

U N D E R S T A N D I N G  
A P O C A L Y P T I C B E H A V I O R S

*A DISCUSSION OF CARL G. JUNG'S PERSPECTIVE  
ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS FOR TERRORISM*



Lecture

by

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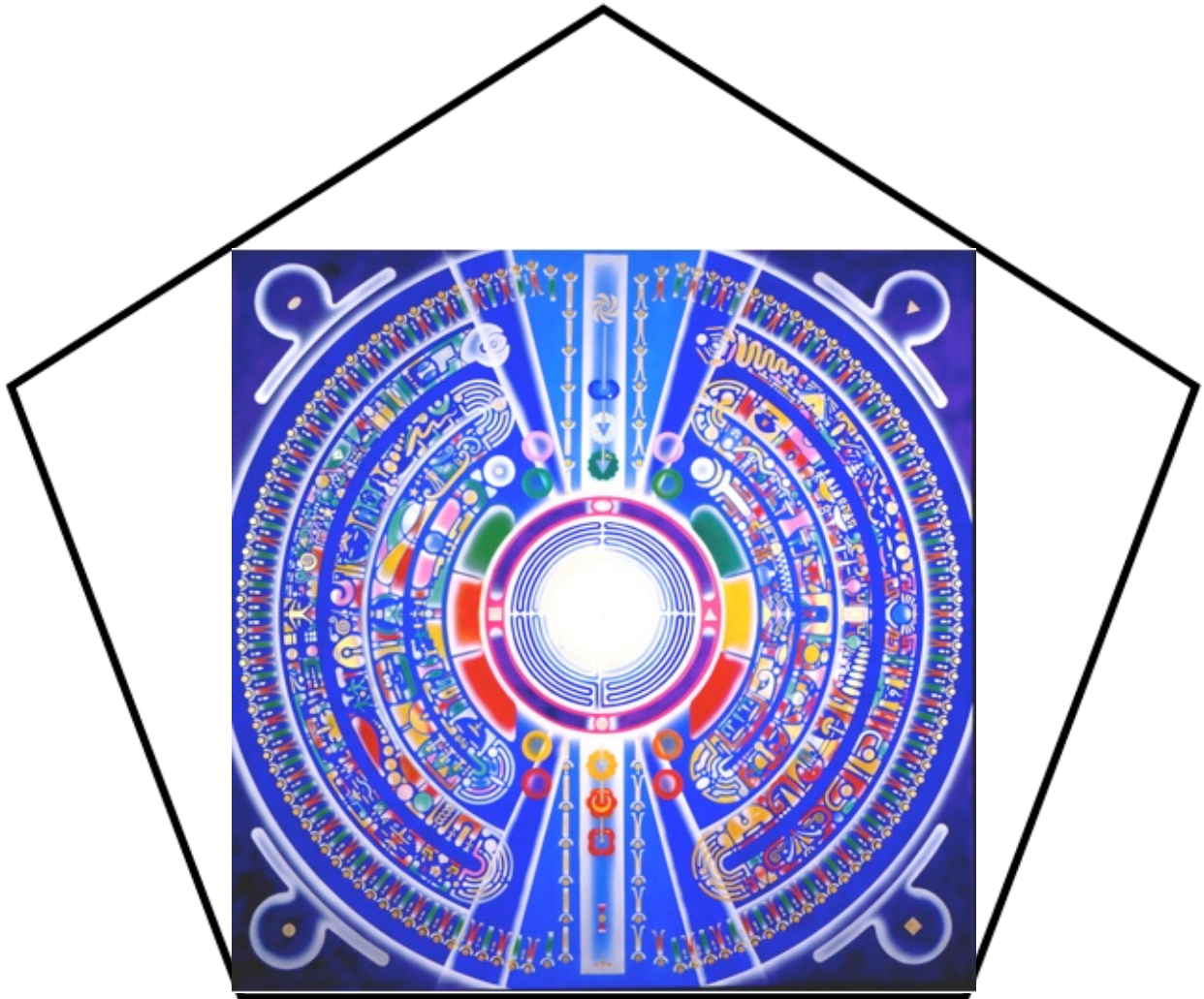
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The Mandala, symbol of the Self in Carl G. Jung's archetypal theory, within a five-sided figure (a pentagon)

*“One thing only can stand against the power of the unconscious and this, paradoxical as it may sound, is the power of individuality.”*

--M.Esther Harding

## Background of Discussion

The events of 9/11 occurred about a year after I published my Master’s thesis. The attacks were frightening enough, but they had another alarming aspect for me. Despite my respect for the intelligence and comprehensiveness of Carl G. Jung’s psychological insights, I did not have a very high opinion of his symbolic predictions, predictions that frankly sounded “far out” to me. After all, who in the modern world (prior to 9/11) cared about pentagons turning into four-sided figures (quaternities)? Or towers being blown up and knocked over? What kind of scientists or mainstream thinkers were interested in such arcane areas as astrology or Tarot (see figure above)? To my mind, these were the kinds of things that concerned uneducated superstitious people. I could appreciate that Jung’s study of these arcana was intended to be an empirical analysis of “psychic projections” (so as to lead him to a better understanding of the objective psyche), but the very subject matter was just too bizarre for my taste. I spent a very thoughtful day on September 12, 2001, allowing the realization to sink in that not only was my country being attacked, but also, from my studies, I had at least some kind of scientific explanation for the apocalyptic motivations of the attackers and even a modicum of understanding for the powerful effect of the symbols involved.

My Master’s thesis focused on the dynamics of individuation and the archetype of the Self (the process by which we as individuals psychologically grow and mature (symbolized in Jung’s theory by the cross)). Without going too deeply into analytical terminology, the exact opposite to the focus of my Master’s study would be the dynamics of how certain “lifting the veil” [αποκαλυψις—uncovering (of the head)] experiences cause de-individuation, and so prompt us to violently self-destruct while destroying those around us. The archetype associated with this explosive process is the archetype of the Apocalypse (an archetype that by its nature cannot readily be represented by a symbol). My talk will discuss what precipitates apocalyptic actions. Some questions that will be raised in my discussion are whether there should be legal limits on the repeated broadcast of certain images; whether a general education in mental hygiene could defuse some of these destructive energies before they reach critical mass; and whether political rhetoric could avoid educing these behaviors if politicians knew the predictable destructive psychic energy that can be set off by certain trigger expressions and images.

