ABSTRACT

Responses to the Jungian Archetypal Feminine in *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*

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What are the origins of the literary ritual of tragedy; what is the purpose of tragic catharsis? Jungian theory provides partial answers; the struggle of all protagonists is, at a profound level, the battle of egocentric consciousness against the forces of chaotic unconsciousness. Jung's disciple Erich Neumann, in *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, condenses this grand narrative of the individual and collective psyche: "The relation of the ego to the unconscious and of the personal to the transpersonal decides the fate not only of the individual, but of humanity. The theater of this encounter is the human mind"(xxiv). Jungian archetypal theory is a valuable mode of criticism precisely because it elucidates important conscious and unconscious processes at work within the Western literary mind. This approach is of particular value in explicating one of these (sub)conscious processes, perhaps the overarching narrative of Western

consciousness: the attempted heroic subjugation of the unconscious, and thus of the archetypal feminine.

A Jungian archetypal explication of *King Lear, Hamlet, Othello,* and *Romeo and Juliet* with reference to Neumann proves particularly valuable. Each tragedy illustrates the subversive interactions of the archetypal feminine with "masculine" consciousness; each exemplifies the effort of Shakespeare's protagonists to subjugate, to demonize, to exorcise, or in some way to integrate the feminine. Moreover, these tragedies demonstrate an evolution of consciousness paralleling that traced by Neumann. In *King Lear*, Lear's psychic inflation presages his fall into Neumann's uroboric state; the Terrible Mother personified by Goneril and Regan is subjugated at horrific cost. Hamlet as hero of consciousness embarks upon a metaphorical battle with Neumann's uroboric First Parents; the apocalyptic purgation of (archetypally feminine) evil from Denmark perhaps temporarily succeeds, again with tragic consequences. The protagonists of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* attempt to integrate the archetypal feminine; the lesser *coniunctio* formed by Othello and Desdemona at Cyprus disintegrates into uroboric chaos. The hope of a greater *coniunctio* embodied by "Juliet and her Romeo" (*Romeo and Juliet* 5.3.310) provides the greatest hope for the integration of the archetypal feminine, of Jungian individuation, of Neumann's centroversion within the human psyche and within literature.

Responses to the Jungian Archetypal Feminine in *King Lear,* *Hamlet, Othello,* and *Romeo and Juliet*

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments v

Dedication vi

I. Introduction 1

II. "So out went the candle, and we were left darkling": *King Lear* as Uroboric Drama 25

III. "A consummation devoutly to be [un]wished": *Hamlet*, Heroic Ego-Consciousness, and the Embrace of Chaos 76

IV. "May the winds blow till they have wakened death": Destruction of the Lesser *Coniunctio* from Within in *Othello* 123

V. "Poor sacrifices of our enmity": Destruction of the Lesser *Coniunctio* from Without in *Romeo and Juliet* 156

VI. Conclusion 187

Works Cited 204

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The mythological and ritual origins of theater would seem to be indisputable. The precise nature of these origins—indeed, the degree of tenuousness of the linkages between myth, ritual, archetype, and theater—is debatable. Inverting the early twentieth-century mythos of Sir James Frazer, the Cambridge Ritualists, and their followers (the mythos, that is, of the purported dying solar or vegetation god whose putative annual slaughter is the precedent of tragedy), René Girard asserts:

> Instead of viewing myth as a humanization of nature, as we always tend to do, Shakespeare views it as the naturalization as well as the supernaturalization of a very human violence. Specialists on the subject might be well advised to take a close look at this Shakespearean view; what if it turned out to be less mythical than their own! (qtd. in Hardin 857)

Northrop Frye, in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, goes so far as to assert:

> The *literary* relation of ritual to drama, like that of any other aspect of human action to drama, is a relation of content to form only, not one of source to derivation. (101)

What, then, are the origins of the literary ritual of tragedy, and what is the purpose of tragic catharsis? The collective unconscious of Jungian theory might provide partial answers; the struggle of all literary protagonists is, at a profound level, the epic battle of egocentric consciousness against the mustered forces of chaotic unconsciousness. Jung's disciple Erich Neumann, in *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, condenses this grand narrative of the individual and collective psyche:

> The relation of the ego to the unconscious and of the personal to the transpersonal decides the fate not only of the individual, but of humanity. The theater of this encounter is the human mind. (xxiv)

Troubling questions of plot vex Neumann's audience. In a postmodern era of many competing grand narratives (or of none), *ex cathedra* pontifications concerning "*the* origins and history of consciousness" are necessarily suspect. Within the cavernous darkness of the world's theater, nevertheless, shadows of partial truth dancing upon its dimly lit stage are necessarily the basis of inquiry. Utilized in conjunction with competing critical approaches, archetypal theory thus provides a valuable—albeit scratched and imperfect—lens through which to view literature.

It is arguable, moreover, that archetypal theory can serve as a valuable mode of criticism precisely because its tenets are indicative of important conscious and unconscious processes at work within the Western literary mind. Such an archetypal approach is of particular value in attempting to explicate one of these (sub)conscious processes, perhaps the overarching narrative of Western consciousness: the attempted heroic subjugation of the unconscious, and thus of the archetypal feminine. Neumann asserts:

> [O]ne thing, paradoxical though it may seem, can be established as a basic law: even in woman, consciousness has a masculine character. The correlation "consciousness-light-day" and "unconsciousness-darkness-night" holds true regardless of sex. . . Consciousness, as such, is masculine even in women, just as the unconscious is feminine in men. (*Origins* 42)

Mustering all the forces of archetypally masculine reason, light, and order to this end, literature nevertheless fails to subjugate the archetypal feminine; resistant to its destruction (or colonization) by literature (or by psychoanalysis), the archetypal "feminine"—the myriad spectral manifestations of which include the Jungian anima, Jung's and Neumann's Great Mother, Robert Graves' White Goddess, or the Kore of classical mythology analyzed by Jung and Karl Kerényi— persists in its subversion of the archetypal "masculine," frequently with dire consequences.

Although the unfortunate protagonists of tragedy might disagree, such upheaval can, ultimately, promote the evolution of consciousness. Jung, in his 1922 lecture "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry," asserts:

> Therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. (*CW* 15.82-83.130)[1]

Neumann, in his indictment of modern dehumanized, psychologically fragmented "mass man" (439), addresses the compelling need for the reconciliation of consciousness with the archetypal feminine:

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[1] References to Jung's *Collected Works* appear in this text by volume, page, and paragraph number.

> In the course of Western development, the essentially positive process of emancipating the ego from the tyranny of the unconscious has become negative. It has gone far beyond the division of conscious and unconscious into two systems and has brought about a schism between them. . . [T]his development has gone beyond the formation of individual personality and given rise to an atomized individualism. (436)

Divorced from the archetypal feminine, "mass man" becomes subject to possession by the collective shadow, by the negative aspects of the unconscious defined as "the Terrible Mother" (440). Ideally, literature would serve a compensatory purpose as a safe means of integrating troublesome aspects of the unconscious defined as feminine; in practice, it appears to serve (in tragedy, at least, with rare exceptions) as a means of exorcism of the demonized archetypal feminine.

Neumann's theories concerning human psychic development are helpful in determining the precise nature of this attempted integration. Neumann argues that a process of "centroversion" manifesting "itself. . . with the ego as the center of consciousness and the self as the psychic center [of the unconscious]" (*Origins* 287) is the goal of psychic evolution. Centroversion—an ideal state in which the ego has liberated itself from the tyranny of the (archetypally feminine) unconscious, yet remains in communion with it and with the divine image, the Transpersonal Self, within the unconscious—is the difficult task not merely of the mythic or tragic hero, but of all human consciousness. The epigram from Ostanes which heads Part I of *The Origins and History of Consciousness* condenses the three major stages of this process: "Nature rejoices in nature. Nature subdues nature. Nature rules over nature" (1). Thus Neumann summarizes these stages:

> The first cycle of myth is the creation myth. Here the mythological projection of psychic material appears in cosmogonic form, as the mythology of creation. The world and the unconscious predominate and form the object of myth. Ego and man are only nascent as yet, and their birth, suffering, and emancipation constitute the phases of the creation myth.
>
> At the stage of separation of the World Parents, the germ of ego consciousness finally asserts itself. While yet in the fold of the creation myth it enters upon the second cycle, namely, the hero myth, in which the ego, consciouness, and the human world become conscious of themselves and of their dignity. (5)

This "dawn state of the beginning" (6)—this "perfect state of being, in which the opposites are contained. . . perfect because it is autarchic" (9), Neumann characterizes as the uroboric state:

> The perfection of that which rests in itself in no way contradicts the perfection of that which circles in itself. Although absolute rest is something static and eternal, unchanging and therefore without history, it is at the same time the place of origin and the germ cell of creativity. Living the cycle of its own life, it is the circular snake, the primal dragon of the beginning that bites its own tail, the self-begetting "*Ουρόβορος*" [uroboros]. (10)

In *The Great Mother*, Neumann defines the all-encompassing nature of this state:

> As symbol of the origin and of the opposites contained in it, the uroboros is "The Great Round," in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled. In this sense the uroboros is also a symbol of a state in which chaos, the

> unconscious, and the psyche as a whole were undifferentiated—and which is experienced by the ego as a borderline state. (18)

As nascent "ego consciousness" (131) achieves self-awareness, it finds itself locked in mortal combat with the hostile maternal and paternal elements contained within the uroboros:

> With the birth of the hero the primordial struggle begins—the struggle with the First Parents. This problem, in personal and transpersonal form, dominates the hero's whole existence, his birth, his fight with the [uroboric] dragon, and his transformation. By gaining possession of the masculine and feminine sides of himself. . . and building up an inner core of personality in whose structure the old and the new stages are integrated, the hero completes a pattern of development which is collectively embodied in the mythological projections of the hero myth, and has also left individual traces in the growth of human personality. (131-32)

In this intermediate state of consciousness, the archetypal feminine and archetypal masculine become distinct entities; the archetypal feminine, specifically, crystallizes into the form of the Great Mother. Neumann, in *The Great Mother,* divides the unconscious into four ascending planes: "the nonvisual reality and action of the archetype *an sich* [as such]" (20); "the uroboros," in which positive and negative, masculine and feminine elements "all work together without order or arrangement" (20), thus producing psychic chaos; the [somewhat] differentiated archetypal feminine and archetypal masculine, in which the feminine "contains essential elements of the Feminine. . . but they are without order and hence impossible for the ego that experiences them to predict and apprehend" (21), thus resulting in bisexual imagery (for example, Lear's vision of Gloucester transformed into "Gonerill with a white beard") (*King Lear* 4.5.94); and, finally, the personification of the archetypal feminine as the Great Mother. Neumann thus defines the Great Mother's crystallization out of the archetypal feminine:

> A configured form of the Great Mother has emerged from the primordial archetype. . . She has three forms: the good, the terrible, and the good-bad mother. The good feminine (and masculine) elements configure the Good Mother, who, like the Terrible Mother containing the negative elements, can also emerge independently from the unity of the Great Mother. The third form is that of the Great Mother who is good-bad and makes possible a union of positive and negative attributes.
> (*The Great Mother* 21)

The ultimate goal of the hero of consciousness' conflict with the Great Mother (and the Great Father) is, ideally, the successful sublimation of the unconscious—the transcendent union of consciousness and the unconscious:

> While in the beginning the ego germ lay in the embrace of the hermaphroditic uroboros, at the end the self proves to be the golden core of a sublimated uroboros, containing in itself masculine and feminine, conscious and unconscious elements, a unity in which the ego does not perish but experiences itself, in the self, as a uniting symbol. (*Origins* 414-15)

This final goal of centroversion is roughly equivalent to the Jungian concept of individuation. Thus Jung defines the latter term in "Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation": "I use the term 'individuation' to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'" (*CW* 9.1.275.490). In Jung's analyses of alchemical texts, the image of the alchemical *coniunctio*—"a *symbol of the creative union of opposites,* a 'uniting symbol' in the literal sense" (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," *CW* 9.1.174.293)—figures prominently as symbol of this elusive goal of psychic wholeness. In the archetypal *coniunctio*, the Platonic and Neoplatonic "bisexual primordial being" whom Neumann equates with the originary uroboric Great Round (*Origins* 9) becomes "a symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self, where the war of opposites finds peace. . . Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality" ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.175.294). In "Psychology of the Transference," Jung clarifies the origins of this archetypal image:

> The *coniunctio* is an *a priori* image which has always occupied an important place in man's mental development. If we trace this idea back we find it has two sources in alchemy, one Christian, the other pagan. The Christian source is unmistakably the doctrine of Christ and the Church, *sponsus* and *sponsa*, where Christ takes on the role of Sol and the Church that of Luna. The pagan source is on the one hand the *hieros gamos* [sacred marriage of Goddess and God], on the other the marital union of the mystic with God. (*CW* 16.169.355)

In his discussion of the alchemical *mysterium coniunctionis* [sacred marriage of opposing elements] Jung comments upon "what an archetypal drama of death and rebirth lies hidden in the coniunctio, and what immemorial human emotions clash together in this problem" ("The Components of the Coniunctio," *CW* 14.41.35). Within the theater of the human mind, the *coniunctio* engenders comedy and tragedy, life and death: "The factors which come together in the coniunctio are conceived as opposites, either confronting one another in enmity or attracting one another in love" ("The Components of the Coniunctio" 14.3.1). The Jungian Edward F. Edinger, in *Anatomy of the Psyche*, distinguishes between a "lesser" and "greater" *coniunctio*:

> The lesser *coniunctio* is a union or fusion of [psychic] substances that are not yet thoroughly separated or discriminated [for example, masculine and feminine, life and death, love and hate]. It is always followed by death or *mortificatio.* The greater *coniunctio*, on the other hand, is the goal of the *opus* [work], the supreme accomplishment [of psychic integration]. In actual reality these two aspects are combined with each other. The experience of the *coniunctio* is almost always a mixture of the lesser and the greater aspects. (211)

This, then, is the task of the protagonists of literature, viewed in another way: the synthesis of the ego and the unconscious in transcendent union, in the marriage of consciousness and the unconscious. Whether imaged as the heroic sublimation of the uroboros or as the sacred marriage of *coniunctio*, this final "synthesis of the psyche" (*Origins* 414) remains an elusive goal. For Kenneth Tucker, in his Jungian analysis of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare "suggests a dark possibility that Jung and [Joseph] Campbell often avoid: [t]he view that individuation may not be possible—at least for a large number of persons" (132). Edinger, in "*Romeo and Juliet:* A Coniunctio Drama," explicates the problem of this "drama of the mystery of the *coniunctio"* (47) in which the pair fall into the *mortificato* of the lesser *coniunctio* while seeking the transcendence of the greater:

"Romeo and Juliet are both sacrificial victims. They fall into identification with the archetype of *coniunctio* and are thus fated for [psychic] dismemberment" (53). Nevertheless, "in transpersonal-love terms they are victorious" (63); in Edinger's view "this play, in its beauty, is a bringer of consciousness" (66) since it hints at the possibility of unified consciousness transcending death.

Previous book-length Jungian studies of (or partially of) Shakespeare are somewhat scarce in number. Archetypal criticism seeks to discover archetypal patterns—fundamental organizing patterns of belief and behavior expressed in human religion, myth, ritual, and narrative—operating within literary works. Jungian criticism specifically attempts to interpret these patterns—and, for that matter, the behavior of literary protagonists—in terms of Jungian psychoanalytic theory with reference to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious (that is, of a transpersonal unconscious containing archetypal manifestations which influence individual and collective behavior). In (for instance) Maud Bodkin's proto-Jungian *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934), Bodkin notes Jung's treatment in *The Psychology of the Unconscious* of "the symbol of the dying hero as it appears in individual fantasy, representing, according to his interpretation, an inflated infantile personality," along with Jung's later discussion in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* of the "'Mana Personality,' a hero figure. . . appearing with a richer content at late stages of analysis" (18). James Kirsch, in *Shakespeare's Royal Self* (1966), analyzes *Hamlet, King Lear,* and *Macbeth* from the perspective of

Shakespeare's own individuation; these plays represent "significant steps in Shakespeare's inner development because in each of them the unconscious appears as a separate factor, as a dramatic figure. . . or because the consciousness of the hero is for a time concentrated on the unconscious and characteristically changed by it" (xviii-xix). The three plays constitute "Shakespeare's grand opus, by which the playwright liberated himself from 'original sin' and gained his royal self" (James Kirsch xix).

Sven Armens, in *Archetypes of the Family in Literature* (1966), seeks "to examine. . . literary depictions of the parent-child relationship" and "to investigate how imagery grounded in this relationship is utilized in poetry and drama to provide a mode of communication beyond that of rationally formulated statement" (vii). Armens, contrasting "the patriarchal demands of the father and the nurturing care of the mother" (viii) within family dynamics—symbolized respectively by "the *Sacred Fire*" and the *Physical Hearth*" (viii)—utilizes Neumann's concepts of the Good and Terrible Mother in his chapters on *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. *Hamlet* is an exploration of "the archetypal relationships of the father, mother, hero, and maiden," *King Lear* "a tragedy which not only depicts a double violation of both hearth and sacred fire but also the reachievement of a family covenant in the reconciliation of Lear and Cordelia" (ix). Alex Aronson, in *Psyche & Symbol in Shakespeare* (1972), discusses Shakespeare's work in relation to the ego, the anima, and the Transpersonal Self:

"[A]ll drama results in psychic polarity, the dualism and conflicting nature of ego and self, the conscious and the unconscious, *anima* and *animus,* mask and face, are the very stuff of which all great drama is made" (39). Aronson concludes with the image of archetype as *asklepios* [healer]:

> The artificer disguised as priest, the wise old man, the virgin, all of them healers of the mind, come to us out of a collective unconscious that gave shape to the Christian and pre-Christian symbolism of these plays. . . What makes human survival possible is the wonder of their spiritual healing, which they perform at a moment of miraculous perfection that is theirs and that they can transmit to the anguished soul of men threatened with extinction. (307-08)

James P. Driscoll's *Identity in Shakespearean Drama* (1983) aims to "show how Shakespeare develops his conceptions of identity by defining his characters' conscious identities through their observations about each other's social identities, their reflections upon their own real identities, and, finally, their aspirations to ideal identity" (25). "Hamlet's withdrawal into melancholy, preoccupation with death and the hereafter, and his encounter with the Ghost are, like the legendary Journey to Hades, emblematic (and symptomatic) of inner exploration" (52); "Hamlet is killed at the point when he has overcome despair, frustration, and self-contempt, and is steadily advancing toward ideal, fully individuated identity" (67). "Iago can conjure the malignant Turk latent in Othello and every man; but the noble Moor vanquishes Iago the instant he smites the Turk within to join Desdemona in a final consummation of their love" (85).

“Two closely related archetypal patterns color and shape the vision of *King Lear.* The first is man’s suffering-laden struggle for consciousness and psychic wholeness and the second his confrontation with existential truths about injustice, death, and evil and with the dark side of God” (123). *Lear* “is a vision of unalloyed evil, unspeakable torment, and irredeemable loss, of undaunted love and the dignity and wholeness that truth and love can give; following the archetypes, it is a vision of God” (152).

H. R. Coursen, in *The Compensatory Psyche* (1986), discusses *Richard III, Henry V, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* as examples of the Jungian “compensatory psyche” (ix) at work upon consciousness, including reference to Jung’s extraverted and introverted psychological types. As for Hamlet, “[t]he Jungian approach allows us to describe Hamlet within the context of a failed androgyny. Such a failure is characteristic of the introverted thinker and can incorporate an oedipal dilemma” (97). Hamlet has “trapped himself in an unsuccessful working out of a myth of identity. He has become mythological, of course, but his status as enigma cannot ignore his having proved himself a guilty creature sitting at a play” (99). In *Othello,* “[a] collision between an introvert and an extravert, when engineered by perhaps the most masterful extraverted thinker in the canon, must prove fatal. The inevitability results from Iago’s forcing both Othello and Desdemona to function from the *weaknesses* of their psyches” (117).

In *King Lear,* "Lear's extraverted struggle to understand his introverted daughter—his fight to keep the insights of his anima from his ego—is agonizing. . . That he should lose Cordelia—however much he allowed his guard to drop—is the final twist of 'the rack of this tough world'" (128).

Few recent Jungian studies of Shakespeare exist. Ryder Jordan-Finnegan's *Individuation and the Power of Evil on the Nature of the Human Psyche: Studies in C. G. Jung, Arthur Miller, and William Shakespeare* (2006) argues "that Hamlet's transformation occurs because he accepts his own imperfections, including his complicity with evil, as well as the imperfections of humanity. . . Furthermore, his long journey into the unconscious allows him to surface, consciously, with a new awareness of evil's relatedness to good" (166). "All in all, Hamlet moves through life and death, 'ready for the final contest of mighty opposites' and finally accepting 'the world as it is, the world as a duel, in which, whether we know it or not, evil holds the poisoned rapier and the poisoned chalice waits'" (Mack, *Everybody's Shakespeare* 127, qtd. in Jordan-Finnegan 218). Matthew A. Fike's post-Jungian *A Jungian Study of Shakespeare: The Visionary Mode* (2009) analyzes *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice,* the *Henriad, Othello*, and *Hamlet* in terms of Jung's "visionary" category of literature (that is, of literature inspired directly by the collective unconscious, as opposed to "psychological" literature inspired by mundane consciousness). In Fike's post-colonial reading of Othello with reference to the Jungian Eurocentric primitive, "the shadow-driven murder of Desdemona affrights the [Transpersonal] Self, which seeks to draw Othello from the primitive tendency for participation mystique toward a greater psychic integration through a more sophisticated understanding of signification. . . [His] death is tragic not because he never realizes the error of his primitive thinking but because the realization comes too late for him to conceive of any outcome other than self-murder" (108). "Hamlet's tragedy is. . . that he encounters the anima and the shadow in the wrong order, attempting a relationship with Ophelia before he has properly integrated his shadow. . . [W]ith Ophelia dead. . . it is too late for him to build a relationship with her now that the shadow integration has laid a more or less appropriate foundation" (147).

Although—much of psychoanalytic criticism to the contrary—literary characters are not analysands, there is value in regarding the protagonist of any given literary work as its ego. Given this (typically Jungian) view, each text becomes a potential "bringer of consciousness," a possible means of interrogating the human psyche. The present study differs from those enumerated above, however, in its emphasis upon Neumann's narrative of the epic subjugation of the archetypally feminine unconsciousness by the heroic ego. Armens cites Neumann in his explication of conflicting matriarchal and patriarchal family structures (and discusses Hamlet as dragon-slaying youthful hero of consciousness who, having failed to sublimate his ego and "to unite with the Kore in a bond of love. . . losing his soul. . . falls back into the embrace of the 'world-dragon'") (147). He does not, however, discuss *King Lear* as a dramatization of Neumann's uroboric state, or the theme of archetypal *coniunctio* evident in *Othello* and in *Romeo and Juliet.* In the case of four Shakepearean tragedies—*King Lear, Hamlet, Othello,* and *Romeo and Juliet*—a Jungian archetypal explication of their protagonists' actions with reference to Neumann proves particularly valuable. Each tragedy illustrates the subversive interactions of the archetypal feminine with "masculine" consciousness; each exemplifies the effort of Shakespeare's protagonists to subjugate, to demonize, to exorcise, or in some way to integrate the feminine. Moreover, these four tragedies demonstrate an evolution of consciousness roughly paralleling that traced by Neumann in *The Origins and History of Consciousness.* In *King Lear,* the ego-king of his tragedy seeks all-encompassing psychic dominion over those around him even as he ostensibly crawls toward death; succumbing to psychic inflation as he overidentifies with his phallic persona of divine kingship, he falls into Neumann's uroboric state. Coursen, in "Age is Unnecessary: A Jungian Approach to *King Lear*," states: "Both Richard [II] and Lear confuse *persona*, or 'body natural,' with the office of kingship, or 'body politic'" (75). Lear's "*hubris*"—that is, his psychic inflation—is punished "from within" by the psyche (78). The chaotic, uroboric state engendered by Lear's psychic inflation threatens to engulf and devour not only Lear, but his kingdom. As Peter L. Rudnytsky points out in his post-Freudian analysis “The Darke and Vicious Place,” a “pattern of role reversals” characterizes the play: “[I]f Cordelia and her sisters are both daughters and mothers to Lear, and Lear is himself identified with the feminine ‘nothing,’ then it becomes impossible to differentiate fathers from daughters, sons from mothers, and parents from children” (309). Although such chaotic implosion of hierarchy characterizes Neumann’s uroboric state, Rudnytsky’s reference is to the Freudian female genital “nothing”; however, as the chaotic, ego-banishing “contentious storm” (3.4.6) of Act 3 illustrates, *Lear’s* uroboric “tyranny of the open [night]” seeks also psychic nothingness, the death of consciousness. Lear’s “pelican daughters” (3.4.74) Gonerill and Regan, reversing Neumann’s narrative of the epic defeat of the feminine unconscious, attempt to overthrow the paternal ego-king; the dark aspects of the archetypal feminine hostile to consciousness are ultimately subjugated, but only with great difficulty and much bloodshed. Cordelia, a figure of the Jungian positive anima and of Neumann’s Good Mother as Sophia, briefly inspires the light of sanity in Lear; she becomes, for him, “a bringer of consciousness.” Kenneth Tucker notes: “Of course, Lear’s identity has been demolished, but painfully and gradually it is remade as he comes to express his feeling side in loving Cordelia” (129). Nevertheless, hanged like a Norse sacrifice upon the tough tree of this world, Cordelia—“dead as earth” (5.3.266) with her life-usurping father— succumbs to archetypally feminine darkness and death. The “desperate” archetypal feminine having been successfully "govern[ed]" (5.3.164), Edgar and Albany attend to the "present business/ of general woe" (5.2.323-324), that of restoring divine order and the primacy of the archetypal masculine.

In *Hamlet*, the "good Mother" (1.2.77) has taken a new incestuous consort (thus echoing Neumann's narrative of primitive matriarchal psychological dominance), her husband's murderer (thus echoing Sir James Frazer's narrative in *The Golden Bough* of the ritually slain priest-king of Nemi—consort of the Great Mother personified as Diana—as well as that of Robert Graves' annually slain ritual king, consort of the White Goddess, in *The White Goddess*). Concerning Frazer's work, Frye states: "*The Golden Bough* purports to be a work of anthropology, but it. . . may yet prove to be really a work of literary criticism" (101). In any case the stage of *Hamlet*, overshadowed by Gertrude's emulation of the Great Mother and her incestuous consort, is haunted simultaneously by the specter of Frazer's (and Graves') ritual king. Hamlet as Harold Bloom's "Western hero of consciousness" (409), attempting the purgation of Denmark's moral chaos by metaphorically confronting Neumann's First Parents, falls victim to the archetypally feminine chaos within his own psyche, taking much of the cast with him. In Neumann's opinion, in *Hamlet* (as in the *Oresteia*) "[t]he spirit of the father is the impelling force that compasses the death of the sinful mother" (*Origins* 168); she is "killed precisely because [the maternal] principle has sinned against the father principle" (168). In a similar vein, Joseph Campbell remarks of Hamlet's "moment of revulsion" concerning the marriage: "Life, the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul" (122). Susan Rowland, in her discussion of *Hamlet* as at one level "the hero myth interrupted" (198), asserts: "Prince Hamlet fulfils his mythical destiny in being the means of destroying a court dominated by the transgressive sexuality of his (goddess) mother" (*Jung as a Writer* 199). Nevertheless Hamlet—vacillating hero of consciousness in the unwitting service of the unconscious—ultimately serves not only the ends of patriarchal consciousness but also the creative, destructive aims of the good and evil Great Mother. In the end archetypally masculine consciousness, light, and order once more prevail, albeit at great price.

The protagonists of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*—attempting to integrate the archetypal feminine—approach (and, in the case of Romeo and Juliet, arguably achieve) Neumann's final "synthesis of the psyche," the heroic sublimation of the uroboros, the mystical state of archetypal *coniunctio.* In Cyprus, Othello and "the divine Desdemona" (2.1.73) briefly form a lesser *coniunctio*, a mystical union of psychic oppositions; unable to withstand Othello's jealous demonization of his other under the influence of Iago as shadow [that is, of the first component of the Jungian unconscious with whom the ego must contend, usually comprised of the individual's unacknowledged negative traits], this *coniunctio* self-destructs largely from within. Gregg Andrew Hurwitz views the play as an example of "the male hero myth" (79): "[t]he hero's task, in coming to terms with his unconscious, is therefore to redefine constantly his relationship with the feminine" (79). Having failed "as Jungian ego. . . attempting to integrate" his fragmented psyche (79), "Othello provides a lesson of 'what not to do' while teaching viewers to love well *and* wisely" (91). Terrell L. Tebbetts, likewise defining Othello as faulty ego, asserts: "Much of criticism's contradiction over the character of Othello stems from readers' wrestling with the pageants Othello's repressive ego creates to keep Othello himself and others in false gaze" (107). Hurwitz's argument, along with the bulk of previous Jungian criticism, defines Iago as Othello's shadow (85-89); for Tebbetts, Iago's and Othello's interaction "suggests the battle between repressive ego and full [Transpersonal] Self [that is, of the God-image within the human unconscious] in the unbalanced, unindividuated psyche" (109). Whether as anima [that is, as the feminine soul of the masculine ego] or (as Tebbetts asserts) "both anima and shadow" (109), demonized Desdemona suffers the consequences not only of Othello's lack of wholesome psychic integration, but of the apparent impossibility of Othello's and Desdemona's psychic integration with one another. The divine pair's alchemical union cannot withstand the diabolical powers of Iago's metaphorical poison, of the deceptively feminine "little web" (2.1.164) that he weaves utilizing all of the conventions of corrupt Venice and Elizabethan England at his disposal. Having briefly attained this "symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self, where the war of opposites finds peace" (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.175.294), the conjoined pair's unfortunate confrontation "in enmity" follows their attraction "in love" (Jung, "The Components of the Coniunctio" 14.3.1). Awakening something primitive within Othello—perhaps a form of Neumann's uroboric state, defined as a "borderline state" of the ego "in which chaos, the unconscious, and the psyche as a whole [are] undifferentiated" (*The Great Mother* 18)—Iago destroys Desdemona by destroying Othello's soul; the latter, in Jungian terms, murders the embodiment of his anima (Coursen 112). Dying with a kiss upon Desdemona's corpse, the protagonist completes his ritualistic descent into his own uroboric underworld surrounded by chaotic nothingness defying the exorcisms of literature. Thus, Neumann's Terrible Mother—or, perhaps, primal uroboric chaos—is triumphant. Whether Othello's consciousness has evolved in this process is a question to be settled "[w]hen we shall meet at compt" (*Othello* 5.3.271).

As Edinger has pointed out, *Romeo and Juliet* likewise deals with the Jungian theme of archetypal *coniunctio*: "Perhaps on the deepest level it can be seen as a drama of the mystery of *coniunctio*. Its major themes—love, war, beauty, marriage, death, and the union of opposites—are all related to this archetype" ("Romeo and Juliet: A *Coniunctio* Drama" 47). Attempting to achieve the "greater *coniunctio*" figuring a transcendent union of consciousness and the unconscious, Romeo and Juliet (according to Edinger) fall into the "lesser *coniunctio*"—that is, into an imperfect union of psychic oppositions pointing toward the possibility of the greater *coniunctio,* yet subject to dissolution and potentially perilous to the ego—and thus into "*mortificatio*" or psychic (and physical) death (*Anatomy of the Psyche* 211). Nevertheless, their fate is not without hope (or, at least, not without meaning), since it hints at their achievement of the greater *coniunctio*, of divine consciousness united beyond death: "Romeo and Juliet both lose a winning match. In ego-power terms they are defeated by death. However, in transpersonal-love terms they are victorious" (63). In Edinger's view, it is the archetype of *coniunctio* itself which crushes the psychologically immature pair; they are "cruelly ground betwen the [psychic] opposites" of masculine and feminine, love and hate, life and death (58). External forces—the warring Capulets and Montagues, the conventions of Veronese society restricting Juliet's freedom of choice—would seem, however, to be at least equally responsible for their ensuing tragedy. Inexorably drawn to the young goddess presiding over the Capulets' festivities—whose celebrated unearthly paleness resembles that of Graves' White Goddess—Romeo rashly ignores the dangers of courting Juliet. Juliet's speech emphasizes her Kore- (that is, Persephone-) like fate: "My grave is like to be my wedding bed" (1.5.134), she sighs, foreshadowing her mock entombment within the realm of Hades and the Terrible Mother. In the conjoined pair's deification of one another, each illuminates the other with divine radiance even as they assume one another's psychic characteristics. Thus Juliet becomes "the sun" (2.2.3) of consciousness, Romeo the Dionysus-like, Cupid-like "god of [Juliet's] idolatry" (2.2.112-114) who—ironically swearing by "yonder blessèd moon" (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.107)—will soon share her Kore-like ritual entombment. The friar who sanctifies this doubly devoted couple's union appears to serve Neumann's Great Mother at least as much as he does the Christian God: "The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb; What is her burying grave, that is her womb" (2.3.9-10). Juliet becomes—not the death-glutted White Goddess—but, in her brief return from mock death, the Kore-like type of the eternal maiden ravished by Death: "Death lies on her like an untimely frost / Upon the sweetest flower of all the field" (4.5.28-29). "Poor sacrifices" (5.3.304) of the enmity not only of warring families but of their own psyches, Romeo and Juliet lie together in the Capulets' tomb, at once the Terrible Mother's "detestable maw" (5.3.45), the earth's "womb of death" (5.3.45), and the cathedral of Juliet's death-defying "feasting presence full of light" (5.3.84-86). Torn asunder largely by external familial and societal forces (Edinger to the contrary), perhaps their union has achieved transcendence of psychic oppositions—of consciousness and the unconscious, of masculine and feminine, of being and nonexistence—somewhere beyond the grave ("*Romeo and Juliet*" 62-66).

The seeds of consciousness—of the literary reconciliation of archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine, of light and darkness, life and death—lie entombed here in Juliet's "feasting presence full of light." An early tragedy which could easily have become a comedy, *Romeo and Juliet* offers greater hope of such reconciliation than do the later tragedies; as Shakespeare's differentiation between the comic and tragic modes progresses, the degree of disjunction between archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine increases. As an archetypal analysis of these four tragedies makes evident, the efforts of Shakespeare and of his protagonists to excise or to include the vexed archetypal feminine result in complex, frequently futile literary and psychic maneuvers. As Albany and Edgar gaze upon the corpses of Gonerill and Regan, the "present business" of "govern[ing]" the negative forces which the dead sisters personify is daunting; Horatio and Fortinbras, resolving to exorcise *Hamlet*'s furious "carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts" (5.2.360) as soldiers bear the play's allotment of dead bodies offstage, provide scant hope that masculine reason and order will more than briefly prevail against the destructive feminine. The brief Jungian syzygy, or *coniunctio,* formed by Othello and "the divine Desdemona" at Cyprus quickly disintegrates, under the influence of Iago as Othello's shadow, into something approaching Neumann's uroboric state. It is, indeed, the image of the archetypal *coniunctio* embodied by "Juliet and her Romeo" (5.3.310) which provides the greatest hope for the integration of archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine, of Jungian "individuation" or psychic wholeness, of Neumann's sublimation of the uroboros within the human psyche and within literature.

