

Jesus' Healing Feminine Aspects and the Archetype of the Self

**by
Leonard W. Lane**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology

Pacifica Graduate Institute

15 May 2013

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I certify that I have read this paper and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a product for the degree of Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology.

Cynthia Anne Hale, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor

On behalf of the thesis committee, I accept this paper as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology.

Tina Panteleakos, Ph.D.
Research Associate

On behalf of the Counseling Psychology program, I accept this paper as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology.

Avrom Altman, M.A., L.M.F.T., L.P.C.
Director of Research

Abstract

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This thesis asks the research question, “What qualities found in the life and teachings of Jesus are important in the healing process of psychotherapy?” It examines the correlation among the feminine qualities of Jesus, his example as an archetype of the Self, the feminine aspects of the scriptural wisdom literature, and how those elements at play in Jesus' life and teachings inform the psychotherapeutic healing process from a feminist, depth psychological perspective. Using a hermeneutic methodology, the research explores Jung's theory of Christ and the archetype of the Self and the work of various scriptural scholars and depth psychologists that focus on the feminine aspects of Jesus' personality and creation. Depth psychological techniques such as active imagination and symbol analysis are used to amplify the feminine as embodied in the life of Christ. Clinical applications are provided within the context of my own psychological and theological training.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the following people who have assisted in this journey, without whom it would not have happened: Martha Feng, Joni Lavick, and all of my Counseling West colleagues and supervisors. And also thanks to: The Revs, Jerry Anderson, Zelda Kennedy, Karen McQueen, and Carolyn Wilkins.

Also special thanks to my close friends Max Miller and Betty Simmons, with special thanks to a dear soul Candace Shivers Morgan, a true saint. I learned from her how one needs to love oneself so one can love others.

To my adopted family Adolfo, Maryanne, Julia, and Vito Calles.

I want to say a special thank you to Cynthia Hale, Ph.D., who is Director of Institutional Learning at Pacifica, and also my thesis advisor. She never wavered these last 2 years in the belief that I can do this. And to Liza Gerberding, my editor, without whom this thing would not have happened. We are editing at the open window, California sunlight streaming in, looking at the Hollywood sign up the street.

I want to acknowledge my own personal therapist, Glenn Goveia, M.F.T., who has been with me in this process since my first year at Pacifica.

I give special thanks and gratitude to Debra “Padmini” Bergman, former classmate in our cohort at Pacifica, and now roommate for the last 2 years. Each day she would ask me, “How much did you do today on your thesis?”

For my friend His Holiness Mahamandalesshwar Swarupananda Vishnua Guru Marahaj Swami-ji, clinical psychologist and Hindu swami, who has laser-like insight and intuition.

Special thanks to Penny Giles, keeper of the soul at the Pasadena Public Library, who said to me when I thought about going to Pacifica, “We’ll make it work,” for always believing.

To my friend Robin Lim Healy, who understands.

Finally, thanks to Michael Koth, a soulmate of numerous lifetimes and catalyst for this endeavor. Thank you for asking the right questions and for being.

Dedication

I am dedicating this thesis to my late parents, my father Leonard W. Lane, Senior, and my mother Bertha Margaret Alderson Lane. I thank them for their love and tenacity and all of the lessons learned, without which my life would not have led me here to Pacifica.

I also dedicate this thesis to my deceased grandmother, Mary Ellen Grey Alderson, an amazing, loving, nurturing Irish grandmother, who taught me about the “thin places” by the time I could walk.

This thesis is also in honor of the Rev. Alvin Van Pelt Hart, an Episcopal priest and certified Jungian analyst who studied with Carl Jung at the Zurich Institute. Al was my Clinical Pastoral Education Director at Saint Luke’s/Roosevelt Hospital in New York City when I was in seminary as an intern chaplain. It was a profound experience really being with people in an authentic way, being with the sick and also with the dying. Having Al as a spiritual mentor and also in the LGBT community, assisted in my own internal grace as I discovered my own imago dei. How often I hear his voice giving me advice and counsel.

Finally my friend Suzanne Malloch, friend and soulmate from the time I was seminarian in training at Church of the Ascension, 5th Avenue, New York City. Suzanne was a breath of fresh air, a beacon of brilliance, intuitive insight, understated elegance, with an uproarious and ribald sense of humor.

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Chapter I Introduction

Introduction

In this thesis, I explore Jesus as an archetype of the Self by examining the life and teachings of Jesus through a depth psychological lens. Analytical psychology founder C. G. Jung (1944/1993) wrote that as a symbol, Jesus as the Christ “is of the greatest psychological importance in so far as it is perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the self, apart from the figure of the Buddha” (p. 557). My research question asks: What qualities found in the life and teachings of Jesus are important in the healing process of psychotherapy? This research question grows out of Jung’s assertion that the real meaning of Christ, the central figure of Christianity, is the symbol of the Self. Jung’s (1951/1968) work in this area was the result of dreams he had during an illness and was put forth in *Aion*, a lengthy treatment of the Christ/Self relationship that integrates religion and analytical psychology.

To answer this question, I explore Jung’s view of Jesus as an example of a highly individuated person. Jung described this as a balance of the masculine and feminine, and related it to a person’s outlook in terms of soul. In *Aion*, Jung (1951/1968) described his research of the phenomenology of the Self by focusing on Christ’s relationship to the feminine via the *anima* and the *animus*, “the inner figure of woman held by a man and the guise of man at work in a woman’s psyche” (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 23). Jung (1951/1968) was interested in the archetypes constellated within the historical

person of Christ and how they might manifest themselves. Jung believed that the experience of the Self is equivalent to the God-image: “*Imago Dei*, imprinted on the soul, not on the body, is an image of an image, ‘for my soul is not directly the image of God, but is made after the likeness of the former image’” (p. 37 [*CW* 9ii, para. 70]). In the next section, I review definitions of various Jungian terms in order to provide a clearer understanding of several ideas explored in this thesis.

Definition of Terms

Depth psychology. In describing its graduate programs in depth psychology, Pacifica Graduate Institute (2013) explained on its website that *depth psychology* calls attention to “what lies below the surface of conscious awareness. This dimension of psychic reality is revealed in literature, the expressive arts of different cultures, dreams, and in the collective symptoms suffered by individuals and society” (paras. 1-3). It is also understood as a process of listening deeply and collecting information from the soul. The roots of depth psychology lie in the theories of Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung, who focused on the phenomena of the unconscious (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 43). Depth psychology seeks an integration of the conscious and unconscious mind. Jung postulated that all of humanity has its unconsciousness divided into personal and collective. The *personal unconscious* is filled with repressed memories, trauma, and the experiences of life. The *collective unconscious* is a more objective repository, “directly related to the phylogenetic, instinctual bases of the human race” (p. 155). In the collective unconscious are stored religious, spiritual, and mythological patterns that reflect archetypal processes.

Archetype of the Self. In Jungian psychology, *archetypes* are “inherited part[s] of the psyche; structuring patterns of psychological performance linked to instinct; [and]

a hypothetical entity irrepresentable in itself and evident only through its manifestations” (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 26). The Self is a key archetype in Jungian thought.

The organizing center from which the regulatory effects stems seems to be a sort of “nuclear atom” in our psychic system. . . . Jung called this center the “Self” and described it as the totality of the whole psyche, in order to distinguish it from the “ego,” which constitutes only a small part of the total psyche. (Franz, 1964, pp. 161-162)

Jung used the image of the circle to symbolize the Self. Jung saw the personality as having two centers.

The ego is the center of consciousness; the Self is the center of the total personality, which includes consciousness, the unconscious, *and* the ego. The Self is both the whole and the center. The ego is a self-contained little circle off the center, but contained within the whole. (Sanford, as cited in Miller, 1991, p. 24)

Individuation is a key concept defined by Jung as “a person’s becoming himself, whole, indivisible and distinct from other people of collective psychology” (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 76).

Gnosticism. The word *gnostic* comes from the word *gnostikos* in Greek, which means “of, relating to, or characterized by knowledge or cognition” (“Gnostic,” 1993, p. 971). Gnosticism developed in the early Christian period (Hoeller, 1982). Gnostics believed matter was evil and that one must have knowledge in order to create internal liberation for the spirit. The Gnostics focused on introspection; they meditated in order to access the unconscious. Gnostics were not judgmental regarding personal behavior and through their teachings assisted followers in separating from the body as material while focusing on the internal spiritual nature. Jung was interested in the Gnostics’ relationship to the unconscious. Gnostic scholar Stephan A. Hoeller wrote that “Jung saw his work as a contemporary counterpart to Gnosticism” (p. 20).

Sophia. The word *Sophia* is a translation from ancient Greek meaning wisdom (Hoeller, 2002). The idea of Sophia as a representation of wisdom is a central part of Platonism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and mysticism. Sophia is mentioned in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible, in Proverbs 9:1. She was also a Gnostic goddess (Barger, 2007; Ulanov, 1971). Jesus alluded to the pronoun *her* and therefore to Sophia in the Gospel of Matthew 11:19 (New Revised Standard Version): “Wisdom is justified by her children.” The apostle Paul also alluded to Sophia as the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians: “The wisdom of God is a mystery.”