## Definitions

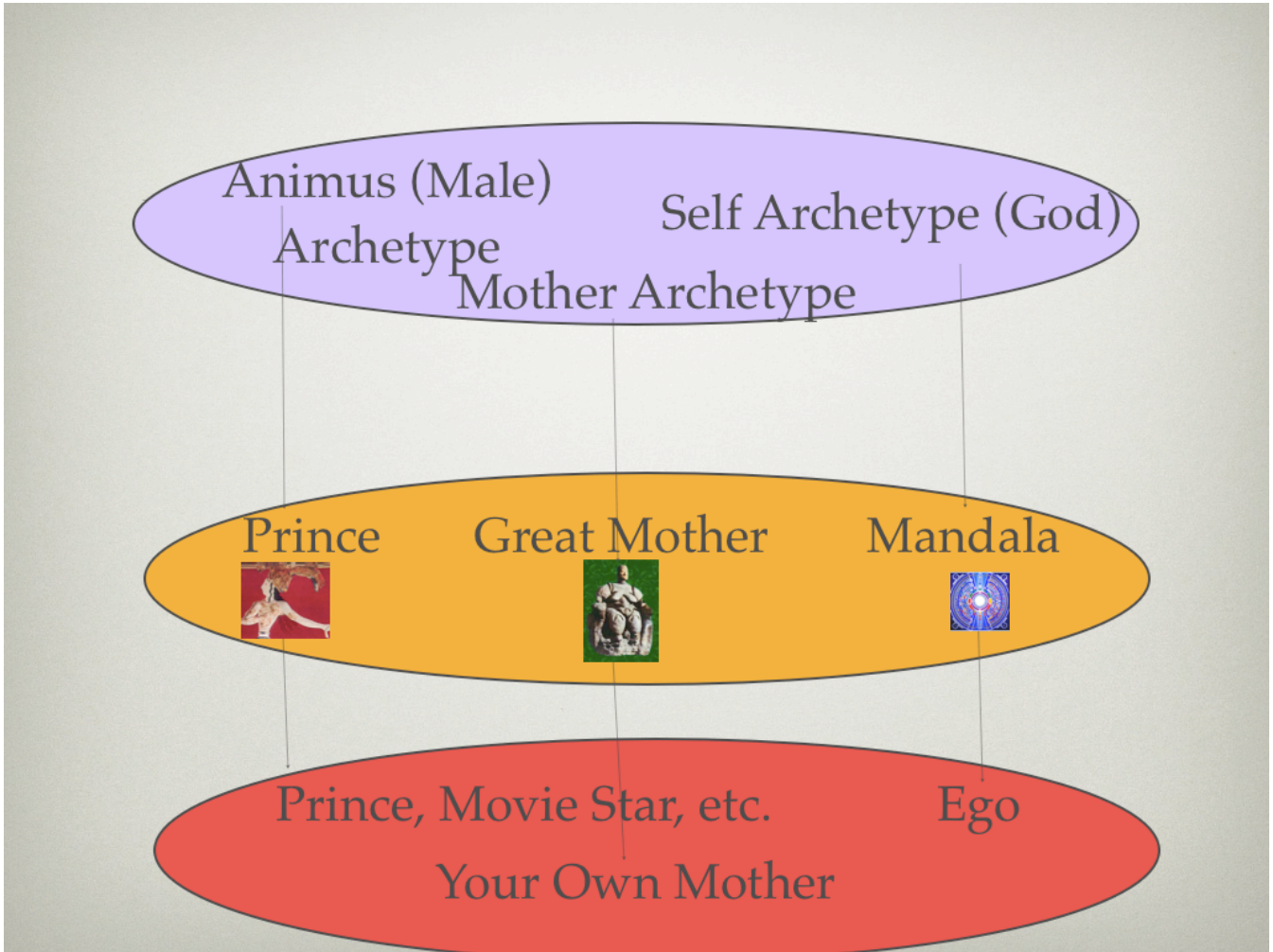
I wrestled with the confused and confusing terms, “terrorist,” and “terrorism.” What are apparently civil wars have been described as terrorism (as, for example, in Chechnya and the British conflict with the IRA). What seem purely criminal acts have also been called terrorism. Moreover, in the U.S. terrorism has now been raised to the status of a nation (one makes military “wars” upon nations, not nouns). All of this puzzlement may be due to the fact that terrorism is most of all psychological, though that aspect seems often ignored: fewer people have died in what are termed terrorist attacks than are killed on the U.S. highways in the course of normal traffic accidents but no one is “terrified” of getting in a car. Obviously, the “terror” is related to the intent to harm, the images of brutal violence (explosions, head-chopping, etc.), and, most of all, the fear of the potential for total nuclear annihilation of countries or, even, the world.

In my coining of the term “apocalyptic behaviors,” I am intentionally attempting to separate what I observe as two kinds of terrorist behaviors. The one, such as the IRA used in Britain, for example, seems clearly a strategy intended for delimited political ends and, as such, is not apocalyptic. The apocalyptic is far more mysterious and is what I am addressing in this lecture. It is also clear to me, however, that whatever this latter kind of terrorism is, it is not isolated to Islamicist or fundamentalist or even always religious causes (but always has religious overtones), and its observable behaviors in the veridical world do not seem to be explicable only by rounding up the usual suspects (socio-economic, political or religious persecution).

Rather, the characteristic atmosphere of such behaviors have a quality that goes past “terror” to something closer to what might occur during a nightmare. For example, most of the activities that make up our normal working days revolve around supporting our lives, and the lives of loved ones; and if suicides happen, they usually can be provisionally explained by psychology (the chemical imbalance of depression, for example). In contrast, immersion in a daytime world where there is the encouraging of suicide by priests and parents, or the local society in general, combined with a general intense murderous hatred toward amorphous “evil,” “super,” “powers,” all makes one feel as though one has inadvertently stepped into the realm of myth, or haplessly fallen into the contents of a bizarre dream.