CHAPTER TWO

"So out went the candle, and we were left darkling": *King Lear* as Uroboric Drama

In act 1, scene 4 of *King Lear*, Lear's Fool, imprudently interrupting Gonerill's indictment of her father's "insolent retinue"[1] (1.4.161), advises the king:

> For you know, nuncle,
> The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
> That it's had it head bit off by it young.
> So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling. (1.4.174-77)

Thus the half-comprehending Lear, tottering upon the brink of madness, begins his descent into psychic dissolution. What, indeed, is the nature of this lunatic descent, and what is the end of Lear's unwitting quest? What, moreover, is the "darker purpose" (1.1.31) of his insane love-contest? Freud and Freudian psychoanalytic theory explain in part Lear's insanity, the insanity of a dying ego seeking infantile oblivion as he makes his castrating daughters his mothers. Denied the incestuous union implied by the frustrated hope of Cordelia's "kind nursery"(1.1.118), enraged Lear, in this view, engenders the tragic ruin of his universe.

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[1] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Lear: Updated Edition*, ed. Jay L. Halio, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2005). Subsequent references appear in this text by act, scene, and line number.

The evidence of an incest theme—in, at least, the metaphorical sense—in *King Lear* cannot be denied. Nevertheless, the Fool's speech to Lear in 1.4.174-77 suggests a non-Freudian avenue of interpretation, one perhaps more profitable than the rehearsal of variant themes of incestuous, eroticized death drive: an archetypal explication of Lear's madness. The "hedge sparrow" Lear, ego-king of his tragedy, seeks all-encompassing—indeed, incestuous—psychic dominion over those around him even as he ostensibly crawls toward death; he blindly nurtures the feminine sources of his ultimate destruction even as he proclaims his phallic persona[1] of divine kingship. Lear undergoes an unexpected severance of consciousness;[2] his metaphorical head bitten off by the double "cuckoo" Gonerill and Regan, Lear's ego[3] (along with all concerned) embarks upon a voyage through the unconscious. Seeking Eros in Death even as he persists in usurping his life, pursued by the fateful daughters whom he has made the Terrible Mother,[4] longing for reunion with the Good Daughter-Mother,[5] Lear journeys toward the extinction or the rebirth of consciousness. With the death of Cordelia—a figure of the Sophia, that is, of Divine Wisdom as feminine Logos venerated in Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic traditions—positive aspects of the archetypal feminine disappear from the play's universe. The dark feminine personified by Gonerill and Regan successfully subjugated, masculine consciousness dissociates itself from feminine aspects of the unconscious. Although *King Lear's* surviving "men of stones"(5.3.231) temporarily suppress the archetypal feminine's negative aspects, its positive aspects, "dead as earth"(5.3.266) with their incarnation in Cordelia, likewise perish.

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[1] Coursen, in "Age is Unnecessary: A Jungian Approach to *King Lear*," states: "Both Richard [II] and Lear confuse *persona*, or 'body natural,' with the office of kingship, or 'body politic' (75). Lear's extraversion exacerbates his difficulty (76): "The Lear of the first scene has repressed his 'inner nature,' the opposite to his conscious orientation represented by Cordelia" (78). Lear's "*hubris*"—that is, his psychic inflation—is punished "from within" by the psyche (78). "For Lear, all crises—adolescent, mid-life, and old-age—will occur with a devastating similarity. The danger is enhanced by the fact that it will be introverted feeling that will break through the fragile stratum of Lear's rational surface" (79).

[2] "By consciousness I understand the relation of psychic contents to the *ego*. . . in so far as this relation is perceived as such by the ego. Relations to the ego that are not perceived as such are *unconscious*. . . Consciousness is the function or activity which maintains the relation of psychic contents to the ego" (Jung, "Definitions," *CW* 6.421-22.700).

References to Jung's *Collected Works* appear in this text by volume, page, and paragraph number.

[3] "We understand the ego as the complex factor to which all conscious contents are related. It forms, as it were, the centre of the field of consciousness; and, in so far as this comprises the empirical personality, the ego is the subject of all personal acts of consciousness. The relation of a psychic content to the ego forms the criterion of its consciousness, for no content can be conscious unless it is represented to a subject" (Jung, "The Ego," *CW* 9.2.3.1).

Sigmund Freud, in "The Theme of the Three Caskets," to some degree anticipates an archetypal interpretation of *Lear*. He concludes that Lear's test represents the king's mythic choice between mother, bride, and Death herself:

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[4] Armens, in his chapter on *King Lear* (149-89), so identifies Gonerill and Regan: "Yet Lear, for countless years, has been the Creon who has been heard and not questioned. Naturally, it is difficult for him to change. But the Terrible Mothers insist that the disrespected Elder must assume the role of child within their perverted family; in other words, they insist that Lear lose his identity, not only as King and father but also as a human being" (152).

[5] Kahn argues "that the socially-ordained, developmentally appropriate surrender of Cordelia as daughter-wife—the renunciation of her as incestuous object—awakens a deeper emotional need in Lear: the need for Cordelia as daughter-mother" (40).

According to Armens (182-89), Cordelia displays aspects of the Good Mother, the Virgin Mary, and Christ.

> The dramatist brings us nearer to the ancient theme by representing the man who makes the choice between the three sisters as aged and dying. The regressive revision which he has thus applied to the myth, distorted as it was by wishful transformation, allows us enough glimpses of its original meaning to enable us perhaps to reach as well a superficial allegorical interpretation of the three female figures in the theme. We might argue that what is represented here are the three inevitable relations that a man has with a woman—the woman who bears him, the woman who is his mate and the woman who destroys him; or that they are the three forms taken by the figure of the mother in the course of a man's life—the mother herself, the beloved one who is chosen after her pattern, and lastly the Mother Earth who receives him once more. But it is in vain that an old man yearns for the love of woman as he had it first from his mother; the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms. (301)

Cordelia, in this view, personifies not only Death but Eros;[6] in his letter to J. S. H. Bransom of March 25, 1934, Freud concurs with Bransom's view of "the secret meaning of the tragedy, the repressed incestuous claims on the daughter's love" (Jones, *The Last Phase* 457).[7] Among the unconscious emotional factors contributing to Lear's madness, Bransom had posited a "disturbing sexual factor[,]" possibly "an old, repressed, incestuous passion for one of his daughters" (221). Freudian psychoanalytic criticism tends to amplify this view of Lear; the image of Lear as infantile narcissist, simultaneously seeking to "[u]nburdened crawl toward death" (1.1.36) and hoping for the incestuous prospect of Cordelia's "kind nursery" (1.1.118), is a common theme. Moreover, the Jungian Karl M. Abenheimer—writing in 1945—states of Lear:

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[6] Freud cites *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Portia's suitors must choose between gold, silver, and leaden caskets ("The Theme of the Three Caskets" 291-92). In a tale from the *Gesta Romanorum*, as well as in the Estonian epic *Kalewipoeg*, a girl must make an identical choice between "the sun, moon, and star youths" (292): "If what we were concerned with were a dream, it would occur to us at once that caskets are also women. . . If we boldly assume that there are symbolic substitutions of the same kind in myths as well, then the casket scene in *The Merchant of Venice* really becomes the inversion we suspected. With a wave of the wand, as though we were in a fairy tale, we have stripped the astral garment from our theme; and now we see that the theme is a human one, *a man's choice between three women*" (292). In the progress of mythology, Death becomes Love: "Man, as we know, makes use of his imaginative activity in order to satisfy the wishes that reality does not satisfy. So his imagination rebelled against the recognition of the truth embodied in the myth of the Moerae, and constructed instead the myth derived from it, in which the Goddess of Death was replaced by the Goddess of Love and by what was equivalent to her in human shape. The third of the sisters was no longer Death; she was the fairest, best, most desirable and most lovable of women" (299).

[7] In the next paragraph, Freud continues: "Your supposition illuminates the riddle of Cordelia as well as that of Lear. The elder sisters have already overcome the fateful love for the father and

> He desires perfect and absolute love which he has to share with nobody. Such is the love which the narcissist expects from the perfect mother. The King's fool clearly sees, and says, what Lear is after. He wants to make his daughters his mother. Thus in old age and at the end of his life he makes a last desperate effort to have his deepest and most regressive longing fulfilled, the longing for the perfect mother. (328)

In 1952, Arpad Pauncz defines Lear's obsession as an inverse Oedipus complex: "This reverse erotic fixation will be called the *adult* libido and more specifically, the *Lear Complex*" (58).[8] Mark J. Blechner, in 1988, states that "we can see in *King Lear* a love-tragedy between father and daughter" (319), concluding: "I see in the

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become hostile to him; to speak analytically, they are resentful at the disappointment in their early love. Cordelia still clings to him; her love for him is her holy secret. When asked to reveal it publicly she has to refuse defiantly and remain dumb. I have seen just that behavior in many cases" (457). Freud asserts that his earlier "interpretation. . . only appears to contradict yours. What I tried to establish there was the mythological content of the material, to which the connection between father and daughter was originally alien" (458).

[8] However, Pauncz continues: "Although the Lear complex plays a decisive role in the development and patterning of the character of the hero in the Lear Tragedy, it would be erroneous to reduce all the richness of the drama's characters and actions to one single motive. . . The 'Case Lear' is not considered by any means, solved or settled by the demonstration of the Lear Complex" (75-76).

play the outbreak of a lifelong, unconscious, incestuous passion" (323). In his post-Freudian "feminist psychoanalytic" (292) analysis of *King Lear* (1999), Peter L. Rudnytsky asserts:

> Lear's 'darker purpose'. . . is not the division of the kingdom announced with such fanfare in his opening speech, but rather his unconscious desire to maintain his incestuous hold over Cordelia, and this desire motivates his otherwise inexplicable decision to abdicate the throne. (305)

Nicholas Kostis and Claudine Herrmann (2001), continuing in this vein, state:

> Lear's experience of spiritual love and survival beyond death emerges both conceptually and dramatically out of the cauldron of his incestuous struggles. The obsessive wish to exercise power over his daughters arises from a profound desire to exercise power over himself. This will to self power is a will to obliterate boundaries, biological as well as political, and to rule and determine every aspect of one's personal duration. Lear's resolution to absorb his daughters obliterates the final bio-existential barrier to control. He attempts to scale not only the boundary of incest but also that of reason and functional sanity. ("The Dramatic Motive of Incest in *King Lear*" 54-55)[9]

As Kostis and Herrmann's remarks suggest, Lear's "incestuous struggles" indicate a conflict inadequately contained by the post-Freudian model of psychological incest. Jungian theory, particularly in its reinterpretation by Erich Neumann, provides greater elucidation of Lear's more than incestuous "will to obliterate boundaries," of his all-devouring "resolution to absorb his daughters" and everything else around him. Lear, in his expression of "our darker purpose" (1.1.31), proudly dons the persona of kingship only to succumb to, in Jungian terms, psychic inflation. Jung defines the persona as "a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual" (Jung, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," *CW* 7.190.305). Jung's description of the state of psychic inflation, moreover, closely resembles that of Lear's character in the opening scenes of the play:

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[9] Kostis and Herrmann contend: "It is clear that in *King Lear* Shakespeare is probing the deepest stratum of primal, archetypal forces concentrated in the human body and consciousness and that he is able to do this by casting the drama, including incest and sexual transpositions, in a pre-Christian context where he is free to locate, catalyze and develop dramatically these urges of human energy in a primal way" (54). The article, however, deals neither with Jungian archetypes nor with the Jungian concept of the Self.

> An inflated consciousness is always egocentric and conscious of nothing but its own existence. It is incapable of learning from the past, incapable of understanding contemporary events, and incapable of drawing right conclusions about the future. It is hypnotized by itself and therefore cannot be argued with. It inevitably dooms itself to calamities that must strike it dead.
> ("Epilogue," *CW* 12.480-81.563)

The Jungian Edward F. Edinger, in *Ego and Archetype*, explicates the role of this process in the psychic interaction of the ego and the Transpersonal Self (defined by Jung as the symbol of psychic totality, as the God-image within the individual):[10]

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[10] Jung on the interaction of ego and Self: "But inasmuch as the ego is only the centre of my field of consciousness, it is not identical with the totality of my psyche, being merely one complex among other complexes. I therefore distinguish between the ego and the *self*. . . since the ego is only the subject of my consciousness, while the self is the subject of my total psyche, which also includes the unconscious. In this sense the self would be an ideal entity which embraces the ego" ("Definitions," *CW* 6.425.706).

Thus Jung defines the Self: "As an empirical concept, the self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of the personality as a whole. But in so far as

> I use the term inflation to describe the attitude and the state which accompanies the identification of the ego with the Self. It is a state in which something small (the ego) has arrogated to itself the qualities of something larger (the Self) and hence is blown up beyond the limits of its proper size. (7)

Lear's initial psychic state, despite its apparent egocentrism, seems perilously close to the infantile state described by Edinger, a state in which the ego identifies completely with the Self:

> In earliest infancy, no ego or consciousness exists. All is in the unconscious. The latent ego is in complete identification with the Self. The Self is born, but the ego is made; and in the beginning all is Self. This state is described by Neumann as the uroborus (the tail-eating serpent). Since the Self is the center and totality of being, the ego totally identified with the Self experiences itself as a deity. (7)

Since Lear is the central figure, if not the totality of being, of *King Lear*, perhaps such conflation is inevitable.[11] Indeed, as Jung states: "[E]very king

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the total personality, on account of its unconscious component, can be only in part conscious, the concept of the self is, in part, only *potentially* empirical and is to that extent a *postulate*. . . In so far as psychic totality, consisting of both conscious and unconscious contents, is a postulate, it is a *transcendental* concept, for it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds and thus characterizes an entity that can be described only in part but, for the other part, remains at present unknowable and illimitable" ("Definitions," *CW* 6.460. 789).

Elsewhere, Jung identifies the Self as the God-image within the human psyche: "The self. . . is a God-image, or at least cannot be distinguished from one" ("The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," *CW* 9.2.22. 42). "[T]he spontaneous symbols of the self, or of wholeness, cannot in practice be distinguished from a God-image" ("Christ, A Symbol of the Self," *CW* 9.2.40.73). "[A]s an individual thing it is unitemporal and unique; as an archetypal symbol it is a God-image and therefore universal and eternal" ("Christ" 63.116).

[11] Cashford states: "[I]f we may approach the play as a drama of the psyche in its journey toward wholeness, we could say that Lear is the center of consciousness, which immediately shows itself to be out of balance with the deepest values of the Self—the center of unconsciousness—revealing radical conflict in the psyche. What literary criticism would call the 'subplot' of the blinding of Gloucester, we could read as the more literal acting out of the original distortion, which makes explicit in the external world what is the essence of the problem of the

carries the symbol of the self. All his insignia—crown, mantle, orb, sceptre, starry orders, etc.—show him as the cosmic Anthropos, who not only begets, but himself is, the world" ("Gnostic Symbols of the Self," *CW* 9.2.198.310). As Lear's banishment of Cordelia makes evident, however, it is precisely Neumann's uroboric state—a state of psychic chaos symbolized by the uroboros, the cosmos-encircling serpent with its tail in its mouth—into which the mad or about-to-be-mad king descends. Thus, in *The Great Mother*, Neumann defines it:

> As symbol of the origin and of the opposites contained in it, the uroboros is "The Great Round," in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled. In this sense the uroboros is also a symbol of a state in which chaos, the unconscious, and the psyche as a whole were undifferentiated—and which is experienced by the ego as a borderline state. (18)

The king thus succumbs to possession by the unconscious—or, at least, to possession by the chaotic intermingling of consciousness and the unconscious.

The Lear of act 1, scene 1 initially appears to personify not chaos, but the king as dignified archetype of consciousness. Lear's initial expression of "our darker purpose" (1.1.31) appears to be rooted in rationality, albeit a rationality based upon incorrect presumptions of virtue:

> Our son of Cornwall,
> And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
> We have this hour a constant will to publish
> Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
> May be prevented now. (1.1.36-40)

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inner world: the moral blindness of Lear" (9).

As images of the Good and Terrible Mothers of archetypal theory, Lear's good and evil daughters personify bright and dark aspects of the archetypal Great Mother. Erich Neumann's analysis of the archetypal feminine in *The Great Mother* (18-23), in which he traces its "development from the uroboros through the Archetypal Feminine to the Great Mother and further differentiations" (18), is useful here. Neumann divides the unconscious into four ascending planes: "the nonvisual reality and action of the archetype *an sich* [as such]" (20); "the uroboros," in which positive and negative, masculine and feminine elements "all work together without order or arrangement" (20); the differentiated archetypal feminine and archetypal masculine, in which the feminine "contains essential elements of the Feminine... but they are without order and hence impossible for the ego that experiences them to predict and apprehend" (21); and, finally, the personification of the archetypal feminine as the Great Mother. Neumann thus defines the Great Mother's crystallization out of the archetypal feminine:

> A configured form of the Great Mother has emerged from the primordial archetype. . . She has three forms: the good, the terrible, and the good-bad mother. The good feminine (and masculine) elements configure the Good Mother, who, like the Terrible Mother containing the negative elements, can also emerge independently from the unity of the Great Mother. The third form is that of the Great Mother who is good-bad and makes possible a union of positive and negative attributes. (*The Great Mother* 21)

As he extends "our largest bounty" (1.1.47) to Gonerill and Regan, benevolently dispensing "shadowy forests and. . . champaigns riched / With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads" (1.1.59-60), Lear seems indeed—as he will later state himself to be—"[s]o kind a father" (1.5.27). Cordelia's refusal to flatter tears off the Good Father's mask; what is revealed beneath is not merely an aged sacrificial king suddenly less inclined to crawl toward self-immolation, not simply the phallic Terrible Father,[12] but something more primitive and more complex—the uroboros.[13] Invoking the origin and its oppositions—the radiant "sun" (1.1.103) of archetypally masculine consciousness; the "mysteries" (1.1.104) of Hecate, darkness, the archetypal feminine—Lear falls into the uroboric state, if he has not already done so:

> For by the sacred radiance of the sun,
> The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
> By all the operation of the orbs
> From whom we do exist and cease to be,
> Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
> Propinquity and property of blood,
> And as a stranger to my heart and me
> Hold thee from this forever. (1.1.103-114)

Breathing forth intimations of incestuous orality, Lear thrusts Cordelia forth from his chamber, withholding his paternal breast even as he, Cronos-like, seeks to rend and devour her:

> The barbarous Scythian,
> Or he that makes his generation messes

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[12] The masculine counterpart of the Terrible Mother; the Great Father appears as the figure of the Good Father, the Terrible Father, or the good and bad Great Father.

[13] "The uroboric totality also appears as a symbol of the united primordial parents from whom the figures of the Great Father and the Great Mother later crystallized out" (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 18).

To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighboured, pitied, and relieved
As thou my sometime daughter. (1.1.110-14)

The king's deadly words, uttered perhaps even as his fantasized hysteric "mother" (2.4.52)[14] climbs up toward his heart, mark—as Coppélia Kahn notes—"Lear's first step toward the primitive, infantile modes of thinking to which he surrenders in his madness. When Cordelia doesn't feed him with love, he thinks angrily of eating *her*" (41-42).[15] Moreover (as Bennett Simon states), Lear "disowns and banishes Cordelia and then collapses generational distances and distinctions by means of a cannibalistic image of merger" (107).[16] In their all-devouring desire for inclusion, Lear's words reveal the uroboric nature of his rage. In his account of the hero of consciousness' slaying of the primal father (*Origins* 170-91), Neumann asserts:

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[14] See textual notes 2.4.n.53 and 54 (162); Lear refers to the humoral conceit of his metaphorical wandering womb. The Elizabethan "disease" of "*[h]ysteria passio*"(2.4.53) also known as *"Passio Hysteria"* (n.53) produced these symptoms, "'a visceral symbol of the breakdown in hierarchy, when the lower elements climb up to threaten or destroy the superior ones'" (G. K. Hunter, cit. in n.54).

Jung, in "The Structure of the Psyche," asserts: "[T]he classic examples of unconscious psychic activity are to be found in pathological states. Almost the whole symptomatology of hysteria, of the compulsion neuroses, of phobias, and very largely of schizophrenia. . . has its roots in unconscious psychic activity. We are therefore fully justified in speaking of an unconscious psyche" (*CW* 8.143. 297).

Kahn, in her post-Freudian interpretation, offers this view: "When his other two daughters prove to be bad mothers and don't satisfy his needs for 'nursery,' Lear is seized by 'the mother'—a searing sense of loss at the deprivation of the mother's presence. . . Thus the mother, revealed in Lear's response to his daughters' brutality toward him, makes her re-entry into the patriarchal world from which she had seemingly been excluded. The repressed mother returns specifically in Lear's wrathful projections onto the world about him of a symbiotic relationship with his daughters that recapitulates his pre-oedipal relationship with the mother" ("The Absent Mother" 40-41).

In his letter to Flatter (March 30, 1930), Freud remarks: "As to your question whether one is justified in considering Lear a case of hysteria, I should like to say that one is hardly entitled to expect from a poet a clinically correct description of a mental illness. . . The fact that [Lear] calms down and reacts normally when he realizes he is safely protected by Cordelia doesn't seem to me to justify a diagnosis of hysteria" (Freud 395).

[15] Kahn notes the proliferation of fantasies of "oral rage" in *Lear* (41).

> [A]ll child-eating father figures stand for the masculine aspect of the uroboros and the masculine-negative side of the First Parents. In these figures the accent falls primarily on the devouring force, i.e., the uterine cavern. Even when they later appear in the patriarchate as genuine Terrible Father figures, e.g., Cronus or Moloch, their uroboric character is transparent so long as the symbolism of eating is in the foreground and hence their propinquity to the Great Mother. (178)

"[T]he dragon" (1.1.116) Lear's words to Kent further illustrate the vacillation between archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine, between conscious and unconscious motives:

> Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
> I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
> On her kind nursery. (1.1.116-18)

Thus Lear, at once phallic "dragon"and infantile ego passively desirous of "kind nursery," inadvertently identifies himself with the all-encompassing, all-devouring, polymorphously incestuous uroboros. At the same time, Lear's "infantile ego consciousness" (Neumann, *Origins* 16) seeks its death in incestuous union with the Good Mother whom—applying Neumann's schema to

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[16] Simon prefaces this remark with: "Lear's response to [Cordelia's] speech is to proclaim, simultaneously, infinite distance between parent and child and no distance at all" (107). The play's cannibalistic "images. . . of parent and child devouring each other. . . typically convey an ambiguity around whether closeness, union, or all-devouring rage is at work" (108).

Freud's view of Cordelia as Death—his unfortunate daughter represents. Although Neumann is speaking of primitive ego-consciousness that "is weak and feels the strain of its own existence as heavy and oppressive" (16), his words are also relevant to the situation of Lear's world-weary, simultaneously inflated and infantile ego:

> Uroboric incest is a form of entry into the mother, of union with her, and it stands in sharp contrast to other and later forms of incest. . . The Great Mother takes the little child back into herself, and always over uroboric incest there stand the insignia of death, signifying final dissolution in union with the Mother. . . It is the form of incest taken by the infantile ego, which is still close to the mother and has not yet come to itself; but the sick ego of the neurotic can also take this form and so can a later, exhausted ego that creeps back to the mother after having found fulfillment. (*Origins* 17)

Even as he approaches "[t]he mysteries of Hecate and the night," Lear persists in the invocation of the masculine deities of consciousness: "Now by Apollo, king, / Thou swear'st thy gods in vain," Kent protests (1.1.153-54). Having made "[o]ur potency. . . good" (1.1.182) by banishing Kent ("By Jupiter,/ This shall not be revoked!") (1.1.172-73), less-than-godlike Lear all too soon finds himself gazing upon Gonerill, desperately invoking the curses of Nature upon her womb:

> Hear Nature, hear, dear goddess, hear:
> Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
> To make this creature fruitful. (1.4.230-32)

Envenomed by his own uroboric "serpent's tooth" (1.4.243), Lear prepares to embark upon a tempestuous Jungian "night sea journey" through the unconscious:

> The night sea journey is a kind of *descensus ad inferos*—a descent into Hades and a journey to the land of ghosts somewhere beyond this world, beyond consciousness, hence an immersion in the unconscious. (Jung, "Psychology of the Transference," *CW* 16.244-45.455)

It is a journey toward the death and the possible rebirth of consciousness, enclosed within the positive and negative aspects of the uroboros. He will undergo this journey under the tutelage of the Fool.

Contemplating the inconceivable feminine evil standing before him, staring into the abysmal nothingness of amorality, Lear asks: "Are you our daughter?" (1.4.178) In response to Gonerill's demand that he "put away/ These dispositions, which of late transport you/ From what you rightly are" (1.4.180-82), Lear cries:

> Does any here know me? This is not Lear:
> Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
> Either his notion weakens, his discernings
> Are lethargied—Ha! Waking? 'Tis not so!
> Who is it that can tell me who I am? (1.4.185-189)

The Fool replies: "Lear's shadow" (1.4.190).[17] As the Fool's earlier speech has made clear, Lear is indeed less than a shadow: "I had rather be any kind o'thing than a fool, and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o'both sides and left nothing i'th'middle" (1.4.145-48). The Fool, paradoxically, possesses greater substance than the king: "[N]ow thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing" (1.4.152-53). The king, in his psychic inflation, has regressed to a state of chaotic nothingness; the sign of "O without a figure," figuring the uroboric tail-eating serpent of beginning and end, is suggestive of Lear's disintegration into originary chaos. Despite Lear's threat of "the whip" (1.4.96), the Fool has persisted in his task of truth-telling: "Truth's a dog must to kennel. He must be whipped out, when the Lady Brach may stand by th'fire and stink" (1.4.97-98). He cannot do otherwise: "Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie. I would fain learn to lie" (1.4.140-41). Lear, indeed, seems appreciative of the Fool's efforts: "And you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped," he replies (1.4.142).

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[17] Coursen, citing Lear's reply ("I would learn that") not in the New Cambridge text, states forebodingly: "And indeed he will. His psyche has a 'darker purpose'. . . in mind for him, something far deeper than whatever the conscious intentions of a lifetime have been" ("Age is Unnecessary" 79).

But what "kind o'thing" is the Fool, and what is the truth that he tells? Although Lear is a shadow of himself, the Fool who answers Lear's cry is also Lear's shadow.[18] Jung describes the ego's confrontation with the mirror of the shadow, the first component of the unconscious with whom it must contend:

Kirsch (who also cites "I would learn that"), on the other hand, states "that [Lear] has become identified with the archetype of the Shadow. . . Instead of a ruler, Lear becomes subject to—even a victim of—his own dark Anima aspects, to an extent which threatens sanity and life itself" ("*King Lear* as a Play of Redemption" 33).

[18] Goldsmith 66-67: "The Fool has also become Lear's alter ego, his externalized conscience, or, as he puts it himself, 'Lear's shadow.'"

> [W]hoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the *persona*, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.20.43)

Beholding his reflection in the Fool, Lear is ultimately forced to acknowledge his own folly. Although "[l]ooked at superficially, the shadow is cast by the conscious mind and is as much a privation of light as the physical shadow that follows the body" ("Conclusion," *CW* 9.2.266.422), the shadow can also perform a compensatory function, containing positive characteristics lacking in the ego:

> [T]he unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc. (*CW* 9.2.266.423)

As the king's positive shadow,[19] the Fool casts light upon Lear's mental and spiritual darkness even as he trails behind him into the night: "So the Fool follows after"(1.4.275). As Lear's "externalized conscience" (Goldsmith 66), "it is his task with his probing, sometimes caustic comments to cut away the cataracts of illusion which cloud Lear's eyes" (67). Moreover, the Fool displays positive

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Willeford states: "The Fool's answer. . . means in part that *the jester*, facing death *with* his royal master, serving as *Psychopompos* or *Seelenführer*, as guide to the living soul, can tell him who he is" (200).

[19] Von Franz, for example, uses the term "positive shadow" (172) to describe a French "desperado" (171) in the dream of a young extraverted man (171-72); the Frenchman "represents the other side of the dreamer—his introversion—which has reached a completely destitute state" (171). This "figure. . . had turned negative and dangerous only because the conscious attitude of the dreamer did not agree with him" (172).

characteristics lacking in Lear's persona. He displays doglike loyalty to the king who banishes Cordelia and Kent, even unto probable death: "And I'll go to bed at noon"(3.6.41), he states ominously as he exits the play. Remarking upon the Fool's love for Cordelia, the Knight explains his absence: "Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away" (1.4.62-63). The content of the Fool's jests frequently displays (albeit obliquely) a concern with social justice, for instance in his song to Lear:

> Fathers that wear rags
>   Do make their children blind,
> But fathers that bear bags
>   Shall see their children kind.
> Fortune, that arrant whore,
> Ne'er turns th'key to th'poor. (2.4.44-49)

As the play progresses, these positive traits manifest themselves in Lear's consciousness. He displays altruism toward the Fool: "In, boy, go first"(3.4.26), Lear tells him as they enter the hovel. In his apostrophe to "[p]oor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are/ That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm" (3.4.28-29), Lear shows newfound concern for the poor: "O I have ta'en/ Too little care of this" (3.4.32-33), he cries. Lear's earlier conscious realization, during his interchange with the Fool, that "[he] did [Cordelia] wrong" (1.5.20) has its catharsis in Lear's howl as he vainly seeks signs of life in the dead Cordelia: "And my poor fool is hanged" (5.3.279).

As Gonerill and Regan shrewdly observe, the "discernings" of Lear's conscious mind have not been especially astute. "'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself" (1.4.284-85), notes Regan; Gonerill replies, "The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash"(1.4.286). The choleric infirmity of Lear's "long-engraffed condition" (1.1.288) requires some remedy; the composite archetypal nature of Lear's Fool renders him the ideal physician. The Fool's kinship with the archetypal trickster—a manifestation of archaic consciousness whom Karl Kerényi defines as "*the spirit of disorder, the enemy of boundaries*" ("The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology" 185)—aligns him with uroboric chaos. Welsford, in *The Fool: His Social and Literary History*, states that the fool's "perennial functions" include "the power of melting the solidity of the world" (221). Subverter of hierarchies on behalf of the unconscious, the fool or the trickster is close to the origin of consciousness: "He is. . . a 'psychologem,' an archetypal psychic structure of extreme antiquity. In his clearest manifestations he is a faithful reflection of an absolutely undifferentiated human consciousness, corresponding to a psyche that has hardly left the animal level" (Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure," *CW* 9.1.260.465).

Moreover, the fool or trickster shares characteristics of the Jungian child-archetype:

> [T]he "child" paves the way for a future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole. (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.164.278)

Like the child-archetype, the fool or the trickster is "a *symbol of the creative union of opposites*, a 'uniting symbol' in the literal sense" ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 174.293). As the alchemical Mercurius, he becomes "the god of revelation, lord of thought and sovereign psychopomp" (Jung, "Religious Ideals in Alchemy," *CW* 12.292.404) who is also the uroboros, "a symbol uniting all opposites" (Jung, "Religious Ideals in Alchemy"12.295.404).[20] Uroboric reflection of Lear's uroboric madness, the Fool opposes the all-inclusive chaos of the primal tail-eating serpent to his master's all-negating, all-negated, uroboric "O without a figure." The Fool's assertion of his own disordered substance in opposition to the shadow that is Lear—"I am a fool, thou art nothing"—echoes Edgar's later assertion as he, in a trickster-like shifting of identities, takes on the chaotic persona of Tom O'Bedlam: "'Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!' That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am" (2.3.20-21). In its seeming incoherence, the Fool's infantile babbling in 1.4.174-77 signifies Lear's continuing descent into the uroboric state:

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[20] See Jung, "Religious Ideals in Alchemy" 292-95 concerning Mercurius as the uroboric "world-creating spirit concealed or imprisoned in matter" (293.404): "Mercurius stands at the beginning and end of the work: he is the *prima materia*, the *caput corvi*, the *nigredo*; as dragon he devours himself and as dragon he dies, to rise again as the *lapis*. . . He is the hermaphrodite that was in the beginning. . . [He is] a symbol uniting all opposites" (293-95.404).

"So out went the candle, and we were left darkling," the Fool concludes. Lear's head, the head of state, the play's head all bitten off, all concerned stumble about in an underworld of psychic darkness as Lear's ironic psychopomp—pointing his metaphorical bauble heavenward, as Mercury does his caduceus in Botticelli's *Primavera*—valiantly strives to relight his master's taper of consciousness.

Mercurius offering his mystic coxcomb as he performs rude gestures with his caduceus-bauble, beloved "boy" (1.4.85) oddly connected with Lear's banished "sometime daughter,"[21] "the sage-fool who sees the truth" (Welsford 253) provides the primal revelation which will lead Lear back—however briefly—to the light of sanity, to his soul which is Cordelia. The Fool has no easy task to perform. Continuing to resist the reflected horror of his own degradation, Lear still clings to his own illusory persona. Upon learning of Gonerill's halving of his train, the wrathful uroboric dragon tearfully threatens phallic destruction, persisting in the vain hope that "kind and comfortable" (1.4.261) Regan will acknowledge that this is Lear, after all:

> Life and death! I am ashamed
> That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,
> That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
> Should make thee worth them. (1.4.251-54)

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[21] See textual note, lines 1.4.62-63 (127) and introductory discussion: "The boy actor who played Cordelia also played the Fool, Ringler and others have maintained" (32-33).

Again calling upon the destructive forces of Nature, Lear simultaneously seeks to envelop Gonerill in blasting fogs and to achieve the complete fatal penetration of her senses: "Blasts and fogs upon thee!/ Th'untented woundings of a father's curse/ Pierce every sense about thee" (1.4.254-56). Surely Regan, in Lear's mind resembling the protective Good Mother or an avenging Fury, will "flay" Gonerill's "wolvish visage" (1.4.262). Surely the king, in her kind nursery, will regain his serpentine vigor: "Thou shalt find / That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think/ I have cast off forever" (1.4.263-65).

It is not for lack of his Fool's pestilent galling (1.4.99) that Lear still believes that he is something more than "my lady's father" (1.4.68). The primitive, anti-hierarchical lewdness of the Fool's clowning reflects the degraded state into which Lear, once literally "every inch a king" (4.6.107, Bevington edn.),[22] has fallen; his childlike veracity ultimately forces Lear to acknowledge his own self-delusion. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit:* although "nothing can be made out of nothing" (1.4.115), the cosmos-encircling O evoked by what Kent calls the "nothing" (1.4.113) of the Fool's uroboric clowning produces a seemingly infinite wealth of imagery depicting not only the king's nullity, but also the inversion of hierarchy resulting from Lear's folly. For instance, the uroboric Fool employs the cosmic egg,[23] divided and devoured symbol of the Great Round, as a metaphor for Lear's self-divestiture:

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[22] William Shakespeare, *King Lear, The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, updated 4th edn., ed. David Bevington (New York: Longman, 1997), 1167-218. Reference is by act, scene, and line number.

> FOOL Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.
> LEAR What two crowns shall they be?
> FOOL Why, after I have cut the egg i'th'middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i'th'middle and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gav'st thy golden one away. (1.4.120-26)

Having divided his nest between two parasitic fledglings, the empty shell of Lear has not only made his daughters his mothers in a obscenely sadomasochistic and incestuous sense, but also in the sense of offering his intermittently infantile ego as an unwitting sacrifice to their dual incarnation of the Terrible Mother:

> LEAR When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?
> FOOL I have used it, nuncle, e'er since you mad'st thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gav'st them the rod and put'st down thine own breeches,
> [*Sings*] Then they for sudden joy did weep,
> And I for sorrow sung,

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[23] See Jung's "The Visions of Zosimos" concerning the alchemical division of the "philosophical egg" into its elements by means of the sword: "As an arcanum, the egg is a synonym for the water. It is also a synonym for the dragon (mercurial serpent) and hence for the water in the special sense of microcosm or monad. . . The egg contains the four elements" (*CW* 13.82.109).

