Jung and the *Imago Dei:* 
The Future of an Idea*

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Among the many adventures in comic fantasy which mark the genius of Borges's literary career is a short parable which he calls "On Rigor in Science." It reads as follows:

In that Empire the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that the Map of a single Province took up an entire City, and the Map of the Empire an entire Province. In time these Disproportionate Maps proved inadequate and the Colleges of Cartography drew up a Map of the Empire which was the Size of the Empire, coinciding with it point for point. Subsequent Generations, less Addicted to the Study of Cartography, found this vast Map Useless, and not without Impiety abandoned it to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winter. Torn Ruins of the Map inhabited by Animals and Beggars survive in the Deserts of the West; throughout the Land no other relic of the Geographic Disciplines remains.¹

With masterful simplicity Borges has sketched for us the caricature of the greatest of all scientific sins: epistemological imperialism. I would like to propose that we take this text as a pretext for a second look at Jung's psychological methods and their current academic status.

All commentary on the parable of the map makers is in one sense a failure of insight since it must, paradoxically, take upon itself the burden of the very criticism which it hopes to explain. Like Multatuli's famous dictum—"Nothing is true, and even that is not quite true"—Borges's story exposes the hubris of the abstracting intellect by making sport of the infinite regress involved in thinking about thinking about the world.² A less radical reading of the text, however, reveals three levels of methodological problems relevant to a reexamination of Jung's work.

First, the obvious logical differences between a map and the territory

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*¹A paper read at a convention on "Jung and Education: Myth and Ritual," held at Notre Dame University, April 19-21, 1974.


³Michael Foucault's compelling description of Velásquez's *Las Meninas* points to the same problem by exposing the invisibility of both subject and object amidst the mirrors, reflections, and successive representations involved in classical perceptual space (*The Order of Things* [London: Tavistock Publications, 1970], pp. 3-16).
which it represents tend to become less obvious as the map becomes more sophisticated and detailed. Addiction to the actual work of approximating map to territory obscures the presence of the “map behind the map” and may lead to consequences of grotesque proportions, as in Borges’s spoof. Text is wrenched from context, fact is separated from heuristic structure, and the result is a general conflation of the real and the imaginary.

Second, preoccupation with mapping territory which has already been conquered and whose boundaries have already been determined tends to underestimate the value of new discoveries and ultimately to discourage investigation of uncharted lands altogether. In this way an empire generates the illusion of self-mastery to cover over the reality of its enslavement to its own imperialism. Addiction to detail thus leads to an unexpected closure of epistemic horizons and to the transformation of a particular point of view into a dogmatic truth.

Third, the continued translation of territory into mappable information tends to prescribe ownership of the Empire and the right to determine its future to a small group of elite, the managers of the Colleges of Cartography. The wide variety of less complex “mental maps” which long served to ensure the common man a role in the destiny of the Empire is thereby rendered powerless and obsolete. When any body of facts becomes divorced from concrete praxis, it is liable to become contingent on the ruling ideology which in turn thrives on the isolation of knowledge within a privileged class of experts. History instructs us to expect of succeeding generations the violent overthrow of the elite and the total disavowal of its academic expertise, which then, as in Borges’s tale, becomes the romping ground for social outcasts, for the beasts and the beggars.

If I now suggest that I detect in Jung’s writings and in the writings of his followers a certain strain of scientific sinfulness comparable to that of the map makers, I shall surely be accused of painting too bleak a picture. Yet the fear that later generations of scholars will find the map of the psyche which Jung charted and which his students elaborated too vast and unmanageable to be of any use seems to me well founded and prompts me to forward the parable as a serious caveat. For the genius of Jung’s methods to survive, a radical epistemological metanoia will have to take place, and this in terms of the broad problematic just outlined.