Consciousness and the unconscious. *Consciousness* is an important conceptualization for the understanding of Jung’s psychology. *Consciousness* and the *unconscious* are the prime opposites in psychic life (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 36). Consciousness is what provides the relationship of psychic contents and the ego. According to Jungian analysts Andrews Samuels, Bani Shorter, and Fred Plaut, “Consciousness begins with control of the instincts, enabling man to adapt in an orderly way” (p. 37). However, strict control of “natural and instinctive behaviors can have dangers, leading to a one-sided consciousness out of touch with darker and more irrational components” (p. 37). If these shadow aspects are split off, as Jung believed they were in Western people, they became “autonomous and uncontrollable, asserting [themselves] negatively from the recesses of the shadow” (p. 37). Jung saw this split in the neurosis of his own patients and in the collective as a whole (p. 37). Thus, Jung’s psychological emphasis on the process of individuation with regard to consciousness was described as a psychological process in the movement from the ego to the Self.

Guiding Purpose

The thesis question I present asks about Jesus' qualities that might apply to the healing process of psychotherapy. This exploration of Jesus' feminine qualities begins with the description of Jesus in Jung's (1951/1968) assertion that Jesus is a highly developed and integrated archetype of the Self. Several stories and parables are used to exemplify and deepen awareness of Jesus' manifestation of feminine qualities, including Jesus' personification of the role of mother in both words and actions. Rather than looking at the historical Jesus as a political reformer or liberating redeemer, I examine how Jesus can be seen in a different light through his relationship with Sophia, the feminine representation of the wisdom of God, as suggested by some of the descriptive definitions of Sophia as documented in the last section.

Various depth psychological and theological sources will be examined that cover the central themes of this thesis. One is that Sophia is the image of feminine wisdom, "the mother at the highest spiritual stage . . . from which flows 'the spirit-nourishing central wisdom of feeling, not the upper wisdom of the head'" (Ulanov, 1971, p. 190). Sophia is the Great Mother who births the child Jesus into his beingness. In a Jungian sense, the wisdom image as anima is a "feminine complement of the God-image itself" (Franz, 1966/2000, p. 159).

A primary focus of this thesis is Jesus' deep connection to Sophia. "Jesus, the Logos of the Father, in being united with the earth in his death . . . united first of all with *mater*, Mother Earth, who is also Sophia, the divine Wisdom" (Slusser, 1986, p. 123). In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus indicated that in order to attain eternal life, one must be reborn of water and spirit. "Water is a clear symbol for the Mother and she, as

the *fons et origo*, the universal congress of potentialities, is also connected in symbol with the unconscious” (p 123). Mother earth and mother water are essential components of a rebirth or individuation process that is embodied in Jesus’ relational approach, which may be applied to contemporary psychotherapy. Water represents baptism, which is a metaphor about death and rebirth similar to the individuation process. Water also represents feminine energy in the image of giving birth, not unlike Sophia’s relationship to Jesus. These images represent the feminine characteristics of Jesus, which are important in the healing process of psychotherapy.

Another focus of this thesis is Jesus’ feminine qualities and proclivities. I explore the idea that Jesus did not shy away from the image of God as a woman (Swidler, 2007, p. 53). Jesus’ relationships with women are explored within the context of the social setting of his day (Johnson, 1992; Kam, 1995; Ulanov, 1971). Viewing his appearance and manner as feminist and as androgynous further supports the idea of Jesus as an integrated human in Jungian terms (Swidler, 2007, p. 15). I also consider how other authors explore sexuality and gender in relation to the image, being, and awareness of Jesus, which challenges ancient notions about Jesus’ gender and masculine and feminine roles, including “a view of an erotic union between believers and Jesus himself” (Fogleman, 2007, p. 79).

This thesis also explores works that ignite a clinical discussion about the relationship of Jesus’ feminine qualities to the healing process in psychotherapy and in the therapeutic relationship, which may have an impact on client and therapist (Sullivan, 1989). Other examples of what might be termed Jesus’ clinical, therapeutic work show Jesus’ radical appreciation of and engagement with women (Sanford, 1970).

Methodology

I am using a hermeneutic methodological approach, comparing and contrasting various works of literature to explore the research question. One source that has enhanced the research as well as my own personal growth is *The Wounded Researcher*, by depth psychologist Robert Romanyshyn (2007). In reading this book, one becomes aware that the research question searches for the researcher and the language used in the process. What I have found valuable in my own process is how Romanyshyn demands that I use my creative instincts and imaginal processes in the research journey. Before my graduate studies at Pacifica, I had experienced research in past academic programs as plowing through a host of uninteresting material only to compile it in some arbitrary form that is somehow readable in an academic context. Romanyshyn helped me in opening the windows of my soul as the essential quest through research.

From my perspective, the word *wounded* as part of this research process presented and continues to present the greatest challenge, and has shifted my research paradigm. Romanyshyn (2007) wrote, “The work comes through the wounding” (p. 111). I am allowed to bring my wounding and lived experience as well as personal subjectivity to the creative and imaginal process of research. The research is an integral part of my healing process, creating more authentic and human space for the research format, including a whole gamut of feelings and emotions. For me, the most radical aspect of being a wounded researcher is described in Romanyshyn’s book as “Recovering the Soul of Method” (p. 205). The method enables my soul’s recovery from the wounding, or as Romanyshyn (2007) wrote about this process of mutual gain, “The work hungers to be fed . . . by soul” (p. 224).

Thesis Overview

The following chapters of this thesis examine Jesus as a highly developed archetype of the Self, Jesus' feminine qualities, and how these aspects of Jesus might contribute to a more feminist approach to the process of psychotherapy. Using a hermeneutic methodology, I include in Chapter II a basic foundation built upon Jung's theories and I then include the work of scriptural scholars, theologians, and psychologists that I reviewed in my research process. There has been no specific research done on the relationship of particular feminine qualities of Jesus as an example of the archetype of the Self and the psychotherapeutic healing process from a feminist depth perspective. In Chapter III, I explore the findings of my research and how they relate to clinical applications in psychotherapy, focusing on Jesus' personality from the perspective of the various gospel texts, Jesus' historical context and perspective, and the theories of various psychologists who have studied the life and teaching of Jesus. Chapter IV is a summary of previous chapters with implications for clinical research and how this research might contribute to the fields of depth psychology and the psychotherapeutic process. I conclude the thesis with my own perspective and synthesis of this research based on my psychological and theological training.

Chapter II Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review begins with an exploration of the works of Jung that set a foundational structure for the thesis question: What qualities in the life and teachings of Jesus are important in the healing process of psychotherapy? Starting with the idea that Jung (1951/1968) regarded Jesus as a highly developed example of the archetype of the Self, I focus on qualities in the life and teachings of Jesus that are described in biblical scripture and can be defined in terms of Jungian theory as feminine qualities. Through this lens of the feminine, the literature reviews continues with perspectives of the Gnostic traditions regarding the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as scriptural references both contemporary and historic that examine the gospel narrative. Additionally, I review the literature of various Jungian scholars, which examine these characteristics of Jesus.

The focus of this literature review is not to define or verify the voracity of Jesus' claims as to his divinity, whether he was literally the Son of God, or other Christological questions, but as an examination of his life and teachings within the context of the thesis question. The focus of this literature review is to look at the feminine qualities of Jesus which might further the healing process of psychotherapy.

Jungian Foundations

This thesis explores the characteristics of Jesus or the Christ. One of the foundational source materials for this thesis is Volume 9ii of the *Collected Works* of C.

G. Jung, entitled *Aion: Researches Into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Jung (1951/1968) wrote, “*Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self*” (p. 37 [CW 9ii, para. 70]). He added, “Christ is our nearest analogy of the self and its meaning. It is naturally not a question of a collective value artificially manufactured or arbitrarily awarded, but of one that is effective and present” (p. 44 [CW 9ii, para. 79]). He further linked the archetype of the Self to the oneness of God:

As I have already emphasized, the spontaneous symbols of the self, or of wholeness, cannot in practice be distinguished from a God-image. . . . The “renewal” . . . of the mind is not meant as an actual alteration of consciousness, but rather as the restoration of an original condition, an apocatastasis. This is in exact agreement with the empirical findings of psychology, that there is an ever-present archetype of wholeness which may easily disappear from the purview of consciousness or may never be perceived at all until a consciousness illuminated by conversion recognizes it in the figure of Christ. (p. 40 [CW 9ii, para. 73])

Jung (1951/1968) went on to explore the “anamnesis” (p. 40 [CW 9ii, para. 73]), whereby “the original state of oneness with the God-image is restored” (p. 40 [CW 9ii, para. 73]). This wholeness, or integration, is relevant to the thesis question regarding the characteristics of Jesus and can be seen in Jung’s reference to the gods of antiquity in relationship to Jesus and his characteristics: “Just as we have to remember the gods of antiquity in order to appreciate the psychological value of the anima/animus archetype, so Christ is our nearest analogy of the self and its meaning” (p. 44 [CW 9ii, para. 79]).