See also Jung's interpretation of his patient's third painting ("A Study in the Process of Individuation," *CW* 9.1.311-13.553-55); the picture's "primordial image. . . is probably that of the world egg encoiled by a snake" (311. 554). In this image "the self, or its symbol, is entwined by the mercurial serpent" (311-12. 554). Here Jung states of Mercurius: "He is the *anima mundi*, the innermost point and at the same time the encompasser of the world" (312. 554).

The (golden) egg is also associated with the child-archetype ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 159-160.270; 172-73. 290).

Kirsch equates Lear's division of the country with that of the personality: "The leitmotif of the play. . . is already stated in the first scene: *Division of the country—psychologically speaking, of the personality—and union of the male and female opposites in an unusual way*" ("*King Lear* as a Play of Redemption" 28).

> That such a king should play bo-peep,
> And go the fools among. (1.4.132-39)

In this way Lear, like Gloucester, blindly steps over a metaphorical precipice without the appearance of some miracle—or deception—to prevent his fall into the nothingness (and uroboric somethingness) of chaos, darkness, madness, and possession.

Thus commences the archetypal ritual which Maynard Mack, in *King Lear in Our Time*, defines as "The Abasement of the Proud King" (49).[24] Reduced to the O associated with the Fool of the Tarot deck,[25] Lear nevertheless does not fall alone;

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[24] See Mack 49-51. Mack cites Hornstein, "*King Robert of Sicily:* Analogues and Origins," *PMLA* 79 (1964): 13-21, which analyzes the literary forms of this biblical, folk, and literary archetype. De Condé's *Le dis dou Magnificat* and *King Robert of Sicily* display similarities to *Lear*; in *King Robert of Sicily*, "the repudiated king is not driven out but made the court Fool and compelled to take his food with the palace dogs" (Mack 50).

[25] Willeford, in his discussion (60-66) of the fool's quality of "divisibility and two-dimensionality" (61), states: "Thus the fool in his connection with nothingness may jar us into an awareness of how far away we are from reality, how much we are like the Fool of one of the conventional Tarot packs who, lost in his dreams, is about to step over a precipice. In the same connection the fool may seem a threat both to reality and to our ways of seeing it complexly. But the fool in his link with 'nothing' may also transform both reality and these ways of seeing it" (62).

In his chapter on *King Lear* (208-25), Willeford further explores this theme: "[T]he fool is sometimes regarded as the last card, sometimes as the first, and sometimes as. . . forming a link between the last and the first, making the linear arrangement of the cards into a wheel" (212). Willeford cites Charles Williams, *The Greater Trumps:* "'Among them is that which has no number and is called the Fool, because mankind finds it folly till it is known. It is sovereign or it is nothing, and if it is nothing then man was born dead'" (227, qtd. in 213). "In *King Lear* the 'nothing' out of which 'nothing will come' and which yet is something, even everything, could be called the *Sovereign Fool*. . . a state of mind and soul and body that is dramatized by the King and the Fool together" (213). The *conicidentia oppositorum* [union of opposites] normally formed by King and Fool has ruptured: "[I]f the king completely abdicates in favor of folly, the psychic system of which he is symbolically the center breaks down; there is a dangerous mutual contamination of consciousness and the unconscious. The resulting state means renewed contact with sources of life and meaning; but it also means dispossession and ruin. . . By the *Sovereign Fool* I mean, then, the total assimilation of kingship by folly" (213). "[W]hereas in Augustine a his shadow leaps with him, babbling prophetic utterances as he gazes clairvoyantly into the void. "[T]hou wouldst make a good fool" (1.5.31), the Fool states as he and Lear begin to merge. His next jest underscores the bitter irony of Lear's folly:

> FOOL If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being
> old before thy time.
> LEAR How's that?
> FOOL Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.
> LEAR O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
> Keep me in temper, I would not be mad. (1.5.33-38)

Despite Lear's appeal to divine reason, hysteria prevails. Nor does the Fool's unreasoned attempt to redress Gonerill's castrating reduction of Lear's train through phallic clowning ("She that's a maid, and laughs at my departure, / Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter") (1.5.42-43) restore the king's dignity. Upon finding Kent in the stocks, Lear—once more invoking the sky-god of light and wisdom—continues to deny the evidence of his dreaming eyes: "By Jupiter, I swear no" (2.4.18). "By Juno, I swear ay" (2.4.19), replies Kent, thus suggesting the subtextual influence of the Great Mother whom Juno exemplifies. As Lear defies the invasion of what remains of his consciousness by the archetypal feminine, the humoral conceit of his metaphorical rising womb further illustrates the Great Mother's unconscious influence: "O, how this mother

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text is a system of signs pointing toward God, the Ineffable Something, *King Lear* is a purposefully dubious system of signs. . . that points toward the ineffable nothing that underlies all human existence. The sign King-Fool and the text that radiates from it is a fissure through which we glimpse that nothing" (5).

swells upward toward my heart! / *Hysterica passio*! Down, thou climbing sorrow,/ thy element's below" (2.4.52-54).[26]

The demonic revelation of Gonerill and Regan's graceless clasped hands (2.4.187-90)[27] renders Jupiter's intentions toward Lear suspect. The gods' fool, nevertheless, persists in pleading his case before the mocking heavens, vowing the Terrible Father's vengeance upon the Terrible Mother whom his daughters embody, refusing his own hysteric "mother" tears:

> If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
> Against their father, fool me not so much
> To bear it tamely. Touch me with noble anger,
> And let not women's weapons, water drops,
> Stain my man's cheeks. No, you unnatural hags,
> I will have such revenges on you both
> That all the world shall—I will do such things—
> What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be
> The terrors of the earth! You think I'll weep;
> No, I'll not weep,
> I have full cause of weeping, but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad. (2.4.267-79)

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[26] See note 15 above.

[27] Hoover, in "'The Lusty Stealth of Nature': Sexuality and Antifeminism in *King Lear*," remarks of this moment: "One need not resort to Freudian cries of 'incest' to explain Lear's disillusionment. In his plans to abdicate he had relied on the humane characteristics of self-sacrifice and gentleness which the patriarchy had long demanded of women, and he holds the belief so strongly that to relinquish it requires Goneril and Regan's powerfully symbolic seizing of hands as they confront him with their united resistance to his demands in II, vi. With his doubly directed words, 'O Fool! I shall go mad'. . . Lear abandons forever the myth of the 'eternal feminine' and replaces it with a virulent misogyny that will endure until his awakening to Cordelia" (88).

In his "high rage" (2.4.289) Lear, as ever seeking control of the unquiet elements unleashed by the sundering of his world-egg, impotently commands the storm within and without—an elemental being whom the elements fail to obey: "There is a pagan ferocity in Lear," states G. Wilson Knight (183).[28] Vainly (or not), the king—valiantly "[c]ontending with the fretful elements"—decrees a miniature apocalypse upon the heath:

> Contending with the fretful elements,
> Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
> Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
> That things might change or cease. (3.1.4-7)

Lear's inseparable psychopomp (soul-conductor)—diligently laboring "to out-jest/ [h]is heart-struck injuries" (3.1.8-9)—conducts his raging master's soul in circles about the netherworld of the heath toward a realm of spiritual transformation without the shut-up doors (2.4.297-302) of consciousness, seeking psychic salvation or death.[29] Enid Welsford's definition of the Fool as the

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[28] See Knight 177-206: "Lear's history is like Edgar's. He, too, falls back on nature. From the first there is a primitive, animal power about him; from the first he is in sympathy with the elements of earth and sky" (182-83). "*King Lear* is, as a whole, preeminently naturalistic" (188). "Lear himself shows. . . an excessive naturalism in point of religion" (189). "Slowly, painfully, emergent from the *Lear* naturalism we see a religion born of disillusionment, suffering, and sympathy: a purely spontaneous, natural growth of the human spirit, developing from nature magic to 'God'" (190-91).

[29] Cashford remarks: "There seems to be an inexorable logic whereby Lear is driven onto the heath, at night, in the storm, the most instinctive layer of unconscious life realized in the play. The tempest in and out of his mind shakes apart the rigid structures of his character and the habitual modes of thought that keep him king when he would be father, friend, or simply human. . . [A]s his state of mind deepens, his suffering achieves a universality and he comes to speak for all humanity in our propensity to blindness" (17).

"*punctum indifferens*" [point of indifference] (249, 321) of the play notwithstanding, the Fool—not an especially detached truth-teller—displays obvious sacrificial loyalty to his reflection.[30] Lost in delusions of godhead, his king ignores his pleas to belatedly seek asylum from this great, terrible, hierarchy-levelling storm suggestive of the unconscious: "Here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools" (3.2.12).

An ironic Jupiter hurling verbal thunderbolts toward the heavens, wrathful Lear cries in defiance:

> Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow,
> You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
> Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
> You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
> Singe my white head; and thou all-shaking thunder,
> Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th'world,
> Crack nature's molds, all germens spill at once
> That makes ingrateful man. (3.2.1-9)

Daring the "sulph'rous and thought-executing fires" and "oak-cleaving thunderbolts"of the Thunderer—sky-father, masculine deity of consciousness—to destroy him as raging watery "cataracts" and chaotic feminine "hurricanoes" drown the phallic "steeples" and punning masculine "cocks" of Britain in a flood suggestive of possession by the negative aspects of the unconscious (and, thus, of the Terrible Mother's influence), Lear at once defies and attempts to usurp divinity. In a supreme gesture of psychic inflation identifying itself with deity, he commands the apocalyptic destruction of the nature "[t]hat makes ingrateful man," the obliteration of the world's "thick rotundity" pregnant with the evil of "unnatural hags," the rupture of its "molds" in one last climactic spewing forth of "germens." Lear's roar fails to compel the apocalyptic ravage of nature by itself: the overwhelming "cataracts and hurricanoes" of the unconscious fail to drown the "steeples" and "cocks" of masculine consciousness, and Jupiter's "all-shaking thunder" fails to wreak nature's quietus. In the absence of such a "promised end" (5.3.237), the King and the Fool must continue circling within the uroboros that is the experience of the play *King Lear*, searching vainly for some shelter from its raging elements.

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[30] One reason for this devotion is the Fool's peculiar identification with Cordelia, discussed later in this chapter.

Unable to command "rain, wind, thunder, fire" (3.2.14), Lear resorts to emotional manipulation tinged with imperfect resignation:

> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.
> I never gave you kingdom, called you children.
> You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
> Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,
> A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man;
> But yet I call you servile ministers,
> That will with two pernicious daughters join
> Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head
> So old and white as this. O ho! 'tis foul. (3.2.15-23)

The indifference of elemental nature, pitiless in its rage, is not moved; its coldness mirrors, if it does not equal, that of the "hard house—/ More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised" (3.2.61-62) shut up at Regan's command. Indeed, the nature of these "pernicious daughters," of these "unnatural hags" whom the elements seem to serve as Oswald does Gonerill, is that of Nature herself, of Neumann's Terrible Mother— a personification, specifically, of the blighting, devouring, amoral aspects of nature:

> The dark half of the black-and-white cosmic egg representing the Archetypal Feminine engenders terrible figures that manifest the black, abysmal side of life and the human psyche. Just as world, life, nature, and soul have been experienced as a generative and nourishing, protecting and warming Femininity, so their opposites are also perceived in the image of the Feminine; death and destruction, danger and distress, hunger and nakedness, appear as helplessness in the presence of the Dark and Terrible Mother. (*The Great Mother* 149)

Cordelia's parting words in act 1 provide further insight into the nature of these parodic Graces, hands and fates knotted together:

> The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
> Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,
> And like a sister am most loath to call
> Your faults as they are named. (1.1.262-65)

Gonerill and Regan, at once "[t]he jewels" of Lear and their own loathsome, unnameable "faults," are not only paired post-Freudian quibbles. In their hermaphroditism—illustrated by, for example, Lear's transformation of Gloucester into "Gonerill with a white beard" (4.5.94)[31]— their father's "parings"

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[31] Neumann states concerning the fragmentation of the undifferentiated "primordial archetype" [of the psychic totality symbolized by the uroboros]: "In the early phase of consciousness, the numinosity of the archetype consequently exceeds man's power of

(1.4.148) display qualities of the uroboric Great Mother.[32] As they "sit [or 'hit'] together" (1.2.294)[33]—since they "must do something, and i'th'heat" (1.2.298)—the two sisters carry out the "horrible pleasure" (or the horrible indifference) of the uroboric Terrible Mother, displaying an admixture of negative masculine and feminine qualities. Incarnations of the "negative elementary character"[34] of the archetypal feminine, parricidal Furies or Gorgons[35] promiscuously laying waste to their cosmos rather than avenging its societal evils, Gonerill and Regan ultimately succumb to the very devouring, blighting forces which they personify.[36]

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representation, so much so that at first no form can be given to it. And when later the primordial archetype takes form in the imagination of man, its representations are often monstrous and inhuman. This is the phase of the chimerical creatures composed of different animals or of animal and man. . . and also of such monstrosities as phallic and bearded mothers" (*The Great Mother* 12-13).

[32] Neumann, *The Great Mother* 19: "When we speak of a 'maternal uroboros,' we mean that in the Archetypal Feminine of this phase the accent is on the uroboric element, while the maternal element is secondary. On the other hand, we speak of a 'uroboric Great Mother' when the archetypal figure of the uroboros shines through the Great Mother, revealing its peculiar symbolism and mode of action, but the configured reality of the Great Mother is dominant."

[33] As the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition's footnote to 1.2.294 points out, the Quarto's "'hit'='agree' or 'strike' is more generally adopted by editors, but F makes sense and does not require emendation'" (115 n. 294a).

[34] See Neumann, *The Great Mother* 147-208.

[35] See Neumann, *The Great Mother* 80 concerning the goddesses and demons "whose nature is that of the Terrible Mother." This group includes "such negatively demonic figures as the Erinyes, Furies, and lamias, the Empusae, witches, and so on." The "plurality" of these "usually" indicates their primitive or regressive nature.

[36] León Alfar, in "Looking for Goneril and Regan," provides a political/historical explanation of their behavior: "In *King Lear*, the power Regan and Goneril desire and the violence in which they participate defy orthodox notions of appropriate feminine conduct. Because power as a feminine attribute is rejected by scholars as a violation of nature, Goneril and Regan become

Chimerical, monstrous compilation of vile and uncanny creatures, Gonerill (thus identified with the Terrible Mother)[37] is a "[b]rach" (1.4.98), a "cuckoo" (1.4.175), a "sea-monster" (1.4.216), a "[d]etested kite" (1.4.217), "wolvish" (1.4.263), "[a] fox" (1.4.271), "sharp-toothed. . . like a vulture" (2.4.127), "serpent-like" (2.4.153)—all within the first two acts. As Gonerill's address to Lear in act 1, scene 4 indicates, she has indeed become Lear's (un)natural devouring mother, rod poised in hand: "Be then desired/ By her, that else will take the thing she begs,/ A little to disquantity your train" (1.4.202-04). Moreover, as her words to Edmond in act 4, scene 2 make evident, Gonerill is capable of sadistic gender inversion as well. Bidding Edmond return to Cornwall, Gonerill does not merely state that she "must change names at home and give the distaff/ Into my husband's hands" (4.2.18-19); the commanding mistress's parting words—"Conceive, and fare thee well" (4.2.25)—seek to impregnate Edmond's consciousness with the Terrible Mother's inscrutable will.

'evil'. . . Women cannot be tyrants, it would seem, or if they can be, such tyranny must be a result of an unnatural femininity rather than the product of specifically cultural and political notions of kingship." She argues "that the play points precisely to the abuse of power by all monarchs, regardless of gender, as inherent to absolutism" (168). "[W]hat critics specify as the 'immorality' of Goneril and Regan's choices [is] instead symptomatic of a ruthless patrilineal structure of power relations they are required to reproduce as representatives of that structure" (193).

[37] "The symbolism of the Terrible Mother draws its images predominantly from the 'inside'; that is to say, the negative elementary character of the Feminine expresses itself in fantastic and chimerical images that do not originate in the outside world. The reason for this is that the Terrible Female is a symbol for the unconscious. And the dark side of the Terrible Mother takes the form of monsters, whether in Egypt or India, Mexico or Etruria, Bali or Rome" (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 148). Although Shakespeare tends to utilize ordinary (albeit "[d]etested") animals as metaphors, there is something fantastic about the sheer variety and quantity of this bestial imagery.

Gloucester's transformation into "Gonerill with a white beard" (4.5.94) is thus no accidental projection of Lear's madness; it is illustrative of the amoral, hermaphroditic nature of the uroboric Terrible Mother.

In contrast, her "kind and comfortable" (1.4.261) sister, not described in bestial terms, has persisted in Lear's imagination as a nurturing, sheltering comforter displaying qualities of the Good Mother:

> No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.
> Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
> Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce, but thine
> Do comfort and not burn. (2.4.163-66)

Nevertheless, running the "peasant" (3.7.79) who defends Gloucester through from behind,[38] Regan in turn demonstrates that she is not lacking in negative phallic aggression. Playing at the game of Lear's symbolic castration with Gonerill, Regan takes the winning turn: "For his particular, I'll receive him gladly, / But not one follower" (2.4.285-86). As, earlier, she bids Gloucester shut up his doors against Lear's possible return, the counsel of the gorgeously appareled Terrible Mother (2.4.260-63) scarcely displays warmth, much less a sense of filial piety: "O sir, to wilful men, / The injuries that they themselves procure/ Must be their schoolmasters" (2.4.295-97).[39] Regan's previous discomforting words to Lear—"O sir, you are old, / Nature in you stands on the very verge/ Of his confine" (2.4.138-40)—suggest a more disturbing inversion. The action of Nature (personified by the uroboric Terrible Mother) within Lear, "sir" O without a figure, stands not only on the verge of "his" limit but also on the verge of an unnatural confinement—on the verge of a "monstrous birth" engendered by the chaotic "[h]ell and night" (*Othello* 1.3.403-04) raging within the uroboros.

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[38] According to the textual footnote, the Quarto stage directions state this (203 n. 78 SD).

[39] Coursen asserts: "By demanding 'false feeling' in scene one, Lear has encouraged such unfeeling rationalizations. Lear may be 'More sinned against than sinning'. . . but he must be blamed for releasing the malign energies of Goneril and Regan into what was his kingdom. Lear's terrible inner experience will be replicated within the sundered, sundering island that he

This psychic parturition might signal the rebirth of Lear's consciousness; on the other hand, it could prefigure the total extinction of consciousness in chaos. Thus Neumann elucidates the individual's experience of the Terrible Mother, an experience indicative of dawning ego-consciousness:

> With the emancipation of consciousness and the increasing tension between it and the unconscious, ego development leads to a stage in which the Great Mother no longer appears as friendly and good, but becomes the ego's enemy, the Terrible Mother. The devouring side of the uroboros is experienced as the tendency of the unconscious to destroy consciousness. (*Origins* 299)

Lost in the tempest begotten not only by Lear's "flesh [which] begot/ These pelican daughters" (3.4.69-70) but also by the injurious consequences of his psychic inflation, he and his Fool stagger about, pursued by the monstrous uroboric "daughters [who] seek his death" (3.4.147). As the ego-negating "contentious storm" (3.4.6) endured by Lear illustrates, this all-leveling, all-

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once commanded" ("Age is Unnecessary" 84).

devouring "tyranny of the open [night] too rough/ For nature to endure" (3.4.2-3) also seeks the death of consciousness, the triumph of the uroboros. Its intermingled elemental "sheets of fire" (3.2.44), "bursts of horrid thunder" (3.2.44), and "groans of roaring wind and rain" (3.2.45) threaten to extinguish fragile human ego-consciousness: "Man's nature cannot carry/ Th'affliction nor the fear" (3.2.46-47).

The uroboric state engendered by Lear and (or with) his unnatural offspring threatens to devour not only Lear, but the divided cosmic egg consumed by his cuckoos. Lear's curse upon Gonerill—"Into her womb convey sterility, / Dry up in her the organs of increase" (1.4.233-34)—seems to engender, ironically, a state of promiscuous death-goddess-like, fertility-goddess-like abandon within both "jewels," who perversely set about spreading coldness, sterility, blindness, and death throughout Lear's kingdom. As Gloucester belatedly learns, there is no sanctuary to be found within the *unheimlich* [uncanny] "hard house" usurped by Regan and her consort. There follows an odd inversion of Neumann's narrative of dawning heroic consciousness' "fight with the dragon" (*Origins* 152), also indicative of a transformative state:

> Once the uroboros has divided into a pair of opposites, namely the World Parents, and the "son" has placed himself between them, thereby establishing his masculinity, the first stage of his emancipation is successfully accomplished. The ego, standing in the center between the World Parents, has challenged both sides of

> the uroboros, and by this hostile act has ranged both the upper and lower principles against him. (152)

Gonerill and Regan, hermaphroditic anti-heroes of the unconscious, seek to slay their father-mother, the uroboric dragon. The conscious intentions of the "serpent-like" and serpent-toothed (1.4.243) "gilded serpent" (5.3.78) and of the worm who proclaims herself made "of that self-mettle as my sister" (1.1.64), however, necessarily result in their own destruction as the cosmos of *Lear* implodes upon them. Their actions portend not the ego's victorious sublimation of the unconscious but (in their case) the final extinction of consciousness.

Oblivious to threatened or promised images of apocalyptic horror, fiendishly deformed "devil" (4.2.36) Gonerill continues mouthing anticipatory "Os" in her glass (3.2.33-34), preparing to "stick boarish fangs" in Lear's "anointed flesh" (3.7.57). Regan—having missed the opportunity to "[p]luck out" Lear's "poor old eyes" with "cruel nails" (3.7.55-56)—addresses the "dark and comfortless" (3.7.84) uroboric "bleeding rings" (5.3.180) of Gloucester, exemplifying the "unnatural" (3.3.1) nature of the Terrible Mother as she does so:

> [GLOUCESTER] Edmond, enkindle all the sparks of nature
> To quit this horrid act.
> . . . .
> [REGAN] It was he
> That made the overture of thy treasons to us,
> Who is too good to pity thee. (3.7.85-86; 3.7.87-89)

Within the "horrid" reality of nature personified by Gonerill and Regan, utterances such as "good" and "pity" are empty speech; to resist the devouring, rending amorality and inhumanity of the Terrible Mother is "treason." Resistance, in this reality void of all goodness, is nearly futile.

"Most savage and unnatural" (3.3.6) Edmond—enkindling "all the sparks of nature" in the service of his bejeweled mistresses—is an apt acolyte of the Terrible Mother, as his first soliloquy indicates: "Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law/ My services are bound" (1.2.1-2).[40] Not only do his "lusty stealth of nature" (1.2.11) and "fierce quality" of "composition" (1.2.12) suit him for this task. His very conception ("under the Dragon's tail" suggestive, again, of the amoral uroboros) renders him the ideal officiant of unnatural Nature's promiscuous and bloody rites: "My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's tail, and my nativity was under *Ursa major*, so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous" (1.2.112-15). Despite his obvious phallicism—"Now gods, stand up for bastards!" (1.2.22)—Edmond's union with Gonerill and Regan seems uroboric in its devouring nature; over the three, their souls fated to "marry in an instant" (5.3.204) in incestuous union as they expire, "there stand the insignia of death."[41]

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[40] Birenbaum comments: "Through Edmund is dramatized the rule of *appetitive nature*, whose code is a form of individualism and whose symbol is the beast" (245). "Against Edmund's conception of appetitive nature stands his father's conception of *cosmic nature*. As the symbol of the one is the beast, of the other it is astrology" (248).

In Cashford's view, Edmond's attitude here "clarifies the shadowy depths of Lear's egoism, the ruthless self-interest that is answerable to no moral law. Those who inhabit this kind of world—Edmund, Gonerill, Regan, and Cornwall—are defined as those who see without feeling, and so see primarily what they can make use of for their own ends. They are not named as blind themselves, though they blind others. What makes them so dangerous is their single-minded clear-sightedness, for they see the weakness of others without compassion" (13).

As the Terrible Mother's less than heroic son-lover labors diligently "in the ranks of death" (4.2.26), the *Lear* storm's "groans of roaring wind and rain" continue within and without the king:

> This tempest in my mind
> Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
> Save what beats there: filial ingratitude.
> Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
> For lifting food to't? But I will punish home.   (3.4.12-16)

Desiring to devour the rending, devouring mouths of his "pelican daughters"—perhaps seeking to devour himself, to become the image of the uroboros—Lear (even now given to self-sentimentality) then apostrophizes: "O Regan, Gonerill, / Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all—/O that way madness lies" (3.4.19-21). As Lear enters the hovel, madness begins to tell the truth. The king's display of compassion for the Fool—"In, boy, go first. You houseless poverty—Nay, get thee in" (3.4.26-27)—marks a turn toward non-egocentric consciousness even as Lear's "wits begin to turn" (3.2.65). As the king prays in the "pitiless storm" (3.4.29) of Nature's indifference, his Fool's "physic"(3.4.33) takes effect:

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[41] Neumann, *Origins* 17; see note 14 above.

Robert Polhemus' view of Gonerill and Regan: "The older daughters are plotters, like Lot's girls, and, after coldly acting out their profession of incestuous desire for the father, both succumb to fatal adulterous sex with Edmund, the bastard engendered from taboo sex—as if they were condemned to repeat until they die, their sick sibling rivalry for love of the same man" (101). "Like Lot with the offer of his daughters to the Sodomites, Lear begins by pushing Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia into. . . verbalized filial whoredom. The two eldest then act like vengeful beings who've been subjected to degrading, patriarchal pressure and conspire to take power, act, and determine history" (101).

> O I have ta'en
> Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp,
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just. (3.4.32-36)

Within the hovel's shelter yet submerged in the unconscious, the king's inner storm nevertheless continues. "Fathom and half; fathom and half; poor Tom!"(3.4.37) Edgar cries inside, echoing the effects of the deluge, of water as "a living symbol of the dark psyche"(Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" 9.1.17.33) threatening to drown all concerned. A trinity of real and feigned madness, Lear, Edgar, and the Fool seek in vain to exorcise the devouring nothingness of the foul fiends that are Lear's "unkind daughters" (3.4.70). Neither obscene phallic nursery rhymes ("Pillicock sat on Pillicock Hill; alow, alow, loo, loo") (3.4.71), nor aphoristic appeals to the abstractions of conventional morality ("Take heed o'th' foul fiend, obey thy parents, keep thy words' justice, swear not, commit not with man's sworn spouse, set not thy sweet heart on proud array") (3.4.73-75), nor the entrance of the torch-bearing "walking fire" Gloucester (3.4.101)—another ironic psychopomp, as yet only metaphorically blind—are sufficient to overcome Lear's madness. Inspired by the entrance of "the foul Flibbertigibbet" (3.4.102), Gloucester's unrecognized son attempts one final (perhaps temporarily successful) exorcism of the Terrible Mother:

> Swithold footed thrice the wold,
> He met the nightmare and her ninefold,
> Bid her alight
> And her troth plight,
> And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee! (3.4.106-10)

In this brief illusion of respite within Gloucester's house from the "nightmare" of "this tyrannous night" (3.4.135), Lear's question dissects the conundrum: "Then let them anatomise Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard-hearts?" (3.6.34) Whether indeed the "flesh and blood" of Regan, Gonerill, and Edmond has "grown so vile, / That it doth hate what gets it" (3.4.129-30), or whether what breeds about their hearts is simply hardened indifference, the cause is Nature itself in its feminine personification as the Terrible Mother. In haste his followers convey Lear to the hope of safety, toward the brief—perhaps illusory—"welcome and protection" (3.6.48) of the Good Mother whose image, Cordelia, awaits him at Dover.

Meanwhile, as he falls asleep, Lear says: "We'll go to supper i'th'morning" (3.6.40), to which the Fool—marking his exit from the play—replies: "And I'll go to bed at noon" (3.6.41). Whether these lines indicate, as A. C. Bradley speculates, that "[the Fool] felt he had taken his death" (314) upon the heath; whether, as Welsford asserts, "his disappearance was a poetic necessity, for the

King having lost everything, including his wits, has now himself become the Fool" (264);[42] or whether his disappearance simply signals the return of Cordelia played by the same boy actor—the Fool possesses a peculiar bond with Lear's banished daughter. As the Knight's comment in 1.4 ("Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away") (1.4.62-63) indicates, this peculiar union transcends their double play of roles. As "Lear's shadow" and "boy" exits, Lear's literal and archetypal child enters; transformed into a figure of Wisdom, Lear's soul returns.

Thus commences the final battle for the ego of Lear—and of *Lear* itself. The action of the Fool's physic is incomplete; it is Cordelia as benevolent Good Mother who, tearfully summoning the reposeful "foster-nurse of nature" (4.3.12) with the aid of "[a]ll blest secrets, /All you unpublished virtues of the earth" (4.3.15-16), briefly inspires the light of consciousness in Lear.[43] A garlanded mock-king arrayed for mythic ritual sacrifice in poisonous or inedible "weeds"—a sort of Frazerian anti-fertility god[44]—mad Lear has fled:

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[42] Welsford continues: "[Lear] has touched bottom, he is an outcast from society, he has no longer any private axe to grind, so he now sees and speaks the truth" (264).

[43] According to Armens, Cordelia is "the missing mother who symbolizes the accepting forces of the Physical Hearth. She is to be the Good Mother whose task it is to restore to Lear his identity, to make of him again Lear instead of 'Lear's shadow'" (179). "In her matriarchal role of the Good Mother, it is she who performs the *Imitatio Christi*, suffering herself that love may be obtained, yet offering the hurt child, Lear, the 'kind nursery' of her tenderness" (181).

[44] See Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* 4.148-59, 9.403-11. The details of Christ's crucifixion and mockery bear some possible relation to this tradition (9.412-23).

Why, he was met even now,
As mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud,
Crowned with rank fumitor and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. (4.3.1-6)

Who is this suddenly exalted figure soon to be "cast down" (5.3.5), this "daughter/ Who redeems nature from the general curse/ Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.196-98)? Simultaneously figuring Christ's words in Luke 2:49 ("O dear father, / It is thy business that I go about") (4.4.23-24)[45] and Mary ("There she shook/ The holy water from her heavenly eyes") (4.3.30-31, ed. Bevington),[46] Cordelia's state calls to mind the archetype of the Sophia, of the Good Mother as Divine Wisdom, the highest projection of the positive Jungian archetypal feminine:[47]

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[45] See Luke 2:49, Geneva Bible: "Then ſaid he vnto them, How is it that ye ſoght me? knewe ye not that I muſt go about my fathers buſines?"

[46] "As the Good Mother, as agent of redemption, as Madonna and Redeemer both, it is her loving kiss which is to restore to Lear his sanity and identity and remove him from the world of pain and illness" (Armens 185).

[47] In Neumann's schema, the Sophia is the most elevated projection of the positive Great Mother archetype:"[T]he terrifying figure of the Gorgon with the snakes writhing round her head. . . is a projection of the Terrible Mother, while Sophia is a projection of the Good Mother." The figure of Isis is the highest projection of the good-bad (primordial, uroboric) Great Mother (*The Great Mother* 15). See 325-36.

Neumann's description of the positive anima is also relevant here: "The anima as prophetess and priestess is the archetype of the soul who conceives the Logos, the 'spermatic word' of God. She is the inspirer and the inspired, the Virgin Sophia who conceives by the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mother who brings forth the Logos-spirit-son"(*Origins* 379).

> The dual Great Goddess as mother and daughter can so transform her original bond with the elementary character as to become a pure feminine spirit, a kind of Sophia, a spiritual whole in which all heaviness and materiality are transcended. Then she not only forms the earth and heaven of the retort that we call life, and is not only the whirling wheel within it, but is also the supreme essence and distillation to which life in this world can be transformed. (*The Great Mother* 325)

From the wise "holy water" of Cordelia's "heavenly eyes" spring healing antidotes to Lear's madness: "All blest secrets, / All you unpublished virtues of the earth, / Spring with my tears" (4.15-17). Her divine forgiveness of Lear's misdeeds is made apparent by her following words addressed to these "unpublished virtues": "[B]e aidant and remediate/ In the good man's distress" (4.15.18). Cordelia's filial piety and humility combine in another Christ-like echo: "No blown ambition doth our arms incite, / But love, dear love, and our aged father's right" (27-28). Indeed, Cordelia's kiss of life appears to impart a "supreme essence and distillation" of spiritual and physical transformation as she symbolically resurrects Lear:

> O my dear father, restoration hang
> Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made. (4.6.26-29)

Lear stumbled when he made his terrible daughters his mothers; transfigured into his spiritual mother, Cordelia—going about the positive business of the

Transpersonal Self, of the God-image within the human psyche—offers the hope of psychic and temporal salvation.

Even in madness, Lear—chastened by his experiences on the heath, no longer seeking to command the unkind elements—was aware of the consequences of his sin of psychic inflation:

> They flattered me like a dog and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything that I said 'ay' and 'no' to was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o'their words. They told me I was everything; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.
> (4.5.94-101)

Nevertheless, the seemingly interminable nightmare of "hell," "darkness," "the sulphurous pit, / burning, scalding, stench, consumption" (4.5.124-25) engendered by the negative aspects of the Great Mother continued to smother Lear with its "[smell] of mortality" (4.5.129). In Lear's description of "yon simp'ring dame, / Whose face between her forks presages snow" (4.5.115), the uroboric Terrible Mother appeared in full hermaphroditic monstrosity:

> Down from the waist they're centaurs,
> Though women all above.
> But to the girdle do the gods inherit;
> Beneath is all the fiend's. (4.5.120-23)

Yet shortly thereafter Lear, displaying the newfound sense of social justice inspired by his Fool upon the heath, has reversed himself:

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand.
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thy own back.
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her. (4.5.153-55)

In act 4, scene 6, the uroboric horrors of Lear's nightmare fade away; the Good Mother of dawning consciousness returns, exorcising the Terrible Mother. Ritualistically arrayed in "fresh garments" (4.6.23), the sleeping father-god and metaphorical "smug bridegroom" (4.5.189)—a soul snatched from the fire, awaiting its marriage with Christ as Cordelia—reluctantly endures the "medicine" (4.6.27) of Cordelia's resurrecting kiss:[48]

You do me wrong to take me out o'th'grave.
Thou art a soul in bliss, but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead. (4.6.42-45)

The "wheel of fire" is not merely "false fortune's" (5.3.6) wheel; it is an image of the Great Round, of the psychic totality symbolized by the uroboros—of the fate of the ego trapped within it, tormented by the awareness of mortality, cyclicity, and amorality, unable to command life and death, good and evil. Lear's psychic inflation has brought about the fate of Ixion (bound to a flaming wheel by Jupiter for presumptuously attempting to seduce Juno), of whom Edinger states:

> Ixion, representing the inflated ego, attempts to appropriate to itself [*sic*] that which belongs to the suprapersonal powers. . . The wheel is basically a mandala [a Buddhist or Hindu design—usually

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[48] Tucker remarks of their reunion: "Of course, Lear's identity has been demolished, but painfully and gradually it is remade as he comes to express his feeling side in loving Cordelia" (129).

