

Archetypes, Mythic Imagination, and Modern Society.

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I will begin this paper on the importance of mythic imagination and archetypal psychology for modern society with a brief discussion of the nature and function of the archetypes and how our understanding of them has changed over the centuries. Following this, I will address more specifically the implications of archetypal thinking for a variety of disciplines and its relevance for the global crisis we are currently facing.

According to the understanding that has emerged from Jungian psychology, consciousness research, and scholarly mythological research, archetypes are timeless primordial cosmic principles underlying, informing, and forming the fabric of the material world (Jung 1959). The tendency to interpret the world in terms of archetypal principles first appeared in ancient Greece and was one of the most striking characteristics of Greek philosophy and culture.

As Richard Tarnas pointed out in his sequel to *The Passion of the Western Mind* entitled *Psyche and Cosmos: Intimations of a New World View* (Tarnas 1993), archetypes can be seen from several different perspectives:

1. In Homeric epics they took the form of personified mythological figures, as deities, such as Zeus, Poseidon, Dionysos, Hera, Aphrodite, or Ares.
2. In the philosophy of Plato, they were described as pure metaphysical principles, transcendent Ideas or Forms. They possessed independent existence of their own in a realm not accessible to ordinary human senses. According to him, earthly things partake in the shape or character of these universal Forms or Ideas, but they fall far short of the perfect glory or perfect reality of these transcendent Forms/Ideas (Plato 1961).

3. In modern times, C. G. Jung brought the concept of archetypes into modern psychology, describing them primarily as psychological principles.

The existence of hidden invisible dimensions of reality is an idea that is alien to materialistic science, unless these are material in nature and can be made accessible through the use of devices that extend the range of our senses, such as microscopes, telescopes, or sensors detecting various bands of electromagnetic radiation. In addition, academic and clinical psychiatrists use a very narrow conceptual framework that limits the human psyche to postnatal biography and the Freudian individual unconscious. According to them, the experiences of archetypal beings and realms are not ontologically real; they are figments of human imagination or pathological products of the brain that require treatment by tranquilizing medication.

Modern materialistic science thus joined the centuries old philosophical argument between the *nominalists* and *realists* concerning the ontological nature of archetypes (Plato's Ideas or Forms), a heated debate that had permeated in its many variations the entire history of Western thought. The nominalists saw the archetypes as "names," abstractions from human experience of concrete objects and situations and thus derivatives of the material world. The realists believed that the archetypal world is ontologically real, although not accessible to human senses. Western science dominated by monistic materialism emphatically decided in favor of the nominalists.

The clinical and philosophical work of C. G. Jung radically changed this situation. Jung's analysis of the dreams and symptoms of his clients, as well as his study of world mythology, art, comparative religion, and ritual life of native cultures brought convincing evidence for the existence of the collective unconscious and for ontological reality of the archetypes as its governing principles (Jung 1959). However, Jung's understanding of the nature and function of archetypes changed dramatically in the course of his life. In his early work, he saw them as transindividual but essentially intrapsychic phenomena. He believed that they were hard-wired into the human brain and often compared them with instincts.

It was the observation of a phenomenon that Jung called *synchronicity* that radically changed his perspective on archetypes (Jung 1960). He observed that everyday life often brings striking coincidences that by far transcend any reasonable probability; they should not happen if the universe were governed exclusively by chains of causes and effects. He cited as examples the work of the Austrian biologist Kammerer and Flammarion's story of the rare plum pudding. Moreover, he observed that in many of these coincidences intrapsychic events form meaningful patterns with material reality (Jung's scarab, Campbell's praying mantis, my *When the Impossible Happens*). This would be possible only if archetypes were cosmic organizing principles governing the human psyche, as well as material reality.

Joseph Campbell's comparative studies of mythology brought strong supportive evidence for Jung's understanding of archetypes and represent an important complement to and support for his clinical explorations. Of particular interest in this regard is Campbell's crosscultural study of the archetypal motif of the Hero's Journey that he referred to as "monomyth" because of its universal and ubiquitous nature transcending historical and geographical boundaries. He first described this motif in his 1947 classic *The Hero with A Thousand faces* (Campbell 1968) and later demonstrated how it manifests in a variety of situations including the shamanic initiatory crisis, experiences in rites of passage, mysteries of death and rebirth, and in psychoses.