Marie-Louise von Franz (1966/2000), an associate of Jung until his death in 1961, conducted a great amount of research at the Jung Institute in Zurich. Her commentary on *Aurora Consurgens*, based on the writings of Thomas Aquinas that addressed the opposites in alchemy, is included for its outlook on wisdom as the divine feminine.

Aquinas’s 13th century

was a time when the worship of Mary was on the increase. Psychologically, this would point to a need, rising from the collective unconscious, for a feminine

figure to be given a place in the purely masculine, patriarchal Trinity, as the representation of the anima of a man and the self of a woman. (p. 157)

Aquinas provided such a figure in the text. Von Franz wrote, “This feminine figure was even identified with God himself” (p. 158).

In von Franz’s (1966/2000) commentary on Aquinas’s thesis, she elaborated upon this mystical female figure of wisdom, known as Sophia in Greek and as Sapientia in Latin. Sapientia is personified as the Wisdom Woman in the wisdom literature, as the Christ in patristic literature, and as the feminine aspect of the collective unconscious in depth psychology (p. 156). She is also known as “the Wisdom of the south” or of the “south wind” (p. 158) and is thus equated in the Hebrew Bible with the Queen of Sheeba, a prefiguration of Mary, and with Maria, the sister of Moses. The south wind is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

These amplifications make it clear that in our text Wisdom is a feminine pneuma who enkindles and inspires. . . . She is a “spirit of truth,” bringing [Aquinas] enlightenment. Thus the anima appears . . . as a feminine complement of the God-image itself. (p. 159)

Von Franz went on to expand upon the idea of Christ as a symbol of the Self:

Seen in the context of *Aurora* as a whole, this re-creation of the world signifies a restructuring of consciousness from the very depths, after it had been annihilated by the invasion of the unconscious. The new, nascent world of consciousness has, however, a different centre: it is no longer the ego, but a figure which the text later calls Christ and the Second Adam, that is, a symbol of the self. (p. 351)

Edward Edinger (1987), a noted Jungian analyst, wrote *The Christian Archetype: A Jungian Commentary on the Life of Christ*, which presents psychological interpretations of images and events that are part of the Christian myth. One of the central features is the exploration of the individuation process. Edinger wrote,

The life of Christ, understood psychologically, represents the vicissitudes of the Self as it undergoes incarnation in an individual ego and of the ego as it

participates in that divine drama. In other words the life of Christ represents the process of individuation. The process, when it befalls an individual, may be salvation or calamity. As long as one is contained within a church or religious creed he is spared the dangers of the direct experience. But once one has fallen out of containment in a religious myth he becomes a candidate for individuation. (p. 15)

Jung (as cited in Edinger, 1987) believed that what happens in the life of Christ happens always and everywhere.

Edinger (1987) explored the essential states of the Christian journey through the events of Jesus' life, from the Annunciation to the Nativity, Baptism Gethsemane, Cross, and Resurrection. Edinger also examined the important events of Mary's life, her Assumption and Coronation, to illustrate the feminine aspects of Jesus' journey in the making of the Christian myth. This is an ordered process, symbolic of individuation. Edinger's book makes the argument that Jesus' individuation process relates to all of humanity.

Gnostic Sources

Writer and women's group organizer Lilian Barger (2007) wrote *Chasing Sophia: Reclaiming the Lost Wisdom of Jesus*, in which she looked at Jesus' life from a feminist perspective through the lens of Sophia. Sophia is the feminine image of Wisdom that was responsible for Jesus' incarnation. Barger wrote about Sophia in the context of the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible:

In the *Meshalin*, or biblical Proverbs, Woman Wisdom is identified with God, present at Creation and infusing all. She seeks close engagement with the world and delights to be with humanity. Contrary to gender-stereotyped images of women, she is in no way passive but is portrayed as a liberator and an establisher of justice, a lover in pursuit of humanity who, in return, responds to those who love her. (p. 36)

The major theme of this book is Jesus' relationship to wisdom and women. Barger focused on the historical Jesus and how the person of Jesus might be made more contemporary for women in their Christian faith using historical source material of wisdom literature and Gnostic sources. Barger emphasized that wisdom has historically, across many eras, been the personification of the feminine:

In ancient wisdom literature, wisdom is often personified as a woman. From the Greeks' Athena to Gnostic Christianity's Sophia, wisdom, in the form of a woman, is the creator and sustainer of life. There is Brigid of the Celtic tradition, whose threefold wisdom in healing, metal work, and poetry is ready to guide us. (p. 54)

As was shown earlier in this thesis, Jung (1951/1968) viewed Jesus as a well-individuated archetype of the Self, having a well-balanced animus and anima. Therefore, an exploration of his feminine characteristics is central to this question. As Barger (2007) wrote,

Out of this rich Hebrew understanding of wisdom came Jesus, preaching in the tradition of Woman Wisdom. From a young age, he is described as filled with wisdom. Jesus calls on those who are marginalized and lost to come to him. . . . Through parables he created a world of reversals. (p. 38)

Barger (2007) also framed the context in which Jesus as the Woman Wisdom integrated his awareness into his being and teachings:

Jesus didn't hesitate to claim the authority of Woman Wisdom. Presenting himself as Wisdom, he said, "Someone greater than Solomon is here"—a remarkable claim to the ears of people who considered Solomon the greatest sage of all. . . . [Jesus] said, "Wisdom is justified by her deeds" (Matthew 11:19). In rebuking those who burden people with religious rules, he responded, "Therefore the Wisdom of God also said . . ." (Luke 11:49). In his teaching and action, Jesus claimed the Wisdom of God as his own identity. (pp. 39-40)

Barger concluded that Jesus was the embodiment of Wisdom—both the wisdom of the wisdom literature and Wisdom Woman.

Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism, edited by Harvard Divinity School

professor Karen King (1988), is a collection of articles written by various historians and theologians about Gnostic perspectives on gender, issues of wisdom and Gnostic texts, heroines of the Nag Hammadi, Sophia as goddess, and Sophia and Christ in the Aprocryphon of John. One of the articles in the book, “Variety in Gnostic Perspectives on Gender,” by comparative religion scholar Michael A. Williams (1988), relates directly to the thesis question. Williams wrote, “‘Male’ and ‘female’ do not have the same associations everywhere or for every person. . . . Nor is it the case that ‘male’ and ‘female’ always suggest ‘opposition’ or ‘polarity’” (p. 2). It is necessary to look beyond gender when evaluating Jesus within the context of his life through the Gnostic lens. This work also points out that nouns used in describing people are gender neutral: “Many nouns that are simply lexically male . . . or female . . . are not in themselves ‘gendered’ . . . they become so only when they are more explicitly gendered in a text . . . (e.g., Sophia referred to as mother)” (p. 5). The author went on to suggest, “We may not have here the cloaking of gender prejudices so much as a lesser degree of gender consciousness” (p. 6). This bears relevance to the thesis question with regard to Jesus’ feminine characteristics and qualities. In other words, the author is suggesting that Jesus was a person who was anatomically male, but he presented with many characteristics more commonly associated with female qualities of personality, including androgyny.

Hoeller’s (2002) book, *Gnosticism: New Light on the Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing*, examined Jung’s discussions of this ancient spiritual tradition, including Jung’s Gnostic symbols of the Self. Hoeller looked at the parallels between ancient Gnosticism and the Jungian response to the conscious and the unconscious. Hoeller pointed out:

As C. G. Jung differentiated between the Self and the ego—the two “gods” in the psyche—so the Gnostics spoke of two gods, one transcendental, the other a bumbling secondary deity. Depth psychology seems to shed more light on the Gnostic understanding of the Judeo-Christian creation myth than liberal biblical studies. Even so, there are meanings in these mythologems, or mythological themes, that elude the grasp of both psychologist and Biblical scholar. (p. 34)

Hoeller (2002) referred to Sophia as the Gnostic archetype of feminine Wisdom.

Sophia is a feminine emanation of God in the Hebrew scriptures. The Hebrew word for Wisdom is *chokmah*, whereas in the Hellenistic world the word was translated as *sophia*. She appears in the category of “wisdom literature” (p. 46) in the book of the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, the Book of Wisdom, and the Song of Songs. In many of the Wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible, “Chokman-Sophia speaks to the reader in the first person, as in a revelatory discourse. She always appears as female and she regularly declares that she participated with God in early cosmic acts of creation” (p. 47). This passage from the Book of Proverbs (8:22-24; 27) is an example:

The Lord possessed me from the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths I was brought forth. . . .
When he prepared the heavens I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth. (As cited in Hoeller, 2002, p. 47)

Sophia also speaks of her creation in exalted terms in Ecclesiasticus (24:5, 7-10, 14):

I came out of the mouth of the most High and covered the earth as a cloud. I dwelt in high places, and my throne is a cloudy pillar. I alone compassed the circuit of the sky and walked in the bottom of the deep; in the waves of the sea and in all the earth, and in every people and nation. . . . He created me from the beginning, before the world and I shall never fail. (As cited in Hoeller, 2002, p. 47)

In repeating these passages, Hoeller attempted to illuminate the origins of all of humanity—male and female—to establish that Christ was not the only divine being, and that the parent is a mother, not a father.