3 The immediate consequence of this creation of the “scientific elite” is the use of the control of information for purposes of deception and for the preservation of existing channels of power. A good deal of what Hannah Arendt writes about this question is applicable to the practice of psychotherapy as well (see her Crises of the Republic [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972], pp. 3–47). By striking a parallel between political imperialism and scientific dogmatism in commenting on Borges’s parable, I do not mean to deny a more direct relationship between the two (e.g., psychotherapy as an ideological tool, as a socioeconomic privilege) but simply to sidestep that problem in this paper.
To begin with, Jung paid insufficient tribute to the heuristic structure which made his "facts" available to him. He did distinguish "psychological truth" from "real truth" in order to make clear that he was deriving his data from introspection. A nodding acquaintance with the Kantian critique made him pause on occasion to ponder the impossibility of the mind's knowing itself or the world as they are in themselves. He was even willing to admit that "archetypal" patterns might lie behind some of his own conceptual constructs (for instance, the fourfold division of the typology). And he knew well enough how transference and apperception can affect the objectivity of a client's judgments. Nevertheless, he was wont to confuse the reality of the phenomenal psyche as such with those data which his own imaginary scheme enabled him to identify. We find him frequently likening his shaky academic reputation to that of Galileo, who could not convince his colleagues from Padua to look just once through his telescope and decide for themselves. What Jung did not appreciate adequately was that it was not only the movements of the moons of Jupiter which Galileo's critics found threatening but the very use of the telescope itself, which was a menace to the current biblical and Aristotelian visions of the sensible world.

Likewise, Jung was not entirely successful in his efforts to avoid the theoretical dogmatism which he had so deplored in Freud's work; and his claims to the contrary, still upheld in most Jungian circles, have only made matters worse for him in the broader context of professional psychology. Jung's initial voyages into the so-called realm of the unconscious led to a provisional map of the psyche whose major territorial divisions were drawn between the years 1911 and 1920. The period in question is flanked by two major books, *The Psychology of the Unconscious* and *Psychological Types*, and encloses Jung's one serious bout with psychosis, in 1916, one of whose important effects was the unification of his previously fragmented vision of the psyche. No significant changes in the explanatory structure are to be found in Jung's later work, despite the wide-reaching application to which he put those theories for nearly fifty years. Jung's epistemological error was to assume that the massive amount of detail so obtained could serve as objective evidence for the validity of his basic structure, when in fact it remained closed within the horizons of his own theory and methods.

Finally, and perhaps most disturbing of all, Jung's attitude to psychological science was decidedly isolationist. His approach to interdisciplinary cooperation was of course extraordinarily liberal. Convincing that his methods were transcendental to the divisions ruling scholarship in the human sciences, he did not hesitate to make frequent

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*I have argued this point at length in "The VII Sermones: Play and Theory," Spring (1972), pp. 266-18.
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use of insights drawn from astrology, Gnosticism, mythology, literary criticism, Sinology, Indian philosophy and mysticism, theology, alchemy, and so forth. At the same time, he was not above a certain courtly disdain for the efforts of psychologists from opposing traditions. Not only does his work after 1915 exhibit a general ignorance of Freud’s later writings (with the exception of a mere handful of passing references), but researches in gestalt theory, behaviorism, learning theory, individual (Adlerian) psychology, perceptual experimentation, applied phenomenology, and the like played no serious role in his thought. Either the cure of this neglect or its frank admission might have spared Jung the just criticism that he had enthroned his own psychology regina scientiarum. Instead, his interdisciplinary efforts grew increasingly colonizing in nature and his discipleship more and more alienated from the major psychological currents of the times. Under such circumstances it was inevitable that the tint of dogmatism in Jung’s early writings would in time become a permanent stain.

In order to locate these general criticisms more concretely in Jung’s writings, let us narrow our attention down to his notion of the imago Dei. My principal motive for selecting this notion in preference to that of the “collective unconscious” or the “archetypes”—both of which Jung would have considered more pivotal to his thought—is that it will better help us to focus on a specific set of empirical data in addition to the general theory and the cross-disciplinary character of his approach. Further, the question of God was an intensely important one for Jung. It stood as cornerstone to his entire psychology of religion and as keystone to his personal spiritual struggles. More than any other aspect of his work, Jung’s God talk discloses developments relative to his thinking and inner life which might otherwise lie hidden. I mention these areas only to bracket them from the remarks which follow, where we shall be studying the problematic in abstraction from its particular archaeology.