Many of the characteristics of these behaviors are similar in tone to those described in religious apocalyptic literature, sometimes because the actors are intentionally following proscriptions from religious writings, but in other instances because a powerful leader’s god-like influence seems to evoke unconscious elements, inspiring otherwise normal people to behave in self-destructive and murderous ways (ways which, incidentally, tend to have startling consilience with traditional apocalyptic writings). In using the term “apocalyptic behaviors,” then, I intend to focus on behaviors of these types, ones that have the quality of daytime nightmares, and that have a numinous religious quality in their “feeling-tone.”





A very rudimentary, "map" of Jung's Theory of Archetypes

# Understanding Apocalyptic Behaviors

Once I start talking about Jung's Archetypal Theory, I start feeling a lot like being a tiny Hobbit tasked with the job of saving the whole world from ultimate evil with only a knapsack, a pen and a few fellow sojourners.

To give a very brief summary of what would be Jung's judgment of 9/11: "Terrorism is a manifestation of the psyche."

But what does that mean? I'm not talking about Bin Laden's potty training or his Oedipus complex when I talk about my understanding of terrorism as a manifestation of the psyche. When I speak of "psyche," I'm talking about something most people who have Ph.D.'s in psychology don't learn about at all, even though Depth Psychology is the only area of psychology that has entire shelves of books explaining the behavior we're seeing in our world today: namely, the sudden explosion of terrorist cells all over the planet.

No one else, not Bush, not the TV pundits, not the Brookings Institute, not even the terrorists themselves (maybe especially not them) did much to explain what is happening, or why such terrible events are occurring with increasing regularity and increased destruction in our world, I realized that it was time for me to begin on my journey despite my paltry gear when Bush started talking about Axes of Evil. That's a phrase that's so charged with psychic energy that it obliterates the possibility for understanding. And understanding, it turns out, is almost the only tool we have for dealing with the psyche—but I get ahead of myself.

So what is terrorism? I've said it's a manifestation of the psyche. And psyche, despite everything you may have been taught to ignore about yourself is a real, powerful energy accessed by all human beings. It has laws that govern its power, a history, and most importantly to this lecture, a safety valve which can safely release its energies so that they won't have to be released by driving airplanes into towers, or dropping nuclear bombs. To cut to the chase, that safety valve is consciousness of the objective psyche itself.

One can't ask why the psyche is as it is, anymore than one can ask why gravity works the way it does, or light energy, or any of the other energies we are used to dealing with in the physical world work the way they do. They exist. They act the way they do. We just observe them.

The difference in psychic energy is that we are not used to thinking of psyche as manifesting in the material world autonomously. We're used to thinking of our psyches as little, private, separate, personal energies, if we think of having a psyche at all.

We are not used to the fact that, like forcing steam energy into a piston creates a steam engine that really moves physical objects in the physical world; forcing psychic energy into a container also creates, a real, physical, force, but one that is much more powerful than any Newtonian energy. The objective psyche's raw energy—in the wrong container—can literally blow up the whole world; or, if you prefer, can blow up 3427 people on one bright blue day in September; or, for another example of the psyche's destructive power, can slaughter twenty million people in the path of its terrible eruptions (WWII).

What I'm saying should not come as a completely new idea to most educated people who've studied rudimentary psychology. They know about repression's terrible eruptions into the physical world: the quiet henpecked guy who suffers his wife's disrespect for thirty years, then we find he's "blown a fuse" and put her through a wood-chipper, distributing her body along the highways of Connecticut one dark cold night.<sup>1</sup>

Even some history books talk about the Holocaust as a psychological event, perhaps resulting from Hitler's awful childhood. Or, they see Hitler as consciously using social psychology's principles to control the masses. But I'm not talking about that primitive understanding of psychology's knowledge. For Jung, what Hitler—and World Wars themselves—reveal, are the power of the unconscious possession by the destructive forces of the objective psyche. Twenty-two million people were sucked into that vortex and obliterated! Every person on the whole planet suffered some kind of pain!

What Jung attempts to explain is the how and why of these manifestations of what usually remains in the unconscious, why they explode into the veridical world; and, most importantly, how to keep them from exploding. For example, I think it is obvious by now that just killing the "terrorists," or the Nazi's; or, to use the other sides' terms, to kill all the Jews, or, from the terrorist's side, all the Americans—to just obliterate whatever group defines "evil" for you—this isn't going to get rid of the destructive force. Why? Because the solution is not annihilation of the individual or group who are unconsciously manifesting the psyche's destructive force because it is not those individuals or groups who are responsible (in one sense) for the sudden explosion. As the Pogo comic strip once famously said, "We have met the enemy and he is us." No, I am not talking about the awful hand-wringing self-condemning, almost treasonous, comments by some Americans after 9/11. Eliminate any notion like that from this discussion. What I am talking about is *human* nature, the nature of our psyches, and a nature that Jung, in a sense, mapped out for us just so we would NOT have to go through some of the worst of what appears to be a particular arc of destructive psychic energy coming our way.

One of the most famous Jungian analysts, E.F. Edinger explains that "**Jung is trying to be helpful in attempting to heal what he calls 'the utopian mass psychoses of our time.'**"<sup>2</sup> (Edinger, 1996, p. 21) That psychoses is not what you might think, not necessarily a religious psychoses or a nationalistic psychoses, but a psychoses that is world-wide, a human psychoses that is very strange indeed. We do not seem to want to face the fact that human beings have some very strange inner landscapes. As an obvious example of this, we have known at least since Milgram and Zimbardo did their famous authority and prisoner/guard experiments that people act *quite* bizarrely when given instructions by those they take to be their superiors; and even more bizarrely when put in positions of guarding prisoners. How it is that an institution that spends 440 billion dollars on defense last year did not know what any first year psychology student knows, and so prevent Abu Ghraib? This only underlines my point: we do not want to believe that we have any unconscious elements at all to our make-up. Freud referred to this discomfort--or even serious distress--at recognizing there were parts of us about which we were unaware, as *resistance*.