> circular—used in meditation, thought by Jungians to symbolize psychic totality]. It connotes the Self and the wholeness pertaining to the Self, but in this case it has been transformed into an instrument of torture. (*Ego and Archetype* 30-31)

Humbling herself, the divine "soul in bliss" bids the humbled father kneeling before her to resume his literal and archetypal hierarchical status: "O look upon me, sir, / And hold your hand in benediction o'er me. / You must not kneel" (4.6.54-56). In this moment of respite, Lear recognizes himself as father, Cordelia as his daughter: "For, as I am a man, I think this lady/ To be my child Cordelia" (4.6.67). Conflation of Christ, Mary, and the Sophia—"And so I am: I am"(4.6.68), she exclaims, identifying herself with both Yahweh and Christ[49]—Cordelia embarks upon a spiritual marriage with the sacrificial mock-king who is father, child, and bridegroom.

As enemy soldiers drag them away, Lear's speech—inspired by Cordelia's divine wisdom and Christ-like forgiveness—visualizes an egalitarian union of *agape* within their celestial prison:[50]

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[49] "And God anfwered Mofés, I AM THAT I AM. Alfo he faid, Thus fhalt thou fay vnto the children of Ifaaél [*sic*], I AM hathe fent me vnto you" (Exodus 3:14, Geneva Bible). See also John 8:58, Geneva Bible: "Iefus faid vnto them, Verely, verely I fay vnto you, before Abraham was, I am."

[50] "In this aspect of the play, we have suggested that part of the humanist tradition which emphasizes the Platonic concept of the child's superior innocence, the process whereby *eros* develops into *agape*, the Pauline implications of *caritas*, and, as in Spenser, the frequent identification of love with divine virtue. Thus, in her role of the Redeemer, Cordelia may be likened not only to such as Oedipus, but also to the Savior-Heroes of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. . . Add to this that her redeeming function possesses validity as an expression of an archetypal role: in the image of the Good Mother, she gives birth to the holy child, for the 'child-changed father,' Lear, under her aegis has become much more of a 'spiritual' figure by the end of

> Come, let's away to prison.
> We two alone will sing like birds i'th'cage.
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies. . .
> . . . .
> And take upon's the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies. (5.3.8-13, 16-17)

The phrase "gilded butterflies," suggestive of the butterfly as *psyche*, implies the presence of *eros* (in the Jungian sense of psychic relatedness) as well. Lear's imagined ideal union with Cordelia—in which the two serve not only as "God's spies" prying into the temporal and celestial "mystery of things," but as the all-seeing eyes of God gazing upon the wonders and horrors of creation—is not only an example of momentarily triumphant Christian *agape* seeking to defy oppression; it is to some extent a vision of the Jungian greater *coniunctio*, or mystical union of opposites symbolizing the wholeness of the Transpersonal Self as God-image.[51] As Lear comforts Cordelia, the devouring uroboric chaos that formerly extinguished his ego is transmuted into a symbol of divine cosmic unity, of psychic union with the Transpersonal Self as *imago Dei*:

> While in the beginning the ego germ lay in the embrace of the uroboros, at the end the self proves to be the golden core of a sublimated uroboros, containing in itself masculine and feminine,

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the play" (Armens 185-86).

[51] See (for example) Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 173-77.

> conscious and unconscious elements, a unity in which the ego does not perish but experiences itself, in the self, as a uniting symbol. (*Origins* 415)

But Lear's dream of their transcendent spiritual union is not to be, at least in the temporal realm; Cordelia's hasty execution prevents its full realization.[52] Moreover, Lear's vision of Christian transcendence—since it by definition excludes hatred, evil and darkness—arguably cannot be equated to the Jungian doctrine of divine "wholeness" incorporating these factors. Awaiting the sweet savor of their own impending sacrifices, "God's spies," Divine Wisdom and fool of the gods, briefly contemplate "the mystery of things" as the uroboros prepares to devour them.

Edmond, expiring in the presence of Edgar, finds himself in turn bound upon Fortune's wheel: "The wheel is come full circle" (5.3.164), he gasps, a whirling Ixion unexpectedly come to rest. The light of day penetrates"[t]he dark and vicious place" (5.3.162)[53] of Edmond's origin, at once the Freudian female

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[52] James Kirsch, however, asserts: "Considering that, in [Lear's] prison fantasy, his exaltation was due to an anticipated eternal life with Cordelia, I can only conclude that at this moment [of Lear's death] the image of the coniunctio has come to life. A vision of transcendental impact lights up and floods him. This is the secret of the play. At the moment of death, the coniunctio occurs and in this vision Lear perceives *ultimate truth*, achieves *full consciousness*, and thus experiences redemption. This is the fruit of his suffering, this the 'ripeness,' the end Shakespeare promised us" (*Shakespeare's Royal Self* 314-15).

[53] Rudnytsky concludes: "Although the fantasies of Lear and Othello draw on what I have no hesitation in affirming to be universal human desires, the forms that they take indubitably reveal the ideological imprint of the age in which they arose. They display a misogyny that is far from inevitable and ought to distress us at the close of the twentieth century. For if we have profited from the interrogations of feminism as well as psychoanalysis, it should be possible for us to begin to sort out the essential from the contingent, to acknowledge our nostalgia for the womb

"[n]othing"(1.1.82) and the all-containing, all-devouring O of the uroboros; surely, at last, the masculine justice of Albany will "govern" the "desperate"(5.3.151) archetypal forces personified by the Terrible Mother. The dead bodies of Regan and Gonerill, trophies of virtue, provide an illusion of safety, some evidence that abstractions such as justice might have actual meaning: "This judgement of the heavens, that makes us tremble, /Touches us not with pity" (5.3.205-06), states Albany as he gazes upon their corpses. But Edmond, predictably, betrays his "own nature" (5.3.218) too late; the wheel of the Great Round continues to turn, its victims slowly roasting in its uroboric flames. The justice of the heavens, perpetually deaf to Lear's cries, is not touched with pity: "Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones. / Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so, / That heaven's vault would crack" (5.3.231-33). His agonized howls emphasize the futility, the negation, the "nothing"ness that has plagued the *Lear* cosmos from the beginning:

> And my poor fool is hanged. No, no, no life?
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never. (5.3.279-82)

Whether Lear dies in self-delusion that Cordelia lives ("Do you see this? Look on her! Look, her lips. / Look there, look there") (5.3.284-85)—or whether

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without stigmatizing its portal as a 'darke and vicious place,' and to emancipate ourselves from the gender arrangements of patriarchy, even as we continue to reread the literary masterpieces in which its fantasies are most powerfully inscribed" (310-11).

he, in the extremity of death, sees evidence of her afterlife[54]—Cordelia, hanged like a Norse sacrifice upon the tough tree of this world, "dead as earth" (5.3.266) with her life-usurping father, succumbs to archetypally feminine darkness and death. To the hope of apotheosis and *agape*—to that of Lear's imagined greater *coniunctio* transcending physical extinction—the Terrible Mother's bloody, bestial temporal triumph opposes the apparent reality of cyclicity, finitude, and meaningless annihilation:

> Thus the womb of the earth becomes the deadly devouring maw of the underworld, and beside the fecundated womb and the protecting cave of earth and mountain gapes the abyss of hell, the dark hole of the depths, the devouring womb of the grave and of death, of darkness without light, of nothingness. . . .
> This Terrible Mother is the hungry earth, which devours its own children and fattens or their corpses; it is the tiger and the vulture, the vulture and the coffin, the flesh-eating sarcophagus voraciously licking up the blood seed of men and animals and, once fecundated and sated, casting it out again in new birth, hurling it to death, and over and over again to death. (*The Great Mother* 149-50)

Edgar and Albany attend to the "present business/ of general woe" (5.2.323-24), that of restoring divine order and the primacy of the archetypal masculine. Although Edgar's words ("The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say")(5.3.296-97) indicate the possibility of a turn toward intuition and emotion—thus, a turn toward the positive archetypal feminine—the death of *Lear*'s soul with its ego-king appears to preclude such possibilities. The archetypal perils personified by Gonerill and Regan temporarily "govern[ed]" if not eradicated, the play's male survivors—becoming rational "men of stones"—return to the problematic sublimation of the unconscious, and thus of the archetypal feminine. As *Lear's* new ego-kings exit with a dead march, its cosmos remains divided.

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[54] Coursen, in "The Death of Cordelia: A Jungian Approach," speculates: "It may be that [Lear] dies uninflated and unillusioned, asking us to look at reality and not to deny it. . . Perhaps Lear should be allowed the dignity of dying with his eyes open at last" (12). "The play becomes Britain's revenge upon King Lear, as well as the revenge of Lear's Self upon his kingly ego" (6). "Lear may have surrendered one reality, but he fails to account for the new reality, the radical evil, for which he is responsible. Hence Lear is oblivious to the danger in which he has placed his child, Cordelia" (12).

CHAPTER THREE

“A consummation devoutly to be [un]wished”: *Hamlet*, Heroic Ego-Consciousness, and the Embrace of Chaos

Approaching his passive entrapment by Ophelia, purported object of his affections, Hamlet commences arguably his greatest soliloquy, an example of his “internalization of the self” that leads Harold Bloom (despite Hamlet’s many less than heroic qualities) to crown him “the Western hero of consciousness” (409):

> To be, or not to be, that is the question—
> Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to—’tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished. (*Hamlet* 3.1.56-64)[1]

Hamlet’s heroic vacillation—his being, and his intermittent desire not to be—is an aspect of his consciousness which has long puzzled critics. The question of Hamlet’s excessively procrastinated revenge is of specific interest to Freudians; in the classic view expressed by Freud himself and by his disciple Ernest Jones, Hamlet’s Oedipal guilt causes the delay. Claudius, having literally killed Hamlet’s father and married Hamlet’s mother, is the embodiment of Hamlet’s repressed Oedipus complex; until Gertrude is dead, psychologically incestuous Hamlet is unable to kill his literally incestuous stepfather.

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[1] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, updated edn., ed. Philip Edwards, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003). Subsequent references appear in this text by act, scene, and line number.

Although this Freudian explication of "[t]he particular problem of Hamlet" (Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* 20) serves well as a partial explanation of Hamlet's motives (or of Hamlet's psychological immobility), its solution of the hero of Western consciousness' titanic problem is, at best, incomplete. An archetypal approach to Hamlet's dilemma, emphasizing the tragedy's mythic aspect, provides the opportunity for a more expansive analysis of the prince's behavior. In *Hamlet*, his ironically addressed "good Mother" (1.2.77) Gertrude has taken a new incestuous consort (thus echoing Erich Neumann's narrative of primitive matriarchal psychological dominance), her husband's murderer (thus echoing Sir James Frazer's narrative of the ritually slain priest-king of Nemi, consort of the Great Mother personified as Diana). Attempting to purge Denmark of its moral chaos, Hamlet as would-be hero of consciousness falls victim to the archetypally feminine psychological and moral chaos within his own unconscious, taking much of the cast with him. In the end archetypally masculine consciousness, light, and order once more prevail, albeit at great price.

Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* engenders the concept of a Hamlet paralyzed by his own Oedipal sins:

> According to the view which was originated by Goethe and is still the prevailing one to-day, Hamlet represents the type of man whose power of direct action is paralysed by an excessive development of his intellect. . . [T]o another view, the dramatist has tried to portray a pathologically irresolute character which might be classed as neurasthenic. The plot of the drama shows us, however, that Hamlet is far from being represented as a person incapable of taking any action. . . What is it, then, that inhibits him in fulfilling the task set him by his father's ghost? The answer, once again, is that it is the peculiar nature of the task. Hamlet is able to do anything—except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. (265)

Ernest Jones, in *Hamlet and Oedipus*, echoes Freud's assertions concerning Hamlet's procrastination:

> The explanation. . . of the delay and self-frustration exhibited in the endeavour to fulfil his father's demand for vengeance is that to Hamlet the thought of incest and parricide combined is intolerable to be borne. One part of him tries to carry out the task, the other flinches inexorably from the thought of it. How fain would he blot it out in that 'bestial oblivion' which unfortunately for him his conscience contemns. He is torn and tortured in an insoluable inner conflict. (70)

Having asserted that "the Freud-Jones interpretation. . . offers a cogent solution to the central problem of the play, Hamlet's delay," John Russell points out its shortcomings noted by critics: "The Freudian project. . . focuses on sexuality as the fundamentally disruptive force in human relations, while the Shakespearean project, though recognizing sexuality as a destabilizing factor, does not focus on it to the exclusion of all other conditions and causes" (14).[1] Clearly some more complex explanation of Hamlet's interiority—and delay—is desirable.

Erich Neumann's narrative of the hero myth, elaborated in *The Origins and History of Consciousness,* provides some insight into the precise nature of the oblivion simultaneously sought and abhorred by Hamlet. As "the archetypal forerunner of mankind in general," the hero's "fate is the pattern in accordance with which the masses of humanity must live, and always have lived, however haltingly and distantly" (131). Hamlet's struggle is that of nascent "ego consciousness" (131) locked in mortal combat with the maternal (and paternal) uroboros (that is, with the tail-eating serpent which, in Neumann's schema, symbolizes primordial psychological chaos):

> With the birth of the hero the primordial struggle begins—the struggle with the First Parents. This problem, in personal and transpersonal form, dominates the hero's whole existence, his birth, his fight with the [uroboric] dragon, and his transformation. By gaining possession of the masculine and feminine sides of himself . . . and building up an inner core of personality in whose structure the old and the new stages are integrated, the hero completes a pattern of development which is collectively embodied in the mythological projections of the hero myth, and has also left individual traces in the growth of human personality. (131-32)

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[1] Moreover, in this critical view, "the specifically historical nature of the Freudian project" renders it "inappropriate and illegitimate when extrapolated from the clinical arena and applied to the literary text" (Russell 14).

The struggle is Herculean, particularly for a hero who describes Claudius as "no more like my father/ Than I to Hercules" (1.2.152-53): "The ego, standing between the World Parents, has challenged both [maternal and paternal] sides of the uroboros, and by this act has ranged both the lower and upper principles against him" (*Origins* 152). The uroboric dragon "is masculine and feminine at once. The fight with the dragon is thus the fight with the First Parents, a fight in which the murders of both father and mother, but not of one alone, have their ritually prescribed place" (153).

In the case of the mother, the hero's (mythological or metaphorical) victory constitutes "regenerative incest" in a psychological sense (154): "Victory over the mother. . . brings about a rebirth. The incest produces a transformation of personality which alone makes the hero a hero, that is, a higher and ideal representative of mankind" (154). Such "heroic incest" marks a transition from the ego-obliterating "uroboric incest" and the castrating "matriarchal incest" characterizing earlier stages of consciousness: "[W]hat distinguishes the hero is an active incest, the deliberate, conscious exposure of himself to the dangerous influence of the female, and the overcoming of man's immemorial fear of woman" (156). Forcing Gertrude's gaze upon his metaphorical "glass/ Where [she] may see the inmost part of [her]" (3.4.19-20), Hamlet as heaven's "scourge and minister" arguably exposes himself to "the dangerous influence of the female" even as he seeks to impose the will of Christian Providence upon her "very soul" (3.4.89). On the other hand, Hamlet's earlier destructive behavior toward Ophelia—indicative of immemorial contempt of woman, if not of actual fear—displays a profound lack of such psychic heroism.

Commenting upon "[t]he ambiguity of the problem of the First Parents, with its dual and contradictory meanings," Neumann remarks: "The final laying of the ghost which, in the form of the Oedipus complex, haunts our Western minds must be made the basis for any genuine understanding of the phenomena we are concerned with here" (132). Concerning the elder Hamlet's ghost, Neumann asserts: "Just as in Indian mythology Rama, at the behest of his father, beheads his mother with an ax, so in the *Oresteia*, and again with variations in *Hamlet*, the spirit of the father is the impelling force that compasses the death of the sinful mother" (168). The fact that Hamlet neither actually kills nor actually commits incest with the mother who "has sinned against the father principle" (168)—indeed, is commanded by the paternal Ghost (whom Hamlet has not slain either) not to "taint" his "mind" (*Hamlet* 1.5.85) with thoughts of metaphorically incestuous matricide— implies Hamlet's resistance to Jungian as well as Freudian modes of parricide and incest. Prompted to revenge "by heaven and hell" (2.2.537)—by the "upper" and "lower" principles, by archetypally masculine consciousness and the archetypally feminine unconscious—Hamlet attempts the heroic purgation of “the royal bed of Denmark” (1.5.82) from “luxury and damnèd incest” (1.5.98) only to descend into a hell akin to that of Neumann’s “uroboric incest,” of his half-wished-for quietus of consciousness. Vacillating hero of consciousness, Hamlet ultimately perishes in the service of the unconscious; seeking heroic apotheosis as heaven’s “scourge and minister” (3.4.176), Hamlet suffers an uncertain fate in the psychologically incestuous arms of the chthonic Terrible Mother (and of the unconscious which she personifies), in the dark consummation of death.

As Hamlet’s description of his father makes evident, the prince is—at least in his mind—of divine descent, a requisite of the hero myth (Neumann, *Origins* 132-33). The elder Hamlet is a metaphorical solar deity of consciousness, an ironic sky-father—as his son’s language suggests—united with Gertrude as “earth” (1.2.142) mother:

> So excellent a king, that was to this
> Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother
> That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
> Visit her face too roughly—heaven and earth,
> Must I remember? (1.2.139-43)

Forcing Gertrude’s gaze upon “[t]he counterfeit presentment of two brothers” (3.4.54), Hamlet portrays his father not only as the titanic solar deity Hyperion, but as an amalgam of Olympic attributes:

> See what a grace was seated on this brow;
> Hyperion’s curls, the front of Jove himself,

> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
> A station like the herald Mercury,
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
> A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man. (3.4.55-62)

Being "too much i'th'sun" (1.2.67) of late, Hamlet's peculiar status as Claudius' "cousin" and "son" (1.2.64) marks (at least ironically) the "dual parentage" characteristic of the hero:

> The fact that the hero has two fathers or two mothers is a central feature in the canon of the hero myth. Besides his personal father there is a 'higher,' that is to say an archetypal, father figure, and similarly an archetypal mother figure appears beside the personal mother. (Neumann, *Origins* 132)

Although Gertrude has no obvious double in the play, her imitation of the morally ambiguous, good-bad Great Mother arguably summons forth the latter's archetypal presence. Not precisely the virgin mother to whom "[t]he hero's birth is expressly attributed" (Neumann, *Origins* 133), Gertrude—whom Hamlet addresses ironically as "good Mother" (1.2.77)—nevertheless seems bent upon emulating Neumann's Great Mother in her simultaneous capacity for benevolence and disregard for conventional morality. As Neumann states, "the hero's mother is frequently the Mother Goddess herself or else betrothed to a god" (133); Gertrude, having betrayed her divine husband in "damnèd incest" with the demonic "satyr" and "serpent" (1.5.39) Claudius, abandons Olympus for the corrupted ruins of Eden. "[F]railty, thy name is woman" (1.2.146), apostrophizes Hamlet, recoiling in horror from the revelation of his divine mother's fall into the mortality of rotten Denmark: "Fie on't, ah fie,'tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature/ Possess it merely" (1.2.135-37).

Concerning the implications of this metaphor, Janet Adelman states:

> Hamlet's soliloquy is in effect his attempt to locate a point of origin for the staleness of the world and his own pull toward death, and he discovers this point of origin in his mother's body. . . [I]f the enclosed garden—the garden unpossessed—traditionally figures the Virgin Mother, this garden, full of seed, figures his mother's newly contaminated body. . . In this highly compacted and psychologized version of the fall, death is the sexualized mother's legacy to her son: maternal sexuality turns the enclosed garden into the fallen world and brings death into that world by making it loathsome. (17)

Hamlet's reaction to his literal father's previous seeding of the maternal garden, according to Adelman, is "the splitting of the father": "[I]t is the satyr Claudius, not the sun-god father, who has violated the maternal space" (20). No longer under the elder Hamlet's "godlike control," the "indifferent voraciousness" of Gertrude's appetites "threatens to undo the gap between then and now, virgin and whore, Hyperion and satyr, on which Hamlet's defensive system depends" (20). Hamlet's definition of Gertrude's uncontrolled moral "frailty" to the contrary, his mother's behavior suggests—in its amorality or its moral indifference, in its disturbing collapsing of binaries—the archetypal action of the Great Mother herself.

Neumann's narrative in *The Great Mother* of "[t]he woman" of Neumann's presumed past matriarchate, dependent upon "the hunting, warring, killing, and sacrificing male," oddly echoes Hamlet's description of Gertrude's voracious, indifferent appetite: "For she is identical with the thrice-plowed field on which she gives herself for fecundation to the male, of whom she indifferently makes use" (303). Hamlet's memory of his devouring mother, dangling like mildewed forbidden fruit from his father, further suggests a kind of passively aggressive voraciousness: "[W]hy, she would hang on him / As if increase of appetite had grown/ By what it fed on" (1.2.143-145). Taken to its mythological conclusion, Gertrude's behavior is akin to that of Neumann's negative elementary feminine, of "the womb, the gate, the gullet, which actively swallows, devours, rends, and kills. Its sucking power is mythologically symbolized by its lure and attraction for man, for life and consciousness and the individual male, who can evade it only if he is a hero, and even then not always" (*The Great Mother* 171).

Within the ungated space of the hero of consciousness' metaphorical "unweeded garden," Gertrude—hastening with "most wicked speed, to post/ With such dexterity to incestuous sheets" (1.2.156-57)—dramatizes this disturbingly amoral, potentially destructive aspect of the archetypal Great Mother. Frazer's once canonical, now less influential synthesis of comparative mythology, *The Golden Bough*, provides (albeit inexactly) the narrative context of this archetypal performance, the "strange and recurring tragedy" (*The Magic Art* 1) of the ritual priest-king of Diana at Nemi:

> In the sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and possibly far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword, and he kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer; and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. Such was the rule of the sanctuary. (*The Magic Art* 8-9)

Acting out Frazer's sacrificial ritual presumably antecedent to tragedy, Claudius (as the elder Hamlet's ghost relates) has treacherously slain his predecessor: "[B]ut know, thou noble youth,/ The serpent that did sting thy father's life/ Now wears his crown" (1.5.38-40). A priest-king of Nemi dozing on his watch, as it were, the elder Hamlet succumbs not to the heroic sword but to his brother's poison:

> Sleeping within my orchard,
> My custom always of the afternoon,
> Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
> With juice of cursèd hebenon in a vial,
> And in the porches of my ears did pour
> The leperous distilment[.] (1.5.59-64)

"Cut off even in the blossoms of [his] sin" (1.5.76) although not identified as a murderer, the elder Hamlet—cut down by Claudius the "mildewed ear/ Blasting his wholesome brother" (3.4.64-65)—is the ironic image of a dying god succeeded by a vegetation-blighting "wretch whose natural gifts [are] poor/ To those of [him]" (1.5.51-52). He is slain by an Edenic "serpent" pouring poisonous vegetable "distilment" (suggestive of the Great Mother's transformative aspects) (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 59-60) from a "vial" (a transformative maternal body-vessel containing nourishment, intoxication, or death-dealing poison) (44-47) into his ears. Lucianus' speech in *The Murder of Gonzago* further identifes poisoner and poison with the realm of the Great Mother in her terrible personfication as Hecate, goddess of night, witchcraft, and necromancy:

> Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
> With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
> Thy natural magic and dire property
> On wholesome life usurp immediately. (3.2.233-36)

Given the feminine seductive power of the "witchcraft of his wits" and of his "traitorous gifts" (1.5.43), given the effeminate treachery of his rank "offence" (3.3.36) with "the primal eldest curse upon't, / A brother's murder" (3.3.37-38), "that incestuous, that adulterate beast" (1.5.42) Claudius is a particularly apt priestly guardian of Gertrude's rank, corrupt "unweeded garden."

Concerning Frazer's work, Northrop Frye states: "*The Golden Bough* purports to be a work of anthropology, but it. . . may yet prove to be really a work of literary criticism" (101). Be that as it may, the specter of Frazer's ritual king—particularly its later incarnation in Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*—persists in haunting the stage of *Hamlet* overshadowed by the Great Mother. Thus Graves expounds upon “the Theme” underlying poetry (and tragedy), that of the Triple Goddess (that is, of the Great Mother) and her unfortunate consort:

> The Theme, briefly, is the antique story. . . of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the God of the Waxing Year; the central chapters concern the God’s losing battle with the God of the Waning Year for love of the capricious and all-powerful Threefold Goddess, their mother, bride, and layer-out. (24)

Like Robert Graves’ White Goddess—a poetic conception of the Great Mother as the “Muse, the Mother of All Living, the ancient power of fright and lust—the female spider or the queen-bee whose embrace is death” (Graves 24)—the queen indifferently exchanges the affections of her former consort ritualistically slain while sleeping in his orchard for those of his murderer, of the sun-god’s (or Frazerian vegetation god’s) “blood-brother, his other self, his weird” (24). Rising from Neumann’s metaphorical furrow, Gertrude—echoing goddess religion’s emphasis upon cyclicity, mortality, and finitude—commands Hyperion’s son to “cast [his] nighted colour off” (1.2.68), to accept his father’s ostensibly accidental sacrifice as the way of all flesh:

> Do not forever with thy vailèd lids
> Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
> Thou know’st ’tis common, all that lives must die,
> Passing through nature to eternity. (1.2.70-73)

Claudius, in his turn a model of conventional piety, condemns Hamlet’s “impious stubbornness” and “unmanly grief”: “It shows a will most incorrect to heaven” (1.2.94-95). Continuing in this vein, invoking both masculine “heaven” and feminine “nature,” he bids Hamlet discard the memory of his father like an unburied sacrificial corpse:

> Fie, ’tis a fault to heaven,
> A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
> To reason most absurd, whose common theme
> Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
> From the first corse till he that died today,
> ‘This must be so.’ We pray you throw to earth
> This unprevailing woe, and think of us
> As of a father[.]   (1.2.101-06)

Hamlet, “too much i’th’sun” to heed such platitudes even before his encounter with the Ghost, defies the perils of encountering the shade: “If it assume my noble father’s person, / I’ll speak to it though hell itself should gape/ And bid me hold my peace” (1.2.243-45). He eagerly follows the shade portending his own Herculean (or hellish) doom: “My fate cries out/ And makes each petty arture in this body/ As hardy as the Nemean lion’s nerve” (1.5.81-83). Uncertain of the spirit’s nature, Hamlet nevertheless addresses it, carefully invoking the heavens’ protection before doing so:

> Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
> Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,
> Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
> Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
> Thou com’st in such a questionable shape
> That I will speak to thee. (1.4.39-44)

Later, as he determines to "catch the conscience of the king" (2.2.558) through the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet's doubts concerning the spirit's origins and veracity remain:

> The spirit that I have seen
> May be a devil—and the devil hath power
> T'assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps,
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me to damn me. (2.2.551-56)

Robert G. Hunter states in connection with this passage: "The will of Hamlet's God is mysterious and his purposes are incomprehensible" (103). Whether or not the Ghost is "a diabolical illusion," "the bait on a Satanic hook" (103) whom Providence permits to deceive Hamlet, there is something heretical—or, more precisely, archetypal—about the purported shade of Hamlet's father. Hunter points out: "The ghost of old Hamlet may be the equivalent of the Witches in *Macbeth,* and Hamlet the equivalent of old Macbeth himself" (104). As such, the Ghost is possibly a projection of "the negative elementary character of the Feminine," of the "Terrible Female" that "is a symbol for the unconscious" (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 148): "[T]he dark side of the Terrible Mother takes the form of monsters. . . In the myths and tales of all peoples, ages, and countries—and even in the nightmares of our own nights—witches and vampires, ghouls and specters, assail us, all terrifyingly alike" (148-49). Condemned to the "sulph'rous and tormenting flames" (1.5.3) of Purgatory, "[d]oomed for a certain term to walk the night" (1.5.10) suggestive of the terrible aspects of the unconscious, yet commanding Hamlet to serve as the divine agent of heavenly justice, the Ghost is at once of "heaven" and of "hell," of "upper" and "lower" archetypal regions, in the service of masculine consciousness and the feminine unconscious: "O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? / And shall I couple hell?" (1.5.91-92) cries Hamlet as it departs, emphasizing the Ghost's ambiguity.

The exchange of Horatio and Marcellus in act 1, scene 1 as the Ghost departs further underscores the specter's hybrid nature. Horatio provides a mythological explanation for its sudden disappearance "like a guilty thing/ Upon a fearful summons" (1.1.148-49) at dawn:

> I have heard,
> The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
> Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
> Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
> Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
> Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies
> To his confine. (1.1.149-54)

Whether it is "the god of day" (1.1.152) who bids "th'extravagant and erring spirit" (1.1.154) return to its elemental confine "in sea or fire, in earth or air" (1.1.153)—or whether the guilty spirit is indeed that of Hamlet's Hyperion-like father returning "to fast in fires" (1.5.11) in Purgatory—Marcellus' reply emphasizes the mythological and archetypal subtext underlying *Hamlet*'s drama of Christian Providence:

> Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
> And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
> The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm,
> So hallowed and so gracious is that time. (1.1.158-64)

"So have I heard, and do in part believe it" (1.1.165), replies Horatio. The birth of Christ, "hallowed" and "gracious" light shining in the darkness of the unconscious, exorcises the "spirit," the "fairy" and the witch" arising from the pre-Christian past to trouble consciousness. Reduced in status to terrors of the night, these formerly prepotent negative aspects of the archetypal feminine—projections of the Terrible Mother, of the Jungian negative anima ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" 9.1.25.52-57), and of Graves' "Night Mare," "one of the cruellest aspects of the White Goddess" (26)—nevertheless (as Horatio's partial belief implies) resist complete eradication. Their pestilent infection of *Hamlet*'s cosmos signals its "rank corruption, mining all within"" that "[i]nfects unseen" (3.4.149-50): "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.5.90), exclaims Marcellus as Hamlet follows the Ghost offstage. Horatio, invoking Providence, replies hopefully: "Heaven will direct it" (1.5.91).

This, then, is the providential and archetypal task of Hamlet, Western hero of consciousness: the exorcism of the Great Mother's negative aspects, embodied in that "O most pernicious woman" (1.5.105), his mother, and the bloody dissolution of her less than sacred ritual marriage with Claudius, her ironic consort. Adelman, in her discussion of Horatio and Marcellus' interchange, summarizes the conflict as a masculine "purifying fantasy," its locus (in her opinion) the undefiled maternal body:

> Through an incipient pun, Marcellus transforms the god of day into the Son who makes the night wholesome because he is born from the mother's de-sexualized body; and the dangers he protects against are increasingly identified not only with the father's guilty spirit but with the dark female powers of the night. The sequence here—from guilty thing, to sun-god, to the Son whose birth banishes the witch—follows the logic of a purifying fantasy: the female body of the night can be cleansed only as the guilty father gives way to the sun-god, allowing for the emergence of the purified Son. (18-19)

Susan Rowland, for whom "*Hamlet* is less concerned with a hero myth than with a political myth" (198), asserts: "Prince Hamlet fulfils his mythical destiny in being the means of destroying a court dominated by the transgressive sexuality of his (goddess) mother" (199). Gertrude achieves "self-determination by reactivating. . . matriarchal sacred rule" (201): "In the myth of matriarchal monarchy the Queen exerts power in the name of the great goddess. *She* chooses her consort who is ritually killed by his successor. . . Gertrude has acted instinctively, in touch with her unconscious, and the cultural unconscious of divine monarchy" (201). Hamlet serves as the would-be "scourge and minister" of Ted Hughes' "reformation Protestantism's goddess destroying god. 'He' [the Protestant God, in this view] is determined to crush the sacred eroticism, the network of the essential relatedness of things, which goddess sexuality stands for" (Rowland 199).[2] The profane eroticism of Gertrude and Claudius is, in its bestial relatedness, arguably a parodic imitation of "goddess sexuality" as well as of "the myth of matriarchal monarchy" cited by Rowland; their actions provoke Hamlet's inscrutable yet righteous God—or, perhaps, from a Jungian point of view, the good and bad Great Father—to action.

Joseph Campbell's reflections upon Hamlet's "moment of revulsion" when confronted by his mother's marriage are pertinent here: "Life, the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul" (122). Campbell also links Oedipus to Hamlet's psychic dilemma:

> The innocent delight of Oedipus in his first possession of the queen turns to an agony of spirit when he learns who the woman is. Like Hamlet, he is beset by the moral image of the father. Like Hamlet, he turns from the fair features of the world to search the darkness for a higher kingdom than this of the incest and adultery ridden, luxurious and incorrigible mother. The seeker of the life beyond life must press beyond her, surpass the temptations of her call, and soar to the immaculate ether beyond (122).

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[2] See Hughes' comments (cit. Rowland 198-99).

Campbell, like Adelman and Rowland, implicates (albeit indirectly) Hamlet's Protestant God in Hamlet's failure to undergo psychic sacred marriage, "[t]he mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world" (120) characteristic of the hero myth. Rejecting the Whore of Babylon's pernicious influence, Hamlet seeks heroic victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil:

> Where this Oedipus-Hamlet revulsion remains to beset the soul, there the world, the body, and woman above all, become the symbols no longer of victory but of defeat. A monastic-puritanical, world-negating ethical system then radically and immediately transfigures all the images of myth. No longer can the hero rest in innocence with the goddess of the flesh; for she is become the queen of sin. (Campbell 123)

On behalf of the "heaven" of consciousness, light and order, summoned by a masculine shade (possibly a projection of the archetypal feminine) sent from the purgatory—or from the "hell"— of the collective unconscious, Hamlet must purge his universe of feminine evil, of the influence of "the queen of sin" and of her consort. The magnitude of the task is daunting: "The time is out of joint: O cursèd spite/ That ever I was born to set it right" (1.5.189-90), Hamlet exclaims despairingly. Sun-god's son, Western hero of consciousness, Hamlet faces perhaps a greater enemy within—the night of his own unconscious. Torn between the divine commandment of conscious existence and the transgressive desire for the obliteration of consciousness, for nonexistence, Hamlet intones:

> O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,

Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. (1.2.129-32)

Hamlet's desire for death is reminiscent of Neumann's psychological "uroboric incest" marked by "the insignia of death" characteristic of archaic consciousness and disturbed ego-states, a state of psychic death " signifying final dissolution in union with the Mother" (*Origins* 17). Would that the "too too solid" or "sullied"[3] flesh imparted by the maternal body might simply "resolve" into seminal "dew"; would that the paternal "Everlasting" had not forbidden the obliteration of consciousness in the embrace of the unacknowledged Great Mother. The imperative of "the Everlasting"—or, at least, of the paternal Ghost—is the enactment of the hero myth, albeit with a providential twist. The solar deity's heir must avenge his death and restore divine order, but must do so without committing the metaphorical and psychological "heroic incest" of matricide. Gertrude, the Ghost implies, will ultimately repent of her sins against patriarchy (and, perhaps, of the psychic inflation which leads her to identify with the Great Mother):

But howsoever thou pursues this act
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. (1.5.84-88)

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[3] See *Hamlet* 1.2.129, n. 129: "The case for 'sullied' is tortuous, though it is the reading of most modern editions" (100).

