could repeat it. The experience, however, left me with an acute awareness of the need for modern day midwives to guide each of us into death and the afterlife. In reading the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and similar literature, I realize how ill-equipped most Westerners are in the face of death and dying.

Maybe six months before my father's passing, he and I quipped about striving for quality of life over quantity of years lived. As I write this essay, I have two elderly neighbors who have been in the quantity of years category, waiting to die for over half a decade: one drifted into the emptiness of Alzheimer's years ago and the other, at nearly 100 years old, is bed bound by age and dementia. Where are the shamans, the monks and the teachers equipped to guide these two souls into their next lives? Do we really need to spend years dying? I hope not. I may not dissolve into a lotus blossom, but I do plan to know when my time in this body is over and leave graciously. I, after all, am one of the fortunate ones who already seems to know the way to death and the afterlife. Unless there is a Tibetan monk in the vicinity, I must simply trust that the luminous path will reappear when my time to leave this earthly existence arrives. Of course, if I were truly a student of Tibetan Buddhism, I would not wait for death to seek luminosity. Rather, it would be a daily meditation during which I face my death to discover the joys of life.

Works Cited

Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dalai Lama XIV. *Advice on Dying and Living a Better Life*. Trans.

Jeffrey Hopkins. New York: Atria Books, 2002. Print.

Fremantle, Francesca, and Chögyan Trungpa. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Boston:

Shambala, 2003. Print.

Mullin, Glenn H. *Living in the Face of Death: The Tibetan Tradition*. Ithaca, New York: Snow

Lion Publications, 1998. Print.

Connecting to the Navel

Demeter and Persephone- The Endless Cycle of Rebirth and Redeath

by Kiese M. Hill

The Demeter and Persephone story may be one of the most compelling in the pantheon of Greek myths. It is one of those myths that we revisit over and over again looking for something just out of reach. But if the myth came from ritual, then doing another deep reading of the text will never be enough. We can parse words or retranslate a phrase in an attempt to come nearer to the myth, but if the myth is truly a linguistic encapsulation of a ritual, then it is to the ritual we must return. Unfortunately, we only have pieces of the rituals. So how do we re-engage a myth on its most basic level? Freud's sudden and very personal, "I am Oedipus" is the key. The ritual had to have come from somewhere. It had to have come from a deep, probably painful, human experience that had to be re-enacted to be healed, or at least to be understood and faced. One so fundamental to life that it had to be ritualized and eventually mythologized, preserving it for generations. So if the myth still haunts our minds, it must be that, though we have lost the ritual, we unknowingly still enact the myth as part of our authentic human experience.

To understand the myth, then, we must look for clues in our personal histories. Given that the main focus of the myth is the lost union between mother and child, we must search ourselves for our most sacred moment of union and our first most devastating moment of loss. Again, Freud would agree that that moment must be birth: union with, and separation

from, the mother. Fortunately, or unfortunately, then, to understand the myth we must open ourselves up to the most intimate introspection of our own lives. To truly engage the myth, we must go through the myth ourselves. There, perhaps, I can shed some light, because I am Demeter.

I am, of course, not the only Demeter; we all must have our own encounters with the myth ourselves or we would not carry the myth for so long in the depths of our collective psyche. It is this psyche we must trust, as Jung believed, "every mortal has an individual role to play in this evolution. For just as our collective human capacity for consciousness evolved out of the unconscious psyche, so it must in each person. Each of us must, in an individual lifetime, recapitulate the evolution of the human race, and each of us must be an individual container in which the evolution of consciousness is carried forward" (qtd. in Johnson 7). So, with a slightly tongue-in-cheek nod to Levi Strauss, the formula is simple. We have the myth. We have parts of the ritual. We must also have a human experience that the ritual and the myth are trying to heal or reenact. In other words, human experience = ritual + myth or $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$. Which, on many levels, gives us a triangle of feminine wisdom also appropriate for our myth. Whether, then, the myth or the ritual comes first, does not matter if they are equal sides of our formula. As Jung points out, both the ritual and the myth are "[a] process of transformation... becom[ing] visible indirectly to the conscious mind by stimulating the imaginative material at its disposal, clothing themselves in it like the dancers who clothe themselves in the skins of animals or the priests in the skin of their human victims" (qtd. in Von Hendy 120). These goddesses of the myth, finding and

losing each other, are the dressing we wear to acknowledge our own dance between joy and grief.

UNION

"Love set you going like a fat gold watch" (Plath lines 1-2).

There is only one time that Freud would agree that we have a perfect union: before we realize the mother is other. "If an infant could speak, he would no doubt pronounce the act of sucking at his mother's breast by far the most important in his life. He is not far wrong in this, for in this single act he is satisfying at once the two great vital needs" (Freud). I found out I was pregnant on March 27th, both my birthday and Easter of that year. Along with the real fear and suddenness of realizing that I was a mother, was a sense of union and belonging, of becoming a woman in a whole new way. My husband bought me my first decaffeinated coffee and *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. In many ways, those were the last things he could do for me. I was on my own. He was there for me as much as any man could be, but this, like the story of Demeter and her daughter, was a story about my child and me.

I told everyone, not that I was expecting, because it was too early and because I was too elated in our private moment; no, I told them that I was Ēostre, the goddess of spring. Suddenly, everything had a new meaning: every single bite of food I put in my mouth, every move I made, the way that I turned in my sleep, how hot the water was in the shower, how I drove, how close the steering wheel was to my body, how I breathed, how I exercised, how I rested. Everything was suddenly and completely about our relationship to each other. No

matter how much support another can give, the umbilical cord from mother to child is a private mental, physical, emotional connection, which cannot be broken or shared by anyone outside the blood bond. Even before the first flutterings, I felt our connection. Later, it was the way she jumped when another baby cried, or when I could see her movements for the first time ripple across my skin. It was when I felt my whole body roll with her as she turned over. It was the way she ran her toes across my ribs as if she was playing the harp. There was no sense that I would be a mother; it was simply that I already was one. I had her completely to myself, and I was solely responsible for her protection and affection. I imagined our whole lives together. She and I. Inseparable.

But the story does not begin with the union of mother and daughter. "I begin my song of the holy goddess, fair-haired Demeter, and of her slim—ankled daughter whom Aidoneus snatched away; and Zeus the loud-crashing, the wide-voiced one, granted it" (Rice and Stambaugh 26). I think I was always aware of a timeline. There was excitement at every new change, but also fear of the separation to come. I suppose it has always been this way, after all every daughter is the daughter of a mother who was a daughter. In some ways, we are inseparable, this long line of women who give birth. Biologically, then, there is little difference between us. I join this long line of women as I become a mother, but I also lose my self-identity to that very long line as well. This connection and possible loss of self highlights another aspect of the myth; Kore, Demeter, and Persephone are always in the midst of a cycle. A cycle in which they are near indecipherable from each other or in fact one goddess with three aspects: child, wife, and mother (Downing 11 and Harrison 272-74).

Whether Kore, Demeter, Persephone are seen as separate entities fully formed or one goddess with three aspects, both layers ring true for the women who reenact the ritual, whether through a formal Thesmophoria or through the act of becoming mothers. Of course, that means as much as we find union and rebirth in the myth, we must face the true aspect of motherhood that all mothers must face: loss.

SEPARATION

"Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue. / In a drafty museum, your nakedness / Shadows our safety" (Plath lines 4-6).

