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**TATTOO:
ITS ROLE IN PSYCHIC COMPENSATION**

by

Dianne Hayman

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.**

**College of Humanities -- Religion
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
April, 2000**

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the Faculty of Graduate Studies
acceptance of the thesis

Tattoo: Its Role in Psychic Compensation

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ABSTRACT

Research into the psychological import of the practice of tattoo has typically associated tattoo with personality disorders and/or pathologies. Through a perspective grounded in Analytical Psychology, this thesis discloses tattoo's role in psychic compensation, the process through which the personality evolves. Using examples drawn from both collectively mandated tattoo practices and tattoo as individual self expression, the thesis reveals the intensification of the compensatory process that occurs when the individual, through tattoo, is thrust into a direct, ongoing encounter with the symbol. The thesis moreover explains how we can think of the tattoo as a symbol in one of the three stages of the transcendent function -- conscious, unconscious, or synthesis. Throughout the work, special attention is accorded to one of the most comprehensive problems in the compensatory process, balancing spirit and instinct in consciousness, and to how tattoo functions to support its resolution.

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INTRODUCTION

Tattoo ~ to insert a substance, like ink, dye, or soot, under the skin such that an indelible mark is created.

In what writer Victoria Lautman has described as an “odd quirk of fate,” the earliest extant human body bears tattoos. The body, that of a Neolithic hunter who perished some 5,300 years ago, is engraved with simple lines on the back and behind the knees.¹ Other evidence of tattoo’s antiquity is found on an Egyptian mummy from the 11th Dynasty, and on the 2,500 year old body of a Scythian chieftain.² Tattoo is as pervasive and enduring as it is ancient. As such, it has been practised from at least Neolithic times until the present era by seemingly countless numbers of people around the world.

While tattoo has often been studied, research into its psychological import has typically been limited to tattooed individuals residing in mental health care facilities or correctional institutions. Often strongly influenced by Freudian theory, these investigations have associated tattoo with a host of problems like character disorders,³ issues with identity,⁴ and a perception that the external environment is threatening,⁵ to name but a few

¹ Victoria Lautman, *The New Tattoo* (New York: Abbeyville Press, 1994), p. 8.

² R. Bianchi, “Tattoo in Ancient Egypt,” in *Marks of Civilization*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), pp. 21-22; C. Sanders, *Customizing the Body, The Art and Culture of Tattooing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p. 9.

³ N. Goldstein, “Psychological Implications of Tattoos,” *Journal of Dermatol. Surg. Oncol.* 5:11 (November 1979): 885.

⁴ G. Grumet, “Psychodynamic Implications of Tattoos,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 53, no. 3 (1983): 491; Sanders, p. 40.

⁵ J. Popplestone, “A Syllabus of the Exoskeletal Defenses,” *The Psychological Record* 13 (1963): 15.

examples. Tattoo's role in psychic compensation, the process through which the personality evolves, has never before been revealed. Through a perspective grounded in Analytical Psychology, this paper will disclose tattoo's compensatory role.

The thesis unfolds in the following manner. In the first chapter, the problem of the integration of spirit and instinct is presented. Balancing spirit and instinct in consciousness is one of the most difficult challenges in the compensatory process. The truly comprehensive nature of this problem is set in context with a series of reflections on how the tension between spirit and instinct has been handled by various spiritual traditions. As the thesis progresses, special attention is paid to this problem and how tattoo functions to support its resolution.

Chapter Two discusses C.G. Jung's self-regulating model of the psyche and compensation, the process through which regulation is achieved. A specific way of talking about compensation is in terms of the transcendent function. Tattoo, as we shall see, has a unique relationship to the transcendent function. In Chapter Three, attention is focused on collectively mandated tattoo practices. While this chapter points out how this type of tattoo supports the needs of the group, and the individual as he/she relates to the group, the paper also reveals how such tattoos have a compensatory meaning related to the development of the individual personality.

The final chapter of this work explores the meaning of tattoo when the tattoo is a function of individual self-expression. Individual self-expression is a form of the art that has flourished in North America since the 1960's. Prior to this point in time, tattoo was primarily limited to soldiers, sailors, bikers, circus entertainers and prisoners. Now

individuals from virtually all walks of life are adorned with tattoos.