Additional validation of the ontological reality of archetypes came from psychedelic therapy and powerful non-drug experiential techniques (Grof 1985 and 2000).

Implications of the new understanding:

1. Archetypes in Psychiatry, Psychology, and Psychotherapy:

In the light of the observations from psychedelic therapy and the work with holotropic breathwork, the cartography of the psyche used by academic psychiatry and psychology, which is limited to postnatal biography and to the Freudian individual unconscious, has to be vastly expanded. It has to include the perinatal domain and the transpersonal domain – particularly the collective unconscious with its archetypal dynamics (Grof 1985, 2000). Modern consciousness research has shown that in non-ordinary states archetypes can be directly experienced and bring new information about mythologies of the world unknown to the subject (Jung's example of the chronic psychotic patient – sun making wind with the movements of its penis as in Mithraic mythology).

To illustrate this, I would like to describe one of many situations in which the authenticity of such information could be verified.

It involved one of my clients in Prague, whom I treated for depression and pathological fear of death (*thanatophobia*). In one of his psychedelic sessions, he experienced a powerful sequence of psychospiritual death and rebirth. As the experience was culminating, he had a vision of an ominous entrance into the underworld guarded by a terrifying pig goddess. At this point, he suddenly felt an urgent need to draw a specific geometrical design and asked me to bring him some sheets of paper and drawing utensils. He drew an entire series of complex abstract patterns and he kept impulsively tearing and crumpling these intricate designs as soon as he finished them. He was very dissatisfied with his drawings and was getting increasingly frustrated, because he was not able to 'get it right'.

At that time, I was still under a strong influence of my Freudian training and I tried my best to identify the unconscious motives for this strange behavior by using the method of free associations. We spent much time on this task, but without much success. The entire sequence simply did not make any sense. Eventually, the process moved to other areas and I stopped thinking about this situation. The entire episode had remained for me

completely mysterious until many years later, when I moved to the United States.

During our stay at Esalen, Joseph Campbell frequently conducted workshops there and participated as guest faculty in many of our monthlong seminars. In the middle of the week, he regularly came for dinner in our house, because he became tired of the Esalen menu, which he called “rabbit food.” We had many fascinating discussions over the years, during which I shared with him various observations of obscure archetypal experiences from my work that I was not able to understand. In most instances, Joseph had no difficulties identifying the cultural sources of the symbolism involved.

During one of these discussions, I remembered the above episode and shared it with him. “How fascinating,” said Joseph without any hesitation, “it was clearly the Cosmic Mother Night of Death, the Devouring Mother Goddess of the Malekulans in New Guinea.” He then continued to tell me that the Malekulans believed they would encounter this deity during the Journey of the Dead. She had the form of a frightening female figure with distinct pig features. According to the Malekulan tradition, she sat at the entrance into the underworld and guarded an intricate sacred labyrinthine design.

The Malekulans had an elaborate system of rituals that involved breeding and sacrificing pigs. This complex ritual activity was aimed at overcoming the dependency on their human mothers and eventually on the Devouring Mother Goddess. The Malekulans spent an enormous amount of time practicing the art of the labyrinth drawing, since its mastery was considered essential for a successful journey to the Beyond. Joseph, with his lexical knowledge, was able to solve an important part of this puzzle that I had come across during my research. The remaining question, that even he was not able to answer, was why my client had to encounter specifically this Malekulan deity at that particular time of his therapy. However, the task of mastering the posthumous journey certainly made good sense for somebody whose main symptom was pathological fear of death.

Of the many experiences involving the archetypal world I have myself had in my psychedelic sessions, the most interesting one happened in a session with MDMA.

About fifty minutes into the session, I started experiencing strong activation in the lower part of my body. My pelvis was vibrating as enormous amounts of energy were being released in ecstatic jolts. At one point, this streaming energy swept me along in an intoxicating frenzy into a whirling cosmic vortex of creation and destruction.