Scriptural Commentaries

In his book, *Jesus Was a Feminist: What the Gospels Reveal About His Revolutionary Perspective*, theologian Leonard Swidler (2007) provided a scriptural commentary that creates a new awareness of ancient textual meaning. Swidler's major themes include: Jesus was an integrated, androgynous person with a feminist-themed ministry, God is feminine, and through textual criticism, the gospels reveal that Jesus took an egalitarian position about women. This book offers evidence from Swidler's own exegesis to verify his conclusions, which are also relevant to the thesis question regarding feminine qualities and Jesus' ministry.

Swidler (2007) wrote about the story of the woman with the lost coin in Luke 15:8: "Here Yeshua [Jesus] projected God in the image of a woman" (p. 33). There is also a lengthy exploration of the feminine and masculine aspects of Jesus, reflecting his balance of the supposedly male qualities—"reasonable and cool" (p. 34) with the traditionally female qualities of "feeling and emotion" (p. 34). The author continued by referring to Jesus as both "firm and aggressive [and] gentle and peaceful" (p. 35). Swidler also suggested, from the following story in the Gospel of John, 7:37-39, that Jesus projected a female, maternal image:

On the last and greatest day of the great festival, Yeshua [Jesus] stood there and cried out: "if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me! Let him come and drink who believes in me! As the scripture says, 'From his breast (*koilia*) shall flow fountains of living water.'" (As cited in Swidler, 2007, p. 55)

In this context the word *koilia* can be properly translated as breast, which until recently was a translation not used, specifically for the purpose of not showing Jesus in a feminine light (p. 55). Throughout the book, Swidler portrayed the way Jesus took up the cause of marginalized people in the 1st century in ways that were not usual for men at that time.

Religion and women's studies professor Sarah Forth (2008) wrote *Eve's Bible: A Woman's Guide to the Old Testament*, which is a companion to the scriptures that provides insight into the feminine aspects of Jewish history, theology, and cultural milieu. The main thrust of this work examined the Hebrew Bible through its textual and exegetical summaries through a feminine lens. Forth explored aspects of the feminine characteristics of the Hebrew God Yahweh with references to Wisdom Woman and the lost goddesses. She also elaborated upon culture, gender, biblical anthropology, and how the image of God is perceived.

Forth (2008) concluded that women are personified in the works of wisdom and that their beginnings and forms started with the myth of creation. She explored the wisdom of Sophia as a feminine aspect of the wisdom of Solomon:

[Woman] Wisdom counseled, "If you delight in thrones and scepters, O monarchs over the peoples, honor wisdom, that you may reign forever" (Wis 6:21). Solomon acknowledged her . . . influence.

Because of her I shall have glory among the multitudes
 And honor in the presence of the elders, though I am young.
 I shall be found keen in judgment,
 And in the sight of rulers I shall be admired. (Wis 8:10-11) (As cited in Forth, 2008, p. 193)

Forth fleshed out the qualities of various women mentioned in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Book of Proverbs, Sirach, Wisdom, and Baruch, including Woman Wisdom, the Strange Woman, wives and mothers, daughters and children.

Moving from the exploration of the Hebrew Scriptures to the life of Jesus and the meaning of his personal sayings throughout the gospels and their relationship to the thesis question, the late John Sanford (1970), an Episcopal priest and Jungian analyst, wrote about Jesus from a psychological perspective in his work, *The Kingdom Within: A Study of the Inner Meaning of Jesus' Sayings*. Sanford (1970) focused on the inner meaning of

Jesus' words in scripture. He also looked at Jesus' personality in the context of Jung's categories of extroversion and introversion and the four functions of the psyche—thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. Sanford concluded that Jesus was well-developed in all four functions (p. 33). Sanford wrote that it was not possible from the evidence in the Gospels to say whether Jesus was an extrovert or an introvert; the only conclusion that can be drawn from the scriptural evidence is to say that Jesus was both (pp. 26-27).

Sanford (1970) focused on various examples of scriptural texts that reveal Jesus' well-balanced feminine and masculine sides. "Looked at psychologically, the Gospels reveal the personality of a whole person. . . . Jesus of Nazareth [represents] the paradigm of the whole man, the prototype of all human development, a truly individual person" (p. 35), and thus an example of Jung's archetype of the Self.

Jesus' feminine qualities as well as his hero's journey are explored by theology professor Gerald Slusser (1986) in his work, *From Jung to Jesus: Myth and Consciousness in the New Testament*. References to the hero story are significant because Slusser discussed them in relation to Jesus and the way in which, in the mythos of his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus unifies the male and female or the mother and father. Slusser asked,

What is this mythic axis, this tree of life and death through which the energies of the universe pour, which connects the realm of the Mother and the realm of the Father, by which the shamans can ascend and descend and by which Christ ascends and descends? (p. 123)

In the same vein, Slusser discussed Jesus' heroic journey in relation to the conflict between the Terrible Mother and God: "Jesus as Hero would be bound to undertake to deliver Israel, his bride-to-be, from her captivity to the patriarch of the priesthood and the

law, the rulers of her lovelessness” (p. 95). Slusser used the archetypal insights of Jung in order to view Jesus as a hero who integrated male and female characteristics.

Jesus’ Feminine Characteristics

History professor Aaron Spencer Fogleman’s (2007) *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America* examined sexuality and gender in relation to the image of Jesus as mother and creator, challenging ancient notions about Jesus, gender, and masculine and feminine roles. Fogleman focused on one particular pietistic group, the Moravians, who like many other outcast Protestant groups, came to colonial America for religious freedom. He wrote, “Moravians altered the gender and structures of power within the Trinity first by dis-empowering ‘God the Father.’ . . . Moravians next reordered the Trinity by feminizing the Holy Spirit, which became a ‘mother’” (pp. 74-75). Their understanding was that the Holy Spirit continued to be the mother of all believers. Moravians also viewed Jesus in a feminine light, as one can see in the following hymn:

Thy royal desire kindles in me
The mellow flame;
and leads me on the militant path
with motherly love.
(Hymn 820, verse 1, *Moravian Hymnal*) (As cited in Fogleman, 2007, p. 78)

Moravians used the side wound of Jesus on the cross in erotic imagery, connecting it to the male orgasm (Fogleman, 2007). The female imagery became important to the mystical spirituality of the Moravians as well as other groups who lived in a communal experience. The Moravians did not invent the female imagery of Jesus; it continued throughout the Middle Ages from Gnostic roots. Fogleman wrote, “Gnostics believed in mystical revelation and hidden divine wisdom, which they personalized in the

term ‘Sophia’” (p. 83). Moravians began to view an erotic relationship between believers and Christ, in a metaphorical sense. They also dealt with this erotic relationship with

Jesus in interesting ways:

Still another solution to the problem of how both men and women could have a spiritual-sexual union with the Savior was to change the metaphor, or regender Jesus as both male and female. Christ was born as the Son of God (the Father) and the Holy Spirit (the Mother), but at the crucial point of his death on the Cross “he” became female by giving birth through the side wound, which in portraiture, speech, and hymnology became a womb. (p. 80)

Andrew Harvey (1998), an Oxford scholar born in India, wrote about the meaning of Jesus in *Son of Man: The Mystical Path to Christ*. One of Harvey’s focuses in the book is what he called “Christ and the Sacred Feminine” (p. xiv). Harvey’s scholarship uncovered what he called the “Sacred Androgyne” (p. xiv). It is Harvey’s understanding that Jesus infuses the combination of the mother and the father and the feminine and the masculine, which leads to the birth of a whole new type of human being, which is “working to engender in all of us now” (p. xiv). Harvey suggested that Jesus is startlingly radical in ways that have not been understood.

Harvey (1998) explored Jesus’ life and teachings, his mission, and the manifestation of the Divine Feminine. He also explored the relationship between the Gnostic Gospels and the Sacred Feminine, which presents us with Jesus as Mother:

The reinvocation of God-as-mother as well as Father, of the full Sacred Feminine as a splendor of blessing of all embodied life, and an incessant demand for compassion, justice, and equality . . . will derange and transfigure all the existing forms of Christianity. It will undo the obscene misogyny, racism, and homophobia that have disgraced nearly all the churches . . . created in Christ’s name. . . . It will, by revealing to everyone, whatever their color, status, caste, or sexuality, their natural unity and equality in the mother-ground of life, end the glamor of . . . external authority, and so make possible at last the worldwide radical democracy of the Kingdom. (pp. 132-133)

This book challenges the traditional conception of Jesus and provides information and awareness for the thesis question with regard to how Jesus can be viewed through a feminine lens.

She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse, by theology professor Elizabeth Johnson (1992), attempts to synthesize classical theology and some of the contemporary research done by a collection of modern feminist theologians. This book is relevant to understanding the feminine mythical imagery in describing the concept of God and the feminine qualities of Jesus that relate to the thesis question.