Let us begin by looking at the God image as a psychological datum. Recall that Jung used the term “image” (or “imago”) to qualify a fact of experience as psychic and to suspend judgment with regard to its possible reference to any state of affairs in the so-called objective world, physical or metaphysical. In this way he hoped politely to withdraw from theological debates about God’s existence, nature, and attributes—a debate which he personally considered so much flatus vocis—and to recover the deeper experiential roots of religion obfuscated or outlawed by dogmatic theism. To speak of God as an image carried the connotation of unconscious apperception for Jung, that is to say, it pointed to the
working of spontaneous psychic processes outside the control of critical consciousness. Thus, the image was to be understood as prelogical, non-rational, and intuitive, in other words, distinct from and prior to abstract thought and language. This in turn led Jung to the assumption that the God image, like any psychic image, was a sort of pure perceptual likeness, representation, or reflection appearing to the subject with objective clarity and self-evidence. In particular, he most often treated the God image as a visual datum, although sounds, smells, touch sensations, and tastes were not excluded in principle. Introspection afforded immediate access to this essentially private world of imagery; and this datum was then communicable through the narration of one's dreams, fantasies, and hallucinations, or through attempts to depict these latter in painting, sculpture, or even dance. That such communication should result in any significant distortion of the original image did not occur to Jung. Indeed, none of the wide range of philosophical and experimental problems involved in his talk of images detained him for very long. But to this failure we must close an eye for the moment.

Granting these working premises, we have now to ask after those canons of classification which enable us to identify an image as a God image. Here, too, it is worth noting, Jung has not given us a full or consistent methodological statement of his practice. We are forced therefore to extrapolate a heuristic structure for the imago Dei from a model of Jung's working method reconstructed from his writings.

A first group of psychological data belonging to the class of God images is all images so named by a given subject or analysand. Whatever be the logical, verbal, or perceptual associations which are responsible for the subject's calling a particular image a God image, the mere fact that this use of language occurs is enough to justify the classification. The purpose of this canon was to include not only images more or less consciously entertained as God images, but also those which, so to speak, "appear" in unconscious states whose paradigm is the dream state. This class of God images is by itself indefinitely large and according as the defining canon is of a high logical order, relatively pure of interpretative interference.

A second group of God images comprises those images so named by the supervising analyst, though not at least initially by the analysand, from among the data supplied in the analytic setting. This heuristic device can work in two distinct ways. On the one hand, the analyst may detect among the clinical data certain images with structural affinities to some form or other of the deity known to him and may then posit a semantic similarity of imagery not acknowledged verbally by the analysand. Strictly speaking, Jung provided no clear statement of rules to govern the intervening interpretative variables; in practice, however, it seems that he intended only the better known and more widely ac-
cepted mythological types to be so used. On the other hand, we frequently see Jung suggesting that God images express an individual's "highest concern" or "supreme value" at a given time, so that certain imaginary data (whether or not they exhibit mythical qualities of the deity) may properly be named images of God. No specific theoretical or operational definitions of notions like "highest concern" appear in Jung's work. We are therefore led to suppose that the actual use of such phrases by the analysand, or the analyst's good judgment on the propriety of such a phrase, would suffice to locate an *imago Dei*.

In adopting either mythological types of the deity or the categories of highest concern, the analyst must eventually submit his description of the data to the judgment of the client for his or her approval. Jung left us no criteria for distinguishing outright error on the part of the analyst from inner resistance on that of the analysand. Indeed, his own writings present such examples of God imagery as objective data in such a way as to obscure or minimize that question.

I have been generous in restricting Jung's implicit heuristic structure to these initial canons for the selection of data. Jung himself was much less cautious, calling upon data for "objective evidence" which depended for their description on the explanatory structures to which I shall turn presently. Yet even on the above model, Jung's data are far less pure than he would have us think.

The linguistic canon is an interesting one which might have led to promising results but for an unwarranted assumption: for Jung it was a matter of common sense and beyond dispute that a class of data whose verbal descriptions were identical in the client's discourse also shared a common meaning or structure. The appeal to mythological types as an a priori heuristic device begs a fundamental question as well, namely, the validity of the type itself and of its applicability to the data of introspection. In like manner, the a priori judgment that the God image ought to stand supreme on the hierarchy of values demands a justification which Jung did not provide. In each of these cases he used the data which his canons yielded as confirmation for the validity of those canons, after the logical fallacy of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

A final underlying assumption of this heuristic scheme is that the data so released fall together into a single descriptive class: the *imago Dei*. It was then a matter of course to transpose the qualities from one set of data to another, even though verbal similarities belong to a different logical order from that of the structural analysis involved in mythology.

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5 I am using "myth" here in the same broad sense in which Jung used it, viz. to cover all ancient and modern tales of the deeds of gods and of heroes, whether these belong to one of the many genres of the folktale or to the dogmas of religion.

6 This idea is to be found more commonly in Jung's unpublished seminar notes, although the same principle is at work in the identification of God and Self, as demonstrated later in this essay.
and value language. To make matters worse, Jung insisted time and again that his whole procedure was strictly "phenomenological," "empirical," and securely tied to the clear and self-evident realm of the "factual."