Though Jung and Freud parted ways early in Jung's investigation of the psyche, I think Jung would definitely agree with that assessment, but not just in the psychiatrist's office: I think he would say *resistance* has become endemic in modern society and will lead it its self-destruction if society as a whole doesn't begin to come to grips with what *is* a very strange inner dynamic of the unconscious.

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<sup>1</sup> Helle Crafts murder in Connecticut.

<sup>2</sup> Edinger, E. F. (1996). *The Aion lectures: exploring the self in C.G. Jung's Aion*. Toronto, CA: Inner City Books.

Jungian theory is very complex and we are going to discuss the most important archetype, the archetype of the Self, but just to quickly gloss over Jung's theory of archetypes--a very long lecture for another day perhaps--Jung discovered these strange archetypal energies through an empirical study. He gave a long list of ordinary words to a large sample of people, noted down when they hesitated, went back the next day and asked them what they were thinking about during the pause: girlfriend, boyfriend, marriage, mother, father, child, death, authority figures, etc. were their answers. He expanded and developed his theory by examining, of all things, astrology: he figured that the stars were a blank slate upon which human beings had been projecting their psyche through the centuries, so by trying to understand the dynamics that were being taught as "astrological truth," he might discover dynamics that were psychologically true. Further, he also studied mythology and, especially, religion, with the same intent of seeing what dynamics seemed to be revealed through these repetitive stories of heroes, death and resurrection, mother love, hatred for the father, attraction to the ideal male, ideal female. (I told you this would be a gloss!)

But what I'm going to talk about today is ONE archetype, that of the Self. And I'm going to talk about it because it is this archetype's dynamics that have to do with apocalyptic behavior. I need to digress just for a moment and explain that one can be possessed by any of the archetypes. This may sound very strange, again the unconscious world is stranger than we know, and--to put it in Jung's terms--stranger than we *can* know completely, something he says human beings really hate about the unconscious (and may be one of the many reasons we resist having a relationship with it). But, we have all met people who are possessed, say, for one example, by the mother archetype. We meet someone who is totally incapable of seeing her child as separate from her and, in a sense, this person's ego is no longer in charge. Nothing matters but the child's welfare. How did this woman get into this state? We will come back to that question.

Or, we've met someone possessed by the eternal boy archetype--not just evincing behaviors that reflect that archetype--we all have known men who have boyish charms--but a person who seems incapable of any ability to distinguish their own ego from the proclivities and joys of a young boy, even though they are adults. I saw such a person just last week on Dr. Phil: a grown man who refused to do any of the normal adult behaviors but acted as though he was ten years' old. We could call him immature or even stupid--and perhaps he is--but the quality I'm trying to expose here is the quality of lack of ego-awareness. It is, like the kids might say, as if he's *doing it on purpose*. He is avoiding looking at what he's doing *with a will*. And so a lot of energy has to be expended by a lot of other people to get him to see what is obvious to everyone else--even exposure on national television might not be enough--but maybe the loss of a job, a wife, children, health, might make him "wake up"--such dynamics of self-awareness (the impact one has on the world) are sometimes required for a person to wake up to, essentially, what was always right in front of their face, and what would have been good for their ego if they'd taken it in small doses all along. (And there is a sense that such a "possessed" person knows this all along, as M. Scott Peck points out in "The People of the Lie," in special cases, it's as if some people are *pretending* not to know what they are doing.) There is a sense in which a person seems to allow this type of possession, sometimes because of a lack of a strong ego to begin with--we'll come back to that--and sometimes, as I say, seemingly on purpose. Either way, the dynamics of the psyche are such that these energies WILL enter ego-consciousness: either the "easy" way (through inner work and self-discipline), or the "hard" way, through physical suffering in the outer world. There are no exceptions. Everyone counts. The bullied kids<sup>3</sup> who seem harmless; the illegitimate child who drops out of school.<sup>4</sup> This dynamic is ruth-

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<sup>3</sup> Harris and Klebold, at Columbine high school in Colorado, U.S.

<sup>4</sup> Adolf Hitler



less in its determination to become realized and humanized, even if that “humanization” is terrible suffering, such as Oedipus tearing his eyes out onstage is Sophocles’ particularly dramatic representation.

What I’ve just described is the dynamics of the more simple--if one can ever call anything simple in Jung’s theory--ways in which we become whole. It is Jung’s contention that that is the purpose of life itself for human beings, to become conscious of all aspects of our nature, to become conscious of nature, and, paradoxically, to become conscious of the fact of our unconsciousness. Becoming conscious of the unconscious and its dynamics will happen whether we want it to or not. It will happen either the hard way, or an easier way, but the truth at the heart of the reason for our existence is that we are here to become aware of the whole range of our existence. If we avoid self-knowledge, then we will get the lesson the hard way--perhaps while sitting on skid row. Or, we can do it the “easier” way, through inner work on the dynamics that are really going on in our entire life, daytime and night. Paying attention to one’s dreams is essential work for this “easier” way. I might add that it might not exactly feel “easy.” But it is “easy” in the same way that giving up a few dollars a week and putting them in a savings account is a lot “easier” in the long run than ending up homeless and starving. Either way, one must face the fact of one’s needy human condition.

# The Self Archetype

Jung says that, “The personality as a total phenomenon does not coincide with the ego” (Jung, 1975f), p. 5) The “Ego...is a profound mystery,” the “center of consciousness.” (Edinger, 1996, p. 22). And I’ve just shown how important it is for our individual lives that we recognize and pay attention to our egos, neither allowing them to inflate (a condition about which we have to be constantly vigilant); nor, allow them to deflate (with the resulting despair and suicide). A kind of balance is necessary for maturity. We see in children and young people a participation mystique that makes it difficult for them to distinguish between a sense of themselves as individuals and the “stuff” that is around them. In a child, we see this as they seem to almost “become” the things with which they play; and in older children, we see them value their ego by the “stuff” that they have, as though their souls were defined by the right kind of tennis shoes. But a, “Keeness of distinction between subject and object is an aspect of the well-developed ego.” (Edinger, 1996, p. 22) Adults, mature adults, no longer *only* value themselves by a particular friend, or the stuff in their house, or the jobs that they have. They have the resilience of an inner sense of themselves that allows them to lose a spouse, deal with job loss, etc. without despairing, even though such life events may be experienced with utter suffering. It is, in a way, that mature adults can go to pieces without falling apart.