Perhaps, I should have known better than to call myself Ēostre. Though not much is known about the Pre-Indo-European goddess herself, all goddesses and gods associated with the cycles of the seasons, or fertility, are in the end about rebirth and therefore redeath. Ultimately the plant must push through the earth, as a child through the mother, and become its own self. Unfortunately, it seems goddesses of the earth give birth in violent, bloody ways. Gaia is forced into a painfully long labor as her children are forced back inside her body until her child cuts Uranus from her. Rhea inherits her mother's pain, just as Cronos inherits his father's fear, as each of Rhea's children are ripped from her and consumed. Perhaps there is no choice for an earth mother than for her child to be cut or ripped from her body and stolen away. In this, I was no different. After 24 hours of labor and a shot of Pitocin, the doctor decided that it was time for a C-section before it turned into an emergency. My daughter had not descended, and I was no longer progressing. While I wanted nothing more than to see my child, the thought that they would take her from me,

that I would not bring her into the world myself, was crushing. They removed my family from the room. Suddenly, there was activity everywhere. I cried as they prepped me. The nurses who had been with me all along held my hand and shed a few tears of their own. It seemed we were all in mourning for something we could not name. My baby should be safe. I should be fine. But the women in the room felt a tangible loss of something important: a navel that would never be reached. Suddenly, there was another emergency C-section, and they skipped over me. I lay there blind without my contacts, shaved, and waiting. Nurses were watching monitors until it was our turn. Then, I went into labor.

I held onto the bars on my bed and fought not to let my daughter go, not to let my body do what it knew it should do. The nurses grabbed my hands repeating "Don't push. Hold on. Just hold on." We all held on together until they could rush me into the operating room. Men washed hands and laughed at me trying not to push. Medication changed hands, but the epidural did not work; a batch of anesthesia was dropped on the floor and had to be repped. They tied me down and pulled a screen across my abdomen dividing me from my baby. My body was exhausted, and I could not fight it anymore. With a man at head and foot, one with a knife and one with anesthesia, I let my body push, and everything went dark.

In many ways, this moment is the one that most connects me to the story of Demeter. She begs, "My daughter, whom I bore, a sweet plant and fair to see; it was her shrill voice I heard through the air unharvested, even as of one violently entreated but I saw her not with my eyes" (Lang). The earth itself is rent and Persephone is pulled through the

gaping hole. It is hard at this point in the myth not to take seriously that Demeter is the goddess of agriculture. She is also the daughter of an earth goddess who is the daughter of an earth goddess. For Persephone to be pulled through the hole in the ground, it is Demeter who must be torn open.

LOSS

"I'm no more your mother / Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow / Effacement at the wind's hand" (Plath lines 7-9).

In many ways, that was the last moment that I was a mother. I think part of me knew it all along. The moments of connection and secret communications. Our private language. Severed. While I could not wait to see her face, she would suddenly be a foreigner. Me to her as she to me. I hoped that she liked me. I hoped that I loved her. I hoped ... that everything would be okay, because I could never again be sure that it would be. I woke up in the semi-dark. My body still pushing. The pain was sharp, but my mind was fuzzy like a dream from which I couldn't wake. Baby... I slurred. There was a movement to my side. After several tries, I whimpered, "Where is my baby?" There was only pain and darkness—and the realization that my baby was gone. I was truly alone for the first time in months, and my daughter was somewhere else. She was in her own world—a reality without me. "Many dedications made by women are part of the display of the oikos at its defining moments of birth, marriage, and death, but such dedications can also be considered to articulate the women's own lives in terms of the gynecological events of conception, pregnancy, and delivery" (Goff 44). In a sense, then, delivery and death or birth and death are connected

concepts. The ritual of the Thesmophoria recreates this connection as well with its suckling pigs buried in the caves for a year in the dark. This was not how I'd imagined it. I had no idea how closely related birth and death could be.

Everyone else saw her first. My husband, unlike Hades, kept watch for me while I was in recovery, and while I am grateful, that initial loss could never be mended. "The redness of the pomegranate symbolizes the woman's womb, the abundance of seeds its fertility. Outwitted by Hades, persuaded to taste of the 'sweet morsel,' the pomegranate seeds, she consummates her marriage with him and belongs to him for at least part of the year" (Neumann 73). As a woman who has gone through the experience to which the myth must refer, I would like to respectfully disagree or, at the very least, to add layers to Neumann's analysis. What we must come back to is the actual biological human practice that must have created the ritual which in turn created the myth.

The fruit full of seeds that separates the child from the mother so completely "that she might not abide forever beside revered Demeter of the dark mantle" (Lang 57) can only be the afterbirth itself. The placenta, with its roots and branches of the umbilical cord, is the tree of life. Only once it has been torn from the mother's earthly body is the child fully and permanently part of the world of men, that first pure union —forever lost. In fact, most placenta-bearing animals consume the placenta after birth, (Kristal, DiPirro and Thompson 178) which would have been widely seen by both hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies. While human cultures rarely consume the afterbirth, the ritual burial of the placenta is

widely practiced (Young and Benyshek 473). In "The First Mother" by Sister Morningstar published in *Midwifery Today*:

The placenta and the cord, which is a centralized extension of the heartbeat of the placenta, are known to many native people as the first mother. Beyond the practical, women create art, ritual, poetry, song and legend from intimate contact with the color, texture, shape, size, wetness and unspeakable mystery contained within placentas and cords. An ancient ritual honoring this first mother is to return her to the earth and plant a tree or flowering bush above the first mother. Such plants are mighty reminders of a passage that brought life to one and to a tribe. (17)

It seems far more likely that the myth captured a real human-animal activity—not a symbolic womb which they would not have often seen. Since there is a human experience and a ritual for this process, it would only make sense that this is the fruit of the womb the myth refers to. Because:

One way or another, once the baby is born, by nature's design or by man's invention, the cord will be severed and the first mother is replaced by the birth mother. The child's life has depended on the sacred connection with the first mother by way of the cord. Upon birth, a drive as strong as life will seek to reunite the baby with the source of that life force. Blood is replaced with milk. Womb is replaced with arms. (19)

While this myth does its job to ultimately hand the child over to the patriarchy, to turn what can only be Gaia's, or Rhea's, or in fact Demeter's agricultural gifts of flower and fruit, into

the work of men, seems the ultimate, though predictable, insult. "It is, if not the mother's breast, the mother herself. We call the mother the first object of love. For we speak of love when we emphasize the psychic side of sex-impulses, and disregard or for a moment wish to forget the fundamental physical or 'sensual' demands of the instincts" (Freud). This, after all, is the return to the "navel" they seek. Without being able to face this singular loss, there can be no union of the psyche.

RETURN

"All night your moth-breath / Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen: / A far sea moves in my ear (Plath lines 10-12).

Even though I got her back that night after our separation, she was never really mine again. Even as I unwrapped us both and placed her naked on my naked breast, I knew that there was no way she would ever be mine again. She was her own person, with her own needs, and wants, and dreams. Even in that room finally alone and quiet, I could only guess at her cries and hold her against the wrong side of my skin. It was a long year in the dark. I don't know if postpartum depression is an accurate enough description for so great a loss: the recalibrating of your entire life, the magnifying of all your fears. The first time she sat in the bath and reached out to grab the water, she laughed. She laughed so hard trying and failing to catch the liquid streaming out of the faucet. She was in her own world and I could only sit by her side and smile. I knew that loving her would be a long journey of holding her close and letting her go, again and again, like water through my fingers.