That Jung lacked the epistemological tools to deliver himself from such problems is clear. But that his psychology is therefore beyond all logical redemption is not a foregone conclusion. To appreciate this apparent dilemma, we need to turn to the notion of the *imago Dei* as part of a wider explanatory framework where it regains in interpretative usefulness some of what it has lost in its empirical foundations.

II

The explanatory structure which Jung adopted to interpret the psychological meaning of the God image can be seen to rest on a single complex hypothesis. Briefly put, it is this: since God as such is necessarily beyond all human knowing, God imagery not only represents the possibility or desirability of powers unknowable in themselves (whether in their totality or with reference to a specific effect) but also is easily contaminated by potential knowledge lying only contingently outside our actual knowledge. Hence the God image which appears among psychic phenomena needs to be seen as a symbol for what is unknown (absolutely or relatively) composed of elements drawn from what is already known.

In its initial vagueness, the hypothesis has numerous precedents in the history of philosophy, reaching its highest expression in Feuerbach's brilliant work on the anthropological essence of religion and belief in God. What is unique about Jung's use of the hypothesis, however, is that it formed part of a general method of psychotherapy. And it is this characteristic which supplies the epistemological context relevant to Jung's explanation of the God image. Specifically, knowledge is seen as a quality of subjective *consciousness*, and its absence (though not its negation) as subjective *unconsciousness*. Beyond this simple statement, it is not possible to discover in the Jungian corpus any clear description of what is meant by "knowledge" or "consciousness," or indeed any noteworthy conviction that the matter deserved closer attention.

At times Jung used the word "unconscious" substantively, as if to delimit a field of forces or a locus of psychic contents. Elsewhere it was used adjectivally to denote a specific class of psychic data, or as a privative meaning simply "nonconscious." There are also hints in his writings that he saw consciousness and unconsciousness as two poles limiting the continuum of human experience, so that any experience whatsoever is to be seen as a mixture of conscious and unconscious qualities. If we assume the commonsense definition of the "conscious" state (the critical,
waking mentality characterized by “directed thinking”) and the “unconscious” state (the noncritical, nonwaking state characterized by “free thinking”), this model of the continuum seems to offer the easiest approach to Jung's theoretical construct. On such a model the imago Dei is seen as a blend of conscious and unconscious qualities. It is an “image” which “appears” in the psyche; both the image and the appearance are more or less subject to the control of the ego (consciousness) and more or less the effect of unconscious processes. Hence the dream image of God falls to the far left of the spectrum, as it were, exhibiting only a minimum of conscious activity, just enough to enable the dreamer to restore the image to waking memory at a later time.

It seems likely that the reason Jung did not further clarify this distinction between the nature of conscious and unconscious states of mind was that he was more interested in the use of the distinction to explain the intermediary function of symbols. To see the God image (or any image) as a symbol was to see it as a hybrid, a symbolon of contrasting meanings, which points to something known and to something unknown. The logical relationship which obtains between the conscious and the unconscious “meanings” of the imago Dei, Jung went on to say, was one of compensation. The symbol needed to be related to both poles of the psyche—he called this the “transcendent function” of the symbol—in order that the “wholeness” of meaning toward which the psyche strives innately be maintained. The symbol can thus be seen as a function of the self-regulation of the psyche with regard to its conscious and unconscious “contents.” To appreciate how this model works as a method of interpretation, we shall have to consider in order the individual and the cultural dialectics which his psychology presents.

Interpretation on the individual subjective level seeks to relate the God image to what Jung calls the “Self.” The two conflicting senses which this term bears in Jung’s works can best be reconciled by seeing how the Self has two distinct interpretative functions to perform on this level.

First, the Self refers to the actual totality of the individual psyche, and as such comprises contents conscious and unconscious. In this sense Self-knowledge involves the recognition that the meaning of unknown and uncontrolled aspects of concrete experience is as essential to understanding the psyche as are the effects of controlled thought. This knowledge depends on the transcendent function of the symbol which, thrown up to the ego spontaneously, compensates for one’s conscious understanding of experience by “completing the picture,” as it were. Judg-
ments which are one-sided are rounded off by their logical contrary; the
either/or of conscious thinking is balanced by the both/and of uncon­
scious imagery. This compensation works in two ways with regard to the
God image.