It is a commonplace summary of modern culture to talk about its commercialism, but the real problem with consumer-society--a term I despise however apt it may be--is that there is the psychological component that is very similar to the child or the teen, where *adults* are deeply into the participation mystique with the world and all the objects that are in it, and are not developing that keen distinction of ego from object, a phenomenon that Robert Bly addresses in his fascinating book, “The Sibling Society,” but that many people have commented on as an odd youthful quality of today’s adults (see Bloom, 1987).

What happens when an entire *society* resists becoming conscious of its limitedness, and cannot discriminate that the daylight half of its reality is only half the story--when it participates in the world as though it was enmeshed with the daylight objects in the world and no inner life existed at all--is that it will *collectively* be forced to become conscious of its individual reality, its whole self (small s), against its will: “The Self acts upon the ego like an objective occurrence which free will can do very little to alter.” (Jung, 1975f, p. 6) The self is the entire whole of a human being’s reality, of which the ego is only one--very important--part. A simple analogy might be someone who refuses to look both ways before crossing the street: the resulting smash-up will act upon that person against his will. But the refusal to recognize the unconscious is orders of magnitude more destructive.

The term projection is necessary to introduce here. You might recall having what we used to call a “crush” on a teacher or a musician or an actor. The experience is as if one has met something beyond one’s ken, beyond belief, and an emotional rush occurs at just the mention of the person’s name. I might, at this point, suggest Princess Diana as having had that effect on millions of people. Jung says that, “One meets with projections, one does not make them.” (Jung, 1975, p. 9) And I will just say for myself that something like that happened to me. I could not believe how upset I was at her death. But this, Jung would say, is more along the lines of “normal” projection, though through that experience, you might begin to see how powerful these dynamics can be even in their normal interactions with our psyches. There is, however, an abnormal projection that can occur that compounds the intensity of its dynamic. Such a projection might be seen in the reverse direction in Kim Jong-il of North Korea. This man has

projected his ego out so far and for so long, and had his ego-inflation enabled by his military and stronghold on his populace that he has literally identified himself with God. What kind of real world comeuppance will have to happen to wake this man up? Jung says, **"The more projections are thrust in between the subject and the environment, the harder it is for the ego to see through its illusions."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 10) I don't want to think about Jungian dynamics in this regard! But I think I've made my point about projection.

To get back to the Archetype of the Self. It is normal for mature people to face their own "evil" and change their ways, to examine their consciences, or get smacked by their parents, or whatever normal way we balance our egos so that we find what the Buddhists call, "The Middle Way." But it is quite another thing altogether for us to look at "evil" itself. **"To make a person see the shortcomings of his attitude considerably more than mere 'telling' is needed, for more is involved than ordinary common sense can allow. What one is up against here is the kind of fateful misunderstanding which, under ordinary conditions, remains forever inaccessible to insight. It is rather like expecting the average respectable citizen to recognize himself as a criminal."** (Edinger, 1996, p. 19) The unconscious appears to have a quality to it that requires an education in discriminating very difficult symbols and, to make it even more difficult, words are usually not allowed: the unconscious (usually) speaks in images. Jung tells us, however, that as difficult as this job might be--as mere Hobbits we are given world-saving missions to journey to Mordor--we have a traveling companion that will not let us down. Ironically, that companion is our ego-consciousness: **"Ego-consciousness is separated from unconscious and exists in absolute space and time...and so must be anchored in the world of consciousness reinforced by adaptation: attention, conscientiousness, patience, etc."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 25) He gives us further advice for our journey, that, **"The figures of the unconscious must not be psychologized: this is either ineffectual or else merely increases the inflation of the ego."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 24)

As anyone who has been paying attention at all will agree, **"Real moral problems all begin where the penal code leaves off . . ."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 25) The issues that we are facing in our time are utterly drenched in moral decisions of such enormous magnitude that it's no wonder that people prefer to go to Soccer matches than think about these problems. Moreover, Jung warns that we can't solve the moral problem of our age by pure intellect, something we academics would love to be able to do! That is because, **"Psychic phenomenon cannot be grasped in its totality by the intellect, for it consists not only of meaning but also of value, and this depends on the intensity of the accompanying 'feeling-tones.' Hence at least the two 'rational' functions are needed in order to map out anything like a complete diagram of a given psychic content."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 28) **Anyone who wants to achieve the difficult feat of realizing something not only intellectually, but also according to its feeling-value, must for better or worse come to grips with the [opposites which exist in his unconscious]."** (Jung, 1975f, p. 30-31)

## Archetype of the Self



Even those who think Jung might be on to something jump ship here. How in the world can Jesus Christ have anything to do with *science*? And what is a religious symbol doing in the middle of a lecture on the dynamics of the objective psyche? Religion is by its very definition a subjective experience. Well, Jung's reasoning is very sound on this point. He maintains--and I can't see any fault in his logic--that *something* happened to people all over the world in an all-of-the-sudden way that engaged people to such an extent that they were, suddenly, willing to be torn apart by lions rather than deny its existence. Jung is sure that there is an archetype acting on people as we've discussed already, but he begins to see in cultures that there is an overriding archetype, an archetype of archetypes if you will, that seems to have some kind of control of the whole ball of wax. He calls this archetype the Self Archetype, but, because "[Self's] exact nature is impossible for the ego to delineate." (Edinger, 1996, p. 34) and because it is obvious that *something* correlated to the Self archetype went on in the Christian era, Jung decides he might as well accept the Christian symbol. Be aware, however, that, psychologically, Christ is only a half of the archetype. And, interestingly, when people are possessed by *this* archetype, they are willing to die, but not interested (or at least not normally interested) in dragging the whole world down with them. The reason the Christ archetype is so helpful is because it describes exactly how the ego finds itself in an, "Agonizing suspension between irreconcilable opposites." [Edinger, 1975, p. 53]

Edinger, who died before 9/11, said that, "Today humanity, as never before, is split into two apparently irreconcilable halves. The psychological rules says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner opposite, the world must perform act out the conflict and be torn into opposing halves." [Edinger, 1975, p. 53] It is this insight that motivated me to discuss these ideas with you today. Edinger goes on to say that, "The reality Jung is pointing out is so horrible that it has to be denied." [Edinger, 1975, p. 53] This is the resistance that I mentioned at the beginning of my talk today.