The chapters about Jesus focus on the meaning of his death and resurrection, Jesus as mother, and Jesus' relationship to Sophia, who is Wisdom (Johnson, 1992). Johnson explained the shift from distorted androcentric images of the past such that "a new ownership of the gift of the female self as *imago Dei*, *imago Christi* is transacted" (p. 75). Johnson explored Sophia's relationship to Jesus:

Jesus is a genuine Spirit-phenomenon, conceived, inspired . . . guided, and risen from the dead by [Sophia's] power. In its etymological and historical context, the early Christian confession that Jesus is the Christ means precisely this, that he is the Messiah . . . the one anointed by the Spirit. . . . Sophia pitches her tent in the midst of the world; the Shekinah dwells among the suffering people in a new way. . . . Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. (p. 150)

The relationship between Jesus and Sophia is built in the wisdom literature. Johnson wrote, "The power of relation built into wisdom metaphors comes to unique fruition in the doctrine of Jesus-Sophia, Sophia incarnate" (pp. 168-169). This feminist theological discourse is highly relevant to the question posed in the thesis regarding the feminine characteristics of Jesus.

Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion, edited by teacher and author Carol Christ and feminist theologian Judith Plaskow (1992), gives an introduction to

feminist interpretations of religion. It is a collection of articles by a variety of feminist scholars in theology and biblical studies that covers issues confronting the image and being of God, focusing on the history of male God language that excludes women. As they relate to the thesis question, the articles on Jesus are of particular interest. These articles show Jesus supporting equality and inclusiveness, the feminism of Jesus, his role as mother, and his relationship with women. Eleanor McLaughlin (1992), an Episcopal priest and professor of church history, wrote “The Christian Past: Does It Hold a Future for Women?” She looked at the life of Julian of Norwich, a 14th-century mystic who was devoted to Jesus. McLaughlin pointed to Julian’s

continual use of the name “Mother Jesus” and the association of mothering metaphors with the action of both Jesus and the Godhead. . . . From the model of these human relationships, in this case, female mothering models, Julian tells us how God acts and how we should act. (pp. 101-102)

Continuing with examples of the divine feminine, of particular interest is a book by Roman Catholic Womanpriest Bridget Mary Meehan (1994) entitled *Delighting in the Feminine Divine*. This is a full, creative, and expansive work full of images of the divine, including a hovering, nesting mother bird: “Imagine the spirit of God as a mother bird, nesting over the chaos, bringing forth light from darkness, sky and water, earth and plants, animals and human life, giving birth to the world” (p. 5). Meehan presented more feminine images of spirit in the creation of the universe:

The Hebrew word for Spirit (*Ruach*) is feminine in form. The writer of Genesis (1:2) tells that the Spirit “moved” (*rachaph*) or “fluttered over” the waters to bring forth creation. Deut 32:11 uses the same word to describe Spirit as a mother eagle “fluttering over” her young eaglets. (p. 5)

Meehan (1994) wrote about the Shekinah, also known as She-Who-Dwells-Within (p. 19). The Shekinah is found in the Hebrew scriptures wisdom literature.

Another example of feminine imagery is El Shaddai. Meehan translated El Shaddai in the Hebrew Bible as “God the breasted one” (p. 24). Meehan (1994) explored the various relationships between Jesus and Sophia in the Gospels: “Certain sayings of Jesus in Matthew and Luke presume a certain familiarity with *Sophia*. Some of these texts are: Matthew 11:16-19 . . . [and] Luke 7:31-35. . . . [They] describe Jesus as the bearer of wisdom” (p. 33). Meehan added,

Paul speaks of Jesus as the Christ, and then identifies Christ with Sophia: “We are preaching a crucified Christ who is the wisdom (*Sophia*) of God (I Cor. 1:24-25). In the deutero-Pauline epistle to the Colossians there is an early church hymn (Col. 1:15-20) which describes Jesus as the reflection of *Sophia* and as the one in whom the new creation unfolds. (p. 33)

Through her research, she posited that all aspects of the Spirit are feminine.

Ann Belford Ulanov is a Jungian analyst and a theologian at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. In *The Female Ancestors of Christ*, Ulanov (1993) looked at the nature of the Christ figure in Jesus from the perspective of his family history and ancestors. In the introduction, Ulanov discussed the four women she believed to be the most important to Jesus’ makeup, “Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba” (p. 1). Ulanov continued,

These four women are the female ancestors of God. They help bring Christ into the world. They prefigure Mary. They are part of the great mothers of our religious history. I propose to examine the four ancestresses, to bring to their presentation in Scripture the resources of depth psychology in order to explore the symbolic meaning they carry for the feminine and its bearing on our understanding of Christ. (p. 1)

Ulanov’s research in this work relates to the thesis question as it attempts to address the feminine characteristics of Jesus. For Ulanov, “In Jesus’ lineage all parts flow together and can no longer be defined apart from one another” (p. 87). Ulanov wrote that

integration and transformation enter into the world in the feminine mode of being human; Christ was one such example.

Psychology, Theology, and Healing

In *Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle*, Jungian analyst Barbara Stevens Sullivan (1989) wrote that “therapeutic work . . . has been significantly impaired by the dominant cultural imbalance between the masculine and feminine principles” (p. 1). Her theory is grounded in depth psychotherapy, which “seeks to heal by orienting toward the unconscious [of] patient . . . [and] therapist . . . for it is through reverberations in one’s own depths that the therapist receives the patient’s messages” (p. xi). Sullivan continued with a discussion of feminine consciousness wisdom, which “has been personified in Christian theology as Sophia and in Jewish mysticism as the Shekhina, God’s feminine aspect” (p. 24).

Sullivan (1989) contrasted masculine judgment and feminine wisdom in the biblical account of Jesus’ encounter with the adulteress, who had been caught in an illicit affair. According to the story, the local mob was going to stone this woman to death, following the prescriptions of the patriarchal legal system of the time. Jesus made what could now be called a therapeutic intervention, telling the men in the mob that he who was without sin should cast the first stone. Sullivan wrote,

The fact that feminine wisdom is carried in this story by a (relatively androgynous) male figure underlines the fact that wisdom leads to a mutual and harmonious marriage between the Masculine and the Feminine, not to the substitution of feminine domination for masculine. (p. 24)

Sullivan underscored the compassion present in this story and cited examples of how this compassion may appear in the therapeutic process, by first grounding it in the feminine.

Somehow our faith must encompass the reality of despair and carry us through the hopeless dry periods that recur more or less frequently in deep therapeutic work. . . . Christ on the Cross cried out in despair, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . When we lose our faith, we must simply go on doing the work of analysis as though it were in our possession, waiting, perhaps for a good while, for its return. In Jung’s alchemical pictures the return or emergence of faith is imaged in the healing moisture that rains down on the dried-up corpse, revivifying it. (pp. 84-85)

Sullivan (1989) focused on how the therapeutic process works through the involvement of both client and therapist, and described the need for the therapist’s full involvement in helping patients:

The therapist must allow his heart to respond as fully as his head does, and there must be room in the work for some kind of expression of the deep concern for his patient generated within him. . . . Somehow the ideal analyst has come to be seen as cold, impervious, objective, and scientific. This is not *my* ideal and I want to share the rationale that can help clinicians find constructive ways to utilize their nurturing instincts. (p. xiii)

Continuing with an exploration of therapeutic healing processes is an exploration of Ulanov’s (1971) *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*. The sections most relevant to this thesis are those written about the psychology of the feminine, the feminine and the doctrines of God and Christ, and the feminine and the doctrine of Spirit. Ulanov investigated “the implications for Christian theology of Jung’s special insights into the feminine. . . . Jung focuses on the human person and sees as central to it its mixture of masculine and feminine elements” (p. ix).

Ulanov (1971) wrote that Sophia is the source of wisdom that gave birth to Jesus and is the “highest expression of the feminine modality of being” (p. 191). She wrote,

The effort to make explicit with the help of Jung the feminine elements in Christian symbolism, then, reveals not only new dimensions of the Godhead and of the feminine psychology but also new parallels between the sufferings and the triumph of the Crucifixion and Resurrection as they deal with the separations and reconciliations we encounter in moving from sexual polarization to full polarity. (p. 323)

“The feminine modality of consciousness and spirit . . . is surely part of the experience of being seized upon in the revelation of Christ” (pp. 303-304). Furthermore, “The feminine mode of activity is one of acceptance and of opening, a kenosis like Christ’s, an attentive desire to others, and a contemplation of them” (p. 304). Ulanov is relevant to the thesis question in that she described the feminine qualities of the incarnational aspects of Jesus as male and female, the redemption about a newly created polarity between the sexes within each person, and Jesus as an example of God’s love.

Summary

The literature reviewed reveals a number of authors who have shared knowledge and insight into the idea of Jesus as an example of the archetype of the Self, the imago dei, and the individuation process. The feminine archetypal figures of Sophia and the anima are discussed in the context of Gnosticism as a basis for relating the ideas of feminine qualities to the life of Jesus. Gnostic perspectives on gender and the androgynous nature of Jesus and wisdom were examined as they amplify Jesus’ feminine characteristics. Stories from the Gospel were presented that support the notion that Jesus was a feminist, had radical relationships with women, and rebelled against the religious and social mores of his time. The work of two women, both Jungian analysts, examined the feminine qualities of Jesus and how those qualities might relate to the therapeutic process from a depth psychological perspective.