On the one hand, we may find that a dream image of God, for exam­
ple, shows qualities contrary to those consciously entertained by the
individual in his or her waking image of God. Thus it may happen, Jung
tells us, that a theologian who spends his daylight hours working over a
lengthy treatise on God as loving father may well discover in his dreams
that God assumes the form of a mother or of a cruel tyrant. Or perhaps
God will appear with the characteristics of the individual’s own father (or
mother) in contrast to the transcendent God of consciousness. In all such
cases we have to do with the compensating function of the unconscious.

On the other hand, the God image may serve to disclose the unac­
knowledged God-like quality of some aspect of conscious experience.
Where the conscious association of God and one’s highest value remains
unexamined, the unconscious image may suggest that one’s actual su­
preme value or “God” lies elsewhere than where one thought, for exam­
ple, in money, in success, in sexual exploits, or the like. Here, too, the
God image of the dream compensates for the conscious attitude.

Second, the Self may refer to the goal of psychic development, to the
ideal of one’s realized potentials, or, in Jung’s preferred neologism, to
“individuation.” In this sense, Self-knowledge involves the recognition
of an innate telos to the drama of psychic change. Whereas in the above
instances Self and God image are related obliquely, here the relation is
direct: God is seen as a symbol of the Self as goal.

Jung held that relatively few images qualify as such symbols of the Self
and that what was common to them all was that they represented a
harmony of opposites. The occurrence of such unconscious images is
rare and is usually accompanied by a sentiment of their special import­
tance. Where the symbol is an imago Dei, the form of the complexio op­
positorum may be orthodox (e.g., Christ as the union of the opposites of
God and man); heterodox (e.g., the “Quaternity” of God, Son, Spirit,
and Devil/Woman); of non-Western origin (e.g., the Buddhist mandala);
or, in the rarest of cases, of apparently original content. The meaning of
such representations is the relation between Self as concrete totality and
Self as goal. The message is: become what you are. The absoluteness of
this innate imperative accounts for the symbolic association with the
imago Dei, the ideal highest value.

It becomes clear, when we organize Jung’s interpretative method in
this fashion, that there is another subtle logical relation at work which is
often overlooked. The God image representing the Self as goal would
seem to stand as the primary or definitive imago Dei and all other God
images compensatorily related to conscious notions as secondary or de-
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This helps us to understand why it was that Jung called the God image not only a symbol but an archetypal symbol. The archetype is simply an innate pattern for psychic behavior, a structured potentiality which tends to produce similarly structured “images” out of the stuff of memory. Now Jung's use of the notion of the archetypes seems to work on the assumption that a given image relates to its archetypal base more or less as a Platonic particular to its defining *eidos* or paradigm, like shadows at play on the cave wall, both revealing and concealing their source. The purest approximation of the God archetype was the *complexio oppositorum*. The process of compensation subserves the archetype by adding the “missing element,” so that the totality is obtained by taking conscious and unconscious images together.

Jung’s interpretative method is somewhat complicated by the addition of another distinction at work in the above processes, the distinction between the “personal” unconscious and the “collective” unconscious. Again Jung was not averse to speaking of the distinction variously as one of “levels,” of “forces,” or of logical universals. We may return to our model of the continuum with greater profit. No piece of unconscious datum was ever fully collective or fully personal for Jung. The two terms represented the essential components in any given image. The collective quality of the unconscious emphasizes the fact that archetypal patterns are not only innate but universal, built up according to an as yet unknown process of psychic evolution. The personal quality of the unconscious stresses the role which the effects of a history peculiar to the individual subject play in giving imaginary shape to unconscious phenomena. Thus in images of the *complexio oppositorum* the role of the personal unconscious can be discounted in the interpretation of the meaning of the God image (although its contextual location in the relative movements of the streams of conscious and unconscious thought may be significant). On the contrary, the deification of a conscious value in a God image or the association of a God image with some significant individual in one’s personal history suggests that we may safely discount the workings of archetypal patterns of behavior behind such compensation (except insofar as images of God point to an as yet undifferentiated attitude to the goal of individuation). In the former case we have to do with the archetypal or *symbolic* level of interpretation, whereas in the latter the interpretation is symptomatic or *semeiotic*. In either case, it was Jung’s conviction that an understanding of mythical motifs would often aid the therapist, that the stories of the deeds of the gods might serve to enlighten collective or personal patterns at work in a particular God image occurring in the conscious history of a particular individual.