## Archetype of the Apocalypse



And so we arrive at the Archetype of the Apocalypse. Jung says, **“The real existence of evil will have to be recognized. This problem can be solved neither by philosophy, nor by economics, nor by politics, but only by the individual human being, via his experience of the living spirit, whose fire descended upon Joachim, one of many, and despite all contemporary misunderstandings, was handed onward into the future.”** [Jung, 1975f, p. 87) This is not to say that this archetype is evil personified. What this archetype is about is extremely difficult to understand not just because of our natural resistance to understanding that which is evil, especially if it is inside *ourselves*. But also because, as I’ve already pointed out, intellectual understanding of this archetype will not lead to any real understanding. One must actually go into Mordor mountain, equipped with nothing but one’s little ego as a life-preserver.

Well, being a normal human being, let me digress before facing this archetype head on, as it were (something we could not do in a group, by the way, each has to find his own way through this particular mission because of the nature of the archetype, it is an individual enterprise to become aware of it). Why now? Why is this archetype emerging now, possessing people in its terrible grip so that they don’t want to die to be a witness to God--as the early Christian martyrs did--they want to *destroy* everyone around them while committing suicide? Well, the simple answer is that this apocalyptic archetype has emerged before. Historically, it emerges when there is a change in the God-image. It is as if the unconscious is demanding a new image be formed and will keep the heat under the fire until such an image emerges.

Prior to Christianity, at least in the West, when the God-image was transforming to that of the Christian symbol, enormous dislocations occurred. But today, as we can certainly see in Europe, the image of what had been held as THE image of God, has been so severely depreciated, that Jung would say that the unconscious is actually demanding some kind of image to be revealed--to “remove the veil” that has been placed *over* the image of the Self, if you will. In Europe for the most part, whatever spiritual value had been carried in the vessel of the Christianity has been more-or-less dumped: Edinger again, **“...As the highest value and supreme dominant in the psychic hierarchy, the God-image is immediately related to, or identical with, the self, and everything that happens to the God-image has an effect on the latter. Any uncertainty about the God-image causes a profound uneasiness in the self, for which reason the question is generally ignored because of its painfulness. But that does not mean that it remains unasked in the unconscious. What is more, it is answered by views and beliefs like materialism, atheism, and similar substitutes, which spread like epidemics. They crop up wherever and whenever one waits in vain for the legitimate answer. The ersatz product represses the real question into the unconscious and destroys the continuity of historical tradition which is the hallmark of civilization. The result is bewilderment and confusion. Christianity has insisted on God’s goodness as a loving Father and has done its best to rob evil of substance. The early Christian prophecy concerning the Antichrist, and certain ideas in late Jewish theology, could have sug-**



gested to us that the Christian answer to the problem of Job omits to mention the corollary, the sinister reality of which is now being demonstrated before our eyes by the splitting of our world: the destruction of the God-image is followed by the annulment of the human personality. Materialistic atheism with its utopian chimeras forms the religion of all those rationalistic movements which delegate the freedom of personality to the masses and thereby extinguish it. The advocates of Christianity squander their energies in the mere preservation of what has come down to them, with no thought of building on to their house and making it roomier. Stagnation in these matters is threatened in the long run with a lethal end." (Edinger, 1975, p. 109)

To continue with Edinger, "The great sociological and individual symptoms of our time -- crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, child abuse, a state of general disorientation -- are all symptoms of the same fact, the destruction of the God-image." The "ultimate task of Jungian analysis: reconstruction of the God-image in the individual." (Edinger, 1975, p. 94)

Well, what do we do with all this? Jung has some ideas. He thinks that, "What was previously missing in the God-image . . . was the human element." (Jung, 1975f, p. 121) The Church "fathers" seemed to focus primarily on Christ as Good, as divine, and any humanness--meaning any sense that he actually was a real human being needing to be touched and loved, for example--seems to have been extirpated over time from the Christian God image and the Christian story. My Master's thesis explores the holes in Jung's theory, but I come to the same conclusion: what is missing in Jung's theory is a theory of inter-personal relations, what appears missing in the God-image too. Jung's theory focuses mainly on the supra-personal relationship between our small selves and the Self. He does, however, have an answer, one that I alluded to at the beginning of this talk: a real understanding of what we are dealing with, a personal integration of the good and evil within one's own psyche, seems to have universal implications in the same way, analogously, that one man on a cross can die for our sins and save the world. But this gets us so far afield of what I can discuss without our reading the more books.

## Waco

Possession by the Archetype  
of the Apocalypse



Let me get back to the 9/11 and those odd symbols that Jung predicted. But, to do that, first let me bring in some earlier real-world examples of the possession by the archetype of the apocalypse. [Summarized, quoted and paraphrased from Edinger, 1999, Appendix I] David Koresh exhibited the behaviors I defined above: ones that have the quality of daytime nightmares, and that have a numinous religious quality in their "feeling-tone." Vernon Howell was the name of the man who, in 1993, caused an international news story in the small town of Waco, Texas. His apocalyptic sect was at war with Federal agents whom he saw as evil. Vernon had a troubled childhood, born in 1959 to a fourteen-year-old mother whom he did not know until he was five. He was raised by his aunt who he thought was his mother until one shocking day his mother arrived unannounced. Keep in mind that, in Jung's theory, when

one misses certain vital childhood relationship experiences it will mean that the person has been deprived of the opportunity to incarnate or personalize those archetypes. A completely missing parent leaves a kind of hole in the psyche through which raw *unmediated* energies of the original archetype can flow. He was sodomized by older boys and brutally bullied. The grandmother belonged to a fundamentalist denomination--The Seventh Day Adventists--that emphasizes the imminent return or "advent" of Christ at the End of the world. The boy studied the Bible intensely.