This myth, in the end, is certainly not a ritual that only women would have needed to face. Though women act in a central role as mothers, several of the Greek death and rebirth rituals were for men and women. But as Freud will quickly point out, it is precisely this loss of the mother that is instrumental for male children as well as female children, or perhaps more because they will never be mothers and again find that bond. In characterizing Jung's thoughts, Von Hendy states "the child must enter an introspective quest for his or her own identity, which involves breaking from both parents, but especially the mother, and discovering the inner strength that enables adult responsibility" (Von Hendy 121). This is also true of the Orphic tradition where it is a "well known fact that in the mysteries of Eleusis, the most famous ritual associated with the myth, men were initiated as well as women, the mysteries being open to all who spoke Greek and who had not committed homicide" (Lincoln 166). Whether the mythic or ritualistic participants are male, female, or both, the ritual allows people to reconnect to the numinous, but ultimately it is a momentary link, and just as the birthed child now belongs to the law and society, the ritual participants go back to their own separate worlds as well. It seems, whether male or female, the only way to free oneself from the endless loss is the "salvation offered by the creator is that the spirit free itself from the wheel of birth. This is what those who are initiated by Orpheus to Dionysos and Kore pray that they may attain, to 'Cease from the Wheel and breathe again from ill'" (Harrison 591). Perhaps, Jung should have more correctly called the corollary to the Oedipal Complex the "Demeter- Persephone Complex."

CONCLUSION

"And now you try / Your handful of notes; / The clear vowels rise like balloons" (Plath lines 16-18).

I acknowledge that like Freud and Jung, I have taken the myth to a very personal level that may not be the same experience of other individuals. While my experience may be different, I will not argue that it is more or less than someone else's experience. Or that it is unique. We all face separation, loss, and the anxiety of return as part of our first experiences in the world. In fact, as Freud states in *Totem and Taboo*, "I have taken as the basis of my whole position the existence of a collective mind, in which mental processes occur just as they do in the minds of an individual" (qtd. in Von Hendy 124). The Greek rituals that celebrate Demeter and Persephone (or Kore) call for a celebration of life, death, and fertility in one rite, so we must assume that the story of Demeter accomplishes this multiplicity of meaning as well. "Thus Demeter and Persephone, no longer pigs or Grain-Mothers, 'lend themselves to the elevation and the correction of the sentiments of sorrow and awe, by the presentment to the senses and imagination of an ideal expression of them. Demeter cannot but seem a type of divine grief. Persephone is the Goddess of Death, yet with a promise of life to come'" (Pater's *Greek Studies* qtd. in Lang 21). In the end, it is with both divine grief and great awe that all of us must face the daily struggle of finding ourselves and letting go. One night in the dark, my daughter held her hand out to me, "Mommy stay," she whispered. We held hands for a while until she said, "Okay, you can go" and she let my hand slip away. With all the brilliance and bravery of a five-year-old, she

laughed, because she knew that she was okay on her own and I would be the one to miss her most. I named her Eden.

The Pomegranate
Kiese M. Hill

I am Demeter.
I am the Tree of Life.
You my daughter, I grew from
myself.
Your blood, my blood.
Your breath, my breath.
Connected, reaching out
Holding you up to the sun.

Someday, you will pull the fruit from
the tree
I nurtured from earth.
You will open up its blood red
Seeds, I know this
Is how mothers are made.
Both death and life,
Love and loss,
Connection and absence.

You, still dancing on the threshold
of life,
Lifting up your laughing face to the
sun,
Have no idea
What stirs beneath.
I do. I do.

I cannot prevent this death,
Though I watch from just a
Heartbeat away,
And it is too late for second
chances,

You reach to pluck the flower
Innocence lost, roots torn.
I cannot protect you.
I would not rob you of your
happiness,
Of your own womanhood,
Even if I could save you from your
fear.

You may not thank me for it,
You would be safe in your Eden,
But someday soon you will reach
Out to the fruit
Of your choosing, and become
queen
Of your own world,

And leave me behind.

Works Cited

Downing, Christine, ed. *The Long Journey Home: Re-visioning the Myth of Demeter and Persephone for Our Time*. Shambhala, 1994.

Freud, Sigmund. *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*; Trans. by G. Stanley Hall. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920; Bartleby.com, 2016.

Goff, Barbara. *Citizen Bacchea: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*. University of California Press, 2004.

Harrison, Jane Ellen. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. Princeton University Press, 1992.

Kristal, Mark B., Jean M. DiPirro and Alexis C. Thompson. "Placentophagia in Humans and Nonhuman Mammals: Causes and Consequences." *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 2012. 51:3, 177-197

Lang, Andrew, trans. *The Homeric Hymns*. 2015.

Lincoln, Bruce. "The Rape of Persephone." *The Long Journey Home*. ed. Christine Downing. Shambhala, 1994. Pgs 166-172.

Johnson, Robert A. *Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*. HarperSan Francisco, 1992.

Morningstar, Sister. "The First Mother." *Midwifery Today* 108 (2013): 17-19. *Alt-HealthWatch*. Web. 21 Nov. 2016.

Neumann, Erich. "The Woman's Experience of Herself and the Eleusinian Mysteries." *The Long Journey Home*. ed. Christine Downing. Shambhala, 1994. Pgs 72-76.

Plath, Sylvia, "Morning Song." *Collected Poems*. HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1992.

Rice, David C. and John E. Stambauch, trans. "The Homeric 'Hymn to Demeter.'" *The Long Journey Home*. ed. Christine Downing. Shambhala, 1994. Pgs 26-38.

Young, Sharon M. and Daniel C. Benyshek. "In Search of Human Placentophagy: A Cross-Cultural Survey of Human Placenta Consumption, Disposal Practices, and Cultural Beliefs." *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*. Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2010. 49:467– 484.

Von Hendy, Andrew. *The Modern Construction of Myth*. Indiana University Press, 2002.

Meine Frau

The Left-Handed Archer of Hrad Houska

by Randall Victoria Ulyate

Located in the Bohemia region of the Czech Republic in Kokořínsko, 47 km north of Prague, lies Hrad Houska (Castle Houska). Local legend has it that the castle's chapel is built on top of a bottomless pit that is said to be a portal to Hell and, according to the castle groundskeeper, contains the oldest paintings in Bohemia. Included among these paintings is *Meine Frau*, a unique depiction of a left-handed female centaur arching a bow and arrow. This castle is steeped in local lore and superstition, and has built up a reputation with locals, international tourists, and paranormal investigators. The inclusion of *Meine Frau* in the chapel built atop this bottomless pit to Hell is significant for many reasons, including its use of left-handedness and the female depiction of a traditionally male mythological creature.

Hrad Houska

Castle Houska (fig. 1) has been open to the public since 1999 (hradhouska.cz). Historical records regarding the castle are varied at best, and a gap exists in the Czech archives between 1938-1945, when castle was in the hands of the Nazi army. Local legend has it that during this time, Nazi experiments were conducted here. The tour guide stated that towards the end of the Nazi occupation, records show discoveries of the bodies of three Nazi soldiers in the castle without any apparent cause of death.

It is worth noting that the owners of Hrad Houska capitalize on the mysterious past of the castle to boost tourism, and corroborating their claims has proven difficult as there has

not been much published about the castle. Because of this, unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this paper has been collected from locals or is from the tour of the grounds in October 2016. In keeping with the connection to the underworld, an animatronic tourist exhibit that illustrates the descent into Hell, inspired by Dante's *Inferno*, is available to tour on the grounds as well. Much of the information presented on the tour of the grounds has been difficult to corroborate through independent research—likely owing to the fact that there simply is not much that has been published about this property. When searching databases and websites for historical documents, the castle almost does not exist. There are very few hits that mention Castle Houska in English-language academia, even when expanding the search to all languages, including Czech. However, there is abundant anecdotal evidence on the internet from people who have taken the tour and heard the local stories. Additionally, there is consistent information is presented by castle representatives on the tours and on the episode "Gate to Hell" of *Ghost Hunters International* that takes place at Castle Houska.