In the center of this monstrous hurricane of primordial forces were four giant herculean figures performing what seemed to be the ultimate cosmic saber dance. They had strong Mongolian features with protruding cheekbones, oblique eyes, and clean-shaven heads decorated by large braided ponytails. Whirling around in a frantic dance craze, they were swinging large weapons that looked like scythes or L-shaped scimitars; all four of these combined formed a rapidly rotating swastika.

I intuitively understood that this monumental archetypal scene was related to the beginning of the process of creation and simultaneously to the final stage of the spiritual journey. In the cosmogenetic process (in the movement from the primordial unity to the worlds of plurality) the blades of the scimitars represented the force that is splitting and fragmenting the unified field of cosmic consciousness and creative energy into countless individual units. In relation to spiritual journey, they represented the stage when the seeker's consciousness transcends separation and polarity and reaches the state of original undifferentiated unity. The direction of this process seemed to be related to the clockwise and counterclockwise rotation of the blades. Projected into the material world, this archetypal motif seemed to be related to growth and development (the fertilized egg or seed becoming an organism) or destruction of forms (wars, natural catastrophes, decay).

Then the experience opened up into an unimaginable panorama of scenes of destruction. In these visions, natural disasters, such as volcanic eruptions,

earthquakes, crashing meteors, forest fires, floods and tidal waves, were combined with images of burning cities, entire blocks of collapsing high-rise buildings, mass death, and horror of wars. Heading this wave of total annihilation were four archetypal images of macabre riders symbolizing the end of the world. I realized that these were the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. (pestilence, war, famine, and death). The continuing vibrations and jolts of my pelvis now became synchronized with the movements of this ominous horseback riding and I became I joined the dance, becoming one of them, or possibly all four of them at once, leaving my own identity behind.

Suddenly, there was a rapid change of scenery and I had a vision of the cave from Plato's Republic. In this work, Plato describes a group of people who live chained all of their lives in a cave, facing a blank wall. They watch shadows projected on the wall by things passing in front of the cave entrance. According to Plato, the shadows are as close as the prisoners get to seeing reality. The enlightened philosopher is like a prisoner who is freed from this illusion and comes to understand that the shadows on the wall are illusory, as he can perceive the true form of reality rather than the mere shadows seen by the prisoners. This was followed by profound and convincing realization that the material world of our everyday life is not made of «stuff» but created by cosmic consciousness by infinitely complex and sophisticated orchestration of experiences. It is a divine play that the Hindus call lila, created by cosmic illusion maya.

The final major scene of the session was a magnificent ornate theater stage featuring a parade of personified universal principles, archetypes - cosmic actors, who through a complex interplay create the illusion of the phenomenal world. They were protean personages with many facets, levels, and dimensions of meaning that kept changing their forms in extremely intricate holographic interpenetration as I was observing them. Each of them seemed to represent simultaneously the essence of his or her function and all the concrete

manifestations of this element in the world of matter. There was Maya, the mysterious ethereal principle symbolizing the world illusion; Anima, embodying the eternal Female; a Mars-like personification of war and aggression; the Lovers, representing all the sexual dramas and romances throughout ages; the royal figure of the Ruler; the withdrawn Hermit; the elusive Trickster; and many others. As they were passing across the stage, they bowed in my direction, as if expecting appreciation for the stellar performance in the divine play of the universe.

The work with non-ordinary states of consciousness (their important subgroup that I call “*holotropic*”) has shown beyond any reasonable doubt that archetypal experiences are not erratic products of brain pathology of unknown origin (symptoms of “endogenous psychoses”), but creations of anima mundi emerging into individual consciousness (Grof 2000). It has also revealed the existence of the perinatal domain in the unconscious that contains a unique mixture of fetal and archetypal elements. This has profound theoretical and practical implications for psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy:

- a. Archetypes play an important role in the genesis of emotional and psychosomatic symptoms as part of multilevel dynamic systems that consist of biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal material (COEX systems). Conversely, archetypes can also play an important role in healing and transformation (the extreme being emergence and integration of a demonic archetype)
- b. This is closely related to inner healing intelligence of the psyche (Jung’s individuation process) and healing potential of archetypal figures or cosmic energy that ancient and native cultures see as divine (Apollo of the Greek temple incubation, deities of the Caribbean and South American syncretistic religions – the loa in Voodoo or orishas in Umbanda and Santeria, *pneuma* of the Gnostics, *prana* of Kundalini Yoga, *ntum* of the Kalahari Bushmen, mana of the Polynesians, etc.)