In his teens and twenties he suffered from a severe compulsion to masturbate accompanied by a profound sense of guilt. Then--and there is no biography to find out what exactly happened--he moved from dissociation from sex drives to an identification with them. He came into contact with a splinter group of Seventh Day Adventists, called the Branch Davidians and satisfied his sexual urges while becoming the charismatic leader of the group. He identifies himself with the Self archetype: he sees himself as God personified. And, then, becomes possessed by the Apocalypse archetype. He was convinced that God had revealed to him total understanding of the Book of Revelation. In fact, he was writing a book on the "Seven Seals," when the armed agents of the ATF invaded his compound. He even agreed to surrender--when he'd finished his book. He'd already become identified with the apocalyptic lamb referred to in that book and had changed his name to Cyrus--the Persian king who had rescued the Israelites from Babylonian captivity.

He required absolute obedience of his followers. And he was able to give brilliant--if crazy--Bible sermons that kept his followers engaged with him. Always, his message was that the end of the world was coming soon.

This, according to Edinger, is key to understanding the archetype: if one is possessed by that archetype? It inevitably leads to catastrophe because catastrophe is built into that archetypal pattern. And so he went to his fiery death at the age of thirty-four, bringing 74 men, women and children with him.

What we are seeing here, and what Jung and Edinger say is the case in all possessions by the archetype of the apocalypse is what happens when there is an unrealized self. What apocalypse means, literally, is not just the "lifting of the veil," but "the coming of the Self." If the Self arrives in an unconscious or primordial form? The process manifests as a paradoxical combination of opposites: it is both savior and beast. And that is how David Koresh behaved, both at the same time.

For Edinger, this man represents a new kind of phenomenon that is quasi-criminal, quasi psychotic due to the possession by the archetype of the Apocalypse. And that means that since a human ego has been bypassed, that the possessed individual is behaving *inhumanly*. It is by that very fact a psychological state that generates charisma with tremendous energy! Further, Edinger implies, that if the ATF agents had been properly informed about this kind of psychic energy they would have been aware of its odd psychic infection: when one is unconscious oneself of the *attraction* that this archetype has for destruction, one finds oneself saying and doing things that will precipitate its manifestation in the world without quite being aware that that is what one is doing. It is as if the archetype were in a collective space sending out its tentacles toward all people everywhere, looking for a weak or inflated ego to permit it to enter. There is a sense to which one can see how the ATF had an odd attraction to the entire Waco scenario. Most of David Koresh's firearms were legal, but there came to be a kind of fascination by the ATF with this group that Jung would explain as a spilling out of the enormous energies of the Archetype of the Apocalypse into the psyches of the police. This may sound implausible--I agree it is not easy to think this way--but *something* very odd happened at Waco, as is described by those who participated: "Despite being informed that the Davidians knew the raid was coming, the ATF commander ordered that the raid go ahead, even though their plan had depended on reaching the compound without the Davidians having been armed." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waco\\_Siege](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waco_Siege)) What was the

rush? Edinger and Jung would say that the collective unconscious, was acting on those agents who were not examining their own actions for motivations that might be less than objective. They did a lot of very odd things, for example, as one witness pointed out, they tried to *disturb Koresh's sleep*, "The point was this - they were trying to have sleep disturbance and they were trying to take someone that they viewed as unstable to start with, and they were trying to drive him crazy. And then they got mad 'cos he does something that they think is irrational!"

We can come back to this during our discussion, but what I promised to bring out at the beginning of this talk is the strange correspondences that I noted between Jung's predictions about the symbols of our age and 9/11. What in the world is this pentagon, quaternity business mean? What do towers symbolize? What kind of psychological compulsions would drive people to exhibit such an intensely destructive behaviors? Going back to Jung's study of the symbolic story, if you will, of what is going on in our unconscious, there is an arc to the story, an arc that is described in astrological literature--and, again, he is not buying astrology, but, rather, looking at what kind of projections the psyche has made onto the blank slate of the stars of the sky, in myths and religions--and the story he sees suggests that there is not a happy ending unless human beings wake up to the very real power that is *behind* what these symbols represent. By the way, Jung's theory is the exact opposite to that of, say, a fundamentalist preacher who insists that there was a physical Noah and a physical Ark--and who ignores the intense symbolic meaning of a story that speaks of the end of the world by water, water being *the* symbol of the unconscious. Such fundamentalism is really an attempt at remaining unconscious and works to de-potentiate awarenesses that are not just religious, but also psychologically important. Remember that the unconscious *only* speaks in images--and it is the process of our daytime lives to analyze, become conscious, of the meanings of those symbols, both intellectually, but, especially, by feeling (what is now called emotional intelligence). It is further posited by Jung that the collective story of human beings is moving away from the previous eon which was the Piscean age symbolized by a fish--and many will already know that a symbol for Jesus is a fish--symbol for the Self, to one of the Water Bearer, the Aquarius symbol. Note that that symbol is also one where water is either contained, or not contained (again, the entire unconscious is almost always symbolized by water). In other words, he points to our age as that which is being given the task of not "fishing" for symbols of the Self in the unconscious anymore, we have integrated that, but an age where we must face the entire unconscious and "contain" it! This is "**The psychological concept of human wholeness**" (Jung, 1951, p. 183) We have integrated the "fish" within ourselves, and, in so doing, have "divine" help within for the now much larger task of containing and becoming conscious of the entire Self archetype--the good, and the "evil" side.