The primary references for the psychological perspectives presented in this thesis are C.G. Jung's *Collected Works*. Another key source is the work of Robert Aziz, specifically, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, and "The Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology." Information on tattoo was gathered from a wide range of literature, both academic and popular. Tattoo magazines like *Tattoo*, *Tattoo Flash*, *Skin and Ink*, and *International Tattoo Art* proved to be a particularly important source for locating individuals' accounts of their own tattoos. Several key narratives which highlight tattoo's unique relationship to the transcendent function were in fact found in letters published in the "Letters to the Editor" columns in these magazines.

I

REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRIT-INSTINCT POLARITY IN WESTERN AND EASTERN SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS

In Analytical Psychology, archetypes are understood to be transpersonal factors which configure typically human ways of acting and perceiving. More specifically, Jung's model of the archetype can be conceived of as a dynamism that has two poles. The one pole, associated with "innate patterns of action," is the realm of instinct. The other pole, dealing with "innate patterns of meaning," is the realm of spirit.¹

As "innate patterns of action," instinctual drives are transpersonal in nature, that is to say, they are not shaped by personal experience. Instinctual drives mould behaviour into characteristically human forms. They are capable of functioning autonomously which means they may operate independently of consciousness. A key aspect of our "innate patterns of action" is that they become operative, or "triggered," in response to specific situations, or in response to the more general needs of the human condition. Two powerful expressions of the instinctual tendency for self-preservation are hunger and sexuality.²

While the instinctual side of the archetype structures our "innate patterns of behaviour," the side of the archetype associated with spirit configures our "innate patterns

¹ Robert Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 54; C.G. Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," *Collected Works (hereafter cited as C.W.)* vol. 8, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pars. 404-420, pp. 207-216.

² Aziz, pp. 52-54; C.G. Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 352 & 398, pp. 165 & 201; Jung, "Instincts and the Unconscious," *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 270, p.134; Jung "Psychological Factors in Human Behaviour," *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 237-238, p.116.

of meaning.”³ Spirit, in other words, directs individual consciousness into specifically human patterns of perception and understanding.⁴ Although spirit is often treated as synonymous with intellect -- it is not. Spirit contains both intellect and feeling and is understood to be *meaning* in the most comprehensive sense of the word. Familiar examples of “innate patterns of meaning” are the symbols and stories that form the “essential content of all mythologies and all religions.”⁵ These symbols and stories are stories of “dismemberment and renewal, wholeness and self-realization, the God-man, the hero, and the mandala -- to name but a few examples.” One of Jung’s most notable findings was that these symbols and stories occur not only in myth and religion, but also “emerge spontaneously” in dreams and visions. These patterns can moreover be observed in dreams and visions of people who have no acquired knowledge of them. It was on this basis that Jung constructed his theory of the collective unconscious.⁶

³ Through-out the Collected Works, Jung describes spirit in a variety of different ways. In a critical essay, “On the Nature of the Psyche,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, Jung outlines his changing understanding of the nature of the archetype and its component parts -- spirit and instinct. It may be quite forcefully argued that this essay represents a crucial turning point in Jung’s theoretical conceptualization of the nature of the psyche itself. As such, the primary understanding Jung accords spirit in “On the Nature of the Psyche” -- i.e., that of “innate pattern of meaning” -- was selected as foundational for this thesis.

⁴ Jung, “Instincts and the Unconscious,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 270, p. 133 in Aziz, pp. 53-54; Jung, “On the Nature of the Psyche,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 420, p. 216.

⁵ Jung, “On the Nature of the Psyche,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 406, p. 206.

⁶ Aziz, p. 53; I am indebted to Robert Aziz for clarifying for me that, despite much literature to the contrary, archetypes are *not inherited* but rather are innate or inborn structural tendencies that have existed from time immemorial as part of the human condition in much the same way as has the brain or spine. There is no transmission as there would be when an individual inherits blue eyes, or red hair, for example. It is incorrect therefore to state that archetypes are inherited as this suggests options (i.e., you inherit blue eyes or brown eyes) or specific characteristics that can skip a generation or not be passed on at all. This confusion is present in Jung’s own writing on the subject. In “The Concept of the Collective Unconscious,” for instance, Jung discusses archetypes in terms of heredity yet states, “the concept of the archetype . . . indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere. Jung, “The Concept of the