- c. The discovery of the ontological reality of the archetypal realm and the inner healing intelligence supports the concept of “spiritual emergency” (emergence of perinatal and transpersonal material into consciousness) as an alternative to the medical understanding of “endogenous psychoses” as mental diseases, caused by a pathological process (Grof and Grof 1989, Grof and Grof 1991).

2. The Role of Archetypes in Science:

- a. Archetypes play an important role in the genesis of scientific theories and in scientific discoveries. As Phillip Frank has shown in his book *Philosophy of Science* (1957), the source of the basic axiom of a scientific theory or the source of a scientific discovery is often an archetypal motif. In the history of science revolutionary ideas often emerge long before there is sufficient evidence to justify them or support them. Examples are the Ionic philosopher Anaximandros with his protoevolutionary theory suggesting that all life originated in the ocean, Demokritos and Leukippos with their atomic theory of matter, Copernicus and Kepler who drew their inspiration from the solar archetype, Friedrich Kekule inspired by the vision of Uroboros in his discovery of the benzene ring, Einstein’s preoccupation with the unified theory, etc.
- b. There is also increasing awareness of the importance of archetypal patterns in various scientific disciplines: Goethe’s fascination by the building plan of plants, Gregory Bateson’s preoccupation with the “pattern that connects” in nature and with evolutionary theory, Sheldrake’s concept of morphogenetic fields, Ilya Prigogine’s theory of dissipative structures, chaos theory, etc.

3. Archetypes, Religion, and Spirituality:

The discovery that the archetypal world is ontologically real gives legitimacy to the spiritual worldview, spiritual quest, and to religious activity that involves direct experience. It makes it possible to distinguish organized religions based on belief, with

their dogmas, ritualism, moralism, and secular ambitions, from authentic spirituality found in the monastic and mystical branches of religions and in groups emphasizing spiritual practice and direct experience.

Spirituality is based on direct experiences of non-ordinary aspects and dimensions of reality. It does not require a special place or an officially appointed person mediating contact with the divine. The mystics do not need churches or temples. The context in which they experience the sacred dimensions of reality, including their own divinity, are their bodies and nature. And instead of officiating priests, they need a supportive group of fellow seekers or the guidance of a teacher who is more advanced on the inner journey than they are themselves.

Another important distinction to make is the difference between idolatry and mysticism; According to Joseph Campbell (echoing Karlfried Graf Durckheim), “a useful deity (archetypal figure) has to be transparent to the transcendent;” it has to point to the Absolute, but not be mistaken for it. Making the archetypal figure opaque and worshipping it as the ultimate is idolatry; it results in a religion that unites within its radius, but divides the world into rival groups - Christians/pagans, Moslems/infidels, Jews/goyim.

The realization of the ontological reality of the archetypal world validates the ritual and spiritual life of pre-industrial cultures – shamanism, rites of passage, mysteries of death and rebirth, and the great religions and spiritual philosophies of the East and West. Of these, rites of passage are of particular importance for modern society. According to scholars, such as Margaret Mead and Mircea Eliade the fact that the industrial civilization has lost meaningful rites of passage contributes significantly to the ills of modern society, particularly of the young generation – sexual acting out, drug abuse, and violence.

Margaret Mead and Catherine Bateson organized in 1973 a small working conference in Burg Wartenstein in Austria, entitled Ritual, Reconciliation in Change.

Several years ago, Christina's attended a conference, convened by a New York state legislator on the same subject – importance of rites of passage and the possibility of recreating and reinstituting them. Participants discussed the possibility of combining such elements as ropes courses, outward bound, fire walking, and holotropic breathwork (since all native rites of passage involve non-ordinary states of consciousness). the authors of the strategic doctrine refer to members of their community as the “nuclear priesthood,” the first atomic test was called **Trinity** -- the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the male forces of creation. The **scientists** who worked on the **atomic bomb** and witnessed the test described it in the following way: "It was as though we stood at the first day of creation." And **Robert Oppenheimer** thought of Krishna's words to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: "I am become Death, the Shatterer of Worlds."