As presented during the tour of the grounds, Castle Houska was built in the late 13th century, and according to the tour guide, the castle was constructed around a pit that locals claimed was an entrance to Hell. While most castles in the middle ages were built to keep invading forces out, local lore asserts that this historical landmark was built to contain evil forces inside of its walls. The castle's location corroborates this theory, since it does not lie along any historical trade routes or territory boundaries, nor is it located in a strategic position for battle. According to the grounds manager, the oldest reference found claims

that the castle was constructed so that “something that should not be named” could not escape. Reports from 878 CE document locals complaining of a sulfur smell when the sandstone rock at the site cracked, opening the bottomless pit to Hell (hradhouka.cz).

Another example of the castle’s dark past comes from the local legend of a prisoner who was offered full pardon if he agreed to be lowered into the pit and report back what he saw. He was lowered down on a rope, and once he was a few feet down out of sight, he began thrashing and screaming. When he was raised out of the pit, the prisoner’s hair had turned white and he appeared to have aged decades in just a few brief moments. So shaken that he was unable to articulate what he had seen, officials took him to a mental institution where he died just two days later.

After this horrific incident, the local community decided to cover up the pit to prevent any monsters and demons from escaping Hell. However, since the pit was bottomless, the hole could not be filled and was covered with a chapel. This was a common practice during the Middle Ages, as Christians turned pagan sites and other places where people felt the presence of the Devil into places of worship (Russell 71). The original sandstone rock was used in the construction. The chapel is the oldest part of the castle, and the floor was built directly over the pit. After its construction, locals dedicated the chapel to the archangel Michael, the protector of God’s chosen people and who acts as a psychopomp by protecting the souls and bodies of Christians from Satan (Johnson 17-9, 83). The castle was originally surrounded by a moat to provide an additional layer of protection in case the demons escaped, but the moat has since been filled in.

The Painting

Castle Houska was constructed to protect mortals from the half-human/half-animals creatures that have been said to escape this Hell-hole. On the wall of the chapel is a figure that castle officials claim is the only representation in the world of a left-handed female centaur (fig. 2), and my research has (so far) proven this to be true. The fresco depicts two figures. One is a left-handed female centaur holding a loaded bow with her arrow aimed at the second figure, a human, possibly a Christian saint.

The figure is called *Meine Frau*, or my wife. It is unclear why her name is German instead of Czech. Perhaps this name was given to her during the Nazi occupation. The groundskeeper offered her name only, and with his broken English, was unable to offer any additional background information when I asked him. This name could point to her significance as a demon from Hell, and possibly her status as Satan's wife. She looms on the wall as a direct threat to the nameless human beside her, painted on the wall of the chapel built over the pit to Hell.

Castle officials note that the chapel remained sealed and boarded up for hundreds of years until its discovery in 1928. As a result, the original frescoes, said to be some of the oldest in Eastern Europe, are well-preserved. While looking at the painting, it is noticeable that the archer's lower body does not resemble a horse as a traditional centaur, but looks to be like more of a lion or a similar creature. The front bottom half of the centaur has disappeared over time, leaving only the back left haunch and tail visible.

She is recognizable as a female due to the obvious cleavage at her breast, above her left arm as she readies her arrow in the bow. The bow is pointing directly at the shoulder of a person painted less than an inch away from the tip of the archer's arrow. The massive bow is approximately as tall as the archer herself. Unfortunately, parts of the fresco have fallen into disrepair, and as a result, the top of the bow is no longer visible.

The simple fresco is done in a thick outline, and relies heavily on line work with a lack of detail and color. It is possible that color once was included in this depiction, but based on the preservation of the frescoes in the chapel, it seems unlikely. The erosion in several places on the chapel walls has luckily only affected the front haunches of the bestial lower body of the centaur and the very top of her bow.

Centaurs as Mythological Figures

Centaurs are present in many different mythologies around the world. The earliest depictions of centaurs are found on the boundary stones of the Kassites in the Fertile Crescent, dating to about 1750 BCE. These boundary stones featured the centaurs as hunters with bows and arrows, and it is believed that they likely functioned as guardian spirits along the boundaries (Lawrence 57).

Centaurs are often depicted as wild male creatures, halfway between civilized humanity and their animalistic nature. The duality of centaurs can represent many things, including the dichotomies between animal and human, wild and tame, savage and civilized, violence and gentleness (Lawrence 62, Cooper 32). They are shown eating raw meat, getting incredibly drunk, and frequently letting their animal instincts dominate over their

humanity, at times representing man's internal struggle between good and evil (Ferguson 14). Their sexual organs are located on their lower animal half, while their brains are located in their human upper half. Ovid's description of the centaurs' defeat by the Lapiths has "often been used to symbolize the triumph of civilization over barbarism" (Lawrence 58). While there are few centaurs of antiquity, such as Chiron, that are portrayed in a positive light, centaurs are most often depicted as wild and savage. As liminal creatures that embody so many dichotomies, centaurs straddle the boundary between the wild and the civilized, outside of human society

Significance of Left-Handedness

In the Judeo-Christian West has commonly relegated left-handedness to the liminal. It has historically been associated with evil, sin, and Satan (Wolman 15). Throughout history, Catholic nuns are known to have punished children for being left-handed by rapping knuckles and even tying the left hand to the desk so the children are forced to write with their right hand (Dossey 121). Catholic school-teachers have claimed that left-handedness is "the mark of the Beast" (Wolman 15). This could even be an interpretation for the mark of Cain- a physical manifestation of other-ness that is associated with a life on the boundaries of society and godliness.

Rik Smits, in *The Puzzle of Left-Handedness*, suggests that Ancient Greeks are responsible for the dichotomy, a "bipolar divine world" (19). This philosophy leads to a fusion of old and new religions: traditional mother goddess religions and new male-dominated religions. This polarization also occurs in Christianity with Jesus depicted in the

Bible as sitting at God's right hand, which implies that by extension, Lucifer is commonly thought of as sitting at God's left hand. The assumption is that Satan counteracts and balances on the left-hand side, even though he is not specifically mentioned in the text as doing so.

The name Satan is derived from the Talmudic Samael, which is derived from *se'mol*, which is defined as left (Smits 21). The religion or practice of Satanism itself is called the "left-hand path" (*The Devil's Party*). Satanists have taken the concept of the left path from Buddhism, using the term to refer to taking the road less traveled (Wolman 21) and playing to the associations of Satan sitting at the left hand of God. Because of the associations in Christianity with the right hand used for sacred ceremonies and performing rites and rituals, Satanists perform many ceremonies with the left hand, and consider themselves as conducting a spiritual path that is divergent from the main-stream, oppressive "right-hand" path (Wolman 22). While Satanists do not necessarily worship the Christian Devil, they use him as a figure representing the desire to rebel against the norm set by the Christian majority.

In Arab and Eastern cultures, the left hand is largely used for hygiene, as it is considered unclean to conduct any other business with the left hand. However, Rik Smits asserts that the Christian association of left-handedness with evil predates the Eastern tradition, or at least was developed separately (23).