In the face of such prospects, the temptation to penetrate one's sullied maternal flesh "[w]ith a bare bodkin" (3.1. 76), to be devoured by the Terrible Mother's womb-maw of death, is perhaps difficult to resist. Yet—despite the fascination its prospect exerts upon ego-consciousness—such extinction is a perilous "consummation/ Devoutly to be [un]wished":

> To die, to sleep—
> To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause. (3.1.64-68)

The lack of true "quietus" (3.1.75) in death—the potential nightmares of Purgatory or Hell; from an archetypal perspective, the possible expulsion of extinct consciousness out of the Terrible Mother into unwilling rebirth—stays Hamlet's hand:

> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of[.] (3.1.78-82)

Contemplating again his call to heroic action, Hamlet faces the paradox of the Ghost's summons and prohibition. It is "conscience," the conscious prospect of heavenly judgment after death, not the unconscious fear of non-extinction, that paralyzes the will and forces thought to revolve in endless circles of futility:

> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution

> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment
> With this regard their currents turn awry
> And lose the name of action. (3.1.83-88)

Resistance to the Ghost's charge is perhaps less cowardly than Hamlet believes; although the Ghost does not initially appear to be a God-image (despite the elder Hamlet's godlike qualities), the apocalyptic mandate issued by his father's image may well be that of the Transpersonal Self, of the psychic God-image within each individual.[4] Edward F. Edinger, in *Archetype of the Apocalypse*, describes the manifestations of the Apocalypse as revelatory archetype—which he defines as "the momentous event of the coming of the [Transpersonal] Self into conscious realization" (5)— in the individual or collective psyche. These manifestations, according to Edinger, resemble those found in apocalyptic literature inspired by the collective unconscious:

> 1) "Revelation" has the psychological correlate of a shattering new insight accompanied by the flow of transpersonal images [that is, of images generated by the collective unconscious personified by the Transpersonal Self as individual or collective God-image] into

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[4] See note 11, Chapter Two. Jung distinguishes "between the ego and the *self*. . . since the ego is only the subject of my consciousness, while the self is the subject of my total psyche, which also includes the unconscious. In this sense the self would be an ideal entity which embraces the ego" ("Definitions," *CW* 6.425.706). "[T]he self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of the personality as a whole" ("Definitions," *CW* 6.460. 789).

Elsewhere, Jung defines the contents of the [Transpersonal] Self as constituting the "God-image"within the individual or collective human psyche: "The self. . . is a God-image, or at least cannot be distinguished from one" ("The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," *CW* 9.2.22. 42). "[T]he spontaneous symbols of the self, or of wholeness, cannot in practice be distinguished from a God-image" ("Christ, A Symbol of the Self," *CW* 9.2.40.73). "[A]s an individual thing it is unitemporal and unique; as an archetypal symbol it is a God-image and therefore universal and eternal" ("Christ, A Symbol of the Self" 9.2.63.116).

> consciousness. 2)“Judgment” is experienced in the form of an abrupt profound awareness of the shadow [that is, of unacknowledged, usually negative aspects of the individual or collective psyche], which at times can be so overpowering that it can threaten complete demoralization. . . 3) The theme of “Destruction” or “Punishment” is manifested as the individual’s anxiety in the midst of this transformation ordeal [as in religious conversion, for example]. 4) Finally, the coming of a “New World” corresponds to the emergence of mandala and quaternity images [symbolic of renewed psychic order] within the psyche—as there begins to appear the possibility of a conscious relation to the [Transpersonal] Self and its wholeness. (7)

Hamlet’s shattering new insight that his stepfather is guilty not only of incest but of murder is accompanied by the transpersonal apparition of the Ghost; an abrupt profound awareness of the rottenness of Denmark and the unprofitableness of the world, along with the realization of his own failure to take corrective action against them, drive Hamlet to the brink of suicide. Contemplating the imperative to punish Gertrude and destroy Claudius, Hamlet punishes himself in seemingly endless rumination. In his quest to “set. . . right” the time that “is out of joint,” Hamlet moves toward the balance or synthesis, toward the “wholeness” that, in Edinger’s view, follows the apocalypse’s catastrophe (4, fig. 1.1). Such harmony, unfortunately, lies beyond the dénouement of *Hamlet*.

Hamlet’s task, admittedly, appears to be one of exorcism and purgation, not of the achievement of moral balance or synthesis of psychic oppositions which would follow Edinger’s Jungian version of the apocalypse. Edinger’s answer to this question—"How can an image represent the [Transpersonal] Self, the totality, while picturing only one side of a pair of opposites?"—in *Archetype of the Apocalypse* provides a possible explanation:

> [T]he manifestation of the Self is always local. It is, therefore, usually modified to some extent by the nature of the local conditions of the ego experiencing it—namely, the level of development of that ego. The degree of one-sidedness of that ego will affect the way the Self manifests. . . [V]ery typical of mystical experience is that it is preceded by a "dark night of the soul." (20-21)

The Ghost, manifestation of Hamlet's "dark night of the soul," is possibly the guilty creature of Hamlet's own inner darkness. Its claimed issuance from Purgatory, demand for the imposition of judgment upon the royal couch of Denmark's "luxury and damnèd incest," and command that Hamlet leave his mother to the justice of "heaven," however, associate it with the apocalyptic brightness of the opening images of Revelation, with the "one-sidedness" (in Edinger's view) of Heaven's imperative to purge evil from *Hamlet*'s cosmos. Given the "local conditions of [Hamlet's and *Hamlet*'s] ego," the Ghost's command is necessarily a purgatorial one. Edinger continues: "It is as though the emphasis on light or brightness is carrying a *compensatory* aspect for an excessive darkness that the ego is experiencing. . . [T]he Christian attitude itself—as it evolved—identified with the "light" and banished the "darkness" as much as possible" (20-21). Although both the Christian hope of purgation and the Jungian goal of "wholeness" lie in the apocalyptic future, Hamlet's efforts as purgatorial "scourge and minister" offer the hope—perhaps illusory—of a temporal correction, of a momentary balance between good and evil.

Torn between the Transpersonal Self's purgatorial imperative and his own failure to enact it, reflecting upon how best to "catch the conscience of the king" (2.2.558) while (at least momentarily) preserving his own half-loathed life, Hamlet recoils from one archetype only to fall into another. Resolving to pretend insanity—a rather strange prelude to enacting revenge—Hamlet swears Horatio and Marcellus to silence:

> Here as before, never so help you mercy,
> How strange or odd some'er I bear myself,
> As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
> To put an antic disposition on[.] (1.5.169-172)

Whether in fact Hamlet's subsequent "antic disposition" consists entirely of "actions that a man might play" (1.2.84)—"I am but mad north-northwest[;] When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw" (2.2.347-348), he confides to Guildenstern—his feigned or real madness is informed by the archetypal trickster. Sally F. Porterfield, in *Jung's Advice to the Players*, sees the trickster as intervening to save Hamlet's "endangered ego" after "[Claudius] and Gertrude become the sensual parents of reality, forcing the ideal, archetypal parents of imagination to die a violent death":

> Hamlet, brought suddenly and belatedly to the realization of his parents' fallible humanity, regresses to an earlier stage of his development in order to integrate the pieces that have been left behind by the courtier-scholar with his head in the clouds. The trickster makes his appearance here as the adolescent prankster, who in his dizzying swoops between childhood and manhood maintains some sense of equilibrium by manic and frequently outrageous adolescent humor. (75)

Putting on "an antic disposition" as his ego resists the threat of psychic dissolution engendered by the Degraded Mother and her consort, Hamlet assumes the mask of the trickster. At first glance the archetypal trickster as described by Jung, although "a forerunner of the saviour" ("On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure" 9.1.263.472), would seem to have little in common with Hamlet, hero of consciousness: "He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness"(9.1.263.472). As a "parallel of the individual shadow" (9.1.263.485), the trickster archetype can appear as "counter-tendencies in the unconscious, and in certain cases by a sort of second personality, of a puerile and inferior character" (9.1.262.469). As a shadow figure, the trickster—as seen in the previous chapter's discussion of Lear's Fool as trickster figure—is not always entirely negative: "[T]he shadow, although by definition a negative figure, sometimes has clearly discernible traits and associations which point to a quite different background. It is as though he were hiding meaningful contents under an unprepossessing exterior" (9.1.270.485). Clad in black "trappings and. . . suits of woe" (1.2.86), in his "nighted color" suggestive of the shadow, Hamlet echoes Jung's comment as he addresses Gertrude: "But I have that within which passes show" (1.2.85). Grappling with Laertes above Ophelia's grave, his ominous words reveal the trickster's hidden, potentially dangerous qualities: "For though I am not splenitive and rash, / Yet have I in me something dangerous / Which let thy wisdom fear" (5.1.228-30).

Moreover—as Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern makes evident—he is well aware that the superhuman and divine qualities of "man" (and, thus, of himself) are, in the final analysis, a less than subhuman and bestial "quintessence of dust":

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? (2.2.286-290)

The archetype of the trickster, in its simultaneous manifestation of these positive and negative qualities, potentially endangers not only the trickster's foes but the trickster as well. Jung, in "The Psychology of the Trickster Figure," states:

> [T]he trickster motif does not crop up only in its mythical form but appears just as naïvely and authentically in the unsuspecting modern man—whenever, in fact, he feels himself at the mercy of annoying "accidents" which thwart his will and his actions with apparently malicious intent. He then speaks of "hoodoos" and "jinxes" or of the "mischieviousness of the object." Here the trickster is represented by counter-tendencies in the unconscious, and in certain cases by a sort of second personality, of a puerile and

> inferior character. . . On the civilized level, it is regarded as a personal "gaffe," "slip," "faux pas," etc., which are then chalked up as defects of the conscious personality. (9.1.262.469)

In any case, Hamlet's intermittently "puerile and inferior" speech reveals an "antic" tendency prior to his stated decision to feign madness: "Ha, ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there truepenny? / Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage, / Consent to swear" (1.5.150-52), he cries in response to the subterranean Ghost's demand. Again, in response to the Ghost's second cry of "Swear" (1.5.161), Hamlet replies: "Well said old mole, canst work i'th'earth so fast? / A worthy pioneer"(1.5.162-63). Ophelia's account of Hamlet's feigning—or not feigning—of the Elizabethan conventions of "the ecstasy of love" (2.1.100)[5] aptly illustrates the trickster's negative influence:

> Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced,
> No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
> Ungartered, and down gyvèd to his ankle,
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosèd out of hell
> To speak of horrors—he comes before me. (2.1.76-82)

Even if Hamlet's letter—"'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia'" (2.2.109)—is intended as "vile" (2.2.110) mockery, the trickster's undermining influence (as Hamlet's hellish and horrible look, despite his skill as a thespian, perhaps indicates) is at work upon him. Upon the exit of the Players, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, Hamlet suddenly faces this aspect of himself: “Now I am alone. / O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!” (2.2.501-02). The players’ skillful illusion created through passionate oratory and feigned heroic action brings home Hamlet’s failure to act in reality, his self-thwarting of his early modern will: “Yet I, / A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak/ Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, / And can say nothing” (2.2.518-21). Some external “hoodoo,” “jinx,” or mischievious object seems to taunt him, to paralyze him:

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[5] See *Hamlet* 2.1 n. 86:"This idea of 'the ecstasy of love'. . . a distraction oblivious of customary forms, merges easily in the Elizabethan mind with actual insanity" (129).

> Am I a coward?
> Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
> Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,
> Tweaks me by th’nose, gives me the lie i’th’throat
> As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this? (2.2.523-27)

Beholding Fortinbras’ army as he embarks for England, Hamlet again muses upon the external and internal forces conspiring against him, upon the “god-like reason” and “[b]estial,” oblivious nature of “man,” upon his own cowardice or indecision:

> How all occasions do inform against me,
> And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and god-like reason
> To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
> Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
> Of thinking too precisely on th’event—

> A thought which quartered hath but one part wisdom
> And ever three parts coward—I do not know
> Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,
> Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
> To do't. (4.5.32-46)

Contemplating the skull of "poor Yorick" (5.1.156), Hamlet meditates upon the cruellest jest of all, the practical joke of mortality for which even the most successful trickster, Yorick, ultimately falls:

> Where be your gibes now? your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. (5.1.160-61)

A particularly tragic example of the trickster's ego-undermining action can be seen in Hamlet's behavior toward Ophelia. In his initial address to her—"Nymph, in thy orisons/ Be all my sins remembered" (3.1.89-90)—Hamlet identifies Ophelia not only as a positive, spiritual figure silently rebuking his sins but also as a figure of the Jungian negative anima, who frequently appears as (for example) "a siren, *melusina* (mermaid), wood-nymph, Grace, or Erlking's daughter, or a lamia or succubus, who infatuates young men and sucks the life out of them" (Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" 9.1.25.53). As the eroticized soul of man—indeed, as the personification of Neoplatonic and Jungian Eros—the negative anima is a perilous creature, particularly to heroic Protestant repudiators of the flesh:

> With her cunning play of illusions the soul lures into life the inertness of matter that does not want to live. She makes us believe incredible things, that life may be lived. She is full of snares and traps, in order that man should fall, should reach the earth, entangle himself there, and stay caught, so that life should be lived; as Eve in the garden of Eden could not rest content until she had convinced Adam of the goodness of the forbidden apple. (9.1.26-27, 56)

Hapless recipient of Hamlet's projections as well as of his "remembrances" (3.1.93), Ophelia cannot be "honest" (3.1.104) and "fair" (3.1.105) at the same time (particularly since she has passively conspired with Polonius and Laertes to ascertain his intentions); her chastity is necessarily a "cunning play of illusions," designed to ensnare Hamlet's "inert matter" that frequently does not want to live. There is one possible way to thwart the purposes of the anima, which are those of the Great Mother: the renunciation of reproduction. Hamlet's negation of the flesh, seeking to undo the actions of Eve, attempts to negate the trickster's bestial, subhuman, "crawling" influence as well: "Get thee to a nunnery—why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me. . . What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?" (3.1.119-25) Slipping, like Lear, into the momentary illusion of (feigned?) divinity as he echoes St. Paul, Hamlet cries: "Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say we will have no mo marriages. Those that are married already, all but one shall live, the rest shall keep as they are" (3.1.140-42).[6] Ophelia's pleas to the heavens ("Oh help him you sweet heavens!") (3.1.130) and to the "heavenly powers" ("O heavenly powers, restore him!") (3.1.136) notwithstanding, Hamlet's consciousness—under the influence of the trickster and of the anima—has to some extent retreated into madness, into the realm of the Terrible Mother. Ophelia's apostrophe as Hamlet departs underscores this failure of Hamlet's reason, invaded by the unconscious: "O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!" (3.1.144)

As *The Murder of Gonzago* begins, Hamlet's fall into the adolescent vulgarity of "country matters" illustrates the trickster's continuing influence. Ophelia, playing straight maid to Hamlet's low comic antics, seems not only the victim of Hamlet's negative anima projection (thus personifying, in Hamlet's mind, the destructive erotic characteristics of the anima) but also an ironic exemplar of the Elizabethan genital "nothing." Ophelia displays an apparently complete lack of thought or personal agency as Hamlet makes a series of obscene "count-ry" puns concerning female genitalia:

> HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
> OPHELIA No my lord.
> HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap?
> OPHELIA Ay my lord.

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[6] Hamlet's echo is of I Cornthians 7, in which Paul discusses the proper behavior of married and unmarried Christians: "Therefore I ſay vnto the vnmaried, and vnto the widowes, it is good for them if they abide euen as I *do*. But if they cannot abſteine, let thé marie: for it is better to marie thé to burne" (I Corinthians 7:8-9, Geneva Bible).

HAMLET Do you think I meant country matters?
OPHELIA I think nothing my lord.
HAMLET That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.
OPHELIA What is, my lord?
HAMLET Nothing. (3.2.99-107)

Ophelia manages to negate naughty Hamlet in turn: "You are naught, you are naught" (3.2.129), she replies to his obscene punning on "show" (3.2.127-128). However, his murder of Polonius reactivates the self-negation of her speech, now the speech of madness—indeed, the speech of the unconscious:

> Her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
> The hearers to collection. They yawn at it,
> And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts,
> Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
> Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
> Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. (4.5.7-13)

At one level, the frequent obscenity of Ophelia's "unshapèd" speech almost parodies the Jungian concept of anima as Eros (that is, of "psychic relatedness"), the counterpart to masculine Logos (that is, of "object interest" or abstract reason);[7] Ophelia's noble consciousness (which she is presumed not to possess), "[d]ivided from herself and her fair judgement" (4.5.84) is overthrown. The content of Ophelia's ravings, however, fixated upon sexual victimization, betrayal, and death, is suggestive of a specific feminine archetype: that of the Kore, of Persephone. According to Jung, "the figure of the Kore. . . belongs, when observed in a man, to the *anima* type; and when observed in a woman to the type of *supraordinate personality*" ("The Psychological Aspects of the Kore" 9.1.183.310).[8] As Hamlet has noted in his ironic description of Ophelia as "[n]ymph," frequently "the 'maiden' appears as the *corybant*, *maenad*, or *nymph*" ("The Psychological Aspects of the Kore" 9.1.184.311). [9] Jung's description of the Kore's manifestations in dream and fantasy provides a metaphorical (if inexact) basis for interpreting Ophelia's speech and fate:

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[7] See Jung, "Aspects of the Feminine," *CW* 10.123.255: "The concept of Eros could be expressed in modern terms as psychic relatedness, and that of Logos as object interest."

> The maiden's helplessness exposes her to all sorts of *dangers*, for instance of being devoured by reptiles or ritually slaughtered like a beast of sacrifice. Often there are bloody, cruel, and even obscene *orgies* to which the innocent child falls victim. Sometimes it is a true *nekyia*, a descent into Hades and a quest for 'the treasure hard to attain'. . . Oddly enough, the various tortures and obscenities are carried out by an "Earth Mother." (9.1.184-85.311)

Psychologically devoured by Polonius and Laertes, subjected to Hamlet's obscene orgies of verbal sexual abuse, Ophelia ultimately undergoes a psychic ritual self-sacrifice following her father's death; Gertrude's marriage to Claudius provides the context of an overshadowing Earth Mother, albeit one not directly responsible for Ophelia's torment. In this context, there is a degree of reason (or, at least, of meaning) in Ophelia's madness. Ophelia's song for the dead Polonius, in its imagery, is evocative of the fields below Olympus from which the Kore, gathering flowers with her maidens, was dragged down by Hades into the earth:

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[8] Jung does not appear to consider the possibility of identifying this archetype with the animus; perhaps the specific nature of this archetype as female victim precluded such a consideration.

[9] In Armens' view, Hamlet "becomes obsessed with the first stage of the hero's 'transformation process,' the killing of the Dragon of Evil. . . Thus he cannot accomplish the following important tasks of freeing the Kore-Captive, Ophelia, or of realizing himself as a potential Statesman-Hero" (125). "[D]ominated by the sordid image of woman bequeathed to him by Gertrude, the moment that Hamlet suspects the spying of Claudius and Polonius, he casts the unwitting Ophelia in the role of the Archetypal Temptress" (127). "Hamlet, arrested at an early stage on the path of individuation, regresses, at the moment of crisis, to ego-narcissism instead of proceeding through the transformation necessary for even a preliminary achievement of the Jungian 'True Self.' At one time capable of sublimating his ego, he fails to unite with the Kore in a bond of love, and thus, losing his soul, he falls back into the embrace of the 'world dragon'" (147).

> White his shrowd as the mountain snow...
> Larded all with sweet flowers,
> Which bewept to the grave did not go
> With true-love showers. (4.5.36, 38-40)

Her Valentine song, narrating the metaphorical devouring of a hapless "maid that out a maid/ Never departed more" (4.5.54-55), echoes to a degree the metaphorical defloration of Ophelia's credulous mind by Hamlet: "Young men will do't if they come to't—/ By Cock, they are to blame" (4.5.60-61).[10] She continues:

> Quoth she, 'Before you tumbled me,
> You promised me to wed.'
> He answers—

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[10] According to Pessoni, both Hamlet and Ophelia "journey through a ritual initiation into adulthood" (33); "Ophelia's story follows the pattern of female initiatory practices" in tribes where males sadistically initiate young girls into submissive adulthood (33). "Ophelia, like the Tukuna girls, has to learn to face the sexual oppressor who would become her husband and master" (34). "Ophelia's role as initiate. . . is obscured by her function as Jungian Kore archetype" (35). "Ophelia does not complete the full circle which Persephone completes in the Homeric Hymn, for she never returns to the earth but is buried deeply within it. Perhaps this is because of the difference in genre" (37). "When we view Ophelia as Hamlet's anima, she is not a failed initiate, but a dreamlike creature used as a tool for the development of the male psyche" (40).

So would I ha'done, by yonder sun,
And thou hadst not come to my bed. (4.5.62-66)

Thus Ophelia succumbs utterly to psychological chaos, to the state of possession engendered by the Terrible Mother as mercilessly torturing "Earth Mother." Passive victim not only of Hamlet, not even only of blind Fortune, but of the uroboric Great Round of death and rebirth dramatized by the myth of Persephone, Ophelia cries: "Oh how the wheel becomes it" (4.5.171). A psychologically deflowered Kore distributing flowers to all about her, she follows her father Polonius downward into the abyss: [11]

> There's rosemary, that's for remembrance—pray you, love, remember—and there is pansies, that's for thoughts. . . There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace a Sundays. Oh you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. They say a made a good end. (4.5.174-81)

Announcing Ophelia's death, Gertrude—briefly abandoning her role as the Great Mother's understudy—seems genuinely sorrowful. Adorned in "fantastic garlands" (4.7.168) of sorrowful willow and sexually suggestive flowers, the "mermaid-like" Ophelia has descended into watery regions of the unconscious frequently associated with the Kore ("The Psychological Aspects of the Kore"

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[11] Polonius, Oakes asserts, combines the archetypal roles of "wise old man, fool and scapegoat" (103).

9.1.184.311), seemingly transformed—an image of the anima as mermaid—into a "creature native and indued/ Unto that element" (4.5.179-80):[12]

> There is a willow grows askant a brook,
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
> Therewith fantastic garlands did she make,
> Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
> But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
> There on the pendant boughs her cronet weeds
> Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
> When down her weedy trophies and herself
> Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
> And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,
> Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds
> As one incapable of her own distress,
> Or like a creature native and indued
> Unto that element. But long it could not be
> Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
> Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
> To muddy death. (4.7.166-83)

Wretched victim, unfortunate image of the violated anima, Ophelia is "[d]rowned, drowned" (4.7.184) in the unconscious, in the murky depths of the Terrible Mother: "Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia" (4.7.185), Laertes aptly states. In defiance of priestly condemnation, Laertes defends the sanctity of Ophelia's doubtfully dead flesh—in its subterranean production of violets, punningly symbolic of violation, again figuring the Kore—as Gertrude benevolently strews flowers upon her grave:

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[12] Fike analyzes *Hamlet* "in terms of the anima, the shadow-anima dynamic, [and] the anima-mermaid-*meretrix* (prostitute) nexus" (116). "Ophelia is simultaneously. . . 'maiden, nymph, Kore'" (Hillman 63, qtd. in Fike 121)"; moreover, "she illustrates the male-dependent role described by Jung and Hillman because she literally ceases to exist with her father dead and her brother and lover abroad" (121-22). "Hamlet suffers not from the wrong sort of anima, as Coursen holds, but from anima *detachment*" (123). "[I]n *Hamlet*, the language of prostitution abounds, largely as a function of repressed anima" (130). The traditional association of mermaids with prostitution (133-40), along with Ophelia's actions before her death, lead Fike to assert that "it appears likely that Hamlet, far from resisting Ophelia's charms, has experienced her sexually" (141). "Ophelia's death by water is the final stage in the transformation of her voice: from poetry, to prose, to her mad-song parody of mermaids' song, and finally—like Cordelia and Desdemona—to the silence of death" (144). "[B]y the end of the play, having integrated his shadow, Hamlet is ironically now ready for the kind of relationship that would be possible if Ophelia were not in the grave" (148-49).

> Lay her i'th'earth,
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring. I tell thee, churlish priest,
> A ministering angel shall my sister be
> When thou liest howling. (5.1.205-09)

The equally "[w]retched queen" (5.2.312), repentant of her not-so-mystical marriage, is by this point more the Pathetic Mother than a transgressive goddess; nevertheless, the pernicious influence of the Great Mother's terrible aspects continues to trouble Denmark. Earlier, as Gertrude awaits her divine and bestial son's entrance into her "closet" (3.3.27), Hamlet— oscillating between possession by Hecate and his divine purgatorial imperative—ruminates in the blackness of midnight:[13]

> 'Tis now the very witching time of night,
> When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
> Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
> And do such bitter business as the day
> Would quake to look on. (3.2.349-53)

Resisting the Terrible Mother's temptation to "drink hot blood" (an image suggestive of the actions of Jung's "Earth Mother" in dreams involving the Kore),

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[13] See Aronson's discussion (229-59) of Hecate as "archetype of witch and goddess, maid and mother, at times the eternal feminine and again a bisexual monster, standing watch at the crossroads where she dispenses eternal damnation, madness, and death" (230).

Hamlet avoids entrapment (at least for now) by the yawning opened graves and the contagion-breathing hell-mouth also indicative of the Terrible Mother's presence. Hero of Western (and Protestant) consciousness, his intermittently ascetic soul must refrain from the incestuous matricide committed by Nero:

> O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
> The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.
> Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
> I will speak daggers to her but use none. (3.2.354-57)

Stealing upon unrepentant Claudius at prayer, however, Hamlet turns again to the darkness within himself. The king, despairing of salvation, cries to heaven: "Oh wretched state! Oh bosom black as death! / Oh limèd soul that struggling to be free/ Art more engaged! Help, angels!" (3.3.67-69) Hamlet, in turn, imperils his soul by refusing "to take [Claudius] in the purging of his soul" (3.3.85). As agent of "hell" in both the Christian and archetypal sense, the intent of his raised phallic "sword" is to send Claudius thither while preserving (as heaven or hell, speaking through the Ghost, has commanded) his bad and good mother:

> Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent,
> When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
> Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
> At game a-swearing, or about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't—
> Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damned and black
> As hell whereto it goes. My mother stays. (3.3.88-95)

Following Hamlet's triple cry to the most wretched representative of Graves' Triple Goddess—"Mother, mother, mother!"—is a reference to the heart of the matter, the matter of Gertrude's maternal flesh, the matter continuously animated and destroyed by the chthonic Terrible Mother: "Now mother, what's the matter?" (3.3.8) To this overabundance of matter—"Have you forgot me?" asks Gertrude (3.4.14)—Hamlet opposes the cross of Christ: "No by the rood, not so" (3.4.14). As the scourging minister to his mother's erring soul and errant matter, Hamlet perhaps also deflates his mother's inflated psyche overidentified with the Great Mother: "You go not till I set you up a glass/ Where you may see the inmost part of you" (3.4.19-20). Gertrude's conscious reason must step in, overcoming the unconscious influence of the Great Mother's unwholesome aspects: "[A]t your age/ The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,/ And waits upon the judgement" (3.4.68-70). Gertrude must shake off not only the deceptive influence of Satan ("What devil was't/ That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?" asks Hamlet) (3.4.76-77) but also that of the compulsive, irrational Jungian hell of the Terrible Mother:

> Rebellious hell,
> If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
> To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
> And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
> When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
> Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
> And reason panders will. (3.4.82-88)

Gertrude, chastened and deflated, beholds the Terrible Mother within: "O Hamlet, speak no more. /Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul, / And there I see such black and grainèd spots/ As will not leave their tinct" (3.4.89-91). Not only virtue and vice, not only Claudius and Hamlet, but the good and bad halves of the Great Mother strive for mastery of her soul: "O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain" (3.4.157), cries Gertrude. Hamlet, replying, bids her discard the Terrible Mother's influence and assume the Good Mother's purity: "Oh throw away the worser part of it/ And live the purer with the other half" (3.4.158-59).

The apparition of the Ghost within Gertrude's chamber, "[a] king of shreds and patches" (3.4.102) come "to whet [Hamlet's] almost blunted purpose" (3.4.110), once again moves Hamlet to call upon the forces of heaven: "Save me and hover o'er me with your wings, / You heavenly guards!" (3.4.103-04). Hamlet—although his mother sees only "vacancy" (3.4.116), "[n]othing at all" (3.4.132), a "bodiless creation" of Hamlet's "ecstasy" (3.4.139)—no longer doubts the Ghost's truth. Whether or not the patchwork spirit is the trickster "coinage" of Hamlet's "brain" (3.4.138)—whether it commands the justice of heaven, serves the purposes of hell, or does both at once—its appearance illustrates the tension between the imperatives of the archetypal masculine (of, perhaps, the localized, apocalyptic Transpersonal Self) and those of the archetypal feminine, of the feminine aspects of the unconscious. Although Gertrude—diminished to the smaller-than-life proportions of an apparently repentant matron—perhaps repudiates her ironic ritual marriage, the good and bad influence of the Great Mother cannot be so easily exorcised. Indeed her son, seeking to interrogate the "inmost part" of Gertrude's soul, has forgotten the warning purportedly inscribed upon the tomb of Isis at Memphis: "*I am all that has been*, *that is, that shall be, and none among mortals has yet dared to lift my veil*" (Reade 10). The Great Mother is not dead, only asleep.

Absolving himself of the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet haughtily remarks: "'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes/ Between the pass and fell incensèd points/ Of mighty opposites" (5.2.60-62). As the events of *Hamlet* move inexorably toward its final clash of poisoned swords and envenomed chalice, it is this impending collision of "mighty opposites"—of Christian context and archetypal subtext, of good and evil, of consciousness and the unconscious, of the Great Father and the Great Mother—that produces its tragic end. This conflict is akin to Edinger's aforementioned apocalyptic revelation of the Transpersonal Self—in the individual (or collective) consciousness (to quote Jung) "a moment of deadliest peril" ("Concerning Rebirth," *CW* 9.1.121.271). Seeking apocalyptic vengeance and the redress of evil, Laertes anoints his sword with witchcraft-working "contagion" (4.7.146) from the realm of the Terrible Mother—a poison without temporal remedy:

> So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
> Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
> Collected from all simples that have virtue
> Under the moon, can save the thing from death
> That is but scratched withal. (4.7.141-45)

Hamlet, relating his trickster-like evasion of Claudius' plot, attributes his escape through rash murderous action to God: "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.10-11). Heaven's "scourge and minister" submits to the inscrutable will of Providence, be it good or evil: "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come—the readiness is all" (5.2.192-95). Such a concept of deity, in its fatalism, bears some resemblance to that of the Transpersonal Self inclusive of evil; seeking to purge Denmark of evil, Hamlet commits and submits to evil. The impending duel offers the possibility of "what the content of the Apocalypse archetype presents: the shattering of the world as it has been, followed by its reconstitution" (Edinger, *Apocalypse* 5).

As Edinger's comment implies, both the Christian hope of the apocalyptic purgation of evil and the Jungian project of psychic wholeness incorporating evil lie in the apocalyptic future; as for *Hamlet*'s apocalyptic present, it is not wholeness but disjunction—in the final analysis—that is the end. The poisoned "union" (5.2.244) thrown into Hamlet's cup by Claudius—an ironic symbol of the Transpersonal Self as "the pearl of great price," as "the grain of mustard-seed, the hidden treasure" symbolizing "the kingdom of God"(Jung, "Gnostic Symbols of the Self" 9.2.221.346)—signals, by its corruption, the failure of Hamlet's personal apocalypse. The "wretched queen" overshadowed by the good-bad Great Mother succumbs to the Terrible Mother's poisoned cup symbolic of her own feminine "frailty," perhaps by conscious choice damning herself as she "carouses to [Hamlet's] fortune" (5.2.266). Forcibly swallowing his own corrupted "union" in the venomous cup prepared for himself, his flesh penetrated by Hamlet's envenomed blade, the "serpent" Claudius reenacts his disjunctive, destructive marriage with the Great Mother as he dies: "Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damnèd Dane, / Drink off this potion. Is thy union here? / Follow my mother" (5.2.304-06), cries Hamlet. Hamlet, achieving his devoutly wished-for "consummation" of death, knows not whether his providential sparrow's fall leads to "the undiscovered country" of "something beyond death" or to the uroboric "bestial oblivion" of incestuous union with the Terrible Mother, a potential union parodic of the Jungian concept of psychic wholeness : "The rest is silence" (5.2.337).

Horatio's words notwithstanding—"Good night sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest" (5.2.338-39)—it is the chaotic influence of the Terrible Mother, of the earth's insatiable devouring hell-mouth, that has won the temporal field.[14] Hades the Terrible Father assists her in masticating this banquet of noble souls:

> O proud death,
> What feast is toward in thine eternal cell
> That thou so many princes at a shot
> So bloodily has struck? (5.2.343-346)

Horatio and Fortinbras seek to undo the play's furious "carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts," "accidental judgements, casual slaughters," "deaths put on by cunning and forced cause," and "purposes mistook/ Fallen on th'inventors' heads" (5.2.360-64) further suggestive of the influence of the Terrible Mother (and of the trickster as shadow). As soldiers bear the play's allotment of dead bodies offstage, archetypally masculine reason, consciousness, and order once more briefly prevail against the destructive influence of the dark feminine. Denmark's apocalyptic purgation of feminine evil has temporarily succeeded; since the negation of that evil in the temporal realm is a vain hope, this is at best a temporary exorcism.

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[14] Tucker notes the apparent triumph of chaos in the play: "[W]ith the forces of chaos thwarting apparently logical courses of action in Denmark and the ultimately unmanageable forces of the human psyche defeating self-realization, the world of *Hamlet* is a world where nothing can ever be taken for granted; it is indeed a world of tragedy" (133).

CHAPTER FOUR

"May the winds blow till they have wakened death": Destruction of the Lesser *Coniunctio* from Within in *Othello*

Beholding "the divine Desdemona" (2.1.73)[1] as he enters in act 2, scene 1, Othello—unable to contain his joy—exclaims: "O, my fair warrior!" (2.1.173). As he continues speaking, her "dear Othello" (2.1.174) expresses his overwhelming desire for sweet dissolution in Desdemona's embrace:

> O, my soul's joy,
> If after every tempest come such calms,
> May the winds blow till they have wakened death,
> And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
> Olympus-high, and duck again as low
> As hell's from heaven. If it were now to die,
> 'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear
> My soul hath her content so absolute
> That not another comfort like to this
> Succeeds in unknown fate. (2.1.176-84)

Perhaps taken aback by Othello's idolatrous enthusiasm, Desdemona replies cautiously: "The heavens forbid/ But that our loves and comforts should increase, / Even as our days do grow" (2.1.185-87). Othello cries, in turn: "Amen to that, sweet powers!" (2.1.187). Their mutual supplication of the "sweet powers" of the "heavens," however, cannot erase a sense of foreboding; such incautious exercises in mutual idolatry necessarily lead to tragic disappointment. It is Othello's projection of archetypal feminine divinity upon Desdemona which, frustrated by Othello's and Desdemona's mutual lack of deity, leads to *Othello*'s chaotic denouement. In Cyprus, Othello and "the divine Desdemona" briefly form a Jungian syzygy or lesser *coniunctio,* a union of psychic oppositions—of consciousness and the unconscious, of archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine, of light and dark, of good and evil—which are simultaneously necessary for the individual's psychic rebirth and potentially perilous to the ego (in this case, to Othello's). This brief union figures—or points toward—the elusive Jungian goal of the greater *coniunctio*, of the divine psychic union Lear hopes to achieve with Cordelia in prison. Unable to withstand Othello's jealous demonization of his other, this lesser *coniunctio* self-destructs largely from within.

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[1] William Shakespeare, Othello, updated edn., ed. Norman Sanders, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). Subsequent references appear in this text by act, scene, and line number.