4. Archetypes and Sociopolitical Movements in History:

Archetypal forces govern not only processes in the individual psyche, but also in the collective psyche, they are forces of history. Medieval knights were asked to sacrifice their lives for Jesus and participate in the Crusades to recover the Holy Land from the Mohammedans. The Bohemian Hussites called themselves “Warriors of God” and sung their powerful chorale “Ye Who Are the Warriors of God” with such intensity that it allegedly wreaked havoc among the enemies they were about to engage and made them flee the battlefield. Hitler used archetypal symbols to influence his followers – the Vedic images of the swastika and the solar eagle, the Thousand Years’ Reich, and the supremacy of the Nordic race.

C. G. Jung noticed that the archetypal motif of Ragnarok (Goetterdaemmerung or Twilight of the Gods) kept appearing in the dreams of his German patients. He concluded that Germany was facing a national catastrophe and that it would be destructive and self-destructive in nature. He also analyzed the archetypal aspects of Hitler and Stalin (Jung 1950) and discussed the political implications of the Wotan archetype for Germany (Jung 1964). Marie-Louise von Franz discussed in her article The Transformed Berserk the importance of the

experience of Nikolas von Flue, the patron saint of Switzerland (his vision of the Wotanic Christ), for the future of her homeland (Franz 1988). James Hillman amassed in his brilliant book *A Terrible Love of War* convincing evidence that war is a formidable archetypal force that has irresistible power over individuals and nations (Hillman 2004).

Ronald Reagan made in his speeches references to the Apocalypse and called the Soviet Union the “Evil Empire.” George Bush called his fight against Moslem terrorists a “crusade”; in turn, Moslem extremists use for political purposes the concept of *jihad*, the Holy War against the infidels, and Moslem terrorists’ expect as reward for their suicidal attacks on infidels the delights of Paradise, including the virginal black-eyed *houris*. Similarly the Japanese kamikaze warriors in the Second World War believed that they sacrificed their life for the living god – “Emperor of Heaven” Hirohito.

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Work with holotropic states of consciousness, with and without psychedelics offers fascinating insights into the archetypal and perinatal roots of war and bloody revolution, The images of violent sociopolitical events typically accompany the reliving of biological birth and appear in very specific connection with the consecutive stages of the birth process (BPMs). Each stage is connected with specific archetypal imagery mixed with corresponding fetal elements (Grof 1985, 2000).

While we are reliving episodes of undisturbed intrauterine existence (BPM I), we typically experience images from human societies where people live in harmony with each other and with nature. The archetypal domain contributes images of paradises and heavens

of various cultures, Disturbing intrauterine memories, such as those of a toxic womb, imminent miscarriage, or attempted abortion, are accompanied by images of human groups living in industrial areas where nature is polluted and spoiled, or in societies with insidious social order and all-pervading paranoia. Corresponding archetypal images feature insidious demons.

Typical archetypal images associated with the onset of delivery are ominous whirlpools, engulfing or constricting monsters (dragon, Leviathan, whale, Tarantula, octopus), or entries into the underworld. Regressive experiences related to the first clinical stage of birth (BPM II), during which the uterus periodically contracts but the cervix is not open, present a very characteristic picture. They portray oppressive and abusive totalitarian societies with closed borders, victimizing their populations, and “choking” personal freedom, such as Czarist or Communist Russia, Hitler's Third Reich, South American dictatorships, and the African Apartheid), or bring specific images of the inmates in Nazi concentration camps and Stalin's Gulag Archipelago. While experiencing these scenes of living hell, we identify exclusively with the victims and feel deep sympathy for the down-trodden and the underdog. Underlying all these is the archetype of hell – extreme physical and emotional suffering that will never end, complete with the images of devils and sinners.