There are many examples of right and left-handedness found in the texts of antiquity. The motif of inversion in Christian churches accentuates the dichotomy of God/Devil, and in

turn, righteousness/evil, by making the left evil (Smits 58). The Bible mentions left-handedness multiple times. One example is that David's army is composed of men who "were expert archers, and they could shoot arrows or sling stones with their left hand as well as their right. They were all relatives of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin" (*New International Version*, 1 Chronicles 12.2). In fact, all of the left-handers specifically mentioned in the Bible as such come from the tribe of Benjamin (Seevers & Klein 190). Servers and Klein note that the translation of Ben-jamin is "son of right hand," so the proclivity of Benjamites to be left-handed is particularly ironic (192).

Various examples exist implying that the left is linked with evil and death, while the right hand is associated with godliness. In the Tarot Deck, death is depicted as holding a bow in his right hand, purposefully showing that he is left-handed (Smits 43). Jesus is always shown giving blessings with the right hand, and there has never been a left-handed pope (Dossey10).

The etymology of the word sinister also derives from the left hand (Thomson 26). Sinister comes from the latin sinus, which referred to the pocket on a Roman toga on the left hand side (Smits 21). Smits asserts that the association of sinister with evil, as the word is used today, came later. In Modern English, the word left is derived from the Old English *lyft*, meaning weak, while right comes from the Old English *riht*, meaning straight and direct (Dossey 10). Even in everyday figurative language, the left is portrayed as bad, as evidenced in phrases such as left-handed compliment (Dossey 10).

The Left and the Feminine

Diabolos Rex, the self-proclaimed Devil King and Megister Templi for the Church of Satan, claims that “the left hand is feminine, darkness, and water” while “the right hand is daylight, solid and masculine” (qtd. in Wolman 23). This concept is also evidenced in Pythagorus’ table of opposites, including male/female, good/evil, right/left, straight/crooked (Smits 19-20, Roth 32). By creating this table Pythagorus equates good with the male and the right side, and evil with the female and left side. This reflects a world of antiquity where both the female and the left were relegated to evil, and othered by society.

Christianity and mythology have both associated the left side of the body with the female sex (Roth 30). Before the spread of Christianity, this was seen as a positive association. The Ancient Celts worshipped nature and the feminine and viewed the left as the sacred side, associated with the moon and the mother. With the conversion to Christianity, however, came the negative connotations with the feminine and nature. This in turn relegated the female power and its close ties to Pagan nature worship to be seen as weak or evil (Roth 31). Femininity and the left side are intertwined in Christianity (Hertz 345), with the first reference being found in the Hebrew story of Genesis. Perhaps when God made Eve from the rib of Adam, close to his heart, it was taken from his left side.

As the Biblical story of the Fall is told, Eve, under the influence of the serpent, is responsible for the fall of humanity. Artistic depictions of this event oftentimes depict Eve reaching for the forbidden fruit with her left hand. This can specifically be seen in Peter Paul Rubens’ *Adam and Eve* (fig. 3), painted circa 1628-9, and Hugo van der Goes’ *Fall of Man*

(fig 4), painted circa 1440-1482. While the depiction of Eve plucking the fruit left-handed is inconsistent throughout historical works of art, connections can be made between the relegation of the left side of the body and the feminine to evil and Satanic forces. From a Christian perspective, the fall of man is the most wicked thing that has befallen humanity and it happened because of the feminine left.

In addition to depictions of the Fall, left-handed females in art are seen in *Gabrielle d'Estrées et une de ses Sœurs* (fig. 5), a painting from the sixteenth century that depicts three females using their left hands. The two sisters in the foreground are nude, indicating savagery and animalistic urges, and the Duchess de Villars has her left hand extending to pinch her sister Gabrielle's right nipple, possibly signifying lust. While doing so, Gabrielle is using her left hand to pinch a ring in a similar manner, perhaps symbolizing greed. In the background of the painting is a seamstress, fully clothed and civilized, embroidering left-handed. Smits argues that this painting has been perceived as, and remains, unsettling, perhaps because of the overt left-handedness and overwhelming feminine energy (119-21). Just like *Mein Frau*, this painting depicts women existing on the boundary of society, unclothed, using their left hands.

Conclusions

The mysterious past of the castle and the elusive hybrid female archer leave room to hypothesize as to the reasoning behind their constructions. The archer from the Chapel's fresco is as a follower of Satan due to her left hand as well as her hybrid body reminiscent of a centaur. Based on the history of centaurs in literature, these creatures are shown as

guardian spirits and protectors, possibly the keeper of this bottomless pit. As a creature with the combination of an animal, or evil, lower half, and a humanoid upper body represents the duality of humankind, she is right at home on the wall of a chapel built over a pit to Hell as the physical representation of darkness below and light and higher thinking above.

Meine Frau is also mirroring another strong female archer, Artemis. Like the centaurs, Artemis is a liminal presence, existing along the boundary of nature and civilization (Ronnberg 496). As a female archer guarding the entrance to Hell, this painting is much like Artemis with her bow, but instead of reflecting the boundary between the wildness of nature and society, *Mein Frau* is reflecting the boundary between the living and the dead. In her left-handedness, this archer shows that she is an agent of the Underworld guarding this entrance to Hell. Instead of hunting wild animals, she is hunting souls.

Arrows are often used as spiritual weapons, and are responsible for the deaths of several saints, such as Saint Sebastian (Ferguson 170). The archer's arrow is pointing directly at an unknown figure, possibly a saint. Centaurs are seen in Christian mythology as an incarnation of the Devil, with their arrows "fiery darts of evil" (Cooper 32). Arrows loosed from a bow represent the consequences of actions which "cannot be recalled or revoked" (Cooper 15). Once the evil escapes, much like Pandora's box, the world will forever be changed. As the female archer still has the arrow loaded in her bow, maybe there is still hope for humanity. This painting could be a warning of the downfall that would

follow an encounter with Satan. The fact that she is a Pagan mythological figure adds to the mystery.

In a Christian world, Pagan mythology oftentimes was associated with evil, especially when women were involved. The connotations of femininity and nature spoke to associations with witchcraft and the Devil, therefore a female centaur represents the Christian fear of powerful women in tune with the natural world. Centaurs are overwhelmingly depicted as male, adding to their animalistic associations. Female centaurs do exist in art and mythology, but their presence is overshadowed by the sheer masculinity present in depictions of male centaurs (Lawrence 63). Pre-Christian European religions tended to be focused on the mother, and this Archer is a powerful female in a newly male-dominated Christian world. Her power and femininity are representative of this old world order, and this would threaten the Christian patriarchy. Her overt feminine power marks her as demon associated with the Devil from a Christian perspective, while pagan interpretations would see this power as strength.

Christian mythology preaches that demons and monsters are instruments of the Devil. From a Christian perspective, this centaur can be seen as a symbol of a dying world. Neither the centaur nor the Devil cares if human souls are Christian, or Pagan, or anything else. It is in the nature of a psychopomp to protect the underworld and gather souls, just as it is in the nature of the Devil to destroy the faithful. This type of evil is typically outside the realm of human comprehension, since it is evil just for evil's sake. Humans were made in God's image, and the centaur's natural state as a half-human/half-beast that gives into his/

her animalistic urges represents the instinctual and savage part of humanity that Christianity tries to suppress. The centaur is an abomination of nature, as it is a liminal boundary-pusher that is left over from a different time.