Freudian explanations of Othello's "romantic projection" and its subsequent antithesis—which certainly have their place in any attempt to interpret *Othello*—serve to illustrate the complex nature of Othello's potential motivations. Abraham Bronson Feldman, more or less summarizing the myriad Freudian psychoanalytic explanations of Othello's subsequent fall into murderous rage, states: "The Freudian exposition of jealousy, its homosexual current, its castration complex and menace to masculinity, its paranoia tendency, is wealthily confirmed by the tragedy of *Othello*" (163). Norman Sanders, in his introduction to the New Cambridge text of *Othello*, provides a more generalized psychoanalytic explanation of Othello's tragic flaw concerning his "fair warrior": "[M]ore significant, and fatal, than [Othello's] verbal militarising of his wife is his insistence on making her the sole object of his full powers of romantic projection. She is not only his love but Love itself which banished chaos from the universe at the beginning of the world" (35). Feldman, for his part, believes that

> Othello's love for Brabantio's daughter was a makeshift passion, the device of a mind in terror of a certain chaos to save itself. The chaos feared by the Moor can be defined as a madness resulting from a revelation of his inner lack of manliness. This fear of unvirility springs from a deeply repressed homosexual impulse, manifested by his passion for Cassio. (158).

Stephen Reid, taking issue with Bronson, asserts that "[Othello's] jealousy can best be explained. . . as a more elementary defence against the castration anxiety aroused by his marriage to Desdemona" (275), a defense against "the. . . fear of *punitive* action by the father for the crime of originally desiring the mother" (275-76). He asserts "that *Othello* offers a case of delusional jealousy in a man in whom 'the homosexual solution' (as Ernest Jones puts it) to the mother's rejection 'has not gone far'" (276). Arthur Kirsch, attempting to explain *Othello*'s movement "from the transcendence and love celebrated in the first half of the play to the nearly utter disintegration and hatred which is dramatized in the second half" (721), makes the following claim in his discussion of Desdemona as "the pearl of great price" whose exit in act 3, scene 3 marks Othello's fall into moral and psychological "[c]haos" (3.3.92):

> [O]n earth the tragic fact is that a man cannot be as one flesh with his wife and at the same time obey St Paul's other injunction that 'they which have wives, be as though they had none'(I Corinthians 7.29). Nor, considered psychologically, can a man experience the continuous feeling of being in love, in all its primal intensity, without a regression to the chaos of the unconscious from which that feeling comes. (740)

As Kirsch's reference to "the chaos of the unconscious" intimates, Desdemona's function as Othello's anchor of consciousness—as sheltering haven against psychic chaos—is tenuous at best. Nevertheless, as an archetypal analysis of that function indicates, it is not merely the chaotic commingling of Freudian *eros* and *thanatos* which inspires the "primal intensity" of Othello's emotions toward Desdemona. In Jungian terms, Desdemona as Othello's discarded "pearl. . . [r]icher than all his tribe" (5.2.343-44) personifies the Transpersonal Self—the God-image within each individual—as "the pearl of great price," as "the grain of mustard-seed, the hidden treasure" symbolizing "the kingdom of God" within the human psyche (Jung, "Gnostic Symbols of the Self" 9.2.221.346).[1] Moreover, her union with Othello—however briefly—typifies divine psychic order. As they stand together upon Cyprus, "the divine

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[1] Subsequent references to Jung's *Collected Works* appear in this text by volume, page, and paragraph number.

Desdemona" and Othello momentarily resist the deadly undertow of chaos; the blissful couple, insensible to the magic web of evil (3.4.65) which already surrounds them, form a lesser *coniunctio*—"a *symbol of the creative union of opposites,* a 'uniting symbol' in the literal sense" (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.174.293). In the archetypal (lesser and greater) *coniunctio*, the Platonic and Neoplatonic "bisexual primordial being turns into a symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self, where the war of opposites finds peace. In this way the primordial being becomes the distant goal of man's self-development. . . Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality" (9.1.175.294). In "Psychology of the Transference," Jung clarifies the origins of this archetypal image:

> The *coniunctio* is an *a priori* image which has always occupied an important place in man's mental development. If we trace this idea back we find it has two sources in alchemy, one Christian, the other pagan. The Christian source is unmistakably the doctrine of Christ and the Church, *sponsus* and *sponsa*, where Christ takes on the role of Sol and the Church that of Luna. The pagan source is on the one hand the *hieros gamos*, on the other the marital union of the mystic with God. ("Psychology of the Transference," *CW* 16.169.355)

Thus, the *coniunctio* (whether lesser or greater) signifies the reconciliation of anima and animus in psychic sacred (or alchemical) marriage:

> As numina, anima and animus work now for good, now for evil. Their opposition is that of the sexes. They therefore represent a supreme pair of opposites, not hopelessly divided by logical

> contradiction but, because of the mutual attraction between them, giving promise of union and actually making it possible.
> (Jung, "Conclusion," *CW* 9.2.268.425)

As Jung's remarks concerning anima and animus as soul-image within the unconscious indicate, the nature of each is complementary to the individual's conscious persona, or mask:

> As to the character of the anima, my experience confirms the rule that it is, by and large, *complementary* to the character of the persona. The anima usually contains all those common human qualities which the conscious attitude lacks. . . . The complementary character of the anima also affects the sexual character. . . . A very feminine woman has a masculine soul, and a very masculine man has a feminine soul. . . . Whereas logic and objectivity are usually the predominant features of a man's outer attitude, or are at least regarded as ideals, in the case of a woman it is feeling. But in the soul it is the other way round: inwardly it is the man who feels, and the woman who reflects. ("Definitions," *CW* 6.468-69.804-05)

Jung further asserts: "Wherever an impassioned, almost magical, relationship exists between the sexes, it is invariably a question of a projected soul-image" (6.471.809). Othello's purported "witchcraft" upon Desdemona, thus, is the result of cross-projection, of sympathies engendered by the complementarity of anima and animus: "She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them. / This only is the witchcraft I have used" (1.3.165-67), he tells the Duke.

Erich Neumann, in *The Origins and History of Consciousness,* asserts that this state of final "synthesis of the psyche" (414) reinterprets the original chaotic uroboric totality "in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled" (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 18). According to Neumann, "[t]he hermaphroditic nature of the uroboros reappears here on a new level" (*Origins* 414). The ego, once engulfed by the uroboros, has now heroically sublimated it:

> While in the beginning the ego germ lay in the embrace of the hermaphroditic uroboros, at the end the self proves to be the golden core of a sublimated uroboros, containing in itself masculine and feminine, conscious and unconscious elements, a unity in which the ego does not perish but experiences itself, in the self, as a uniting symbol. (414-15)

At first glance the divine syzygy formed by the harmonious ecstasy of Othello and Desdemona upon Cyprus would seem precisely to exemplify such a union of opposites. Certainly the text (as Hunter points out) associates the pair with godhead—with that, specifically, of Venus and Mars (136 ff.).[2] Desdemona—like the newly created Venus, having come ashore at Cyprus—is both "*Venus Anadyomene*, a human goddess of Love and Beauty" and "*Venus Armata* as well" (Hunter 137). As Hunter notes, Cassio's prayer to Jove in act 2, scene 1 identifies Othello as similarly godlike: "Cassio's extravagance is presenting us with a vision of Venus in the act of love with Mars" (138).

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[2] According to Hunter, "*Othello* can, but need not, be taken as occurring in a Pelagian world" (129). The protagonist, falling prey to idolatry of Desdemona and Iago's seductive Pelagianism, succumbs to hatred and chaos in the absence of divine grace (127-57). "So we are left in the end to contemplate the final benefit of our powers of self-creation: we are free to destroy the things we turn ourselves into" (157).

Given Desdemona's actual status as mortal woman "[l]eft in the conduct of bold Iago" (2.1.75), Cassio's humble adulation of "our great captain's captain" (2.1.74) is particularly poignant. As his "tall ship" consummates a *hieros gamos* in the bay of Cyprus, Mars—enacting the union of the Great Father and the Great Mother with the latter's personification as Venus—will, in Cassio's imagination, renew the island and his men's venereal "extincted spirits" with martial "fire" and erotic "comfort":

> Great Jove Othello guard
> And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,
> That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
> Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
> Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits,
> And bring all Cyprus comfort. (2.1.77-82)

At the same time divine Desdemona, exalted by Cassio, undergoes an ironic transfiguration into the Virgin Mary as she awaits Othello:

> You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.
> Hail to thee, lady! And the grace of heaven,
> Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
> Enwheel thee round. (2.1.84-87)

Desdemona will, unfortunately, soon stand in dire need of angelic encircling "grace"; as Hunter points out, she enters not accompanied by the three Graces but by those "far scruffier realities"(138), Iago, Roderigo, and Emilia. Nevertheless Othello, addressing his "soul's joy," eagerly anticipates erotic "death" in the embrace of Desdemona as Venus: "May the winds blow till they have wakened death, / And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,/ Olympus-high, and duck again as low/ As hell's from heaven" (2.1.178-81). Echoing Neumann's concept of "uroboric incest"—of the primitive ego-state over which "stand the insignia of death [that is, of the ego's obliteration], signifying final dissolution in union with the Mother" (*Origins and History of Consciousness* 17)—Othello's "soul" (2.1.183) wistfully longs for final, blissful oblivion, for eternal "content so absolute/ That not another comfort like to this/ Succeeds in unknown fate" (2.1.183-84): "If it were now to die, / 'Twere now to be most happy" (2.1.181-82).

As Neumann's account of the purported ritual enactment of the *hieros gamos* at Eleusis (in this case, of the rape of Kore—that is, of Persephone—by Hades) indicates, the image of sacred ritual marriage is not entirely a positive one:

> It is believed that this central event was a forced marriage, ritually enacted by the hierophant, the priestess of Demeter, and those who were to be initiated. This *hieros gamos* was also experienced as as death situation, for the Eleusinian mysteries were compared to "a gruesome celebration of the death night." (*The Great Mother* 318)

Oblivious to the workings of the "demi-devil" (5.2.298) Iago, Hades' pander, on every hand about them, Othello and Desdemona continue their enactment of the lesser archetypal *coniunctio* in the shadow of deceit and death: "I cannot speak enough of this content; / It stops me here; it is too much of joy" (2.1.188-89), whispers Othello. Iago, beholding them, resolves to end their celestial harmony:

"O, you are well tuned now! / But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,/ As honest as I am" (2.1.191-93). Although (as Roderigo states incredulously) "full of most blest/ condition" (2.1.236-37), Desdemona's ephemeral divinity cannot withstand the diabolical powers of Iago's metaphorical poison, of the "little. . . web" (2.1.164) which he—enraged by Othello's preferment of Cassio—has busily woven, spider-like, since the opening scene of *Othello*: "I follow him to serve my turn upon him" (1.1.42), he tells Roderigo as the two stroll onstage. Identifying himself as Satan (or, at least, as the antithesis of Yahweh), Iago as demonic adversary apostrophizes: "I am not what I am" (1.1.66).[3] He commences his vengeance by proclaiming his master's miscegenation through the streets (canals?) of Venice, attempting to incite Desdemona's unsuccessful custodians to violence:

> Call up her father:
> Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,
> Proclaim him in the street, incense her kinsmen,
> And though he in a fertile climate dwell,
> Plague him with flies. (1.1.71-72)[4]

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[3] See note 50, Chapter Two. "And God anfwered Mofés, I AM THAT I AM. Alfo he faid, Thus fhalt thou fay vnto the children of Ifaaél [*sic*], I AM hathe fent me vnto you" (Exodus 3:14, Geneva Bible). John 8:58 provides another ironic echo, possibly implying Iago's status as Antichrist: "Iefus faid vnto them, Verely, verely I fay vnto you, before Abraham was, I am."

[4] See Bristol on Iago as *charivari* mock-priest or "scourge of marriage" (86) presiding over a carnivalesque ritual designed to unmask and punish the "transgressive marriage" (75) of Othello and Desdemona.

Iago wastes no time in demonizing the "old black ram" (1.1.89), half of an obscene Aristophanean "beast with two backs" (1.1.116) parodying Plato's original hermaphrodite in the *Symposium*:

> Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
> Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
> Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
> Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you. (1.1.89-92)

This image also parodies Jung's hermaphroditic child archetype, the image of psychic wholeness that "anticipates the figure [that is, the figure of the greater *coniunctio*] that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole" (The Psychology of the Child Archetype," *CW* 9.1.164.278). Moreover, it ironically prefigures the actual lesser *coniunctio*—transcendent "symbol of the unity of personality" consisting of "the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality" (9.1.175.294)—which Othello and Desdemona will embody in act 2, scene 1. In any case, Brabantio—informed of his daughter's escape "[t]o the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor" (1.1.125)—immediately suspects wizardry, asking Roderigo: "Is there not charms/ By which the property of youth and maidhood/ May be abused?" (1.1.170-72) He accuses his daughter's "foul thief" of gaining her affections through black Moorish arts:

> Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
> For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
> If she in chains of magic were not bound,
> . . . .
> Would ever have, t'incur a general mock,
> Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
> Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight.
> Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense
> That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,
> Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
> That weakens motion. (1.2.63-65; 69-75)

In act 1, scene 3, Brabantio continues to assert Othello's working of "witchcraft"upon his daughter:

> She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
> By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
> For nature so preposterously to err,
> Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
> Sans witchcraft could not. (1.3.60-64)

Othello's subtext of actual or purported "witchcraft," in conjunction with Iago's verbal and ocular "poison," implies the influence of "the negative elementary character" of the archetypal feminine (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 147-208), of Neumann's Terrible Mother (59-60)—specifically of Hecate, goddess of witchcraft, necromancy, and deadly poison (80). Moreover, Brabantio's allusion to "nature" calls to mind the actions of Neumann's Terrible Mother as personification of Nature's blighting, devouring, pitiless aspects, inflicting "death and destruction, danger and distress, hunger and nakedness" upon her hapless victims (*The Great Mother* 149). Although Othello protests that his only “drugs” (1.3.91), “charms” (1.3.91), “conjuration” (1.3.92), and “mighty magic” (1.3.92) lie in the enchanting power of his heroic tall tales (1.3.127-69) upon Desdemona’s “greedy ear” (1.3.148)—“This only is the witchcraft I have used” (1.3.168), he insists—a kind of sorcery attends his doomed marriage from its inception. Certainly its deceptively auspicious beginning holds illusory promise. Seduced by Desdemona’s ready consecration of her “soul and fortunes” (1.3.250) to Othello’s “honours and valiant parts” (1.3.249), charmed by Othello’s desire “to be free and bounteous to [Desdemona’s] mind” (1.3.261), the Duke exclaims: “If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black” (1.3.285-86). It appears that the “brave Moor” (1.3.287), ignoring Brabantio’s warning—“Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:/ She has deceived her father, and may thee” (1.3.288-89)—will indeed “use Desdemona well” (1.3.287).

Iago, meanwhile, begins to work his own spell. Substituting the incantation “I hate the Moor” (1.3.350; 1.3.368) for his mesmerizing suggestions that Roderigo will “[p]ut money in [his] purse” (1.3.330) by heeding him, Iago conjures up the powers of night—including, not only “all the tribe of hell,” but those of the archetypal Terrible Mother, mistress of primal darkness—as he determines the method of his revenge upon the gullible man of “a free and open nature” (1.3.381) who has not only failed to promote him, but, perhaps, has committed adultery with Emilia “’twixt [his] sheets” (1.3.369). Invoking the baleful chthonic powers of eroticized darkness, the Terrible Mother's demonic priest impregnates his own mind with poisonous malevolence: "I have't. It is engendered. Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light" (1.3.385-86). Reaffirming his infernal resolve to pervert the Moor's "constant, loving, noble nature" (2.3.270) to his own fiendish ends, Iago engenders the process of Desdemona's demonization. Possessed by the spectral "mere suspicion" (1.3.371) of "the lusty Moor" (2.3.276) cuckolding him, the demi-devil soliloquizes:

> The thought whereof
> Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
> And nothing can or shall content my soul
> Till I am evened for him, wife for wife;
> Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
> At least into a jealousy so strong
> That judgement cannot cure. (2.3.277-83)

As he concludes his heretical sermon to Roderigo upon self-willed lust and economics, he promises his gull: "If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her—therefore make money" (1.3.342-45). "There are many events in the womb/ of time which will be delivered" (1.3.353-54), Iago utters portentously, echoing Neumann's depiction of the Terrible Mother as the temporal "devouring womb of the grave and of death, of darkness without light, of nothingness. . . casting [life] out again in new birth, hurling it to death, and over and over again to death" (*The Great Mother* 149-50).

Employing the "[d]ivinity of hell" (2.3.317), Iago clarifies his Claudius-like intent to empoison Othello's ear as he continues knotting the Terrible Mother's net of deception:

> I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:
> That she repeals him for her body's lust;
> And by how much she strives to do him good,
> She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
> So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh them all. (2.3.323-29)

The Diana-like Venus, pure consort of Mars, will become in Othello's mind unnaturally venereal Astarte,[5] a witchcraft-working type of Robert Graves' White Goddess, of "the ancient power of fright and lust—the female spider or the queen-bee whose embrace is death" (24) whose Kore-like "sweet body" (3.3.347) is capable of casually devouring "the general camp, / Pioners and all" (3.3.346-47). In the instant between Desdemona's exit following her plea for Cassio's reinstatement (3.3.41-85) and Iago's initial dripping of aural poison, Othello utters fatal words of premonition: "Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul/ But I do love thee; and when I love thee not, / Chaos is come again" (3.3.90-92).

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[5] For what it is worth, Frazer notes: "In Cyprus there was a bearded and masculine image of Venus (probably Astarte) in female attire: according to Philochorus, the deity thus represented was the moon, and sacrifices were offered to him or her by men clad as women, and by women clad as men" (*Adonis Attis Osiris* 259n).

Subtly arousing “the green-eyed monster which doth mock/ The meat it feeds on” (3.3.168-69), Iago gradually awakens something primitive—something regressive—within Othello. Coursen asserts: ”Under Iago’s tutelage, Othello’s unconscious reverts to its distant pagan origins” (*The Compensatory Psyche* 113). It could be a form of Neumann’s uroboric state “in which chaos, the unconscious, and the psyche as a whole [are] undifferentiated—and which is experienced by the ego as a borderline state” (*The Great Mother* 18). Othello first reacts to his own increasing psychic disorder with vehement denials:

> Exchange me for a goat
> When I shall turn the business of my soul
> To such exsufflicate and blown surmises
> Matching thy inference. ’Tis not to make me jealous
> To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
> Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well:
> Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.
> Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
> The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,
> For she had eyes and chose me. (3.3.182-91)

Indeed, Othello initially denies that he is capable of jealousy: “No, Iago, / I’ll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;/ And on the proof, there is no more but this:/ Away at once with love or jealousy!” (3.3.191-94) As Iago’s wizardry begins to convince him of Desdemona’s deceptive “witchcraft” (3.3.213), Othello—speculating upon the possibility of Desdemona’s “nature erring from itself” (3.3.229)—minimizes the prospect that his Gravesian “Night Mare” (Graves 26) might prove (like the amoral White Goddess) “haggard,” flying like a hawk from his hand in emulation of a shape-shifting Queen Mab: "If I do prove her haggard, / Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, / I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind/ To prey at fortune" (3.3.262-65). Forming a mare's nest in his mind, his increasingly toad-like thoughts work a dark enchantment:

> She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
> Must be to loathe her, O curse of marriage,
> That we can call these delicate creatures ours
> And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
> And live upon the vapour of a dungeon
> Than keep a corner in the thing I love
> For others' uses. (3.3.269-75).

As Iago's and Othello's exchange of echolalia—that is, of the automatic repetition of another's vocalizations—in act 3, scene 3 emphasizes, "[h]onest Iago" (2.3.158) serves not only as midwife to the Terrible Mother's monstrous birth out of "hell and night"; he is, as subsequent events reveal, Othello's shadow. As the two men discuss Cassio's honesty, Iago's archetypal function becomes apparent:

> IAGO Indeed?
> OTHELLO Indeed? Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that?
> Is he not honest?
> IAGO Honest, my lord?
> OTHELLO Honest? Ay, honest.
> IAGO My lord, for aught I know.
> OTHELLO What dost thou think?
> IAGO Think, my lord?
> OTHELLO Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me,
> As if there were some monster in his thought
> Too hideous to be shown. (3.3.100-09)

Iago, in his verbal reflection of Othello's doubts engendered by the "hell and night" of his master's own increasingly chaotic unconscious, displays the behavior of the archetypal shadow—of the unflattering mirror of the unconscious with whom the ego must contend:

> [W]hoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the *persona*, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. (Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.20.43)

As Maud Bodkin points out, Iago's promise to "set down the pegs that make this music" overshadows the harmonious lovers' "almost inevitable, archetypal fantasy of man and woman in their turning to one another" (219) in their meeting at Cyprus: "To the menace immanent in the form of the ecstatic moment substantial shape is given in the figure of Iago. . . Here, as the lovers embrace, the harsh impact of his threatening aside gains intensity from the shadowing fear that lies in excess of happiness" (220). Iago, in his feigned "terrible power of seeing and speaking truth" based upon his ability to project "the half truths that Othello's romantic vision ignored, but of which his mind held secret knowledge" (Bodkin 223), embodies the devil (perhaps the ultimate shadow figure) as archetype: "If we attempt to define the devil in psychological terms, regarding him as an archetype. . . we may say that the devil is our tendency to represent in personal form the forces within and without us that threaten our supreme values" (223). Gregg Andrew Hurwitz—noting that, "[c]ritically, Iago has always been described in shadow terms"—likewise so defines Iago: "Iago is indeed a dark complement to Othello. . . Iago is a creature of the night, finding himself most at home when surrounded by the darkness he represents" (85).

Othello's ego, failing to discern the intent of its pale shadow (or to reconcile itself with the shadow without committing murder and suicide), succumbs to psychic dissolution. Hurwitz views the play as an example of "the male hero myth" (79): "The hero's task, in coming to terms with his unconscious, is. . . to redefine constantly his relationship with the feminine" (79). Having failed "as Jungian ego. . . to integrate" his fragmented psyche (79), "Othello provides a lesson of 'what not to do' while teaching viewers to love well *and* wisely" (91). Terrell L. Tebbetts, likewise defining Othello as faulty ego, asserts: "Much of criticism's contradiction over the character of Othello stems from readers' wrestling with the pageants Othello's repressive ego creates to keep Othello himself and others in false gaze" (107). Othello, flawed heroic ego pulled into the vortex of the unconscious, follows his tragic predecessors and successors into the Terrible Mother's cellarage of psychic death; the promise of transcendent psychic union with his "fair warrior" implied by their brief lesser *coniunctio* now proves illusory.

As Iago brings their mutual misogynistic fantasy to its hideous consummation, he destroys Othello by destroying Othello's soul; Othello, in Jungian terms, ultimately murders the embodiment of his anima, of the complementary feminine image of his own unconscious.[6] "The anima is not the soul in the dogmatic sense, not an *anima rationalis,* which is a philosophical conception, but a natural [good and bad] archetype that satisfactorily sums up all the statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind, of the history of language and religion" (Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,"*CW* 9.1.27.57). Jung's following description of the anima's behavior echoes Brabantio's and Othello's perception of the "super-subtle Venetian" (1.3.343) Desdemona as deceiver and ensnarer of masculine rationality:

> With her cunning play of illusions the soul [that is, the anima] lures into life the inertness of matter that does not want to live. She makes us believe incredible things, that life may be lived. She is full of snares and traps, in order that man should fall, should reach the earth, entangle himself there, and stay caught, so that life should be lived; as Eve in the garden of Eden could not rest content until she had convinced Adam of the goodness of the forbidden apple. ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.26-27.56)

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[6] According to Coursen, "Iago's subtle encouragement of Othello's 'shadow'. . . causes the Moor not merely to contaminate 'the feminine in him' but to murder the embodiment of a deeper archetype, the perfection of soul beneath the merely personal" (*The Compensatory Psyche* 112). To this end, Iago employs the tools of drunkenness and metaphorical poison: "[T]he deeply poisoned Iago must become a poisoner in the garden of Othello's fantasy of perfection" (112-13). The pair's vows in 3.3 constitute "a pagan perversion of Holy Matrimony" (25).

Othello, projecting the negative anima's characteristics onto the unfortunate Desdemona, endows her in his mind with its amoral, promiscuous independence—with its poisonous, web-weaving "witchcraft":

> She comes upon us just as a nixie [a mythical Germanic water spirit] might; she sits on top of us like a succubus; she changes into all sorts of shapes like a witch, and in general displays an unbearable independence that does not seem at all proper in a psychic content. Occasionally she causes states of fascination that rival the best bewitchment, or unleashes terrors in us not to be outdone by any manifestation of the devil. . . .
> Even in a state of reasonable [psychic] introjection the nixie has not laid aside her roguery. The witch has not ceased to mix her vile potions of love and death; her magic poison has been refined into intrigue and self-deception, unseen though none the less dangerous for that. (Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.25- 26.54)

As he strangles Desdemona, Othello—in a final act of psychic suicide—throttles his own demon-haunted existence; for "the anima is the *archetype of life itself*" ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.32.66).

Even so, as she enters with Emilia in act 3, scene 3, Desdemona still exemplifies the anima's positive characteristics. She still, for the moment, embodies the goddess-like, Sophia-like heavenly qualities of the "divine Desdemona," of the "fair warrior" met at Cyprus: "[F]or the anima can appear also as an angel of light, a psychopomp who points the way to the highest meaning" ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.29.60). "If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself; / I'll not believe it" (3.3.280-81), Othello muses.

Yet already Iago the devil-warlock-priest's hellish ritual has sealed his victim's (indeed, his victims') fate, as Othello affirms: "I am bound to thee for ever" (3.3.215), he tells Iago. Armed with that supremely potent fetish— Desdemona's handkerchief—Iago prepares to provide the "ocular proof" (3.3.361) that will condemn Othello's "eternal soul" (3.3.362), vacillating between something akin to Christianity and the invocation of "[t]h'immortal Jove's dread clamours" (3.3.357), not only to Iago's demonic "hell's pains" (1.1.153) but to the peculiar chthonic damnation of the Terrible Mother's uroboric venom:

> The Moor already changes with my poison:
> Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
> Which at the first are scarce found to distaste
> But, with a little act upon the blood,
> Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so. (3.3.326-30)

Again identifying himself with the deadly aspects of the Terrible Mother as he prepares to spew forth poison without narcotic antidote, Iago ends his soliloquy as Othello enters:

> Not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owed'st yesterday. (3.3.331-34)

Iago's references to the "poppy" and "mandragora," both flowers of stupefaction and potentially of death, suggest Desdemona's identity as a type of the archetypal Kore, or Persephone. As in the case of Ophelia, Jung's description of this archetype in "The Psychological Aspects of the Kore" provides a series of relevant metaphors applicable to hapless Desdemona's fate:

> The maiden's helplessness exposes her to all sorts of *dangers*, for instance of being devoured by reptiles or ritually slaughtered like a beast of sacrifice. Often there are bloody, cruel, and even obscene *orgies* to which the innocent child falls victim. (*CW* 9.1.184-85.311)

Othello, now joining in the obscene degradation of Desdemona in which Iago has indulged himself since the opening scenes of the play, commences the blasphemous sacrament which will end in Desdemona's ritual slaughter: "What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?" (3.3.339), he asks Iago. Othello proceeds to the orgiastic image of Desdemona as sweet, flower-like Kore willingly violated by his men: "I had been happy if the general camp, / Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body/ So had I nothing known" (3.3.346-48). The "waked wrath" (3.3.364) of Mars, feeding upon itself, mulls over possible means of dispatching the erring, violated, violating Kore-demon, until now in his mind simultaneously chaste Diana and Venus, "fair warrior" of Eros:

> Her name, that was as fresh
> As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
> As my own face. If there be cords or knives,
> Poison or fire or suffocating streams,
> I'll not endure it. (3.3.387-91)

Inadvertently invoking Hades, hell, and the nothingness suggestive of the Terrible Mother's uroboric chaos—"Death and damnation! O!" (3.3.397)—

Othello, confronted with Iago's account of Cassio's "monstrous, monstrous" (3.3.428) purported dream (3.3.414-27), explodes into a flesh-rending Dionysiac frenzy: "I'll tear her all to pieces!" (3.3.432).

The *mana* of his dead mother's handkerchief, its sibylline "magic in the web of it" (3.4.65) of love and its threatened death providing yet another example of *Othello*'s immersion in negative feminine "witchcraft," works its spell upon Othello as soon as Iago fabricates Cassio's suggestive beard-wiping: "[S]uch a handkerchief—I am sure it was your wife's—did I today/ See Cassio wipe his beard with" (3.3.438-40).[7] Othello, demanding the handkerchief of Desdemona, relates the strange history of the napkin—a sort of primitive external soul or anima as strawberry-spotted cloth, ominously interwoven with witchcraft, Eros, and Thanatos:

> There's magic in the web of it:
> A sibyl that had numbered in the world
> The sun to course two hundred compasses,
> In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
> The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,
> And it was dyed in mummy, which the skilful
> Conserved of maidens' hearts. (3.4.65-71)

Given by "an Egyptian. . . charmer" (3.4.52-53) to Othello's mother—who, Othello tells Desdemona, "dying gave it me, / And bid me when my fate would have me wive, / To give it her" (3.4.59-61)—the handkerchief's spellbinding power of attraction, simultaneously good and evil, is that of the good and bad Great Mother. In its origin in sibylline "prophetic fury," in its composition of the excreta of hallowed worms, and in its staining "in mummy. . . [c]onserved of maidens' hearts," the handkerchief fatefully interweaves magic, love, and death. The "maidens' hearts," despite their lack of violation, again suggest the presence of the archetypal Kore. In Janet Adelman's view, the red-spotted handkerchief symbolizes Othello's conflicted need to preserve the undefiled maternal body:

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[7] Coursen states: "As Othello's archetypal past floods past the unguarded gates of his consciousness, the handkerchief becomes the most negative of talismans" (*The Compensatory Psyche* 114-15).

Also see Frazer's examples of pieces of cloth serving as tokens of inspiration or possession (*The Magic Art Vol. 1* 377-80).

> In its complex weave of consummation, virginity, and death. . . the handkerchief enunciates both the limiting condition of male desire and the impossibility of that condition, thus anticipating Desdemona's end: if virginity is the ground of Othello's desire, death is its only preservative. . . . [I]n Desdemona's death, the transmission of the handkerchief becomes perfectly circular: the talisman that comes from the dying mother is returned to her through the dead body of the wife. And as the mother is preserved in the dead maidens, so Desdemona's death serves not only to punish but to preserve her, returning her to her status as maiden/mother and making her Othello's alone, in the terrible love-death that consummates the play. (69)

Whether or not the marriage of Desdemona and Othello has been consummated before her death, Adelman's term "maiden/mother" is also suggestive of the archetypal Kore symbolically united with Hades and Demeter in the death-rites of Eleusis—an amalgam of virginity, Eros, and Thanatos all imprinted upon Desdemona's fragile "sweet body." Othello, meanwhile, exorcises Venus—along with all hope of psychic union with his “fair warrior,” of *coniunctio*—as he undergoes possession by Mars the Terrible Father:

> Look here, Iago,
> All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven;
> ’Tis gone.
> Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
> Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
> To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
> For ’tis of aspics’ tongues. (3.3.445-51)

Summoning the “black vengeance” of the Terrible Mother from her chthonic “hollow cell,” Othello—kneeling, wedding his witch-priest and demonic “lieutenant” (3.3.479), his heaving bosom swollen with jealous serpents’ poison—seals a murderous covenant of “O, blood, blood, blood” (3.3.452), of metaphorical sexual violation:

> [M]y bloody thoughts with violent pace
> Shall ne’er look back, ne’er ebb to humble love,
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up. Now by yond marble heaven,
> In the due reverence of a sacred vow
> I here engage my words. (3.3.458-63)

As agent of “yond marble heaven”—of the Terrible Father as pitiless ravisher and avenger—Othello, identifying wholly with Mars, forswears “humble love” while employing the pornographic conceit of “a capable and wide revenge” upon Desdemona’s presumably capable, widened “hollow cell.” In performing the Terrible Father’s will, Othello serves the inscrutable purposes of the vengeful or indifferent, life-swallowing Terrible Mother as well—of “the deadly devouring maw of the underworld. . . the devouring womb of the grave and of death, of darkness without light, of nothingness"(Neumann, *The Great Mother* 149). Rising from their nuptials, Othello resolves to deal "some swift means of death / To the fair devil" (3.3.478-79). Iago, reiterating his role as Othello's shadow, darkly affirms: "I am your own for ever" (3.3.480).

Desdemona, bewildered by her new identity as "that cunning whore of Venice" (4.2.88), the demonized "closet lock and key of villainous secrets" (4.2.21),[8] nevertheless appears obediently to transform herself from passionate object of idolatrous veneration to half-expectant sacrificial victim. Othello, addressing her, summarizes the dichotomy between chaste (or virginal) wife and cunning whore, between exalted Venus and venereal Astarte, between the pure waters of marital life (suggestive of the Good Mother, of the anima as divine "psychopomp who points the way to the highest meaning") and the toad-engendering cistern of the Terrible Mother, of Hecate, of the negative anima as "witch":

> But there where I have garnered up my heart,
> Where either I must live or bear no life,
> The fountain from the which my current runs
> Or else dries up—to be discarded thence

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[8] Gajowski asserts: "Shakespeare represents in *Othello* the reality of women—their wholeness—in high contrast to the fragmented notions of them held by men. . . It is no coincidence, of course, that Shakespeare has the 'phantasmagoric questioning, raving, mocking debate go on among the men about their stereotype (*sic*) women,' to quote Roger Stilling, 'while at the center of it Desdemona sits, [a]. . . denial of a whole tradition of masculine invention and myth" (97).

Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in! (4.2.56-61)

In Othello's mind, it is not only the "cistern" of his marital bed (or of Desdemona herself) which is irredemiably defiled; it is his soul—his anima—which "she hath contaminated" (4.1.195-96). In Othello's mind Desdemona's murder becomes, not an act of violence engendered by psychic chaos or external "witchcraft," but the rational sentence decreed by heaven's verdict—by Jove, heavenly judge and all-ravishing seeder of the universe: "Good, good! The justice of it pleases; very good!" (4.1.197) responds Othello to Iago's suggestion that he strangle Desdemona in her bed.