By looking at Jesus as an example of the archetype of the Self, one begins to look inward and begin an individuation process. This process reveals the essence of who one is. The next chapter examines clinical applications of the information discussed in the

literature review, in particular as it relates to Jesus' feminine and relational qualities and how they might be applied in the therapeutic relationship.

Chapter III

Clinical Perspectives on Jesus and Psychotherapy

Introduction

This chapter examines the feminine characteristics present in the life and teachings of Jesus that relate to the healing process in a therapeutic relationship. I look at examples taken from various gospel accounts of Jesus and his interactions with people from various walks of life. In his actions, he demonstrated a balanced, healthy example of a highly individuated person. From the perspective of Ulanov (1971), “The archetype of the Self, which the figure of Christ represents in Jung’s opinion, is an inner objective fact whose symbols disclose the reality of the psyche’s growth to wholeness and its relation to meaning” (p. 121).

The individuation process is the manifestation of the archetype of the Self, which is the experience of God or the imago dei. Jesus is an image of God that represents both male and female. His maternal instincts and nurturing qualities, if embodied in the therapeutic relationship, might be healing to a client who grew up outside of a nurturing environment. As a result, the client is suffering and enters therapy. This move into psychotherapy is a move away from isolation.

Christ: Individuation and Integration

As discussed in the literature review, Christ can be viewed as an image of integration and individuation, and as a balance of masculine and feminine energies as defined by the terms animus and anima. Sanford (1970), using the example of Jesus,

suggested that we are called “to go beyond [the] ancient herd instinct and establish an individual consciousness of oneself and of God” (p. 80). From a Christian perspective, Sanford identified this process as becoming a disciple of the kingdom of God, or, as Sanford wrote, “This will mean the separating out of oneself from the collective psychology of the group” (p. 80). Sanford quotes Jesus: “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword (Matt. 10:34/Luke 12:51)” (as cited in Sanford, 1970, p. 81). This particular saying of Jesus looks at the sword that divides and separates. “Christ as the Word of God is a living sword, dividing and separating what was once merged together in order that individual differentiation may take place” (p. 81). Sanford (1977) described the individuation process in this way:

Becoming whole does not mean being perfect, but being completed. It does not necessarily mean happiness, but growth. It is often painful, but, fortunately, it is never boring. It is not getting out of life what we think we want, but is the development and purification of the soul. (p. 20)

Sanford added, “To be healthy . . . has nothing to do with serenity, and less to do with adjustment; to be healthy means to become whole” (p. 21).

Sanford (1970) also explored the personality of Jesus through the writings of Jung as well as the gospel accounts of Jesus’ life and teachings. Sanford wrote, “Looked at psychologically, the Gospels reveal the personality of a whole person” (p. 35). Sanford described in Jesus an equal development of both masculine and feminine qualities. Sanford used the cleansing of the temple and the removal of the money changers as an example of his masculine qualities in the way that he carried out his battles with his enemies (p. 34).

The feminine qualities of Jesus appeared in his relationship with women. Sanford (1970) wrote that Jesus was in touch with his feelings, and not only was he deeply in touch with his life process, he manifested a highly developed feminine side in his nurturance of children and in his eros development, shown in his capacity for deep personal relationships with women and men (p. 34). Jesus communicated with and supported women in public, entered into their lives, and loved them as human beings rather than as male-owned property or objects relegated to silence and suffering as prescribed by their religious and societal structures and mores. Jesus' treatment of women was condemned by the religious power structure.

Sanford (1970) described what Jesus meant by the kingdom within or the kingdom of God. According to Sanford, this "must be described as a psychological reality insofar as it is experienceable by the individual in the development and unfolding of his personality" (p. 42). This means that by following the example of Jesus as archetype of the Self and his individuated integration of masculine and feminine, "the kingdom involves the realization of our personalities . . . [and] the unfolding of a Self which predates and transcends the ego" (p. 42).

Edinger (1987) described the process of wholeness, individuation, and integration using the images of Jesus' life and experience. Edinger explicated symbolically the images and myths that might help modern people in their individuation process. Edinger wrote, "Jung's 'Resurrection body' corresponds to Paul's 'celestial body' (I Cor. 15:40). What they refer to is beyond our conscious grasp. My own hypothesis is that they refer to the ultimate goal of individuation—the transformation of ego into archetype" (p. 118).

Edinger continued, “The death and resurrection of Christ is an archetype which lives itself out not only in the individual but also in the collective psyche” (pp. 118-119).

Another example of Jesus’ individuation and integration of the masculine and feminine is discussed by Sullivan (1989) in the story of the encounter with the woman who was called an adulteress. Jesus created an intervention that reflects a unique therapeutic approach. According to Sullivan, “Jesus is rejecting a masculine approach to the situation, an approach that evaluates this woman’s behavior according to the codified, inflexible standards of the static masculine principle” (p. 24). Instead, “[Jesus] is urging a shadowy, vague ‘assessment’ of the situation, an assessment determined by a loving immersion in the demands of a unique situation, by a deep empathic resonance with this woman’s life” (p. 24).

Jesus Was a Feminist

Swidler (2007) wrote, “The model that Yeshua [Jesus] provided, the burden of everything that he thought, taught, and wrought, was ‘liberation’” (p. 16). He wrote, “This liberation is a freeing from ignorance and hence from a bondage to a false self and a false perception of reality” (p. 17). This allows the human being to reach out and love his or her own self; “The so-called feminine and masculine characteristics were exemplified in Yeshua [Jesus] in integrated, liberating androgynous fashion, and he presented a similar mutual, liberating model in the encounter with nature and with God” (p. 17). According to Jungian psychologist Hanna Wolff (as cited in Swidler, 2007),

Yeshua [Jesus] is the first male who broke through the androcentrism of antiquity. The despotism of the solely male values is deposed. Yeshua is the first one who broke with the solidarity of men, that is, of non-integrated men, and their anti-feminine animus. Yeshua [Jesus] stands before us as the first man without animus. (p. 17)

Jesus broke custom in many ways, including speaking to women in public and teaching them the scriptures, which was considered an obscene act (Swidler, 2007, p. 17). Jesus also created spiritual intimacy with women by appearing first to them after his death (p. 17). Whereas the male followers did not believe Jesus was alive, the women did. Jesus also touched women, which was considered a ritual purity violation (p. 24).

Jesus also used language to support women in that he used symbolic imagery that portrayed God as a woman (Swidler, 2007). Jesus used the story of the woman with the lost coin in the Gospel of John:

What woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly until she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbors? “Rejoice with me,” she would say, “I have found the drachma I lost.” In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner. (As cited in Swidler, 2007, p. 53)

The woman in this story can be seen as God, as Jesus, or as a therapist. A therapist can help people find something new or something they have lost. A therapist can also shine a lamp in the dark places where one can transform the darkness into light.

The Feminine Image of Jesus in the Therapeutic Relationship

An example of how the feminine aspects of Jesus can relate to the role of a therapist occurs in the story of the crippled woman that is told in the Gospel of Luke (13:10-17). Jesus sees the woman outside the entrance to a synagogue because she was not allowed to go inside; he speaks to her in public, which is against custom and religious law (Kam, 1995). The crippled woman is someone who would have been avoided. Her disease may have been arthritis or the result of an accident, and she was probably depressed from being homeless for 20 years. It appears that Jesus’ loving compassion is demonstrated in his personal intervention with this woman. “All the legal and cultural

conditioning that surrounds womanhood must be eliminated, as she is just as important as man in being a hearer of the word” (Moloney, as cited in Kam, 1995, p. 184).

In modern times, this crippled woman could be a psychotherapy client, possibly “a single head of the household imprisoned in the desperation of poverty . . . [or] . . . a victim of abuse, locked . . . in crippling fear and anxiety” (Kam, 1995, p. 185). Or the client might be a woman who is crippled in spirit with immense anxiety, depression, and a lack of self-esteem. So how might we treat a client like this? From the example of this story, we can see Jesus’ love and compassion, his empathic attunement, his positive regard and embracing being, as an image of a therapeutic response.

Another example of how these feminine qualities can relate to the role of a therapist was demonstrated is Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria, a story that appears in the Gospel of John (4:4-42). Jesus stopped by a well in the city of Sychar in Samaria. The Samaritans had a long and conflicted history with the Jews. There was hatred and distrust between them, with both groups criticizing each other for historically absurd reasons. Jesus and his disciples found themselves in the center of town at Jacob’s well, which had huge significance for Jews. Jesus encountered a woman at the well in the middle of the day and spoke to her. The woman was surprised that Jesus spoke to her in public, and his followers were also shocked. The woman was there in the middle of the day because she was known as a woman of ill repute and was not allowed to draw water with the rest of the women at daybreak.

Jesus spoke to this woman of a well of water that “will cancel all thirst, it will become a spring of inner water, welling up into eternal life” (Kam, 1995, p. 214). When she responded with interest, Jesus asked that she bring her husband, and there was a

conversation about her sexual past and current marital status. He acknowledged these facts and did not make her wrong; instead, he was nurturing, compassionate, and full of positive regard, as he defied the conventions of the time that had condemned her.