The rich symbolism and meaning present in the left-handed, female archer of Hrad Houska is far beyond the scope of this limited paper. Additional research is warranted on the surrounding frescoes of the chapel, and their significance in Bohemian Christianity in the Middle Ages. Her feminine power, association with the Devil, and her status as a mythological figure left over from a different time contribute to her intrigue, and her lasting image suggests that her significance will only grow as society continues to change.

Figure 1. *Hrad Houska*. Photo by Randall Ulyate.



Figure 2. *Left-Handed, Female Archer at Hrad Houska*. Photo by Randall Ulyate.

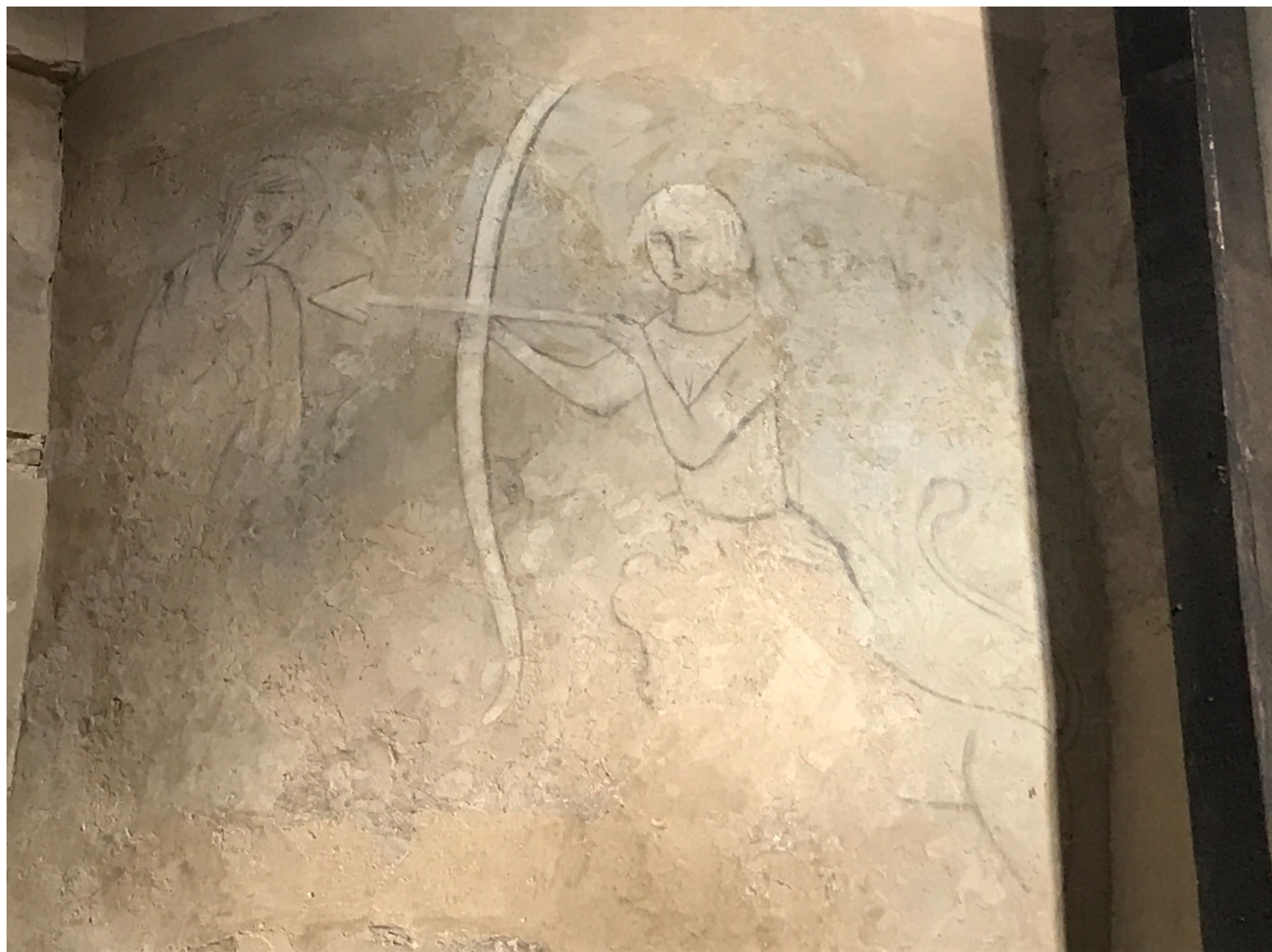


Figure 3. *Adam and Eve* by Peter Paul Rubens c. 1628-9. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 4. *Fall of Man* by Hugo van der Goes c. 1440-1482. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 5. *Gabrielle d'Estrées et une de ses Sœurs* by an unknown artist. Wikimedia Commons.



Works Cited

Hrad Houska. 2016, www.HradHouska.cz. Accessed 11 Nov 2016.

Hrad Houska. Kokořínsko, Czechia. 27 Oct. 2016. Tour.

The Bible. New International Version. 2016.

Cooper, J.C. *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2015.

Dossey, Larry. "Left-handedness: In Support of the Ten-percenters." *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 9.5 (2003): 10-4, 118-21.

Ferguson, George. *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Hertz, Robert. "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity." trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3.2 (2013): 335-57.

Johnson, Richard Freeman. *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005.

Lawrence, Elizabeth Atwood. "The Centaur: Its History and Meaning in Human Culture." *Journal of Popular Culture* 27.4 (Spring 1994): 57.

Ronnberg, Ami and Kathleen Martin, eds. *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images*. Cologne, Germany: Taschen: 2010.

Roth, Melissa. *The Left Stuff: How the Left-Handed Have Survived and Thrived in a Right-Handed World*. Lanham, Maryland: M. Evans, 2005.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Seevers, Boyd, and Joanna Klein. "Genetics and the Bible: The Curious Case of the Left-Handed Benjamites." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 64.3 (2012): 190-192.

Smits, Rik. *The Puzzle of Left-handedness*. London: Reaction Books Ltd, 2012.

Thomson, David. "Sinister Cinema." *Sight and Sound*, 24.8 (2014): 26.

Wolman, David. *A Left-Hand Turn Around the World: Chasing the Mystery and Meaning of all Things Southpaw*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2005.

The Divine Spirit on Earth

Archetypal Resonance Between Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and the African Diaspora Tradition of Santeria

by Hannah Irish

The archetypal psychological lens provides a deep perspective through which to analyze the similarities among religious and mythological systems, offering an explanation of why the similarities exist and how they came about. The similarities among what appear to be such different religious systems highlight the idea of archetypal patterns residing in the collective unconscious. In different parts of the ancient world, humans, grappling with questions of origin, existence, and meaning, unconsciously engaged what appear to be the same primal energies in order to explain life and the universe. Theologian Rudolf Otto posits that deep emotional experiences, which he refers to as “numinous,” are “the origin and essence of religion,” and as such they are “shared in greater and lesser intensities by all religious people of every culture and historical epoch” (Murphy 129). Thus, “the heart of religion [. . .] is an awesome, numinous experience of a ‘wholly other’ reality, a holy or sacred dimension of existence that stands apart from and beyond the ordinary world in which we live.”