While spirit and instinct exist as complementary forces at the unconscious level of the human psyche, tension frequently exists between them at the conscious level. For various reasons, an individual may become predominantly oriented to either instinct or spirit -- consequently neglecting, or even entirely rejecting, the other pole. Such one-sidedness can be envisioned by thinking of a person who is concerned almost exclusively with bodily appetites -- eating, drinking, and sex, for example -- or by picturing an individual that 'lives' primarily 'in the head' taking sustenance only from ideas. We might describe the latter position as "disembodied consciousness." On occasion, entire cultures, or groups within cultures, have become oriented almost exclusively toward one or the other pole -- much, it may be added, to their detriment. Within the religious history of the West, for example, spirit has been treated as paramount. Indeed, the Western proclivity to overvalue spirit has resulted in many individuals being disconnected from their instinctual tendencies.⁷ In the following excerpt, Jung discusses the excess of spirit and the shape it has often taken within the West particularly under Christian influences. As Jung relates:

There are too many cases of men so possessed by a spirit that the man does not live anymore, but only the spirit, and in a way that does not bring him a richer and fuller life but only cripples him. I am far from implying that the death of a Christian martyr was a meaningless and purposeless act of destruction -- on the contrary, such a death can also mean a fuller life than any

Collective Unconscious," *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 1, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pars. 89-91, pp.42-43.

⁷ Robert Aziz, "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," manuscript, p. 17 and "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," in *Asian and Jungian Views of Ethics*, ed. C. Becker (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 77. Note: As the published version of this paper contains numerous editorial changes that not only detract from the style of the original work but in some cases alter the intended meaning, I have chosen to quote from the original manuscript. As a courtesy to the reader who may wish to refer to this paper, I hereafter cite the page numbers from the original manuscript followed by the corresponding page numbers in the published text.

other -- rather, I refer to the spirit of certain sects which wholly deny life. Naturally the strict Montanist view [*the Montanists were an early Christian sect*] was in accord with the highest moral demands of the age, but it destroyed life all the same. What is to become of the spirit when it has exterminated man? . . . just as there is a passion that strives for blind unrestricted life, so there is a passion that would like to sacrifice all life to the spirit because of its superior creative power. This passion turns the spirit into a malignant growth that senselessly destroys human life.⁸

The problem of spirit-instinct imbalance is not easy to redress. Analytical Psychology contends, however, that for an individual to be whole, the poles must be balanced. This balance, or integration, is achieved through a process of following the lead of the compensatory images supplied by the unconscious. (This process will be more fully explained in the next chapter.) The integration of spirit and instinct results in a more developed *spiritual* position within the individual characterized by Aziz as "*spirit grounded in instinct*."⁹ When used in this context, spiritual takes on a new meaning. As "spirit grounded in instinct," spiritual means a depth experience of life. It is "embodied consciousness" -- a consciousness that is no longer 'split-off' from the body and its

⁸ Jung, "Spirit and Life," *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 645-646, pp. 336-337; According to the *Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, Montanism was an early Christian heresy whose adherents "embraced a severe form of asceticism marked by fasting, forbidding of second marriages and an enthusiastic attitude to martyrdom." John Bowker, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 653.

⁹ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 54 - 55; Aziz's phrase "spirit grounded in instinct" follows Jung's analogy of the colour spectrum. (See Jung, "On The Nature of the Psyche," *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 414, p. 211.) Jung uses this analogy to describe the interface between spirit, represented by blue, and instinctual drives, represented by red. The colour violet represents the archetype and is a synthesis of red and blue though a "colour in its own right," as Jung puts it. "Violet," Aziz explains, "is the appropriate color for the archetype because although the archetype contains within it the energies of pure instinct and pure spirit, it is a numinous dynamism that transcends the tension of these opposites. As a psychoid [*i.e., psycho-physical*] factor, the archetype, therefore is understood to constitute a spiritual force in its own right -- spiritual not in the sense of pure spirit, but rather as a dynamism of spirit that is grounded in instinct." Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 54.

instinctual tendencies as has historically been the case in the West. Spiritual, in this more developed sense of the word, signifies a position that integrates both poles of the archetype.

The process of effecting a resolution between the poles constitutes an integral, and indeed indispensable, part of the movement toward self-realization. Analytical Psychology maintains that if one's meaning cannot be embodied, if spirit cannot be "grounded in instinct," then the movement toward self-realization cannot proceed. As Jung explains it: "Life [*the living body*] and spirit are two powers or necessities between which man is placed. Spirit gives meaning to his life, and the possibility of its greatest development. But life is essential to spirit, since its truth is nothing if it cannot live."¹⁰

The tension between spirit and instinct is one of the truly classic problems in the history of Western spiritual traditions. It has also been a problem in the East. By reflecting on how the spiritual traditions handle the spirit-instinct polarity we can gain a measure of insight into the comprehensive nature of the problem. There is in fact real variation in approaches to the problem by the spiritual traditions. At one end of the spectrum are traditions which do not integrate instinctual drives. At the other end are traditions which work toward a synthesis of spirit and instinct. At the midpoint are traditions which allow instinctual drives a measure of expression but do not integrate them fully. On the following page this spectrum of approaches to the spirit-instinct polarity has been sketched out and examples included.