Having said all this about interpretation of the *imago Dei* on the subjective individual level, we may now turn to a second dialectical use of the conscious/unconscious model: interpretation on the subjective cultural...
level. Again, this is not a position which Jung himself articulated as such but, rather, a reconstruction from his writings. It points to a psychological relationship between the ruling Zeitgeist or "collective consciousness" of a given period and the esoteric "underground consciousness" of the time. The conventional orthodoxy and eccentric heterodoxy are then related hermeneutically as conscious to unconscious psyche and follow the rules of interpretation given above. This explains how Jung came to speak of folklore, mythology, alchemy, and astrology as projections of the collective unconscious subsisting in conscious culture though often only at the fringes. Judgments, attitudes, and psychic needs which did not find a means of expression in the accepted mores or religious dogmas of the time would often reappear in disguise in the teachings and imagery of the underground consciousness. In our own day, for example, Jung saw the widespread interest in Oriental religions pointing to a neglect of immediate religious experience in Western Christianity. Or again, the perennial fascination with astrological prediction, while scientific nonsense, had a certain value for psychic hygiene insofar as it removed its students from the cold and visionless prospects of a technological culture to a more human cosmos where forces outside of man's control were shaping the destiny of man. In all such cases, Jung would argue, a felt inadequacy in current collective forms of consciousness prompts the emergence and continuance of the contrapuntal traditions.

God imagery is also subject to this dialectic. Indeed, Jung's attempts to explain the mysterious God imagery found in the works of the alchemists and the Gnostics as images of the Self (as psychic totality or as goal) are the clearest examples of this process to be found in his writings. And because these images perdured in a tradition (where personal and symptomatic functions are minimized) they are most often to be understood as among the purest available examples of archetypal God imagery.

I must apologize at this point for having attempted to condense Jung's explanation of the imago Dei into such a few words. For one thing, as any student of Jung's writings knows, the reorganization of his methods into logical order is rather like trying to train a bird to restrict itself to walking on the ground so that we can study its habits of movement more closely. Deprived of his richly idiosyncratic approach to the flight of ideas, Jung's theory looks more clumsy and inefficient than it actually is. For another, my résumé of Jung's working method of interpretation raises more questions about his metapsychology than I am able to cope

The term "subjective" in Jung's writings includes both conscious as well as personal and collective unconscious contents of the psyche, and is thus capable of defining the individual or the cultural aggregate of individuals.

The term, though not a particularly happy one, does point to an aspect of Jungian theory which he had neglected to name specifically. To my knowledge, the term was first used by Jolanda Jacobi in 1939 but did not find ready acceptance by Jung or his followers.
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In order to defend the "scientific" nature of his work, Jung liked to compare his methods to those of comparative anatomy. His only objection was that comparative anatomy, as a strictly descriptive science, did not include the element of prediction, which Jung saw as essential to psychology. But there are also difficulties with Jung's methods of description and comparison. To take one example, the relationship he sets up between the imago Dei as a psychic phenomenon and as a mythological type is one of mutual definition and mutual interpretation. At one moment the mythological type is used as a premise for defining certain psychic data as God images and the mythical context in which the type appears as a premise for a comparative interpretation of the God image in its unconscious context, for example, in a dream motif. At another time he draws upon the data provided by his clients' unconscious activity as evidence of the archetypal structure of the God image as a totality of opposites and uses this as a critical technique for distinguishing collective from personal elements in mythical God imagery. This same approach enables him then to interpret the meaning of cultural symbols according to his own model of the psyche. No higher methodological support is provided to clarify the confusion.

2. Jung also compared his explanatory structure of the psyche to the atomic model of the physicist, seeing both as scientific "theories" of the same hypothetical order. The only major difference Jung was willing to concede was that the controlled experimentation available to the physicist in his laboratory was denied the psychologist in the analytic setting. But again we must look deeper. The benefit of controlled experimentation is not merely that it provides "proof" for a received theory, but also that it prevents the practicing scientist who may be uninterested or uninformed in metatheoretical questions from developing the received theory along lines inconsistent with the available data, or from selecting his data to suit his theory. By admitting the absence of such laboratorial checks for his own theory, Jung unwittingly burdened himself with the obligation to supply the missing methodological securities. That he did not do so is readily apparent. To take only one example from the foregoing, the variety of theoretical uses to which Jung put his notion of the "unconscious," and indeed that very notion itself, depends on a radical neglect of fundamental scientific procedure. As a class name for a set of data, the heuristic criteria for what makes a thought, image, feeling,
perception, attitude, or motive unconscious are exceedingly vague. We are led to suspect that the notion belongs rather to the theoretical structure. Yet here too its use as referring to a series of psychic processes whose range of functions (compensation, projection and image formation, instinctual and archetypal programming, repression, subliminal perception, etc.) is so wide and covers such a variety of logical levels that we begin to wonder whether Jung intended the term simply to describe "all that is unknown about the working of the mind." But the progressive reification of the unconscious into a self-regulated and causally efficient center of mental activity makes such an interpretation equally unrepresentative. Consequently, Jung's theories of the genesis and function of the unconscious God image lack the explanatory efficiency and consistency he intended for them.