As he continues "to write 'whore' upon" (4.2.71) the "fair paper" of her "most goodly book" (4.2.70), Othello's floral metaphor again identifies Desdemona as a disturbingly fragrant Kore figure ripe for murderous ravage by Hades: "O thou weed, / Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet/ That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!" (4.2.66-68). As the "poor soul" (4.3.38) awaits her impending ill "fortune" (4.3.27), desiring to be shrouded in one of the wedding sheets upon her deathbed (4.3.21-24), the words of her anticipatory willow-song (4.3.38-56) again illustrate Desdemona's watery, vegetative fate as the Kore who frequently "appears as the *corybant*, *maenad*, or *nymph*" (Jung, "The Psychological Aspects of the Kore," *CW* 9.1.184.311):

> The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
> Sing all a green willow;
> Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
> Sing willow, willow, willow;
> The fresh streams ran by her and murmured her moans;
> Sing willow, willow, willow,
> Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones—
> . . . .
> Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
> Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve—
> Nay, that's not next. (4.3.37-44; 4.3.48-50)

Unable to soften "the stones" evocative of Othello's (ir)rational hardness, his anima's portentous "salt tears" fall in vain. Charitably approving her lord's blameless scorn (4.3.49), the deposed Venus, queen of transcendent Eros, is doubtless unaware of her pernicious symbolic identity: she has indeed become in Othello's mind Graves' White Goddess of poetry and myth, the all-embracing, all-consuming masculine obsession simultaneously provoking and defying attempts to eradicate her presence from (un)consciousness. Himself unaware of his own ritual identity as the "'old Mars'" of Rome (a scapegoat figure, perhaps once a ritual king destined for slaughter),[9] Othello again threatens to ritualistically rend Desdemona's vexed flesh: "I will chop her into messes" (4.1.188). Ironically affirming the moral veracity of Nature, the shaken Othello slips further into psychic chaos characteristic of the Terrible Mother and of the uroboric state: "Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction" (4.1.39-40), he insists as he falls into epileptic trance. Ecstatic, Iago cries triumphantly: "Work on, / My medicine, work!" (4.1.42-43). Yet Othello, fearing lest Desdemona's "beauty and body unprovide [his] mind again" (4.1.193), proves irresolute when confronted by the White Goddess' "monumental alabaster":

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[9] See Frazer's discussion of the annual custom of driving the old Mars forth from Rome (*The Scapegoat* 229-32): "Mars was originally not a god of war but of vegetation" (229).

> Yet I'll not shed her blood,
> Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
> And smooth as monumental alabaster—
> Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. (5.2.3-5)[10]

"Put out the light, and then put out the light" (5.2.7), Othello soliloquizes over his late "soul's joy"; extinguishing the divine Desdemona's too-mortal flame, he extinguishes his own soul. Reluctant to spill the source of her overwhelming "Promethean heat" (5.2.12) and light—or, conversely, reluctant to pollute the earth with demonic female blood[11]—Othello, standing abstracted from his own evil as he gazes upon this "cunning'st pattern of excelling nature" (5.2.11), becomes Hades leering down at Kore: [12]

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[10] Frazer mentions one (perhaps related) custom of bloodless sacrifice: "The custom of putting an unfaithful Vestal to death by immuring her in a subterranean chamber may have been adopted in order to avoid taking the life of a princess by violence; for. . . there is a very widespread reluctance to spill royal blood" (*The Magic Art Vol. 2* 228).

[11] See Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful Vol.1* (76-100) for a discussion of various taboos and customs designed to ward off female pollution.

[12] Cohen remarks: "Sleeping, Desdemona assumes Othello's construction of her as a passive, beautiful participant in a pre-enacted ritual; she is one with the sacrificial victims of the ages" (121). Waking, she destroys Othello's self-deluding fantasy: "This expression of herself is possible only if Desdemona will cooperate with his careful, religious staging of the sacrifice by remaining asleep in her alabaster, immobile state, like the compliant scapegoat of mythology"

> When I have plucked thy rose,
> I cannot give it vital growth again;
> It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree.
> O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
> Justice to break her sword! (5.2.13-17)

A self-appointed god of death unable to resurrect his sacrificial victim at Mercury's command, Othello manages nevertheless to co-opt immasculate, illusory Justice to his bloody, bloodless ends. As once godlike Othello administers Jovian (Martial?) "justice," Iago's devotee—fatal eyes rolling (5.2.37-38), gnawing his "nether lip" (5.2.43) in entranced "bloody passion" (5.2.44),[13] groaning in the birth-throes (5.2.56) of his master Iago's "strong conception" (5.2.55—engenders the obliteration of the soul of *Othello.* Interminably throttling his suddenly resistant sacrificial "strumpet" (5.2.78; 5.2.80), Othello has become the subhuman or inhuman embodiment of his feared "chaos." His murderous marriage half consummated, the partially strangled goddess' consort bids the forces of nature bear witness to his horror:

> O insupportable! O heavy hour!
> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe
> Should yawn at alteration. (5.2.99-102)

The cosmos fails to comply; Sol and Luna gaze on impassively as Venus and Mars continue their appointed planetary rounds. Othello, addressing Emilia,

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(124).

[13] Frazer documents similar signs of ritual possession in *The Magic Art Vol. 1* 373-421 and *Adonis Attis Osiris Vol. 1* 68-70.

inadvertently identifies the source of his murderous madness—the archetypal feminine's personification as anima, as the erring, erotic "moon" of the psyche with which he could not remain conjoined without succumbing to ego-death: "It is the very error of the moon:/ She comes more nearer earth than she was wont/ And makes men mad" (5.2.110-12). Crying "O! O! O!" (5.2.197), Othello awakens from his possession by chaos only to succumb again to the triply baneful force of "the capricious and all-powerful Threefold Goddess," his "mother, bride, and layer-out" (Graves 24) whose mortal incarnation—conflation of sacrificial maiden and dying whore-goddess—lies before him. The "ill-starred wench" Desdemona still possesses sufficient divinity to condemn Othello's suddenly orthodox Christian soul:

> O ill-starred wench!
> Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt
> That look of yours will hurl my soul from heaven
> And fiends will snatch at it. (5.3.270-73)

Devils with squibs in their mouths fail to appear (at least onstage) in response to Othello's command that they deliver him from the chthonic, soul-devouring hell of his ego's own making—from "this heavenly sight," the exquisite corpse of the lesser *coniunctio* achieved—however briefly—at Cyprus:

> O cursèd, cursèd slave! Whip me, ye devils,
> From the possession of this heavenly sight!
> Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur!
> Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
> O Desdemon! Dead Desdemon! O! O! (275-79)

The winds of chaos have blown till they have wakened death; the lesser *coniunctio* formed by Othello and Desdemona, transcendent "symbol of the unity of personality. . . where the war of opposites finds peace" signifying "the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality" (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.175.294), has proven unable to withstand the susceptibility of Othello's ego to his shadow's psychic "witchcraft," to the undermining sorcery of his own unconscious. Rather than heroically sublimating chaos, Othello's ego succumbs to it, to the darkness of the Terrible Mother—of she who, like her monstrous servant Iago, is "[m]ore fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea" (5.2.358). Moreover, as "one whose hand, / Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away/ Richer than all his tribe" (5.2.342-44), Othello has discarded the God-image within himself—"the pearl of great price," "the grain of mustard-seed, the hidden treasure" symbolizing the Transpersonal Self (Jung, "Gnostic Symbols of the Self" 9.2.221.346)—along with his soul. Dying with a kiss (5.2.355) upon his demon, goddess, whore, and scapegoat, Othello belatedly completes his ritualistic descent into an underworld—perhaps, as the twin "O"s beginning and ending his name suggest, into a self-willed uroboric hell—surrounded by chaotic nothingness.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Poor sacrifices of our enmity": Destruction of the Lesser *Coniunctio* from Without in *Romeo and Juliet*

As the curtain falls heavily upon *Romeo and Juliet*'s dénouement, Capulet and Montague knit hands and unite hearts, vowing unwonted bonds of communal love under the auspicious gazes of the posthumously idolized "poor sacrifices" Romeo and Juliet:

> CAPULET O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
> This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
> Can I demand.
> MONTAGUE But I can give thee more,
> For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
> That whiles Verona by that name is known,
> There shall no figure at such rate be set
> As that of true and faithful Juliet.
> CAPULET As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,
> Poor sacrifices of our enmity! (5.3.296-304)[14]

Lingering doubts engendered by the clash of predestination, free will, and intermittently benign omnipotence—what Robert G. Hunter summarizes as "the horrors of theology" (126)—gradually fade away. Perhaps God is a godly Protestant, severely merciful yet willing to forgive two adolescent Catholic suicides. Nevertheless, the fateful issuance of these "star-crossed lovers" (Prologue 6) from their parents' "fatal loins" (Prologue 5), along with the "fearful passage of their death-marked love" (Prologue 9), indicates an archetypal subtext, a sinister undercurrent paradoxically opposed to the play's orthodox setting. The protagonists of *Romeo and Juliet*, like those of *Othello*, attempt to integrate the archetypal feminine; Romeo and Juliet, identifying completely with one another in mutual idolatry, form—like Othello and Desdemona at Cyprus—a syzygy or lesser *coniunctio*. Destroyed largely by external forces, the psychic union of these "[p]oor sacrifices of our enmity" (5.3.304) nevertheless suggests the possibility of a reconciliation of archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine—indeed, of the greater *coniunctio* imagined (to an extent) by the repentant Lear as he accompanies Cordelia to prison.[15] Even as their graven images rebuke their families' mutual hatred and psychic disunion, the entombed corpses of Romeo and Juliet—asleep in the embrace of the all-devouring Great Goddess, rapacious mistress of chaos and eternal night—evoke the mythic hope of psychic wholeness, of the resurrection of consciousness in a Jungian greater *coniunctio*.

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[14] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 2nd edn., ed. G. Blakemore Evans, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984). Subsequent references appear in this text by act, scene, and line number.

Conventional psychoanalytic approaches have not viewed the pair as an ideal example of psychic unity. Karl A. Menninger, in *Man Against Himself*, sees the tragedy as “a dramatic exposition of the way impulsiveness combines with hate to produce self-destruction” (320):

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[15] As noted in Chapter Two, Lear's brief union of *agape* with Cordelia in prison is at best an inexact analogue of the Jungian greater *coniunctio* figuring psychic "wholeness." In Jung's view, the Transpersonal Self [the God-image within the human psyche] incorporates evil; thus, the greater *coniunctio* incorporates destructive elements even as it transcends them.

> Romeo's impulsiveness lost him his sweetheart just before he met Juliet in the same mood. His subsequent impulsiveness first resulted in the death of his best friend (he started to intervene in the duel and did so in such a way as to allow his friend to be stabbed) and then, in the avenging of this death, his own exile. Finally, had he not been so impulsive in jumping to conclusions after he observed Juliet in the tomb and so precipitous in resolving upon suicide, neither his suicide nor Juliet's would have been necessary. (321)

Theodor Reik, in his discussion of the pair in *Psychology and Sex Relations*, asserts that “romance is fostered by dissatisfaction with oneself” (88):

> The unrest, the dismay and discontent observable before the emergence of love is a constant in the psychology of the situation. It is one end of the thread which leads to the center of the problem . . . Romeo falls in love with Juliet on the rebound after his failure with Rosaline. Before he meets Juliet he is the victim of deep melancholy.
>
> Love is an escape from oneself, an antidote for the self-dislike and sometimes even for the self-hate which a person feels. (88-89)

Concerning Juliet’s desire that Romeo should go “no farther than a wanton’s bird, / That lets it hop a little from his hand” (2.2.177-78), Reik asserts: “There is much more possessiveness than sex in this tenderness, more greediness than sensuality” (113). Norman N. Holland, for whom “*Romeo and Juliet* represents an effort to master by erotic action a political problem,” remarks:

> It is possible that we have here a clue to the dualism and reversals characteristic of early Shakespeare. . . Perhaps the crudities of the early plays represent attempts, so to speak, to divide and

> conquer—in psychological terms, to master ambivalence by splitting the love and hate, isolating them, and so gaining control over the fantasies involved. (207)

As an archetypal interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* makes evident, however, the couple's fateful attraction is not inspired merely by self-hatred, possessiveness, or "erotic action." In its whirling vortex of love, hatred, ecstasy, and despair, the union of Romeo and Juliet does not divide or isolate conflicting psychic elements; rather, it seeks the union of such oppositions in a Jungian *coniunctio*—in "a *symbol of the creative union of opposites,* a 'uniting symbol' in the literal sense" (Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" 9.1.174.293). The *coniunctio* is "a symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self, where the war of opposites finds peace. . . Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality" (9.1.175.294). As stated in the previous chapter, the *coniunctio* signifies the reconciliation of anima and animus in psychic sacred (alchemical) marriage:

> As numina, anima and animus work now for good, now for evil. Their opposition is that of the sexes. They therefore represent a supreme pair of opposites, not hopelessly divided by logical contradiction but, because of the mutual attraction between them, giving promise of union and actually making it possible.
> ("Conclusion," *CW* 9.2.268.425)

In his discussion of the alchemical *mysterium coniunctionis*, Jung remarks: "The material we have adduced shows what an archetypal drama of death and rebirth lies hidden in the coniunctio, and what immemorial human emotions clash together in this problem" ("The Components of the Coniunctio," *CW* 14.41.35). This conflict, indeed, is the stuff of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*: "The factors which come together in the coniunctio are conceived as opposites, either confronting one another in enmity or attracting one another in love" ("The Components of the Coniunctio" 14.3.1).

Edward F. Edinger, in "*Romeo and Juliet*: A Coniunctio Drama," thus defines the play: "On the deepest level it can be seen as a drama of the mystery of the *coniunctio.* Its major themes—love, war, beauty, marriage, death and the union of opposites—are all related to this archetype" (47). Analyzing *Romeo and Juliet* in the light of Jung's "The Psychology of the Transference," Edinger asserts that the play's action "corresponds symbolically with" (47) the *Rosarium philosophorum* ["Rosary of the Philosophers"]—a series of twenty woodcuts first published in the *De Alchimia Opuscula complura veterum philosophorum* (Frankfurt, 1550)—examined by Jung (47). The "'ancient grudge'" (Prologue 3, qtd. in Edinger 48) of Montague and Capulet

> represents a current, personal version of the archetypal strife between the opposites [that is, of warring dualistic elements such as life and death, love and hate, good and evil]. . . . The existence of the ego is based on the separation and perpetual conflict of the opposites. This is the original sin, the ancient grudge that breaks out again and again in new and unexpected forms. . . . Romeo and Juliet are personifications of the constellated opposites, and the third thing which arises between them, the energic process that resolves the conflict, is love. (48-49)

As noted in the Introduction, Edinger—in *Anatomy of the Psyche*—distinguishes between a "lesser" and "greater" *coniunctio*:

> The lesser *coniunctio* is a union or fusion of substances that are not yet thoroughly separated or discriminated. It is always followed by death or *mortificatio.* The greater *coniunctio*, on the other hand, is the goal of the *opus*, the supreme accomplishment. In actual reality these two aspects are combined with each other. The experience of the *coniunctio* is almost always a mixture of the lesser and the greater aspects. (211)

In Edinger's view, the lesser *coniunctio* imaged by Romeo and Juliet destructs from within: "Love threatens one with loss of identity. If love is based on the projection of an archetypal image, perhaps the [Transpersonal] Self, then to unite with the loved one threatens dissolution of the ego-self" ("*Romeo and Juliet*" 52). According to Edinger, it is the pair's projection of the Transpersonal Self onto one another—of the "God-image" (Jung, "The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," *CW* 9.2.22.42) within the individual or collective psyche, embodying "the whole range of psychic phenomena in man" and symbolizing "the unity of the personality as a whole" (Jung, "Definitions," *CW* 6.460. 789)—that seals their doom: "Romeo and Juliet are both sacrificial victims. They fall into identification with the archetype of *coniunctio* [that is, of a divine syzygy uniting and transcending all dualistic oppositions] and are thus fated for [psychic] dismemberment" (Edinger, "*Romeo and Juliet*" 53). "No sooner does an immature ego touch the archetype [of *coniunctio*] than it becomes inflated and in danger of being exploded by its transpersonal energy. Both Romeo and Juliet have fallen into the archetypal realm of the *coniunctio* and, in their immaturity, are cruelly ground between the [psychic] opposites" (58). Nevertheless, their fate is not without hope (or, at least, not without meaning), since it hints at their achievement of the greater *coniunctio*, of divine consciousness united in "transpersonal-love" transcending death: "Romeo and Juliet both lose a winning match. In ego-power terms they are defeated by death. However, in transpersonal-love terms they are victorious" (63).

Edinger—noting the play's numerous references to light ("*Romeo and Juliet*" 65)—concludes that "this play, in its beauty, is a bringer of consciousness" (66); as for Romeo and Juliet themselves, their union embodies the lesser *coniunctio* (and, perhaps, the greater as well) "for the [psychic] benefit of all" (66). *Romeo and Juliet*'s transcendent emphasis upon "the light that shines in the darkness" (66)—suggestive of the victory of consciousness, "of life and love triumphant over death" (65)—calls to mind Erich Neumann's portrait of final psychological synthesis (never mentioned by Edinger), of the triumphant ego's sublimation of uroboric chaos:

> While in the beginning the ego germ lay in the embrace of the hermaphroditic uroboros, at the end the self proves to be the golden core of a sublimated uroboros, combining in itself masculine and feminine, conscious and unconscious elements, a unity in which the ego does not perish but experiences itself, in the self, as the uniting symbol. (*Origins* 414-15).

Even as their corpses lie together in the earth's "detestable maw" (5.3.45), food for the earth's "womb of death" (5.3.45), these "star-crossed lovers"—archetypal images of transcendent union—offer the possibility of light in darkness. Golden seeds of psychic life awaiting resurrection, they defy the "nothingness" of chaos and death; having succumbed to the lesser archetypal *coniunctio* in life, they nevertheless embody the archetype of greater *coniunctio.*

As the conflict between opposing Capulet and Montague mars the play's opening scene—"Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?" (1.1.95) inquires Montague of Benvolio—it becomes apparent that (Edinger to the contrary) external factors, more than internal ones, bring about the (temporal, at least) destruction of Romeo and Juliet's *coniunctio.* Turning from their discussion of the latest episode in their interminable strife, the Montagues and Benvolio discuss the problem of Romeo, who spends his mornings wandering pensively about a sycamore grove "an hour before the worshipped sun" (1.1.109) rises in the east, fleeing "into the covert of the wood" (1.1.116) from those who approach him. In doing so he faintly resembles the priest of Diana at Nemi immortalized by Sir James Frazer, a young ritual king grimly haunting his grove until cut down by his would-be successor:

> In the sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and possibly far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword, and he

> kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. (*The Magic Art* 8-9)

Alternately, the “bud bit with an envious worm” (1.1.142), refusing to “dedicate his beauty to the sun” suggestive of archetypally masculine rationality (1.1.144), shuts himself up in the “artificial night” of his chamber, the votary of some mysterious cult of lunacy:

> But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
> Should in the farthest east begin to draw
> The shady curtains from Aurora’s bed,
> Away from light steals home my heavy son,
> And private in his chamber pens himself,
> Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
> And makes himself an artificial night:
> Black and portentous must this humour prove,
> Unless good counsel may the cause remove. (1.1.125-33)

Rejecting the Apollonian “fair daylight” of “the all-cheering sun,” Romeo turns to the potentially Dionysian realm of the Great Mother, to the dark portentousness of metaphorical entombment within her. Upon his entrance, the object of Benovolio’s and the Montagues’ speech soon reveals the source of his madness, his rejection by the Diana-like goddess of chastity, Rosaline (1.1.199-207). Romeo’s description of his love’s nature is most foreboding:

> Here’s much to do with hate, but more with love:
> Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
> O any thing of nothing first create!
> O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
> Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,

> Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
> This love feel I, that feel no love in this. (1.1.166-73)

Edinger, noting this passage's "interplay and paradoxical union of opposites" ("*Romeo and Juliet*"47), quotes the epigram from John Gower's *Confessio amantis* which heads Jung's "The Psychology of the Transference": "'*Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suave malum* (A warring peace, a sweet wound, a mild evil)'" (*CW* 16.167, preceding 353, qtd. in Edinger, "*Romeo and Juliet*" 47).[16] In its "[m]isshapen chaos of well-seeming forms" (1.1.168)—of conflicting, conflicted "heavy lightness, serious vanity" (1.1.169)—Romeo's description of love's warring oppositions is also descriptive of Neumann's originary uroboric state "in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled. . . experienced by the ego as a borderline state" (*The Great Mother* 18). As Romeo's repetition of "O"s in this passage suggests—"O any thing of nothing first create!" (1.1.170) he cries—the uroboric state is at once nothing and anything, the creation of chaotic all-inclusiveness *ex nihilo*. Such a state might ultimately lead to a *coniunctio* in which "the self proves to be the golden core of a sublimated uroboros," to "a unity in which the ego does not perish but experiences itself, in the self, as the uniting symbol" (Neumann, *Origins* 414-15); on the other hand, Romeo's fall into the uroboric state could lead to the ego's extinction.

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[16] In the English translation of Jung's *Collected Works*, the translation from Latin reads "A warring peace, a sweet wound, an agreeable evil" (*CW* 16.167, preceding 353).

Hoping to prevent such an occurrence, Benvolio—homeopathically seeking to cure "the rank poison" (1.2.49) of Romeo's malady with "some new infection" (1.1.48)—bids him accompany him to the revelry at the Capulets' feast, which involves the somewhat Dionysiac crushing of wine-cups (1.2.81). Romeo initially doubts that "the devout religion of [his] eye" (1.2.88) will commit the heresy of wandering. Despite Mercutio's urging that he "borrow Cupid's wings" (1.4.17) and enter the amorous dance, he is content to remain an ironic figure of Mercury in search of a psychopomp [that is, of a Mercury-like conductor of souls either to the underworld or upward to celestial regions]: "Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling; / Being but heavy, I will bear the light" (1.4.11-12). Explaining his reluctance, he attempts to tell Mercutio of an ominous dream. Mercutio interrupts with a lengthy digression on Queen Mab, bringer of nightmares (1.4.53-94), and the details of Romeo's omen are perforce lost. Mercutio's interpolation, however, also serves as a portent:

> She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
> In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
> On the forefinger of an alderman,
> Drawn with a team of little atomi
> Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
> . . . .
> This is that very Mab
> That plats the manes of horses in the night,
> And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
> Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
> (1.4.54-58; 1.4.88-91)

Despite her diminution, Queen Mab is a foreboding figure; Mercutio here describes, and perhaps unknowingly invokes, a particularly unpleasant aspect of Robert Graves' White Goddess—of the "Muse, the Mother of All Living, the ancient power of fright and lust—the female spider or the queen-bee whose embrace is death" (24). In explication of this aspect of the White Goddess—that is, of the good and bad Great Mother—Graves cites Poor Tom's exorcism of the Night Mare in *King Lear*:

> Swithold footed thrice the wold,
> He met the nightmare and her ninefold,
> Bid her alight
> And her troth plight,
> And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee! (3.4.106-10, qtd. in Graves 26)

Continuing his description of the Night Mare as "one of the cruellest aspects of the White Goddess" (26), Graves echoes Neumann's lurid descriptions of the pitiless, all-devouring Terrible Mother:

> Her nests, when one comes upon them in dreams, lodged in rock-clefts or the branches of enormous hollow yews, are built of carefully chosen twigs, lined with white horse-hair and the plumage of prophetic birds and littered with the jaw-bones and entrails of poets. The prophet Job said of her: "She dwelleth and abideth upon the rock. Her young ones also suck up blood." (Graves 26)

Denying the overshadowing presence of the *ur*-goddess—of she whose "names and titles are innumerable" (Graves 24)—Romeo cries: "Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace! / thou talk'st of nothing" (1.4.95-6). Suddenly intent upon attending the Capulets' masque, Romeo defies the fearful possibility that

> Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
> Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
> With this night's revels, and expire the term
> Of a despisèd life closed in my breast. (1.4.107-11)

He invokes, as an antidote, the aid of Providence: "But He that hath the steerage of my course / Direct my sail!" (1.4.112-13). As he does so, Romeo ironically echoes Sir Thomas Wyatt's Sonnet XIX, in which Dan Cupid possesses the steerage of the unfortunate lover's course:[17]

> [A]nd eke mine enemy, alas,
> That is my lord, steereth with cruelness;
> And every oar a thought in readiness
> As though that death were light in such a case. (81.3-6)

Whether steered by his crossed stars, directed by the finger of Providence, or lured thither by Queen Mab, Romeo—perhaps a stricken type of Cupid in search of his psyche's Psyche, rather than merely Cupid's victim—is inexorably drawn to the young white goddess who presides over the torch-lighted dance:

> O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
> It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
> As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—
> Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear:
> So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
> As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows. (1.5. 43-48)

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[17] This sonnet, a translation of Petrarch's Rime 189, is entitled in *Tottel's Miscellany* "The lover compareth his state to a ship in perilous storm tossed on the sea." See textual notes in Wyatt (349-50).

References to Wyatt's sonnets in this text are by page and line number.

Juliet's celebrated unearthly paleness indeed resembles that of Graves' White Goddess (or, at least, that of her more positive, anthropomorphic, non-Queen-Mab-like incarnations): "The Goddess is a lovely, slender woman with a hooked nose, deathly pale face, lips red as rowan-berries, startlingly blue eyes and long fair hair"(24). Juliet—failing, unlike Graves' White Goddess, to "suddenly transform herself into sow, mare, bitch, vixen, she-ass, weasel, serpent, owl, she-wolf, tigress, mermaid or loathsome hag" (24)—seems to prefer Romeo's display of sacreligious Christian devotion at their meeting to poetic rituals of orgiastic bloodletting. In his determination to in "touching hers, make blessèd [his] rude hand" (1.5.50), Romeo rashly ignores the dangers of deifying (or, at least, idolizing) Juliet; she becomes the image of a Christian saint, her hand a "holy shrine" (1.5.93), his kisses a profane display of adoration (1.5.92-109). Indeed, Juliet here resembles the positive anima as "the psychopomp who leads the way to the Elysian fields" (Jung, "The Self," *CW* 9.2.30.56), "as prophetess and priestess," as "the archetype of the soul who conceives the Logos. . . She is the inspirer and the inspired, the Virgin Sophia who conceives by the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mother who brings forth the Logos-spirit-son"(Neumann, *Origins* 379). In Romeo's imagination she becomes a type of Neumann's Good Mother whose kiss, like Cordelia's, imparts life-giving transformation:

> The dual Great Goddess as mother and daughter can so transform her original bond with the elementary character as to

> become. . . a spiritual whole in which all heaviness and materiality are transcended. Then she not only forms the earth and heaven of the retort that we call life, and is not only the whirling wheel within it, but is also the supreme essence and distillation to which life in this world can be transformed. (*The Great Mother* 325)

Unfortunately, the bright maiden of the torch-dance also bears a striking resemblance to another pagan goddess—to the Kore, eternal victim-bride of Hades, mistress of the mystery-dance of Eleusis: "It was characteristic of the Eleusinian mystery-dance that at certain stages it turned into a torch-dance," asserts Karl Kerényi ("Kore," *Essays on a Science of Mythology* 196). [18]As in the case of Ophelia and Desdemona, Jung's description of the Kore's fate to some extent mirrors (or, at least, provides a metaphorical context for) Juliet's impending plight: "The maiden's helplessness exposes her to all sorts of *dangers*, for instance of being devoured by reptiles or ritually slaughtered like a beast of sacrifice. Often there are bloody, cruel, and even obscene *orgies* to which the innocent child falls victim. Sometimes it is a true *nekyia*, a descent into Hades and a quest for "the treasure hard to attain." (9.1.184-85.311)

As Romeo departs the Capulets' Eleusinian ritual of fertility and death, Juliet's speech foreshadows her Kore-like "descent into Hades": "My grave is like to be my wedding bed" (1.5.134), she tells her Nurse. Her following words, moreover, emphasize the deadly clash of oppositions inherent in the archetypal *coniunctio*:

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[18] For a description of the Eleusinian mysteries, see Kerényi, "Kore" 188-214.

> My only love sprung from my only hate!
> Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
> Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
> That I must love a loathèd enemy. (1.5.140)

The Chorus emphasizes this intertwining of hated desire and mortality: "Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie, /And young affection gapes to be his heir" (1.5.144-45). Romeo's passion, likewise, seems already to draw him, not only back to Juliet, but down towards the underworld: "Can I go forward when my heart is here? / Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out" (2.1.1-2). Mercutio's conjuring by Venus, Cupid, and Rosaline cannot extricate Romeo from the dark grove where he has once more, like Frazer's doomed priest-king of Nemi, "hid himself among these trees / To be consorted with the humorous night:/ Blind is his love, and best befits the dark" (2.2.30-33). Both lovers, along with their fates, are already inextricably woven together in a nightmarish tapestry of *eros* and *thanatos*; even as their mutual consciousness aspires heavenward toward Sophia and the Good Father, external forces conspire to drag it down into the subterranean realm of Hades, into the grave-pits of the Terrible Mother.

They do not, however, submit immediately to the lunatic embraces of nightmare. In their deification of one another, each illuminates the other with a divine radiance far outshining that of the physical heavens; they make of each other suns to light their darkness. Romeo first exalts Juliet, entreating her to emulate "the sun" which she personifies in an ironic inversion of the Jungian concept of anima as Luna, as inconstant erotic "personification of the unconscious" in opposition to the sun as "symbol of the source of life and the ultimate wholeness of man" (Jung, "Individual Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy," *CW* 12.84.112). Juliet's invoked brilliance destroys the power of the lunar goddess of cyclicity and finitude:

> Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
> Who is already sick and pale with grief
> That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.
> Be not her maid, for she is envious;
> Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
> And none but fools do wear it; cast it off. (2.2.4-9)

Romeo—assuming the role of Luna's votary—again identifies himself with the archetypal feminine, with the Great Mother's realm of seasonal flux, and with Frazer's priest of Diana in Nemi's grove as he begins: "Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I vow, That tips with silver all these fruit tree-tops—" (2.2.107-08). In turn assuming the role of solar goddess, Juliet interrupts, warning Romeo to eschew the changeable, inconstant passion of (usually feminine) Luna: "O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon, / That monthly changes in her circled orb, / Lest that thy love prove likewise variable" (2.2.109-11). She bids him swear, instead, by something far more dangerous than "yonder blessèd moon" (2.2.107) shining upon the fruit-trees of the sacred Nemi-like orchard, at once garden of earthly delights and "place" of "death" (2.2.64), which the lovers briefly inhabit: "Do not swear at all; / Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self, / Which is the god of my idolatry" (2.2.112-14). Yet she also bids him shed, like a serpent's skin, his own identity—his very name, part yet not part of his being:

> O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
> Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
> . . . .
> Romeo, doff thy name,
> And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
> Take all myself. (2.2.33-34; 2.2.47-49)

Precisely what identity does Romeo take on in denying his name, as he again will do in Friar Lawrence's cell following his banishment in act 3, scene 3? Addressing him, the desperate Romeo cries:

> O tell me, Friar, tell me,
> In what vile part of my anatomy
> Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
> The hateful mansion. (3.3.105-08)

Romeo, exchanging the name of the father—as well as, metaphorically, the name of the Great Father—for Juliet's "all myself," takes on the symbolic nature hinted at by his earlier grove-haunting; he becomes the type of a ritual king, the seasonal consort of the White Goddess, the vegetative god whose annual sacrifice cuts short his brief bliss. Frazer, continuing his description of Diana's priest-king stalking about his grove, provides the metaphorical context of Romeo's star-crossed slaying of Tybalt: "He was a priest and a murderer. . . Such was the rule of the sanctuary" (*The Magic Art* 9). At one level, Romeo enacts what Graves asserts to be "the Theme" of poetry and tragedy, becoming the foredoomed consort of the Triple Goddess (that is, of the Great Mother):

> The Theme, briefly, is the antique story... of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the God of the Waxing Year; the central chapters concern the God's losing battle with the God of the Waning Year for love of the capricious and all-powerful Threefold Goddess, their mother, bride, and layer-out. (24)

The dying God, like the Goddess, possesses innumerable interchangeable names.[1] In this case, the hapless deity might well be Dionysus, a sacrificial victim identified with the Kore, god of wine, madness, and intoxication; of trees, spring flowers, corn, and miscellaneous vegetation; and, not incidentally, of classical Greek theatre and of the antique sacrificial rituals which preceded it.[2] As Romeo prepares to depart the orchard, his unhappy goddess, still hoping for a transcendent solar love free from sickness, mutability, and death, ironically identifies their passion's seasonal, mutable, lunar nature:

> This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
> May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
> Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest
> Come to thy heart as that within my breast. (2.2.121-24).

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[1] See Frazer, *The Dying God*, along with *Adonis Attis Osiris Vol.1* and *2*.

[2] Frazer, in *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild Vol. 1* 1-34, examines the mythology of Dionysus. His worship possibly once included the sacrifice and dismemberment of divine kings (24) or other human victims (33-34); later, animals such as bulls and goats served as substitutes.

In *The Scapegoat,* Frazer states that Athenians "associated [dramatic performances] directly with the worship of Dionysus and allowed them to be enacted only during the festivals of the god" (384).

Graves links the rending of Dionysus to the general fate of ritual kings: "The fate of the old king was perhaps. . . the fate of Dionysus at Delphi: to be disrobed and dismembered by his successor and, when the pieces were gathered together, to be secretly buried in a chest with the promise of an eventual glorious resurrection" (292-93).

Juliet's speech, reverberating through the light and darkness of this brief "good night," exemplifies the transcendence of archetypal *coniunctio*: "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, / My love as deep; the more I give to thee/ The more I have, for both are infinite" (2.2.133-35). Nevertheless, as Romeo ominously implies, this "blessèd, blessèd night" (2.2.139) of conscious and unconscious psychic union is endangered by the influence of Queen Mab, the Terrible Mother's midwife: "I am afeard, / Being in night, all this is but a dream, /Too flattering-sweet to be substantial" (139-41). Juliet's final address to her "wanton's bird," moreover, is an ominous reminder that the *coniunctio*'s all-encompassing union is also inclusive of evil and death: "Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing" (2.2.183), she warns Romeo. The peculiar friar who sanctifies this doubly devoted couple's union, entering as "fleckled darkness like a drunkard reels/ From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels" (2.3.3-4) with his basket of poisonous and medicinal remedies—thus usurping the historical role of pagan priestesses, witches, and healers, morally ambiguous dispensers of herbal life and death (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 294-95)—appears to serve Neumann's Great Mother, Gaia of many names, benevolent creatrix and terrible devourer of all, at least as much as he does the Christian God of daylight:

> Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,
> The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
> I must upfill this osier cage of ours
> With baleful weeds and precious-juicèd flowers.