¹⁰ Jung, "Spirit and Life," *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 648, p. 337.

The Spirit - Instinct Polarity: A Spectrum of Integration

Not integrating instinctual drives.	Allowing instinctual drives a measure of expression but not integrating them fully.	Integrating spirit and instinct ~ 'grounding spirit in instinct.'
--	--	--

**Celibate Traditions
in:**

Judaism

**Hindu Tantric
Traditions**

Buddhism

Islam

**Buddhist Tantric
Traditions**

Christianity ¹¹

Zoroastrianism

Taoism

Medieval Alchemy

**Non-Celibate Traditions
in:**

Christianity

Buddhism

¹¹ There are a few celibate traditions, forms of Hinduism and Taoism for instance, which deny sexual activity so as to first transform, then reintegrate at a higher level, the energies associated with sexual drives. This differs from the objective of celibacy as practised in the majority of Buddhist and Christian traditions. In these groups, the sexual drives are repressed in an attempt to completely overcome the body.

Before these approaches are examined in detail, it is worth restating that the problem of spirit- instinct imbalance resides in the conscious domain of the psyche. This imbalance has been fostered primarily by religious views that are inimical to the human body and instinctual drives. In this way, ideals have been imposed on nature such that the natural complementarity between spirit and instinct is disrupted and conscious development arrested.

I would like to begin by examining the spirit-instinct polarity within traditions that do not integrate instinctual drives. In these traditions, a number of methods were developed which have as their objective the “shutting down” of instinctual tendencies. One of the most striking was celibacy which consists of a complete repression of sexuality. A spiritual tradition which especially embraced celibacy was early Christianity.¹² This was consistent with a negative view the tradition had of the body. Sexuality in particular was considered problematic and was associated with original sin, lost immortality, and death, among other things.¹³ Celibacy was thus chosen by many early Christians as a primary method for “spiritual” cultivation.¹⁴ Indeed, celibacy was so highly regarded that it came to be seen as

¹² I am confining my comments to the period ranging from 40 C.E. until the death of Augustine in approximately 430 C.E.

¹³ P. Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); A. Louth, “The Body in Western Catholic Christianity,” in *Religion and the Body*, ed. S. Coakley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 115-116; Augustine, *De civitatis Dei* 14, 18-26 (CCL 48, 440-450) as paraphrased by Elizabeth Clark in “Sex, Shame and Rhetoric. En-gendering Early Christian Ethics,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, no. 2: 237-238.

¹⁴ Louth, p. 115.

“an imperative requirement of Christian holiness.”¹⁵ As Athenagoras, writing in the second century, states: “You could find many among us both men and women, growing old, unmarried in the hope of living in closer communion with God. [For] remaining in virginity and in the state of a eunuch brings one closer to God.”¹⁶ The early Christian tradition, with its strong emphasis on celibacy, may consequently be described as oriented exclusively to the spirit pole of the archetype.

Traditions which do not integrate instinctual drives often combine other forms of asceticism with celibacy. Ascetic “techniques” used by these traditions include such things as self - wounding and the denial of food, drink, and shelter from the elements. During the Medieval period in Europe, many cloistered Christian women pursued rigorous asceticism as a means of “spiritual” advancement. Common ascetic practices of these women consisted of: “thrusting nettles into [the] breasts, wearing hair shirts, binding [the] flesh tightly with twisted ropes, enduring extreme sleep and food deprivation, performing thousands of genuflections and praying barefoot in winter.”¹⁷ Less common techniques included such things as “rolling in broken glass, jumping into ovens, hanging oneself from a gibbet [*i.e.*, a

¹⁵ John Bossy, “Review article: Vile Bodies,” *Past and Present*, no. 124 (August 1989): 181. Note: This excerpt is from a review by John Bossy of Peter Brown’s, *The Body and Society*; Biblical texts which may be described as promoting celibacy are Mark 12:25 and I Corinthians 7:15-39. We can also turn to Matthew 19:12 where Jesus is recorded as saying: “For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let any one accept this who can.” *Holy Bible*, N.R.S.V. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989). Historical documents suggest that Origen, an early church leader, went so far as to have himself castrated on the basis of this text. Bowker, pp. 718- 719.