It is largely Otto’s idea of the numinous upon which Carl Jung built many of his thoughts regarding religion: “Religion, it might be said, is the term that designates the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been altered by the experience of the numinosum” (“Psychology and Religion” 6). When considering religion in light of Jung’s

ideas of the archetypes, religious experience is also psychological experience: "Religion means dependence on and submission to the irrational facts of experience. These do not refer directly to social and physical conditions; they concern far more the individual's psychic attitude" ("The Undiscovered Self," CW 10, para. 505). Further, Jung claims that religious experience is absolute and indisputable for the individual: "No matter what the world thinks about religious experience, the one who has it possesses the great treasure of a thing that has provided him with a source of life, meaning and beauty and that has given a new splendor to the world and to mankind" ("Psychology and Religion" 113-4). Since we cannot know "the ultimate things," we "take them as we experience them" (114).

In comparing two religious traditions in light of Jung, the idea of the God archetype must be acknowledged. This archetype is the psychic pattern that contains, for Jung, the ultimate goal for individuation, or, in broader terms, spiritual enlightenment, or union with the divine. Of God, Jung says, "To this day God is the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse" (qtd. in Edinger 68). It is the archetype residing deeply within the collective unconscious that provides the wealth of religious experience from which humanity has drawn since the beginning, allowing for the diversity of spiritual and religious expression, and its energies and patterns can be seen in the practices of both the Christian Pentecostal-charismatic movement and the African Diaspora tradition of Santería.

Like Christianity, adherents to Santería believe in one god, Olodumare, “the almighty, the ground of life. Olodumare is the ultimate destiny of all creation; from him all existence comes forth, and to him it all returns. His breath is the force, this pulse of life and death” (Murphy 7). Olodumare’s presence in the world shows up as *ashe*, “the blood of cosmic life, the power of Olodumare toward life, strength, and righteousness” (Murphy 8). This is the Divine Spirit. According to Christian theologian Paul Tillich, “God is best understood as the ground of Being,” and “the meaning of the Divine Spirit is ‘God present to our spirit. Spirit is not a mysterious substance [. . .]. It is God Himself; but not God as the creative Ground of all things and not God directing history and manifesting Himself in its central event, but God as present in communities and personalities, grasping them, inspiring them, and transforming them’” (Yong 84). Henry Van Dusen says that “the Holy Spirit is the fulcrum of all aspects of religious faith, and, therefore, the one best ground for consideration of [a vast complex of issues. . .] because the Holy Spirit concerns, above all, man’s experience of the Divine, or conversely, the Divine’s impact upon the souls of men; it is God-near and God-at-work; it is the meeting place of the Divine and the human” (qtd. in Yong 97-8).

Ashe functions in Santería very similarly to how the Holy Spirit does in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. As Pentecostal-charismatic Christians are often known for their energetic church services, full of music, dancing, clapping, shouting, and speaking in tongues (commonly understood as the Holy Spirit’s power manifesting in someone by their spontaneously speaking in a language unknown to them), which are all understood to

be expressions of the charismata, Santería, too, is known for its ecstatic worship, specifically the drums, the dance, and the trance-possession.

Ashe is a current or flow, a 'groove' that initiates can channel so that it carries them along their road in life. The prayers, rhythms, offerings, tabus of santería tune initiates into this flow. They are lifted out of the self-absorption and frustration of ordinary life into the world of power where everything is easy because all is *ashe*, all is destiny. [. . .] Santería is a danced religion because dancing expresses the fundamental dynamism of *ashe*. [. . .] The world is a dance. Its meaning lies in its constant movement. The dance is the expression of this mystery and more: it is its technology. [. . .] the special states of mind brought on by dance reveal the world as it truly is, a world of unfiltered *ashe*. *Orisha* consciousness is true consciousness, and our ordinary view of the world is derived it. (Murphy 131)

One specific manifestation of *ashe* are the *orishas*, essentially the Santería divinities, which can act on behalf of the humans who honor them. "For every important Yoruba activity, there is an *orisha* whose power underlies it and whose mysteries it will deepen" (Murphy 11). This is similar to the functions of the Catholic saints. And as Christians understand God, through the Holy Spirit, to work both in the world and in individual believers, in Santería *orishas* also function in the world and within devotees. As tongues is one of the charismata, so in trance, "[the *orishas* stream] through human consciousness unhindered" (Murphy 140).

While there are several points of comparison between Santería and the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition, such as Ifa divination with prophetic words, initiation with baptism, and sacrifice with tithing and communion, the most outwardly similar aspects are trance-possession and Baptism of the Holy Spirit, respectively. "In santería trance, the channels of *ashe* are fully open as human dancers merge with divine rhythms" (Murphy 136-7). This is a sacred consciousness brought on by the drums and dance of the *bembe* ceremony in which an *orisha* "mounts" the medium, who becomes the "horse," and is then controlled by the *orisha* "rider." This aspect of the experience is somewhat conveyed in the term "possession," and as "santería mediums claim to remember nothing of their activities when in this altered state of awareness, so the term 'trance' is not entirely unfounded" (Murphy 137).

While the general characteristics of Santería trance are marked differences in the movements and voice of the medium, each medium's trance behavior is specifically indicative of the *orisha* riding her. Murphy gives an example from the *bembe* he attended:

One woman in particular is carried by this energy [from the drums and dance], and others begin to channel theirs toward her. The dancing circle clears for her alone, and the drums focus directly on her. Her eyes are closed, and she is whirling and whirling. [. . .] The call and response between soloist and congregation has become tighter and more intense. [. . .] Then, with a sharp slap from the *iya*, she falls to the ground. The drums are silent, and the room echoes. (Murphy 196)

This highly physical participatory nature of the tradition is also found in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, as Yong paraphrases Daniel Albrecht: "The goal of Pentecostal-charismatic worship [. . .] is the experience of the presence and activity of God, and this is felt, thought and psycho-physiologically engaged" (163).

Murphy's account continues:

Three santeras help her up and begin to escort her from the room. As she parts the crowd, she is clearly a different person. Her eyes are open now and gigantic, their focus open to the whole world. Her face is illuminated with an enormous smile, and she moves her shoulders and hips with sensuous confidence. Oshun has arrived.

[. . .] This is not a human being before me. [. . . Later,] Shango has found a suitable mount. A woman is dancing before the drums in a deep crouch, bringing down each bent leg very hard so that her bare feet slap the basement floor. [. . .] As she turns to face the ile, her eyes show the same unearthly gaze, but her face seems a mask of rage. (196-198)

Finally, "When Oshun [re]enters, Shango immediately leaves his human devotees and falls before her. [. . .] It seems that the sweet *orisha* has cooled some of the rage of the wrathful one, for when Shango rises and they dance together, the energy is calm and composed. This feels like the heart of the religion at last, a harmony of the human and the divine in dance and joy" (199). This "harmony of the human and the divine" is also an important characteristic of the Pentecostal-charismatic experience: "The operation of the charisms [. . .] signifies the conjunction of the divine and human in a manner such that there

is a paradoxical tension between the recognition of the Spirit as a divine Thou over and against that I on the one hand, and yet a union between the Spirit and the self that obliterates the subject-object distinction on the other" (Yong 224). In both traditions, this union recalls Jung's comments on religion, especially regarding individuation as a spiritual journey.

It is clear from Murphy's descriptions of the two mediums, one mounted by Oshun, the other by Shango, that the trance behavior differs drastically from what is considered normal human behavior free from outside influence, and that the trance behavior differs drastically based on which *orisha* is riding the medium. The Pentecostal-charismatic Baptism of the Holy Spirit shares many traits with Santería trance. Like trance, Baptism of the Holy Spirit "points to an encounter with the divine (Spirit) such as that experienced when one undergoes a deluge or is swept by a whirlwind (baptism)" (Yong 168) and can manifest in a variety of ways.