In this symbolic metaphor, Jesus showed respect for this woman with “astonishing, even shocking, inclusiveness” (Schneiders, as cited in Kam, 1995, p. 216) and “her culturally assigned status gave way” (Wahlberg, as cited in Kam, 1995, p. 216). She seemed to ask Jesus, ““Who *are* you anyway?” Through his responses, Jesus slake[d] her thirst of spirit. Similar critical junctures—similar wells of meeting—occur in every life” (Kam, 1995, p. 216).

A question comes to my mind: What would it be like to be that woman? And to be with a man who comes from a cultural group alien to you? What would living water mean to us as therapists? Would we have the compassion to be with this woman, from that empathic, loving, nonjudgmental place of Jesus as her therapist? How do we allow the nurturing feminine like Jesus into our own therapy for ourselves and with our clients?

Because of her interaction with Jesus, this woman was willing to drop her water jar and change her reality of life. Author Rose Sallberg Kam (1995) asked, “What must you set aside in order to reach a deeper level of commitment in some area of your life?” (p. 218). We as therapists assist our clients in looking at what is hidden down inside of them, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman.

The story of the woman who anointed Jesus with oil is spoken of in all four gospels. The story took place at a dinner for men. A woman appeared and interrupted the dinner and anointed Jesus’ head and feet with oil. This woman’s act during a dinner inside a home for men, as well as the fact that the oil was expensive, was a complete

violation of social and religious custom of the day. Not only did she intrude into a space of men, she touched Jesus in public. Jesus welcomed her; he acknowledged and embraced her. This intervention on the part of Jesus indicated that love can overcome fear (Kam, 1995, p. 229).

The woman . . . embodies all of the liberating qualities of devotion, generosity, compassion and courage that Jesus proclaims, and he accepts her. He perceives a person, not a stereotype. For Jesus, neither maleness nor sinlessness was a prerequisite for service. He accepted people as they were. . . . He demonstrates extraordinary inner wholeness and freedom from prejudice. (p. 230)

What if this woman who anointed Jesus was our client? How could we as therapists embrace the image of compassion and empathy from the feminine, loving space demonstrated in this story?

Jesus expressed this feminine modality as part of his being. According to Ulanov (1981), “[Jesus] met [women] head on and spoke to their singular beings wrapped in their own self-definitions and in their cultural roles. He called them out to be all of themselves in relation to the God he proclaimed” (p. 25). Ulanov wrote that women were not suddenly discovered in the liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s; serious notice was taken of them centuries ago (p. 19). In the New Testament, “Jesus approaches women in a radical new way” (p. 24). Furthermore, “Jesus did not treat . . . women with patronizing coddling or with condescending superiority” (p. 25). As a radical theologian, Jesus created interventions with women in the deepest part of their lives. With the empathic attunement and compassion, identified in Jungian terms as feminine qualities, Jesus helped Martha the overactive housekeeper, sharing with her the real meaning of a new life and resurrection. For the Samaritan woman who was viewed as nonhuman and promiscuous in society, Jesus brought to her the living water in which the spirit cannot

die (p. 24). Jesus shifted their stories and self-definitions. Through his feminine qualities, Jesus extended authentic compassion and relatedness as a way of being with people. Jesus did not create relatedness from his ego but from his own highly developed self. Jesus listened to people's stories and in so doing assisted them in the creation of new self-awareness, the process of moving from ego to individuated self.

Another example of Jesus that amplifies his maternal and compassionate qualities in a therapeutic sense is in the story of the sheep and the goats, found in the Gospel of Matthew (12:31-46). Ulanov (1986) suggested that Jesus was telling us not only in this parable but also with regard to his own motherly, compassionate qualities, that we cannot give genuine compassion to others if we fail to feel it and give it to ourselves (p. 56). Jesus shares with his followers that we are to treat others who need compassion using his example. Ulanov pointed out that often the one who needs compassion is the "inner neglected neighbor, a composite of all that we despise in ourselves . . . [which] is the place where Christ meets us" (p. 56).

So in what way does this feminine Christ meet us as therapists in our own lives? It begins with each of us doing our own inner work as we also move from our own ego space. The inner neglected neighbor may be a place to start. Perhaps the place to start is how we think about ourselves, how much we really love ourselves and are compassionate to ourselves. How often do we find it difficult to create relationships with clients who reflect what we feel about ourselves? Do we allow ourselves to share compassion with a client when we do not experience this within ourselves? Is this the cause of dislike of others because we feel so unloving to ourselves? Have we cut off our own feelings of love, compassion, empathy, and care because we have lost touch with Christ within? Are

we cut off from the imago dei within, precluding us from experiencing that with another? How long do we neglect our inner neighbor? This is where the feminine Christ meets us.

Imaginal Perspectives

I have explored the possibility of the feminine characteristics of Jesus within the context of his life. There are many images or symbols reflecting those characteristics that may be played with in active imagination, which might be a component of the healing process in a therapeutic relationship. Jung, who developed the technique, wrote, “Active imagination, as the term denotes, means that the images have a life of their own and that the symbolic events develop according to their own logic” (as cited in Chodorow, 1997, p. 145). In active imagination,

Jung encouraged his patients to enter a state of reverie in which judgment was suspended but consciousness preserved. They were then enjoined to note what fantasies occurred to them, and to let those fantasies go their own way without interference. (Storr, 1983, p. 21)

Meehan (1994) did not say that she is engaging active imagination; in my reading of Meehan’s book, however, I immediately thought of active imagination when I read her research and writings about her experiences with the images. Meehan explored some of the images of the feminine divine, which is helpful in understanding Jesus.

One of the images Meehan (1994) explored is the image of the hovering of a nesting mother bird, “sheltering those with difficulty under the shadow of her wings” (p. 5). Also included are images of El Shaddai, God the breasted one, “humanity in the womb of God” (p. vii); Jesus, washerwoman of God, and God as seamstress (p. 24); images relating to Jesus as the incarnation of Sophia of the feminine divine; Jesus the welcoming hostess; and Jesus as mothering liberator and healer of our stress (p. 5).

The image of a hovering, nesting mother could speak to a need for love, care, or nurturance (Meehan, 1994, p. 6). Through the imaginal process explored by Meehan, feelings, thoughts, and images might come up for a client. The image of the nesting mother bird might help one in the areas of self-acceptance and connectedness (p. 6). We can also learn to celebrate our connectedness to each other as with ourselves. Meehan explored the possibility of expressing repressed feelings through image: “This could be demonstrated in song, dance, art or journaling. It might also embrace other creative ways as part of the process of embracing personal freedom” (p. 8).

Meehan (1994) also explored the image of the merciful mother Jesus. This image came from Julian of Norwich, a 13th-century English abbess. Julian said, “And though our earthly mother may suffer her child to perish our heavenly Mother Jesus may never suffer us to perish” (as cited in Meehan, 1994, p. 104). Meehan offered therapeutic questions relating to Jesus our Mother. For example, “How did you experience your own mother and do you need healing in relationship to your mother?” (p. 104) and “Have there been times when you have experienced this love and in what ways do you reflect that love?” (p. 104).

In active imagination, soul expresses itself in imagery. In depth psychology, healing begins with the soul. Jesus’ interaction with people was related to soul. The many images of Jesus as mother, liberator, hovering bird, and nesting mother bring forth many images associated with soul. As an example, the image of Jesus as compassionate mother may be beneficial to a person who has had a difficult relationship. Many people who have been damaged by the image of a stern, iron age male God may be healed by the image of God as Jesus, the hovering bird. The image of Jesus as the mother within might increase a

client's ability to have self-love and compassion. These images attend to the soul in the place where it manifests the image.

Jesus' Genogram

This exploration of Jesus continues with a backward glance at his family history, in particular the family history of Jesus' female ancestors. The process of understanding the feminine qualities of Jesus' character can be illuminated by creating something akin to a genogram. Genograms are family maps that "allow clinicians to keep in mind the complexity of a family's context, including family history, patterns, and events that may have ongoing significance for patient care" (McGoldrick, Gerson, & Shellenberger, 1999, p. 2). Jesus' feminine qualities can be identified by looking at four of his female ancestors: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba (Ulanov, 1993). Tamar, who was married to Judah, is the ancestor of David. David married Bathsheba, who was the mother of Solomon, all of whom were the direct ancestors of Joseph, who was the father of Jesus. Ulanov "wants to bring to their [the ancestors'] presentation in scripture the resources of depth psychology in order to explore the symbolic meaning they carry for the feminine and its bearing on our understanding of Christ" (p. 1).

Ulanov (1993) looked at the ancestors of Jesus from two points of view, theological and psychological. Ulanov indicated from a theological perspective the importance of a genealogy: "Linking Jesus with David accomplishes several important things. It emphasizes solidarity with all of humanity, through David's connection with the father of the faith" (p. 2). Ulanov added, "From a psychological point of view, these genealogies bring to consciousness all of the complexes of our psyche the ancestors represent" (p. 3). This links David in the lineage of Abraham. Ulanov also reminded us,

“Living in touch with what our ancestors symbolize in the emotional contents of the unconscious allow us to see that we live as a greater part of the whole” (p. 4). The feminine aspects reside in Jesus from his four female ancestors; Jesus as human is male, but he is also the bearer of a large female component, reasonably enough, for Jesus, as Christ, presides over all that lives in us, male and female (p. 15). Ulanov went on to suggest that Jesus is the link with the solidarity of humanity through the family of David, which was central to the faith system of their lineage (p. 7). In other words, the image of Jesus becomes synonymous with the image of God. This image of God or *imago dei* is, according to Jung (1951/1968), the essential component of Jesus as archetype of the Self.