¹⁶ Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 33 in Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 66.

¹⁷ Caroline Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 132: While Bynum suggests that these methods were a useful means of spiritual cultivation, the position this paper takes is that the instinctual drives must be integrated in consciousness. In other words, the drives cannot be sublimated.

gallows], and praying while standing on one's head.”¹⁸

One of the difficulties with not integrating instinctual drives is that it results in a blocking of libido, or vital energy. Jung suggests that when this occurs it leads to an “accumulation of instinctuality, and, in consequence, to excesses and aberrations of all kinds.”¹⁹ Another way we might think about an “accumulation of instinctuality” is as an accumulation of energy at the unconscious level. For a particularly clear example of such an “accumulation,” we may turn to the records of St. Jerome, a Christian ascetic who lived from 342-420.²⁰ As Jerome writes:

How often, when I was living in the desolate, lonely desert, parched by the burning sun, how often I imagined myself among the pleasures of Rome! I used to sit alone, because my heart was filled with bitterness; my limbs stuck inside an ugly sack cloth, my skin black as an Ethiopian's Day after day I cried and sighed, and when, against my will, I fell asleep, my bare bones clashed against the ground. I say nothing about my eating and drinking. Even when sick, solitaries drink only cold water, and a cooked meal is considered excessive. *And yet, he who, in fear of hell, had banished himself to this prison, found himself again and again surrounded by dancing girls!* My face grew pale with hunger, yet in my cold body the passions of my inner being continued to glow. *This human being was more dead than alive; only his burning lust continued to boil.*²¹

In Jerome's case, harsh ascetic practices resulted not in the hoped for eradication of drives and desires, but in recurrent visions of dancing girls and “boiling lust,” that is to say, in an “accumulation of instinctuality” or energy at the unconscious level. For a discussion of

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁹ C.G. Jung, “Symbols of Transformation,” *C.W.*, vol. 5, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), par. 249, p. 169.

²⁰ Bowker, p. 495.

²¹ Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 89.

blocked libido and accumulated instinctuality “gone haywire,” we may return to medieval cloistered women. As we have seen, the medieval women used a variety of rigorous ascetic techniques to repress sexual tendencies. We know now, however, that these practices do not result in an elimination of the sexual drive but instead function to “charge it up.” As we can well imagine, when the medieval women’s drives were “charged-up,” their efforts at repression would intensify, yet, the greater their efforts at repression, the more their drives would be “charged-up” – and so on! Thrusting nettles into the breasts, or rolling in broken glass, would thus not “shut down” sexuality but would, in all likelihood, promote the use of more and more nettles, and more and more broken glass. (When we turn to the discussion of traditions which integrate instinctual drives, we will see how an “accumulation of instinctuality,” or energy, may in fact be transformed such that it is placed in the service of higher levels of consciousness.)

The next position on the spectrum consists of traditions which allow instinctual tendencies a measure of expression within tightly-defined boundaries. These traditions have typically acknowledged that while instinctual drives are naturally part of the human condition and not inherently ‘sinful,’ they are still in need of substantial regulation. Within these systems, instinctual tendencies are usually ‘accommodated’ in a specific manner as opposed to denied. This approach can be illustrated with reference to some specific Sabbath rituals of the Judaic tradition. Sabbath delight, as defined by Maimonides in his *Mishneh Torah*, entails indulging bodily appetites during the Sabbath with “special juicy foods and good wine.”²² This accommodation of the hunger and thirst drives is accompanied by a cessation of manual work which, because it is a respite for the body, constitutes another form of

²² Louis Jacob, “The Body in Jewish Worship: Three Rituals Examined,” in *Religion and the Body*, ed. S. Coakley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 78.

Sabbath delight.²³ Friday night, the Sabbath night, is also considered by some to be a special time for sexual relations.²⁴ These rituals associated with Sabbath delight may be interpreted as a positive movement in the direction of integrating spirit and instinct.

Other traditions which may be placed, generally speaking, in this vicinity on the spectrum are Islam,²⁵ Zoroastrianism,²⁶ and Christian groups which do not practice celibacy like the mainstream Protestant and lay Catholic traditions. As can be appreciated from the above discussions, these traditions move more toward a balance of spirit and instinct than traditions which do not integrate instinctual drives at all.