One could be 'slain in the Spirit', whereby one falls to the ground either because one is powerless to sustain oneself, or because one passes from consciousness (cf. Rev. 1.17). One could burst forth in ecstatic or controlled glossolalic speech, or exuberant and melodious praise (Acts 10.16), or prophetic utterance (Acts 19.6). There have been those who have grunted, groaned, or laughed vociferously or quietly. Others have been motivated to take 'holy marches' around the sanctuary, or to dance innovatively 'in the Spirit', and so on. (Yong 168)

Losing consciousness, losing muscle control, unusual speech or vocalizations, unprovoked laughter, and unusual movements, whether marching or dancing, are characteristic of both traditions. So, too, are prophetic words, in the senses both of foretelling (prophesying the future) and forthtelling (bringing the truth to light). In Santería trance, "even more important than the dance is the incarnated *orisha's* capacity to give advice. Throughout the course of a *bembe*, an *orisha* may favor certain devotees with warnings, admonitions, and harangues" (Murphy 138).

The prophetic function brings the possession behavior into the realm of the community in both traditions. In Santería, the *orishas* give direct words to those in attendance, ranging from advice to admonishment. In the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition, these words may come in the form of wise counsel, a word of prophecy, or a word in tongues, in which case there may also be someone in attendance with the spiritual gift of interpreting tongues. If there is no one to interpret, the tongues-speaking is taken as a form of powerful prayer uttered directly by the Holy Spirit to God the Father through the believer. The existence and implementation of spiritual gifts in Christianity are explicitly for the good of the whole congregation, and even the Church as a global body. "And there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are varieties of ministry, but the same Lord: and there are varieties of activities, but the same God, the One Who works all things in all people. And to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit toward that which is profitable for all" (1 Cor. 12.4-7). It is the same in Santería: "Santeros [initiated practitioners] have repeatedly told me that it is not the medium who profits from trance but the community

that enjoys the healing presence of the *orisha*" (Murphy 139). However, "observers have noted that the amnesia of mediums absolves them of responsibility for their trance behavior and so allows mediums special opportunities for uncensored self-expression." This is true in the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition as well, as anything said or done is attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and so not under the control of the believer.

A final similarity worth noting between Santería trance and Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the concession that it is on faith that the behaviors in both traditions are taken to be divinely inspired. Murphy states that "these patterns of *orisha* behavior occur in a particular cultural context. Mediums generally have grown up in a culture surrounded by santería and have seen many bembes before they have ever been 'mounted' themselves. It is impossible to say whether the medium learns trance behavior or learns to be a medium for trance behavior" (138). Similarly, Yong admits that through a "pneumatic orientation, Pentecostals and charismatics experience these phenomena as holistic encounters with the divine Spirit. By themselves, of course, none of these manifestations guarantee the special presence or activity of the Holy Spirit; they could be personally, or even on occasions, demonically inspired" (168).

While it is important, in order to maintain appropriate cultural respect, to note the differences, of which there are many, some subtle, others drastic, between religious traditions, it is equally important, from a depth psychological perspective, to recognize their similarities. It is the similarities among these, and other, religious traditions that point toward the underlying archetypal patterns. And it is our personal and scholarly associations

with these archetypal energies that allow us to engage with traditions outside of our own. Pentecostal spirituality “exploded” in the twentieth century, and Harvey Cox attributes it to “the upsurge of a common human religiosity that is also the undercurrent to the efflorescence of ecstatic and indigenous faith traditions worldwide,” (Yong 17) including many forms of ecstatic speech, mystical piety, and millennial fervor. It is a spirituality that enables reconnection with “the forces of the cosmos and the realm of the sacred” in spite of the alienation and isolation predominant in our modern world, and so may be “a Christian confluence of elements of an original human religiosity” (20). Yong points out the prominence of Pentecostal-charismatic and Spirit-type churches in Africa as evidence of African Christians’ “concern for retaining more of a continuity between their Christian thought and practice and traditional African religiosity” (159). The Pentecostal-charismatic “practical belief in the immanence of God by the Holy Spirit,” with its emphasis on spiritual power, resonates with traditional African religiosity, and the “Pentecostal Weltanschauung recognizes spiritual realities such as that of the ancestors posited by African traditions” (194). Yong goes so far as to state that “Africa is, in fact, intrinsic to the Pentecostal orientation” (290).

By way of conclusion, in the spirit of Yong’s thoughtful segments “What Can Pentecostals Learn from Umbanda?” and “What Can Umbandists Learn from Pentecostalism?”, I would like to suggest one area in which Evangelical Christian traditions, on the whole (even the Pentecostal-charismatic traditions with all of their similarities to Santería), could benefit from considering the beliefs of Santería devotees. While the Holy

Spirit is a (mostly) universally accepted reality in Christian theology and doctrine, and the existence of other spiritual powers (such as angels and demons) is fairly commonly accepted, the distinction between the acts of the Divine Spirit (whether Holy Spirit or angels) and those of "dark powers" remains a challenging task for Christians. This is especially true when the manifestation of a spiritual power is incongruent with a congregation's or denomination's preconceptions of the charismata.

For example, as a teenager responding to the altar call at youth group to be "baptized in the Spirit," rather than being "slain in the Spirit" as was expected, I was overcome by grief, which manifested in uncontrollable sobbing and a feeling of deep despair. I was told, by well-meaning Christians, that this experience must have been a demonic attack. That when I opened myself to receive the Holy Spirit, evil spirits got there first. In the minds of those believers, my "negative" response must have been caused by something dark, or even evil. The Divine Spirit, full of light imagery and often personified as a dove, could not possibly be to blame. Needless to say, at fifteen-years-old, this explanation was detrimental to my spirituality. It left me feeling like I had done something wrong, that I was somehow to blame for my traumatic experience. It has haunted me ever since.

In Santería, there is a recognition that all spiritual power ultimately comes from the same source, Olodumare, "the almighty, the ground of life," the "pulse of life and death" (Murphy 7). As such, Olodumare manifests "in the world as force, [. . .] the blood of cosmic life," (Murphy 8) and directly to people through *orisha* trance. While the expectation

is that these experiences are positive and will yield gifts to the medium as well as the community, it is also understood that those gifts, as the end result of possession, may not always appear positive in manifestation. Each of the *orisha* manifests specific elements of Olodumare's power, and as such, some of them manifest in violent and chaotic ways during possession. Devotees understand these manifestations to be one aspect of the Divine Spirit, just as necessary as the gentle and joyful manifestations. There is a context, as it were, for the "dark side of God" within Santería. A consideration of this would be beneficial in Christian Evangelicalism.

Works Cited

Edinger, Edward F. *The Creation of Consciousness*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1984. Print.

Jung, C.G. *Psychology and Religion*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1977. ProQuest Ebook

Central, [ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pacgradins-ebooks/reader.action?](http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pacgradins-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3420942)

docID=3420942. Accessed 22 January 2018.

—. "The Undiscovered Self." *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Complete Digital Edition*.

Vol. 10. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014. EBSCOhost, [pgi.idm.oclc.org/login?](http://pgi.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=685330&site=ehost-live&scope=site)

[url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?](http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=685330&site=ehost-live&scope=site)

[direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=685330&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=685330&site=ehost-live&scope=site). Accessed 22

January 2018.

Murphy, Joseph M. *Santería: African Spirits in America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993. Print

The One New Man Bible. Traveler's Rest, South Carolina: True Potential Publishing, 2011.

Print.

Yong, Amos. *Discerning the Spirits: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian*

Theology of Religions. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000. Print.