Ulanov (1971) showed in her research that Jesus was an example of this developed archetype of the Self. She wrote, “The feminine mode of activity is one of acceptance and of opening, a *kenosis* like Christ’s” (p. 304). This spiritual connectedness represents wisdom of the heart, as represented by Jesus, and it communicates through symbol, image, and parable the feminine modality of consciousness and spirit (p. 304). Ulanov made a connection between Jung’s description of Jesus as the integrated archetype of the Self and a demonstration of his feminine characteristics as a source of personal individuation and transformation (p. 305).

Given this possible conclusion, we can explore some contemporary theological perspectives in the history of Christianity that support the image of Jesus as mother. The Moravian tradition that grew out of the radical reform movements of 17th-century Europe held opinions about Jesus that were considered unorthodox during that time period (Fogleman, 2007). These are ideas that are being discussed in theological communities today, and they are more relevant than ever because the church has eliminated women

from its history and theology despite the fact that the feminine is the source of creation and the source of Jesus. Fogleman (2007) wrote that the Moravian community challenged gender order by observing a female Trinity (p. 73). Moravians also experienced Jesus as mother in their imagery of the crucifixion of Jesus. They viewed the wounds of Jesus, especially the wound on Jesus' side created from the Romans soldier's spear, as a birth canal by which all humanity is reborn, each going through a spiritual birth canal from Jesus as the mother (p. 79).

Fogleman (2007) also suggested that the question of Jesus' feminine qualities confronts the image of power in traditional, male-dominated hierarchies (p. 37). Fogleman said that society, in particular religious institutions, has based its agreements and understandings about power on gender (p. 37). From my perspective, our role as therapists might be in helping female clients identify their selfhood outside of the limitations of societal definition. Other implications include how we as therapists can manifest the healing image of Jesus in the nurturing and empathic attunement process with clients. This could be a beneficial process as we travel with clients on their psychic journeys.

Summary

I have examined the clinical aspects of the thesis question regarding the characteristics of Jesus in his life and ministry. I have focused on his feminine qualities, which are apparent as part of his embodiment of what Jung called the archetype of the Self. Some of these examples have included an examination of Jesus' individuation process and consider his integration as a developed human being. Examples have also been given from various stories of his encounters with women. Stories from gospel

accounts have been included. Feminine images that relate to Jesus' archetypal image and his feminine ancestral genealogical aspects have also been explored as a way of experiencing his being as the archetype of the Self. Following is Chapter IV, which applies this hermeneutic research to the thesis question.

Chapter IV

The Feminine Jesus in Thought, Word, and Deed

The research question in this thesis opens up an exploration of the attributes of Jesus as reflections of the archetype of the Self. Jung called him the *imago dei*. The many feminine qualities demonstrated in stories from the life of Jesus support Jung's thought and enable a more complete consideration of him as a representation of the divine feminine.

Looking at the Gospel of John provides further images of Jesus in this way. The Gospel of John begins with "in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1-5). *Word* translated from the Greek means wisdom, and *sophia* also means wisdom in Greek. In addition, Sophia is a feminine image of God. This way of looking at creation and God presents a whole new vision—that the male-dominated hierarchical vision of epistemology may not be male but female.

Christ the Sacred Feminine

This idea of Christ as the sacred feminine brought to mind for me the Beatitudes, words spoken by Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. These passages comprise a comprehensive statement that comes from the Sacred Feminine (Harvey, 1998, p. 140). Also known as the Sermon on the Mount, the essence of the Beatitudes suggests important feminine qualities of feeling, empathy, and compassion that are presented in the therapy room between client and therapist. Blessed are the meek, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are the

merciful, blessed are the peacemakers; each of Jesus' statements speak to the core of our therapeutic relationship with our clients, and to ourselves. As Sullivan (1989) wrote, the work is done by the presence of therapist and client (p. 30).

The Sacred Feminine manifested in Christ transforms our ability to love. As Harvey (1998) wrote, this mystery of Jesus as the Sacred Androgyne creates a sensitivity in our relationships and understanding, assisting us in unraveling and letting go of confusing pronouns, genders, and identities as we illumine our souls (p. 159).

Passages

This thesis process has been a journey of the soul. This is a journey of love and pathos. I recall a story of my childhood from A. A. Milne's (1954) *Winnie-the-Pooh*. The story is one about the meaning of life. Standing on a bridge overlooking a stream, Christopher Robin asked Pooh how a stream knows where it is going. Pooh told Christopher Robin that a stream does not always know where the path may lead but it knows when it arrives.

My thesis process has been similar to this conversation. The idea of completing a thesis had been residing in my being during my whole experience at Pacifica. Wanting to ignore the process, it came to full consciousness at the end of the course work. Ignoring the thesis process appeared as an image of a black hole. This left me in a space of nothingness. I was grieving the connection to my cohort and also to Pacifica. I was still unclear about my thesis topic. Unbeknownst to me, the germination process had begun years before I even knew of Pacifica.

My own process at Pacifica presented itself as turbulent emotional chaos, abandonment, and aloneness. I felt like that frozen river alone with unexpressed feelings.

The process created new feelings of freedom, which created space for new beginnings. I was experiencing a new relationship with the feminine.

This process began 25 years ago in New York City while I attended the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church. For the first time, I was confronted with an understanding of animus and anima. I discovered how they expressed themselves in creation and in the expression of God and the Goddess, which I have now integrated as one. Introduced to the work and teachings of Ulanov, I began to learn about the feminine aspects of Jesus by looking at him through a different lens. Through this education, I began to explore Jungian archetypes and relate them to various stories in scripture as well as different theological perspectives. I began to learn about dreams and myths and how they are related to our life experiences. These discoveries profoundly broadened my awareness of historical and theological assumptions about the Christian myths. This thesis had its incarnation in these discoveries 25 years ago.

During this thesis process, I had several numinous psychic experiences of my mother's presence. I often smelled her perfume. This occurred with a profound synchronicity during my inner turmoil through my thesis incubation. I worked through my feelings of depression, isolation, and anger. I was reminded of the thin places in my reality. Thin places in Irish folklore are places where the seen and unseen come together as a whole. Internally, I discovered my own thin place within and thus my connection between physical reality and mystical sensory presence, which integrated my personal unconscious with the collective. That sharp dividing line of separation disappeared.

Where We Go From Here

I began this research with a question about Jesus as the archetype of the Self, looking at his personal characteristics and teachings and how they might contribute to the healing process of therapy. The wholeness of individuation is reflected in the personal integration of animus and anima, regardless of gender. Noted from various sources in the first three chapters, Jesus' incarnational source is of the feminine. The awareness of this has an impact on a society and cultural structure that has been dominated by male energy and prejudice. Therefore, becoming aware of the feminine in Jesus' relationships has an effect even on the field of psychology. To me, the image of psychology changes from that of a distant, male academic image to a female image of compassion, empathy, and positive regard. A similar image shift could be seen in the view of what might be known as God or divine. God no longer is an iron age male, dominating by fear, judgment, and punishment. The divine may now be experienced from the place of love, nurturance, compassion, and wholeness.

The therapeutic relationship can also be affected by the presence of the feminine. Active imagination as an aspect of depth psychology utilizes image as a way to reach the soul. Jesus can be experienced as a mother, a nurturer, and a protector, by client and therapist. Like Jesus' story of the woman with the lost coin, a therapist can assist clients in looking in those dark places not heretofore experienced in their lives. The therapist can be the mother who assists in the individuation process and who allows the person to explore and to grow as part of their life process. This inner work in the presence of the divine feminine may also have a deep effect on the therapist in developing a deeper sense of consciousness.

Each of us contains within the imago dei. Our individuation process continues throughout our living experience and is never complete. We can look at Jesus' experience as one example—it is an image of our own process. Our continued enlightenment and transformation is present in the therapeutic process with our clients.

What might this hold for our future? We could begin with our understanding of the universe. Perhaps our universe is a compassionate soul who is our mother. Perhaps the image of the universe lies within each of us as the imago dei. How would our cultural structure shift? Will this present to us a paradigm shift in how we establish relationships? Do we have the prospect of no longer seeing each other as a different gender but as the same? Do we relate to the soul that is within, animus and anima, regardless of it being a female or male container? Do we see a shift in our sexuality if it is not based on type? Might psychology see that there are as many forms of sexuality as there are human beings? How would we imagine an androgynous society or culture that is not based in power on sexuality or gender? Can we, as therapists, be at the forefront of this transformation? We are called to be living grace.

The water of God is limitless, and there is no need for our souls to be dry if we will only lift up from the depths of ourselves the living contents with which God can fill us.

Harvey, 1998, pp. 23-24

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