3. Finally, Jung likened his scientific methods on occasion to those of biology, inasmuch as both were concerned with organic and teleological processes. As in the previous comparisons, so too here Jung recognized a methodological distinction: biology has to do with publicly observable data, while psychology depends on the private world of introspection for its primary data. Oddly enough, it is precisely to this observational difference that Jung appeals in his attempted scientific demonstration of psychic teleology. As an example, consider Jung's principle of "opposition" at work in his explanation of the meaning of the *imago Dei*. Jung first used the principle as a theoretical assumption regarding what he called "psychic energy." Taking his lead from the first law of thermodynamics according to which energy demands two opposing forces, he established the hypothesis that conscious and unconscious forces were similarly related one to another. This principle was then extended into a heuristic device for determining the "completeness" of symbols, so that even when, in his later work, talk of "energy" and "forces" had grown scarce, the principle of opposition remained. Typically, Jung turned to the wide applicability of the principle as confirmation of its validity, citing instances of its use, for example, in God imagery, as supporting evidence. Now it was the compensatory function of the unconscious which expressed the working of this principle and which Jung likened to teleological processes in biology. The final entropic state (according to the second law of thermodynamics) would then refer to the ultimate goal of the compensatory exchange of psychic energy, that is, to full individuation. Because Jung was dealing with the psyche on the model of a "closed" system derived from classical physics, he tended to accept uncritically the absolute individuality of the psychological subject in his theory and to ignore the psychosocial environment except insofar as a society can be viewed as an aggregate of

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similarly structured but digitally distinct individuals. Symptomatic of this, the God image was denied any contextual origin or function; its meaning and finality were related exclusively to the individuation process of the monadic units that peopled his vision of the social system. The epistemological error in all of this is Jung's insistence that the teleology he attributed to the psyche and its driving energy find scientific proof in the unbiased observation of the psychological images of Self and God. In fact, this equivalence depended upon the prior commitment to the principle of opposition (energetic and symbolic) as well as upon a thinly defended set of assumptions about the nature of the individual psyche.

What the above examples illustrate is that Jung sought but never found an adequate scientific paradigm for his explanatory theories. The result was an inevitable circularity of argument and an unwarranted constriction of the horizons of psychic phenomena to those data which would support his theoretical assumptions and his heuristic nets. As for his sweeping attacks against scientific dogmatism in psychology, they functioned rather like Jung's own notion of the external projection of the "shadow": far from saving him from the same errors, they helped to precipitate his fall.

III

In the hands of their creator, Jung's methods were an endless source of insight and suggestiveness with regard to the mysteries of the human psyche. The almost ascetic simplicity of his psychological theory reflected Jung's own philosophical temperament and ensured the fullest expression of his particular genius in cross-disciplinary research. Yet for that very reason it was predictable that his work would appeal strongly not only to a broad scattering of trained scholars from various provinces of the academic world but also to a good number of the less critically prepared, ranging from those interested in training for a career in lay analysis to the feuilletonists and dilettantes. This need not surprise us; it is part of the history of any revolutionary thinker. What should give us cause for serious concern at this point, however, is that even as archetypal psychology grows in popular appeal, it is fast losing the academic credibility it enjoyed in Jung's lifetime. To the question of this crisis I turn my concluding remarks.

Had Jung not protested so often and so vigorously that his methods were thoroughly scientific, and had his followers not by and large given their consent or at least closed an eye to the problem, it is possible that a suitable scientific basis for those methods would by now be well on its way to articulation. Instead, interest in the methodological foundations of the major psychological movements of the twentieth century has
tended to alienate growing numbers of scholars from Jung's writings and the work being done in archetypal psychology. To suppose that the Jungian corpus will survive on its own merits or on the strength of the therapeutic success of practicing analysts is very shortsighted. Whitehead once remarked that "it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true." In my view, the generation of interest in methodology is the only foreseeable means of redeeming the enormous "truth" of Jung's lifework for those outside the Jungian circle.