The experiences accompanying reliving of the second clinical stage of delivery (BPM III), when the cervix is dilated and continued contractions propel the fetus through the narrow passage of the birth canal, feature a rich panoply of violent scenes -- bloody wars and revolutions, human or animal slaughter, mutilation, sexual abuse, and murder. These scenes often contain demonic elements and repulsive scatological motifs. Additional frequent concomitants of BPM III are visions of fire - burning cities, launching of rockets, and explosions of nuclear bombs. Here we are not limited to the role of victims, but can participate in three roles - that of the victim, of the aggressor, and of an emotionally involved observer. When the third matrix approaches resolution, the archetypal images feature figures representing death and rebirth, such as Osiris, Dionysus, Quetzalcoatl, Inanna, or Jesus, Phoenix, or deities associated with fire (Moloch, Pele).

The events characterizing the third clinical stage of delivery (BPM IV), the actual moment of birth and the separation from the mother, are typically associated with images of victory in wars and revolutions, liberation of prisoners, and success of collective efforts, such as patriotic or nationalistic movements. At this point, we can also experience visions of triumphant celebrations and parades or of exciting postwar reconstruction. Archetypal motifs that belong here are rainbow spectra, peacock designs, Great Mother Goddesses, and images of deities appearing in light (angelic beings, gandharvas and apsaras, etc.)

In 1975, I described these observations, linking sociopolitical upheavals to stages of biological birth, in *Realms of the Human Unconscious* (Grof 1975). Shortly after its publication, I received a letter from Lloyd de Mause, a New York psychoanalyst and journalist. De Mause is one of the founders of psychohistory, a discipline that applies the findings of depth psychology to history and political science (Mause 1975). Psychohistorians study such issues as the relationship between the childhood history of political leaders and their system of values and process of decision-making, or the influence of child-rearing practices on the nature of revolutions of that particular historical period. Lloyd de Mause was very interested in my findings concerning the trauma of birth and its possible sociopolitical implications, because they provided independent support for his own research.

For some time, de Mause had been studying the psychological aspects of the periods preceding wars and revolutions. It interested him how military leaders succeed in mobilizing masses of peaceful civilians and transforming them practically overnight into killing machines. His approach to this problem was very original and creative. In addition to analysis of traditional historical sources, he drew data of great psychological importance from caricatures, jokes, dreams, personal imagery, slips of the tongue, side comments of speakers, and even doodles and scribbles on the edge of the rough drafts of political documents. By the time he contacted me, he had analyzed in this way seventeen

situations preceding the outbreak of wars and revolutionary upheavals, spanning many centuries since antiquity to most recent times.

He was struck by the extraordinary abundance of figures of speech, metaphors, and images related to biological birth that he found in this material. Military leaders and politicians of all ages describing a critical situation or declaring war typically used terms that equally applied to perinatal distress. They accused the enemy of choking and strangling their people, squeezing the last breath out of their lungs, or constricting them and not giving them enough space to live (Hitler's "Lebensraum"). We could illustrate this by a recent example – Osama bin Laden threatening in his videotape that he would turn United States into a "choking hell."

Equally frequent were allusions to dark caves, tunnels, and confusing labyrinths, dangerous abysses into which one might be pushed, and the threat of engulfment by treacherous quicksand or a terrifying whirlpool. Similarly, the offer of the resolution of the crisis comes in the form of perinatal images. The leader promises to rescue his nation from an ominous labyrinth, to lead it to the light on the other side of the tunnel, and to create a situation where the dangerous aggressor and oppressor will be overcome and everybody will again "breathe freely."

Lloyd de Mause's historical examples at the time included such famous personages as Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Samuel Adams, Kaiser Wilhelm II., Hitler, Khrushchev, and Kennedy. Samuel Adams talking about the American Revolution referred to "the child of Independence now struggling for birth." In 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm stated that "the Monarchy has been seized by the throat and forced to choose between letting itself be strangled and making a last ditch effort to defend itself against attack." During the Cuban missile crisis Khrushchev wrote to Kennedy, pleading that the two nations not "come to a clash, like blind moles battling to death in a tunnel."

Even more explicit was the coded message used by Japanese ambassador Kurusu when he phoned Tokyo to signal that negotiations with Roosevelt had broken down and

that it was all right to go ahead with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He announced that the "birth of the child was imminent" and asked how things were in Japan: "Does it seem as if the child might be born?" The reply was: "Yes, the birth of the child seems imminent." Interestingly, the American intelligence listening in recognized the meaning of the "war-as-birth" code.