> The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;
> What is her burying grave, that is her womb;
> And from her womb children of divers kind
> We sucking on her natural bosom find[.] (2.3.5-12)

As Friar Lawrence's words indicate, from the Great Mother's bosom spring not only the "blest secrets" and "unpublished virtues of the earth" (*King Lear* 4.15-16) associated with the life-imparting Good Mother. The poisonous tares sown by her antithesis, almost inextricably intermingled with these, recall Neumann's words in *The Great Mother*:

> Just as world, life, nature, and soul have been experienced as a generative and nourishing, protecting and warming Femininity, so their opposites are also perceived in the image of the Feminine; death and destruction, danger and distress, hunger and nakedness, appear as helplessness in the presence of the Dark and Terrible Mother. (149)

Indeed, the same herb—like the good and bad Great Mother, like the experience of the "opposèd kings" (and queens) dueling within the archetypal state of *coniunctio*, like existence in the sublunary temporal realm—is at once potentially beneficial and baleful:

> Within the infant rind of this weak flower
> Poison hath residence, and medicine power:
> For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part,
> Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.
> Two such opposèd kings encamp them still
> In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;
> And where the worser is predominant,
> Full soon the canker death eats up that plant. (2.3.23-30)

Friar Lawrence, despite his hopes that the marriage of Romeo and Juliet will unite the couple's warring houses, fears a dark ending to these nuptials. His foreboding words provide—again—an image of the volatile, perilous nature of the lesser *coniunctio*:

> These violent delights have violent ends,
> And in their triumph die like fire and powder,
> Which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey
> Is loathsome in its own deliciousness,
> And in the taste confounds the appetite. (2.6.9-13)

Oblivious to his and to their own forebodings, the "star-crossed lovers" continue on their collision course toward the fearful celestial consequence hanging above them. Young Dionysus happily climbs the sacrifice-binding "cords" (3.2.34; 3.2.35) of fate to reach the Mab-like "bird's nest" (2.5.73) where the death-dealing type of the White Goddess who is herself foredoomed victim of Hades awaits to devour the sting of his "serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face" (3.2.73). Juliet-Kore, in turn, revels in anticipation of her defloration by "'The Night Sun'" Dionysus (Graves 134) —now himself both a brilliant solar light in darkness and a snow-white god—invoking the archetypally feminine powers of simultaneously "good," "blessèd," and accursed Night: "Come, Night, come, Romeo, come, thou day in night, / For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,/ Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back"(3.2.17-19). Cut into pieces, her Dionysus will fertilize heaven as the god or his representative, torn to pieces and devoured, fecundates the earth:[3]

> Come, gentle Night, come, loving, black-browed Night,
> Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die,
> Take him and cut him out in little stars,
> And he will make the face of heaven so fine
> That all the world will fall in love with night,
> And pay no worship to the garish sun. (3.2.20-25)[4]

It is indeed the nightingale of ill omen, not the lark heralding the brightness of a new day, that pierces "the fearful hollow" (3.5.3) of Romeo's ear as the two part at dawn: "More light and light, more dark and dark our woes!" (3.5.36), he cries. Juliet—his anima, his "soul" (3.5.25)—is now fated to become, not the death-glutted White Goddess, fecund yet impregnable, but the Philomela-like type of the Kore, of the eternal maiden perpetually ravished by Death. Likewise, as Juliet's "ill-divining soul" (3.5.54) intuits, Romeo must likewise fulfill his archetypal destiny by becoming "[a]s one dead in the bottom of a tomb" (3.5.56): "Dry sorrow drinks our blood" (3.5.59), moans Romeo as both approach the regions of Hades and the Terrible Mother.

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[3] Graves quotes Plutarch's *On the Ei at Delphi,* regarding the "Orphic secret doctine" of Dionysus: "'In describing the manifold changes of Dionysus into winds, water, earth, stars and growing plants and animals, they use the riddling expressions 'render asunder' and 'tearing limb from limb.' And they call the god 'Dionysus' or 'Zagreus' (the torn) or 'The Night Sun' or 'The Impartial Giver,' and record various Destructions, Disappearances, Resurrections and Rebirths, which are their mythographic account of how those changes came about'" (134). This is in keeping with Edinger's description of Romeo's (and Juliet's) psychic "dismemberment," as well as suggestive of Romeo's identity as the type of a dying and resurrecting solar or vegetation god.

[4] Julia Kristeva discusses the sadomasochistic (and somehow Graves-like) aspects of the pair's Law-transgressing "solar or blind love" (72), full of "solar" and "nocturnal metaphor" (72): "The shattered, murdered solar metaphor displays Juliet's desire to break up Romeo's body. Within the sombre blindness of such a passion, there nevertheless arises the meaning of another metaphor—the metaphor of Night. As if love drew from two sources, light and darkness, and could maintain its insolent self-confidence only from their alternation—day and night. What is Night?—Woman Night, and it is indeed Juliet who speaks of it; or death Night. . . [F]eminine desire is perhaps more closely umbilicated with death; it may be that the matrical [*sic*] source of life knows how much it is in her power to destroy life (see Lady Macbeth), and moreover it is through the symbolic murder of her own mother that a woman turns herself into a mother" (72-73).

Capulet, addressing the unfortunate Juliet, transforms his daughter into an ironic image of the Petrarchan lover, tempest-tossed victim of Cupid, as he directly echoes Wyatt's Sonnet XIX. Thus Wyatt continues his description of the passenger's torments within Cupid's bark:

> An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
> Of forced sighs and trusty fearfulness.
> A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain
> Hath done the wearied cords great hindrance,
> Wreathed with error and eke with ignorance.
> The stars be hid that led me to this pain.
> Drowned is reason that should me comfort
> And I remain despairing of the port. (81, ll. 7-14)

Capulet's words, moreover, also transform Juliet into the image of "[w]oman as body-vessel" (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 42), of the archetypal feminine as vessel of transformation, as ship of the dead bearing extinct consciousness to unknown regions of rebirth:

> How now, a conduit, girl? What, still in tears?
> Evermore show'ring? In one little body
> Thou counterfeits a bark, a sea, a wind:
> For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
> Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
> Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,
> Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,
> Without a sudden calm, will overset
> Thy tempest-tossèd body. (3.5.129-38)

The weeping Juliet—at once “conduit,” “bark,” “sea” and “wind”— is not only a frail, “tempest-tossèd” boat overset by the psychological horrors engendered by the lesser archetypal *coniunctio* (as well as by that archetype’s interaction with the Capulets’ actions); she embodies the archetype of *coniunctio* itself, recoiling in horror as she faces its raging elements. Moreover, Juliet’s association with watery elements once more identifies her with the depths of the unconscious, with the archetypal Kore who “appears as the *corybant*, *maenad*, or *nymph*” (Jung, “The Psychological Aspects of the Kore” 9.1.184.311). Refusing submission to the Capulets’ decree that she marry Paris, the suddenly insolent feminine vessel provokes the cold Demeter who serves as accessory to her daughter’s intended rape by the County Hades to exclaim: “I would the fool were married to her grave” (3.5.140). Doing so, Lady Capulet calls to mind Jung’s note that the “various tortures and obscenities” visited upon the Kore “are carried out by an ‘Earth Mother’” (“The Psychological Aspects of the Kore” 9.1.184-85.311).

The enraged Capulet, displaying greater skill at Italianate subtleties of torture as he suddenly incarnates the Terrible Father, bids his “mistress minion” (3.5.151), tallow-faced “green-sickness carrion” (3.5.156), prepare her “fine joints” (3.5.153) for violation and metaphorical execution: “Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither” (3.5.155), he concludes.[5] The desperate familial scapegoat again seeks Friar Lawrence's aid. His medicinal and poisonous remedy is in keeping with his identity as priest of the Good and Terrible Mother; the magical potion that he proffers (4.1. 89-120) entombs Juliet, Kore-like, in mock death within the borders of Hades, within the doubtful safety of the earth's womb.[6] Capulet's words emphasize Juliet's complete metamorphosis into the archetypal Kore: "Death lies on her like an untimely frost/ Upon the sweetest flower of all the field" (4.5.28-29). Although neither literally "devoured by reptiles" nor "ritually slaughtered like a beast of sacrifice," Juliet—having escaped the "bloody, cruel, and. . . obscene *orgies*" of her intended marriage through Friar Lawrence's cunning potion—nevertheless undergoes a "true *nekyia*, a descent into Hades and a quest for 'the treasure hard to attain'. . . connected with orgiastic sexual rites" (Jung, "The Psychological Aspects of the Kore" 9.1.184-85.311). Addressing her would-be violator, Capulet continues: "O son, the night before thy wedding day/ Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies, / Flower as she was, deflowerèd by him" (4.5.35-37).

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[5] See textual note: “[A f]lat frame on which traitors were drawn through the streets to execution. . . In his present role as tyrant-father Capulet views Juliet as a traitor” (3.5. n.155, p.

Romeo, meanwhile, dreams of Juliet as a resurrecting Sophia, figuring the anima not only as "the *archetype of life itself*" (Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *CW* 9.1.32.66), but as a soul-guiding "angel of light, a

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152).

[6] Fisch remarks in his discussion of Juliet's Proserpine-like fate: "And of course, in almost parodic obedience to the myth pattern, Juliet will come back to life in the tomb, but only to die again, as the ritual repeats itself" (55).

psychopomp who points the way to the highest meaning" ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" 9.1.29.60):

> I dreamt my lady came and found me dead
> (Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think!)
> And breathed such life with kisses in my lips
> That I revived and was an emperor. (5.1.6-9)[7]

Juliet, in Romeo's psyche, has become the queen of the alchemical *Rosarium philosophorum*—explicated by Jung in "The Psychology of the Transference"—who unites with the king in the alchemical and archetypal *coniunctio.* Thus Jung explains the origins of this archetype:

> The *coniunctio* is an *a priori* image which has always occupied an important place in man's mental development. If we trace this idea back we find it has two sources in alchemy, one Christian, the other pagan. The Christian source is unmistakably the doctrine of Christ and the Church, *sponsus* and *sponsa*, where Christ takes on the role of Sol and the Church that of Luna. The pagan source is on the one hand the *hieros gamos*, on the other the marital union of the mystic with God. ("Psychology of the Transference," *CW* 16.169.355)

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[7] Romeo here echoes (to an extent) Wyatt's Sonnet XXVII:

Unstable dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once or else at least be true.
By tasted sweetness make me not to rue
The sudden loss of thy false feigned grace.
By good respect in such a dangerous case
Thou brought'st not her into this tossing mew
But madest my sprite live my care to renew,
My body in tempest her succour to embrace.
The body dead, the sprite had his desire;
Painless was th'one, th'other in delight.
Why then, alas, did it not keep it right,
Returning to leap into the fire,
And where it was at wish it could not remain?
Such mocks of dreams they turn to deadly pain. (85)

Learning of Juliet's apparent death, Romeo—thus entering the transformative realm of the Terrible Mother, of drunkenness, madness, and deadly poison (Neumann, *The Great Mother* 44-47, 59-60)—purchases a "cordial" (5.1.85) stronger than Friar Lawrence's simulated remedy, seeking a degree of oblivion beyond Dionysiac stupefaction. Forcing his way into the Capulets' tomb, Romeo darkly parodies Neumann's "heroic incest"—that is, "the deliberate, conscious exposure of [the hero of consciousness] to the dangerous influence of the female" (*Origins* 156)—even as he offers himself as victim:

> Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,
> Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,
> Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
> And in despite I'll cram thee with more food. (5.3.45-48)

As he speaks, Romeo directly echoes Neumann's lurid description of the Terrible Mother's chthonic horrors:

> Thus the womb of the earth becomes the deadly devouring maw of the underworld, and beside the fecundated womb and the protecting cave of earth and mountain gapes the abyss of hell, the dark hole of the depths, the devouring womb of the grave and of death, of darkness without light, of nothingness. (*The Great Mother* 149)

Dispatching his rival "flower" of manhood busily strewing flowers upon "the flesh-eating sarcophagus" (*The Great Mother* 150) containing Juliet-Kore's flower-like corpse, her ironic priest-king spares himself the tedium of awaiting his next would-be ritual slaughterer. As he lays Paris "in a triumphant grave"

(5.3.83) beside Juliet, the transfiguring brilliance of her corpse fills the Terrible Mother's womb of putrefaction with transformative divine radiance: "A grave? O no, a lantern, slaughtered youth, / For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes/ This vault a feasting presence full of light" (5.3.84-86), Romeo apostrophizes. Having penetrated the subterranean realm of the Terrible Mother, Romeo offers himself as sacrifice and guardian of his fellow victim—her radiance as yet "not conquered"(5.3.94) by Death—against the ravages of Hades:

> Shall I believe
> That insubstantial Death is amorous,
> And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
> Thee here in dark to be his paramour? (5.3.102-05)

Hades' erstwhile paramour awakes from her Kore-like seasonal slumber only to find her Dionysus dead beside her; Romeo, having crushed his final wine-cup of ego-obliterating "cordial," has sealed his "dateless bargain to engrossing Death" (5.3.115) with a final "righteous kiss" stolen from Juliet's (and Hades') honeyed lips. Drowning—Kore-like—in dark psychic waters, the Blind Cupid of the Capulets' Eleusinian mystery-dance unites with Psyche's "feasting presence full of light." Romeo's foundering ship of consciousness, like Juliet's, cannot withstand the tempest engendered by their lesser *coniunctio*: "Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on / The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!" (5.3.117-18), he cries. His stars hidden, his reason drowned, despairing of the port (Wyatt, XIX ll.12-14), Cupid's Petrarchan victim expires. In vain Friar

Lawrence—suddenly shifting his alliance from Queen Mab to the Christian God—bids the revived Juliet return to the world of conscious day, to the universe governed by Providence:

> Come from that nest
> Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.
> A greater power than we can contradict
> Hath thwarted our intents. (5.3.151-54)

Thus the dying god, transformative vessel of poison clutched in his hand, and his equally dead goddess—dagger ensheathed in her breast—lie together in the earth's "detestable maw" (5.3.45), putrefying morsels for the Terrible Mother's "womb of death" (5.3.45). Defeated conquerors assuming "[t]he form of death" (5.3.246), radiant suns of consciousness enlightening the subterranean vault of the unconscious, their golden images figure the positive aspects of the Transpersonal Self [of the positive—and negative—"God-image" within the human psyche] as "the golden core" (Neumann, *Origins* 414) of the greater *coniunctio*, as "the pearl of great price," "the grain of mustard-seed, the hidden treasure" (Jung, "Gnostic Symbols of the Self" 9.2.221.346) symbolized by the archetypal image of the greater *coniunctio.* "Poor sacrifices" (5.3.304), foredoomed scapegoats whose transgressions ultimately benefit their city-state,[8]

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[8] See Frazer, *The Scapegoat* 224-28, for an analysis of the ritual functions of scapegoats. The victims sometimes underwent mock or actual marriage ceremonies (257-58).

Also see Liebler 148-55; citing Derrida, she argues that the pair serve jointly as *pharmakos* and ironically as *pharmakon* (as both "*remedy*" and "*poison*") (152-54).

Perhaps Romeo and Juliet, like Friar Lawrence's medicinial poisons, serve both the good and bad aims of the Great Mother--or the inscrutable purposes of Providence: "See what a scourge is

Romeo and Juliet—emblems not only of the Transpersonal Self but of the greater *coniunctio*—serve not only as the providential "scourge. . . laid upon [the] hate" (5.3.292) of Capulet and Montague. Despite its temporal destruction from without by the warring societal elements seeking to rend it asunder, the greater, divine *coniunctio* embodied by "Juliet and her Romeo" (5.3.310) persists in its figuration of light in darkness, of psychic wholeness, of consciousness transcending death.

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laid upon your hate, /That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!" (5.3.292-93), exclaims the Prince.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The enduring significance of *Romeo and Juliet*'s achievement is not only that of spiritual transcendence in the face of defeat, physical death, and the threatened obliteration of consciousness; it is also—as Jung's 1922 essay "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" implies—that of correction, of balance. In Jung's view, the societal function of "the artist"—and of art inspired by the collective unconscious— is compensatory:

> Therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. The artist seizes on this image, and in raising it from deepest unconsciousness he brings it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers. (*CW* 15.82-83.130)

Thus, for example, Shakespeare reaches back to the "primordial image" of Juliet as positive anima, as the feminine component of the (albeit lesser) *coniunctio* compensating the "inadequacy and one-sidedness" of Elizabethan conceptions of womanhood. "[T]he secret of great art," according to Jung, lies in the overwhelming power of the collective unconscious, in the artist's "unconscious activation of [a repressed] archetypal image":

> The impact of an archetype [as, for instance, that of the Great Mother] whether it takes the form of immediate experience or is expressed through the spoken word, stirs us because it summons up a voice that is stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in primordial images [archetypes] speaks with a thousand voices; he enthrals and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the [archetypal] idea he is seeking to express [as, for instance, the ego's confrontation with its own human evil personified by the shadow] out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night.
>
> That is the secret of great art, and its effect upon us. The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life. (*CW* 15.82.129-30)

In his 1922 essay, Jung characterizes art as either "*introverted*" or "*extraverted*": "The introverted attitude is characterized by the subject's assertion of his conscious intentions and aims against the demands of the object, whereas the extraverted attitude is characterized by the subject's subordination to the demands which the object makes upon him" (*CW* 15.73.111). An author of realistic fiction would be a writer of introverted literature; a Romantic poet writing in the grip of daemonic frenzy, of extraverted literature. In Jung's essay "Psychology and Literature" (1930), he has revised these categories, defining "one mode of artistic creation *psychological,* and the other *visionary*": "The psychological mode works with materials drawn from man's conscious life—

with crucial experiences, powerful emotions, suffering, passion, the stuff of human fate in general" (*CW* 15.89.139). Again, a writer more or less dealing with the fabric of daily existence—such as, perhaps, Charles Dickens—would exemplify the psychological approach to literature; Byron, Shelley, and Keats, the visionary approach. Continuing, Jung waxes eloquent in the attempt to define visionary literature:

> Here everything is reversed. The experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar. It is something strange that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind, as if it had emerged from the abyss of prehuman ages, or from a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience [of the unconscious] which surpasses man's understanding and to which in his weakness he may easily succumb. . . .
>
> Sublime, pregnant with meaning, yet chilling the blood with its strangeness, it arises from timeless depths; glamourous, daemonic, and grotesque, it bursts asunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form, a terrifying tangle of eternal chaos, a *crimen laesae majestatis humanae* [crime of high treason against humanity]. On the other hand, it can be a revelation whose heights and depths are beyond our fathoming, or a vision of beauty which we can never put into words. . . .
>
> [T]he primordial experiences rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow a glimpse into the unfathomable abyss of [the unconscious,] the unborn and of things yet to be. Is it a vision of other worlds, or of the darknesses of the spirit, or of the primal beginnings of the human psyche? We cannot say that it is any or none of these.
>
> (*CW* 15.90-91.141)

Undoubtedly Shakespeare's material is at one level "psychological," since its tangled plots are "drawn from. . . conscious life." In its portrayal of the contents of the unconscious—in its "glamourous, daemonic, and grotesque" glimpses into the "terrifying tangle of eternal chaos" (thus, into the terrors of Neumann's uroboric state), in its moments of revelatory "beauty which we can never put into words"(suggestive of the realm of the Good Mother, of the Sophia)—Shakespeare's corpus certainly also exemplifies "visionary" literature. Nevertheless—as James Kirsch's account of his conversation with Jung in 1958 makes evident—it is unclear to what extent Jung himself viewed Shakespeare as a visionary artist:

> He made several points in regard to Shakespeare: one that it would be impossible to discover Shakespeare's own individuation in his plays; two, that although one certainly would find all sorts of archetypes and archetypal patterns in his plays, this fact would not contribute very much to the understanding of the phenomenon Shakespeare; and three, that God spoke with Shakespeare and Shakespeare spoke with God. ("*King Lear* as a Play of Redemption" 25)

Jung's words are indeed odd, given the preponderance of "primordial experiences" and "archetypal patterns" in Shakespeare's works; moreover, Jung's assertion "that God spoke with Shakespeare and Shakespeare spoke with God" implies the direct communion of Shakespeare with the Jungian Transpersonal Self, with the God-image within the human psyche. Perhaps Jung was being artfully cryptic. In reply to Kirsch's question concerning the paucity of Jung's references to Shakespeare, Jung replied:

> "Well, we know so little about Shakespeare. We are in no position to know whether he had individuation; we know too little about him.

> We cannot say, for example, whether he realized that he was the greatest playwright of all time. We don't know for sure what he himself experienced or to what extent he knew that the characters in the play represented aspects of his own personality. . . . We know nothing of Shakespeare's state of mind when he wrote his plays or what effect they had on his own consciousness and on the events of his life. It is no accident that the myth arose that other people had written Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare was a typical Renaissance man. . . similar in this respect to Bach, who only at the end of his life realized he was one of the greatest musicians of all times." ("*King Lear*" 25)

Despite Jung's doubts concerning Shakespeare's interior life (and despite his strange dismissal of Shakespeare as "a typical Renaissance man," superbly talented yet self-unaware of his genius), the plays of Shakespeare arguably comprise sufficient evidence of Shakespeare's visionary relation to the archetypal realm and to the unconscious. Thus Matthew A. Fike (for example), in *A Jungian Study of Shakespeare: The Visionary Mode,* asserts that the plays discussed in his work "all illustrate Jung's 'visionary mode' because they relate to the collective unconscious" (12)[1] —that is, they express Jung's archetypal "primordial experiences." As Jung's assertion "that God spoke with Shakespeare and Shakespeare spoke with God" implies, Shakespeare's corpus potentially performs the will of the Transpersonal Self, of the "God-image" within the individual and collective human psyche ("The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," *CW* 9.2.22.42). "[C]onjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking," compensating for “the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the [contemporary] present,” Shakespeare, in the four tragedies analyzed, “ brings [the archetypal feminine] into relation with conscious [masculine] values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted [or reinterpreted] by the minds of his [male] contemporaries [or later critics] according to their powers” (Jung, “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” 15.82-83.130). *King Lear*, in this view, not only dramatizes the tragic folly of an aged king’s self-delusion and fall into psychic chaos. The predatory horrors of the negative archetypal feminine personified by Gonerill and Regan, the brief reunion of Lear with the positive archetypal feminine embodied in Cordelia quickly extinguished in horrific death, also demonstrate the struggles of (Elizabethan, as well as postmodern) masculine consciousness confronted with the polarities of the archetypal feminine. Hamlet, Western hero of consciousness—unable to endure the good and terrible dichotomies embodied in his most wretched mother—in turn destroys Ophelia by projecting the Elizabethan categories of sexualized female evil engendered by Gertrude onto the hapless Kore figure. Such categories are most effectively utilized by Iago upon Othello and his unwitting “cunning whore of Venice,” demonized Desdemona—a sacrificial victim whom contemporary audiences would necessarily find sympathetic. The Capulets’ intended dragging of Juliet upon a hurdle to the altar of forced Eleusinian marriage—a scene doubtless designed to wring tears of pity from the most hardened Elizabethan audiences—is a particularly poignant example of the struggles of the archetypal feminine in the grip of patriarchal oppression. Shakespeare, thus, is indeed performing a compensatory function; identifying with female victims in tragic catharsis, his contemporary (and, arguably, his postmodern) audience moves toward integration with (or, at least, acceptance of) the archetypal feminine. Since the will of the Transpersonal Self is not the purgation of troublesome psychic contents but instead "the possibility of a conscious relation to the [Transpersonal] Self and its wholeness" (Edinger, *Apocalypse* 7), this Jungian goal of psychic integration necessarily conflicts with the goal of Christian consciousness, that of the apocalyptic purgation of evil. As the irrepressible proliferation of the demonized archetypal feminine's avenues of vengeance testifies, neither the exorcism of the shadow nor the integration of the unconscious proceeds without the peril of tragic consequences; thus follows Hamlet's metaphorical crucifixion between the conventions of Elizabethan society, the apocalyptic demands of the Ghost, the will of Christian Providence, and the darkness of his own psyche.

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[1] Fike analyzes *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice,* the *Henriad, Othello*, and *Hamlet* as examples of Jung's "visionary" category of literature. Fike's study, however, does not discuss Neumann's concept of the Great Mother.

As the plots of *King Lear, Hamlet, Othello,* and *Romeo and Juliet* demonstrate, the struggle of early modern literary protagonists—and playwrights—to come to terms with the psychic contents defined by Jungian theory—including the archetypal feminine—is an interminable and equivocal one. As Neumann's account of more recent modernity in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* makes evident, this conflict between masculine consciousness and the feminine unconscious continues unabated. In Neumann's view, (post?)modern "mass man" has achieved not centroversion—that is, the sublimation of the uroboros "with the ego as the center of consciousness and the self as the psychic center [of the unconscious]" (Neumann, *Origins* 439, 287), a state perhaps achieved by Romeo and Juliet (or to some extent, perhaps, by Lear and Cordelia) somewhere beyond death—but a radical disconnection from the archetypal feminine: "In the course of Western development, the essentially positive process of emancipating the ego from the tyranny of the unconscious has become negative" (436). Humanity thus succumbs to possession by "the collective shadow," the "murderous accomplice" of the Terrible Mother:

> This unconscious mass component [that is, the collective shadow] is opposed to consciousness and the world of culture. It resists conscious development, is irrational and emotional, anti-individual and destructive. It corresponds mythologically to the negative aspect of the Great Mother—it is her murderous accomplice, the adversary and man-slaying boar. This negative, unconscious part of the personality is archaic in the most negative sense, for it is the beast-man at bay. . . .
>
> The renegade ego of modern man therefore succumbs to a reactionary mass-mindedness and falls victim to the collective shadow, to the mass man within . . . .
>
> As a result, the ego-sphere of the human and personal is lost. Personality values [such as individual ethics] no longer count, and the supreme achievement of the individual—his behavior as an individual human being—is broken down and replaced by collective modes of behavior. The daemons and archetypes become

> autonomous again, the individual soul is swallowed back by the Terrible Mother, and along with it the experience of the voice and the individual's responsibility before man and God is invalidated. (*Origins* 439-40)

Whether or not the prototype of "the mass man within" existed in Shakespeare's time—whether or not Shakespeare's age was (as his plays would seem to indicate) one exemplifying heroic individual consciousness—the struggles of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists indicate that "the ego-sphere of the human and personal" is, in Elizabethan times as well as in the present, the scene of grave conflict. Although, in Neumann's belief, the age of psychic heroism (at least for the "mass man") is past—"The fabric of the archetypal canon which used to support the average man has given way, and real heroes capable of taking up the struggle for new values are few and far between," he states (439)—the continuing relevance of Shakespeare's visionary corpus to readers and playgoers, along with its infinite capacity for critical reinterpretation, belies this notion. Hamlet, "Western hero of consciousness," still reigns supreme atop the Western literary canon; looking backward to Neumann's heroic age of dragon-slayers defying the First Parents, he looks forward—Janus-like—to the self-absorption and unconsciousness of atomized yet collective "mass man" flailing about in a new age of uroboric chaos. The death-throes of King Lear and Cordelia entangled within the uroboros, the regression of Othello from divine nobility and the transcendent union of archetypal *coniunctio* with Desdemona into murderous rage and disjunction, the ideal union of "Juliet and her Romeo" figuring the archetype of *coniunctio* in defiance of societal hostility and death—these provide, not only "real heroes" for the postmodern era, but potentially examples relevant to "the struggle for new values" as well as for those of old.

Such relevance is not confined to the genre of tragedy; as an archetypal analysis of *Cymbeline*[2]—for instance—might show, "all sorts of archetypes and archetypal patterns" occur in this late Shakespearean tragicomedy as well. As the play begins, Cymbeline—a figure of the Terrible Father resembling wrathful Lear—imprisons Imogen and banishes Posthumus for their offense against his royal persona and inflated ego: "Thou took'st a beggar, would have made my throne/ A seat for baseness" (1.1.143-44), he tells Imogen regarding her secret marriage to Posthumus. His queen the Terrible Stepmother, displaying her usual interest in noxious "drugs" (1.5.4), requests what she believes to be "most poisonous compounds," "the movers of a languishing death" (1.5.8-9), from Doctor Cornelius. Cornelius, well versed (like Friar Lawrence) in the knowledge of good and evil botanical virtues associated with the good and bad Great Mother, not surprisingly provides instead a potion inducing the "show of death" (1.5.40). Iachimo—Iago's less appealing understudy in the role of shadow, of the embodiment of the ego's unacknowledged (usually negative) characteristics)—

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[2] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare,* updated 4th edn., ed. David Bevington (New York: Longman, 1997): 1434-83. Subsequent references appear in this text by act, scene, and line number.

makes of Imogen a simultaneous figure of Desdemona, of Venus, and of the archetypal Kore as flower-like victim ravished by Hades when he likens her to Lucrece:

> Our Tarquin thus
> Did softly press the rushes ere he wakened
> The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,
> How bravely thou becom'st thy bed, fresh lily,
> And whiter than the sheets! (2.2.12-16)

As Iachimo first provides the "corporal sign" (2.4.122) of Imogen's purported adultery, then the secondhand "ocular proof" of Imogen's mole "under her breast—/ Worthy the pressing" (2.4.137-38), Posthumus predictably regresses into an Othello-like cannibalistic, uroboric frenzy: "O, that I had her here, to tear her limbmeal!" (2.4.150), he cries. His faintly sadistic memory of Imogen's chastity ironically calls to mind the image of a rose-like archetypal Kore in the grip of Hades, vainly (in the case of Kore) pleading "forbearance":

> Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained
> And prayed me oft forbearance; did it with
> A pudency so rosy the sweet view on't
> Might well have warmed old Saturn, that I thought her
> As chaste as unsunned snow. (2.5.9-13)

Imogen, like Desdemona in Othello's mind, has become a White Goddess defiled by "yellow Iachimo" (2.5.14) if not by the entire camp: "Perchance [Iachimo] spoke not, but, / Like a full-acorned boar, a German one, /Cried "O!" and mounted" (2.5.15-17), speculates Posthumus. In his overwhelming desire to excise the archetypal feminine from himself, he exclaims: “Could I find out/The woman’s part in me!” (2.5.19-20)

Donning man’s clothing at the behest of Pisanio (3.4.154-80), Imogen as the male page Fidele takes on the identity of the hermaphroditic Jungian child-archetype , an identity which “paves the way for a future change of personality . . . a symbol which unites the [psychic]opposites [of masculine and feminine, light and darkness]; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole” (Jung, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” *CW* 9.1.164.278). Having swallowed Cornelius’ potion (4.2.37-38) earlier given by the Queen to Pisanio, Imogen—like Juliet—now undergoes an Kore-like Eleusinian ritual mock death and entombment within the devouring earth, realm of the Terrible Mother and of Hades: “O sweetest, fairest lily!” cries Guiderius at the sight of the seemingly dead transvestite flower in Arviragus’ arms. As they entomb Imogen-Fidele, the Kore-evoking floral metaphors continue:

> With fairest flowers
> Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
> I’ll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
> The flower that’s like thy face, pale primrose, nor
> The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor
> The leaf of eglantine, whom, not to slander,
> Outsweetened not thy breath. The ruddock would
> With charitable bill—O bill sore shaming
> Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
> Without a monument!—bring thee all this,
> Yea, and furred moss besides, when flowers are none,
> To winter-ground thy corpse. (4.2.220-31)

Belarius, exiting with his sons after their final strewing of flowers, emphasizes the return of Imogen and Cloten to the Great Mother's womb of birth and death: "The ground that gave them first has them again. / Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain" (4.2.292-93). Imogen, mistaking bestial Cloten for the scarcely divine Posthumus, endows the latter with an absurd degree of divinity as she echoes Hamlet's catalogue of his godlike father's attributes: "His foot Mercurial, his Martial thigh, /The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face—/Murder in heaven? How? 'Tis gone"(4.2.313-15). Posthumus, repenting of his commanded murder of Imogen, regrets his earlier demonization of her although still believing her guilty of "wrying but a little" (5.2.5). Resolving to "die / For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life/ Is every breath a death" (5.2.25-27), he begins once more to view Imogen as a positive anima figure (that is, of the feminine soul residing within the Jungian masculine unconscious). Imagining their *coniunctio* in death—or, perhaps, their union in the "O" of uroboric nothingness—Posthumus exclaims as he falls asleep: "O Imogen! / I'll speak to thee in silence" (5.4. 28-29).

In this case, however, the negative archetypal feminine loses the battle; since *Cymbeline* ends in comedy, the *coniunctio* of Posthumus and Imogen does not end in death. Indeed, their union mirrors the newfound general harmony within Jupiter's divinely ordained hierarchy; corresponding to Frye's comic "mythos of spring,"[3] *Cymbeline*'s ritual of mock death and seeming rebirth brings about a kinder, gentler social order. The poisonous Queen personifying the Terrible Mother succumbs to her realm"[w]ith horror, madly dying, like her life, / Which, being cruel to the world, concluded / most cruel to herself" (5.5.31-33). As the play's denouement unfolds before King Cymbeline, Posthumus' transformation of Imogen into a conflation of chaste Diana and the Good Mother is complete: "The temple / of virtue was she, yea, and she herself" (5.5.22-23). Posthumus unintentionally strikes Fidele only to behold Imogen's resurrection as an alchemical queen all too willing to undergo the archetypal mystery of the *coniunctio:* "Why did you throw your wedded lady from you? /Think that you are upon a rock, and now/ Throw me again" (5.5.264-66), Imogen exclaims. Posthumus, in turn—in an ironic reversal of the narrative of the Fall—addresses his positive anima and psychopomp (soul-conductor): "Hang there like fruit, my soul, /Till the tree die!" (266-67). The Soothsayer's interpretation of Jupiter's tablet (5.5.439ff.) promises the triumph of archetypally masculine reason, light, order, and consciousness—as the tragicomedy's comic ending dictates: "And in the temple of great Jupiter / Our peace we'll ratify, seal it with feasts" (5.5.486-

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[3] See Frye 151-73. "In the first place, the movement of comedy is usually a movement from one kind of society to another. At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero, and the moment when this crystallization occurs is the point of resolution in the action, the comic discovery, *anagnorisis* or *cognitio"* (151-52).

87), commands Cymbeline. Nagging doubts concerning the duration of Posthumus' repentant deification of his "soul," along with those concerning the finality of the triumph of Jovian justice or of the efficacy of universal pardon (5.5.426), obscured by the reeking smoke of sacrificial altars, fade away. For the moment, all celebrate the apparent triumph of the Good Father, the defeat of the Terrible Mother's "maw of death." Willingly subjugating itself, the action of the archetypal feminine in *Cymbeline* mollifies the repressive harshness of patriarchal order.

Frye's description of the tragic mythos illustrates the archetypal dichotomy between comic and tragic dramatic modes:

> In comedy the erotic and social affinities of the hero are combined and unified in the final scene; tragedy usually makes love and the social structure irreconcilable and contending forces, a conflict which reduces love to passion and social activity to a forbidding and imperative duty. (204)

Thus—arguably—as this brief analysis of *Cymbeline* demonstrates, the archetypal patterns of tragicomedy and of comedy would tend to conclude with the achievement of archetypal *coniunctio,* or at least the form of it; the archetypal feminine indeed undergoes reconciliation and integration, albeit within the external societal structures of patriarchy. Those of tragedy, with rare exceptions (such as—notably—*Romeo and Juliet*, a tragedy that behaves as a comedy until its midpoint) would end in some degree of disjunction between archetypal masculine and archetypal feminine reflective of the ego's conflict not only with the archetypal feminine, but with the oppressive dictates of its society.

Returning to Neumann, a final *ex cathedra* statement is in order: "The development of consciousness in archetypal stages is a transpersonal fact, a dynamic self-revelation of the psychic structure, which dominates the history of mankind and the individual"(*Origins* xxii). Whether Neumann's narrative is indeed that of the origins and history of consciousness—or whether it, like *The Golden Bough*, "may yet prove to be really a work of literary criticism"— it is evident that the ritualized struggles postulated by Jung, by his disciples, and by archetypal criticism indeed occur in literature. If the grand narrative of Western civilization, or merely of Western literature, is indeed that of the archetypal masculine's heroic subjugation of the archetypal feminine, that struggle is a difficult and potentially fruitless one. As *King Lear* and *Hamlet* demonstrate, the suppression or exorcism of the forces defined as belonging to the archetypal feminine is achieved only briefly and at great price; the candle of consciousness flickers fitfully in the darkness. The integration of the archetypal feminine, as *Othello* and (to an extent) *Romeo and Juliet* demonstrate, is likewise perilous; the possibilities engendered by the Jungian *coniunctio* are simultaneously creative and destructive. Nevertheless, even in the potential absence of grand narratives, the attempt to derive potential truths from the evidence of flickering archetypal shadows— to reconstruct originary light from the prismatic hues of its shattered remains— is all that humanity has. If the feminine (as opposed to the "archetypal feminine"), whatever that might be, is to be incorporated into literature, chaos, darkness, evil, and the unconscious must be confronted as themselves rather than as aspects of a demonized other. So Romeo and Juliet perhaps do, feasting in the chthonic light of their enwombed tomb.

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