Two general directions lay before us for the choosing. First, an effort may be made to rebuild the foundations of archetypal psychology after the model of the natural sciences as Jung had tried. A good deal of ambitious study along these lines has already been done on Freudian psychoanalysis, and many of the conclusions would seem equally valid for Jung's psychology, although to my knowledge no attempt has been made to demonstrate this at any length. My own feeling is that such efforts would turn out to be counteradaptive in the long run, inasmuch as Jung's theory of mind does not provide us with enough significant structure to reformulate a properly scientific theory from his writings. For the present, I must leave that judgment to stand on its own except for the few hints of support given in my earlier comments on the imago Dei.

Second, we may attempt to ground Jung's methods after the model of the experimental and interpretative techniques of the so-called human sciences. Here again, the precedent has been set by major methodological investigations into Freud's work over the past twenty-five years, especially in France. Significantly, none of this research has turned its focus on Jungian thought or, as far as I know, inspired similar efforts from archetypal psychologists themselves. If I might be permitted my own bias, it is in this second area—and more particularly in the fields of


13 I am excluding the use of philosophical phenomenology as a possible methodological basis for Jung's psychology, because it would force us to bracket questions of therapy, which are essential to Jung's project. Jung often referred to his methods as "phenomenological" in order to stress the objectivity of his observations, though in fact his use of the term has almost nothing to do with the current philosophical meaning of the term.


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hermeneutics, general linguistics, and communications theory—that Jung's work could come to rest on foundations more solid than those he was able to provide for his own methods. I would even go so far as to predict that such efforts would enable us better to judge which aspects of this theory, if any, might be reformulated along models drawn from the natural sciences. Such investigations would emphasize in the first instance the interpretative aspects of Jung's work in preference to his theory of mind, an emphasis which, incidentally, has its precedent in some of Jung's early comments on the relationship between theory and therapy.16

We would begin by observing that the basic “context” for Jung's methods, as he always admitted, was that of therapeutically oriented communication between analyst and analysand. The specific given “text” of the encounter is the client's discourse and not, as Jung often assumed, a series of psychic experiences. For example, a dream image of God as an objective datum has to be seen initially as an event of language in the therapeutic setting. This location of the God image within discourse rather than in the field of quasi-perceptual images appearing “in” the psyche would avoid the premature introduction of assumptions about psychic processes which are altogether superfluous to the gathering of data. It also makes us aware that the analysand's discourse is in some way also a commentary on a nonlinguistic event whose narration is liable to involve its own share of selection and distortion. And finally, it forbids us from classifying any piece of the discourse as a God image prior to establishing a relevant interpretative context for the text at hand.

This latter task, which Jung called “amplification,” involves the client's deliberate commentary on the text; it is a partial narration of the individual's greater “life story” to which he hopes to restore the missing elements. The meaning of the initially meaningless dream image, this method suggests, is to be sought in relating it to the life story as a textual gloss. Two hermeneutical options make themselves felt at this point: the dream image may be viewed reductively with an eye to demystifying some part of the life story which turns out to have been a distortion; or it may be viewed prospectively as a kerygmatic disclosure of a depth of meaning previously closed off in the habitual life story.17 Jung termed this the difference between sign and symbol.

Once the data, the amplification, and the hermeneutic have been settled, the actual work of interpretation may begin. It is here that the rules specific to Jung's method and suggested by his map of the psyche need to be formulated anew. These rules would enable description of a specific item of discourse as an imago Dei for the purpose of adopting the


17 The distinction and the terms are taken from Ricoeur, p. 27.
articulated structural model or motif to correlate dream image and life story.

The "cure" of the client—that Self-knowledge which sets him on the path of individuation—might then be understood as the client's gradual independence of the communication of the clinical setting as a technique for the work of correlation. The analysand will have been taught, by immediate experience, the process of uncovering the meaning of his life story by the regulated interpretation of double meanings revealed in dreams, fantasies, fixations, obsessions, and the whole range of psychological parapraxes. The client will have understood the psychological translation of God talk into talk about the Self, that unfathomable expanse of mystery and continual wonder which envelops the waking subject like a vast uncharted ocean.

As the above sketch makes patent, any attempt to reformulate Jung's methodology along hermeneutical lines will not solve the problems raised earlier in this paper. Its principal advantage is that it might redefine the self-critical tools of archetypal psychology in such a way as to make them both sound and applicable to actual therapeutic methods.