Particularly chilling was the use of perinatal language in connection with the explosion of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The airplane was given the name of the pilot's mother, Enola Gay, the atomic bomb itself carried a painted nickname "The Little Boy," and the agreed-upon message sent to Washington as a signal of successful detonation was "The baby was born." It would not be too far-fetched to see the image of a newborn also behind the nickname of the Nagasaki bomb, Fat Man. Since the time of our correspondence, Lloyd de Mause collected many additional historical examples and refined his thesis that the memory of the birth trauma plays an important role as a source of motivation for violent social activity.

The issues related to nuclear warfare are of such relevance that I would like to elaborate on them using the material from a fascinating paper by Carol Cohn entitled "Sex and Death in the Rational World of the Defense Intellectuals" (Cohn 1987). The defense intellectuals (DIs) are civilians who move in and out of government, working sometimes as administrative officials or consultants, sometimes at universities and think tanks. They create the theory that informs and legitimates U.S. nuclear strategic practice - how to manage the arms race, how to deter the use of nuclear weapons, how to fight a nuclear war if the deterrence fails, and how to explain why it is not safe to live without nuclear weapons.

Carol Cohn had attended a two-week summer seminar on nuclear weapons, nuclear strategic doctrine, and arms control. She was so fascinated by what had transpired there that she spent the following year immersed in the almost entirely male world of defense intellectuals (except for secretaries). She collected some extremely interesting facts confirming the perinatal dimension in nuclear warfare. In her fascinating paper, she

mentions eight historical examples, where coded messages and other communications about development and testing of atomic and hydrogen bombs involved references to birth and newborns.

Further support for the pivotal role of the perinatal domain of the unconscious in war psychology can be found in Sam Keen's excellent book *The Faces of the Enemy* (Keen 1988). Keen brought together an outstanding collection of distorted and biased war posters, propaganda cartoons, and caricatures from many historical periods and countries. He demonstrated that the way the enemy is described and portrayed during a war or revolution is a stereotype that shows only minimal variations and has very little to do with the actual characteristics of the country and culture involved.

He was able to divide these images into several archetypal categories according to the prevailing characteristics (e.g., Stranger, Aggressor, Worthy Opponent, Faceless, Enemy of God, Barbarian, Greedy, Criminal, Torturer, Rapist, Death). According to Keen, the alleged images of the enemy are essentially projections of the repressed and unacknowledged shadow aspects of our own unconscious. Although we would certainly find in human history instances of just wars, those who initiate war activities are typically substituting external targets for elements in their own psyches that should be properly faced in personal self-exploration.

Sam Keen's theoretical framework does not specifically include the perinatal domain of the unconscious. However, the analysis of his picture material reveals preponderance of archetypal images that are characteristic of BPM II and BPM III. The enemy is typically depicted as a dangerous octopus, a vicious dragon, a multiheaded hydra, a giant venomous tarantula, or an engulfing Leviathan. Other frequently used symbols include vicious predatory felines or birds, monstrous sharks, and ominous snakes, particularly vipers and boa constrictors. Scenes depicting strangulation or crushing, ominous whirlpools, and treacherous quicksands also abound in pictures from the time of wars, revolutions, and political crises. Juxtaposition of pictures from holotropic states of consciousness that depict perinatal experiences with the historical

pictorial documentation collected by Lloyd de Mause and Sam Keen represents strong evidence for the perinatal and transpersonal roots of human violence.

According to the new insights, provided jointly by observations from consciousness research and the findings of psychohistory, we all carry in our deep unconscious powerful energies and emotions associated with the trauma of birth that we have not adequately mastered and assimilated. The symbolism associated with them is drawn from deep archetypal sources. For some of us, this aspect of our psyche can be completely unconscious, until and unless we embark on some in-depth self-exploration with the use of psychedelics or some powerful experiential techniques of psychotherapy, such as the holotropic breathwork or rebirthing. Others can have varying degrees of awareness of the emotions and physical sensations from the perinatal and transpersonal level of the unconscious.