Well, this sends me back to my Hobbit mode! What a project for the individual to contain within himself! But let's look at our current evidence that such a job may indeed be our human purpose. The world is split apart into one "super" "power" who is irrationally seen as the Great Satan--total evil--by a huge swath of the rest of the world, a world that is joyous when even a small part of its power is blown to smithereens. Leaders (who should know better), refer to axes of evil on an almost daily basis it seems. Images of a pentagon being forced into a four-sided figure are impressed upon our *daytime* experiences. Is there something that we are not facing at night? Is there something going on in our collective UNconscious that we don't want to look at that is demanding consciousness? Jung says there is: the symbol of wholeness is represented by a FOUR-sided figure, the mandala you see inside the pentagon figure is as good a symbol of wholeness as any. And what about the tower? Why are there images of towers with burning tops, people jumping out to their deaths, going back to ancient times? Towers are very old symbols of ratiocination. We all know the story of the Tower of Babel. They are symbols of intellectual hubris and the one-sidedness of intellectualism which can miss the very thing in front of its face until it is knocked down and faced with its feeling side. Do I think the Islamicists who clearly were possessed by the Archetype of the Apocalypse are any less responsible personally? Of course not. But by allowing the unmediated archetype to flow through them, they

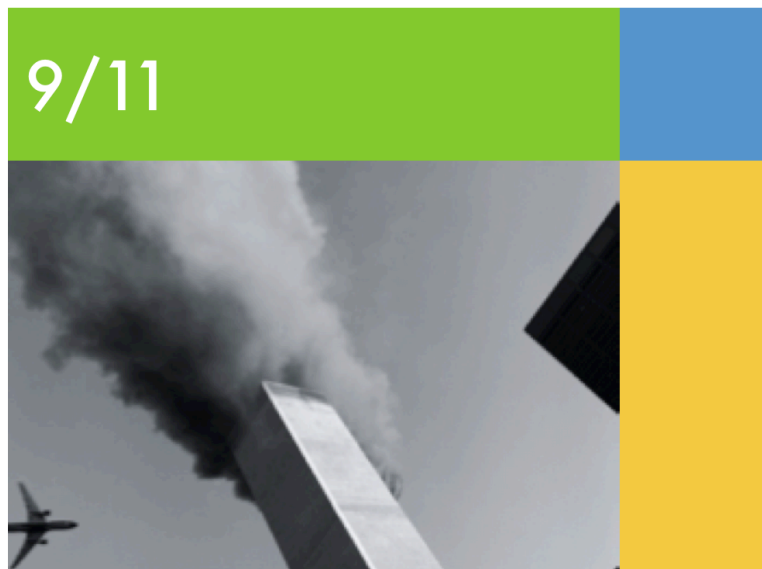
are also, unknowingly, providing us a clue as to how we might avoid the catastrophe that the archetype seems to want to enact. We must become conscious individually, pay attention to our dreams, develop strong, which is to say, humble egos, while, at the same time, becoming aware of the inner human that can make contact with the Self through self-knowledge; especially not allow ourselves the simple-minded projection that evil is “out there” --well, it is--but also “in here.” Jung says, “[Our attainment of consciousness during the Christian era] [is] gravely threatened in our anti-christian age, not only the sociopolitical delusional systems, but above all by the rationalistic hubris which is tearing our consciousness from its transcendent roots and holding before it immanent goals.” (Jung, 1951, p. 221) I leave with you with the final symbol, that of the tower--which always represents the purely rational. And I want to point out to you--because these words were rarely printed or discussed on the news media--the real final words of Todd Beamer of the Flight 93 plane that crashed on 9/11 was not just “Let’s roll,” but: “May Jesus Christ protect us,” after having recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm which includes the following verse:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil: For thou art with me;  
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;  
Thou annointest my head with oil; My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

The fact that these words were not printed in newspapers and almost no one (except his wife) talks about Beamer’s Christianity is one of the most mysterious elements to that particular day for me. Not because I am a Christian--but because those are the facts.

Are we avoiding this subject for some unconscious reason? I don’t know the answer.



## Scientific Considerations

*“ . . . the scientific standpoint falls short in psychology because it is, in the main, intellectual only.” (Jung, 1975, p. 27)*

One empirical principle that Jung discovered in his investigation of the apocalyptic archetype is that the only way to “fight” its intense power is through a concentrated effort by individuals intent upon becoming conscious of, and understanding its dynamics. As strange as this sounds, the attention to the archetype seems to reduce the necessity for its destructive eruption into our physical world. (We see this principle in a less traumatic way, for example, when we avoid doing the work to become conscious of our own unconscious behaviors—permit them to remain unconscious—and suddenly find ourselves “waking up” to a huge argument with our spouse.) As M. Esther Harding says, “One thing only can stand against the power of the unconscious and this, paradoxical as it may sound, is the power of individuality.” I think Jung would say that merely studying his own theories would not be sufficient; but rather the light needs to be directed from every possible perspective through as many individuals as possible in the hopes that one who is capable of understanding such a force in the psyche emerges.

There is a power something akin to Freud’s in the fact that the general public, including law enforcement and the military, do not have basic psychological facts at their disposal. Why do so few of the public seem to know basic psychological facts?

## Practical Considerations

(1) I am interested in studying the cost to our liberal ideas of free speech in an age of terrorism, especially because such a cost remains hazy and unclear. The problem logically appears when one faces the reality that terror itself is a psychological, not a conventional, means of warfare. A relatively unsophisticated understanding of psychology should make it obvious that re-creating repetitive images of terror is, in essence, the means of terrorism. Therefore, the visual media is aiding and abetting the enemy every time it displays terrorist acts. Should their freedom to cover the news—especially images—then be regulated? What is the solution? Is there a guarantee of the free display of images implied in the First Amendment?

(2) A second question is related to the first. Not only do terrorists count on the very principle of freedom that we hold so dear to give them what they need the most to be effective at creating terror, namely, free round-the-clock unmediated (“objective”) television advertising, but they also plant dangerous, powerful, universal apocalyptic symbols directly into the unconscious minds of millions of people by those means. My Master’s thesis is tangentially related to the logical next question: What are the scientifically known consequences of planting such images in the human psyche?

(3) A third area is related to the ineluctable truth that a man becomes that which he meditates upon. Are the general cultural fictional images with which we are entertaining ourselves somehow also contributing to the overall increase in such strange apocalyptic phenomena as we are seeing in the real world, phenomena such as the willingness to commit suicide for one’s cause?



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