Activation of this material can lead to serious individual psychopathology, including unmotivated violence. It seems that, for unknown reasons, the awareness of the perinatal elements can increase simultaneously in a large number of people. This creates an atmosphere of general tension, anxiety, and anticipation. The leader is an individual who is under a stronger influence of the perinatal energies than the average person. He also has the ability to disown his unacceptable feelings (the Shadow in Jung's terminology) and to project them on the external situation. The collective discomfort is blamed on the enemy and a military intervention is offered as a solution.

Historical and astrological research of Richard Tarnas threw fascinating new light on de Mause's idea of the collective tension originating in the perinatal unconscious which typically precedes onset of wars and revolutions. In his meticulous explorations, Tarnas recognized the deep correlation between the phenomenology of what I call Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPMs) and astrological archetypes (BPM I and Neptune, BPM II and Saturn, BPM III, and Pluto and BPM IV and Uranus). He also was able to demonstrate throughout human history deep correlations between the periods of wars and revolutions and hard Pluto/Saturn aspects (Tarnas 2006).

5. Search for a New Planetary Myth.

Scholars, such as Arnold Toynbee and Joseph Campbell noticed that all cultures of the past were governed by an underlying myth or a combination of myths. Joseph Campbell often raised the question: “What are the myths that are driving the Western civilization?” He himself emphasized the importance of the Search for the Holy Grail myth in its relation to individualism characterizing Western society. We can also think about the two major myths of the modern era: Paradise Lost vs. Ascent of Man. Equally appropriate seems to be the motif of the Abduction and Rape of the Feminine, Death/Rebirth Struggle, and a variety of others - Faust, Sorcerer’s Apprentice, Frankenstein, Prodigal Son, Tower of Babel, etc.

Joseph Campbell also often asked: what will be the myth of the future and he expressed his hope that it would involve overcoming fragmentation and creating a planetary civilization, where people would live in harmony with others and with nature, benefiting from the astonishing discoveries of science and technology, but using them with wisdom coming from a deep spiritual place (New Atlantis). Achievement of this goal would also involve psychospiritual rebirth and liberation and return of the feminine.

Since we are talking about planetary civilization, I would like to mention a very interesting observation that seems very relevant in this regard. One of the most surprising discoveries in my work with psychedelics and with the holotropic breathwork was the ease with which individuals in holotropic states of consciousness (including myself) transcended historical and geographical boundaries and experienced archetypal figures, motifs, and domains from just about any culture in human history. Over the years, I have myself have experienced in my own psychedelic sessions episodes from many different mythologies and religions of the world – Hindu, Buddhist, Tibetan Buddhist, Moslem, Christian, Egyptian, Shinto, Australian Aborigine, Native American, South American, and others.

This has to be a new phenomenon. Many other cultures had and used powerful mind-altering technologies, including psychedelic plants. Had the collective unconscious in its entirety been as easily accessible for them as it seems to be for modern subjects, we would not have distinct culture-specific mythologies. We have to assume that, for example, the Tibetans experienced primarily Tibetan deities and Huichol Indians in Mexico Huichol deities. There are no descriptions of the Dear Spirit or Grandfather Fire in the Bardo Thodol or those of the Dhyani Buddhas in the Huichol lore.

It seems that this increased accessibility of various domains in the collective unconscious parallels what is happening in the material world. Until the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans did not know anything about the New World and its inhabitants and vice versa. Many human groups in remote parts of the world remained unknown to the rest of the world until the modern era. Tibet was relatively isolated until the Chinese invasion in 1949. Today telephone, short-wave radio stations, television, jet travel, and more recently the Internet have dissolved many of the old boundaries. Let us hope that what is happening in the inner and the outer world are indications that we are moving toward a truly global civilization.

6. Consciousness research, archetypal psychology, and astrology.

The new understanding of the nature and function of the archetypes that has emerged from the study of holotropic states of consciousness has important implications for the field of astrology. On the one hand, it brings strong supportive evidence for the worldview underlying astrology (Grof 2009), on the other hand it opens new exciting perspectives for psychiatry, psychology, and a broad range of other disciplines. This is a complex topic that has to be reserved for another time and place.

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