I would now like to discuss traditions which are concerned with an integration of spirit and instinct. One of the few spiritual traditions within the West which attempted this synthesis was medieval alchemy.²⁷ Although the alchemists were concerned with the transmutation of crude substances into gold or other precious matter, they were also concerned with the spiritual transformation of the personality.²⁸ Jung wrote extensively on the work of the alchemists as he recognized in their efforts important parallels with depth

²³ Ibid., p. 77.

²⁴ The *Ketubot* Talmud quotes Samuel, a third century Babylonian teacher, as stating that scholars are obliged to make love to their wives on Friday nights. The rationale given was that scholars were often away from home the rest of the week. Later this precept was extended to include non-scholars. Ibid., p. 80.

²⁵ Within Islam, celibacy was never considered desirable: "'There is no monasticism in Islam,'" and "'I am as much in need of sexual intercourse as I am of food, so the wife is definitely nourishment and a means for purification of the heart.'" Quoted in Michael Winter, "Islamic Attitudes towards the Human Body," in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. J. Law (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 41.

²⁶ In the Zoroastrian tradition, "asceticism, celibacy, and self-mortification" are all considered "demonic tendencies." Alan Williams, "Zoroastrianism and the Body," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. S. Coakley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 155.

²⁷ Much of the direction for the section on medieval alchemy was derived from Robert Aziz, "C.G. Jung's Concept of Synchronicity as it Relates to the Psychology of the Individual," (master's thesis, Carleton University, 1981).

²⁸ Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (London: Rider & Company, 1962), pp. 158-159.

psychology and the modern “journey of the soul.” As Jung relates:

Today we can see how effectively alchemy prepared the ground for the psychology of the unconscious, firstly by leaving behind, in its treasury of symbols, illustrative material of the utmost value for modern interpretations in this field, and secondly by indicating symbolical procedures for synthesis which we can rediscover in the dreams of our patients. We can see today that the entire alchemical procedure for uniting the opposites . . . could just as well represent the individuation [*i.e., self-realization*] process of a single individual.²⁹

One of the principal sources for Jung’s writing on the alchemical tradition was the work of Gerhard Dorn, a sixteenth-century German alchemist. Dorn outlined three developmental stages in the movement toward “self-realization.” These three stages are the creation of an *unio mentalis*, the creation of an *unio corporalis*, and the conjunction with the *unus mundus*.³⁰

The creation of the *unio mentalis*, or “mental union,” was accomplished by freeing “the mind from the grip of bodily appetites and the heart’s affection” through a process parallel to the Jungian concept of integrating the *shadow*.³¹ The shadow is a term used to describe the unknown often “inferior and guilt-laden” aspects of the personality.³² “Shadow work” consists of bringing the contents of the shadow to consciousness. When these contents are made conscious, our *projections* are recognized and then withdrawn. Projections are qualities of our own personality which we unconsciously assign to other

²⁹ C.G. Jung, “Mysterium Coniunctionis,” *C.W.*, vol. 14, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), par. 792, p. 555.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pars. 654 -789, pp. 457-553.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pars. 671 - 676, pp. 471- 475.

³² Jung, “The Structure and Dynamics of the Self,” *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 422, p. 266.

people or objects.³³ Jung comments that it is important for projections to be withdrawn for two reasons. The first reason is that projections distort the true nature of the object being observed. The second is that projections contain items which belong to the individual's own personality and thus "should be integrated with it."³⁴

During the process of creating an *unio mentalis*, the alchemists purposefully developed an ascetic attitude toward the body and its desires.³⁵ Their objective was to "shut down" the body.³⁶ "Shutting down" the body in shadow work is about the prevention of psychic discharge at the physiological level so that shadow contents will have the necessary energy levels to cross into consciousness.

Although the alchemists purposefully "shut down" the body to support the process of creating an *unio mentalis*, they experienced the body in this state as inanimate -- a condition they found unacceptable.³⁷ The objective of Dorn's second stage was to reanimate the body by uniting it with the *unio mentalis*. This synthesis, which Dorn called an *unio corporalis*,³⁸ infused the body with new levels of energy. We may again turn to what has been learned in analytical work to elucidate the alchemical process. In analysis, instinctual drives are separated out from the shadow and the complexes. Complexes are "repressed

³³ Aziz, C.G. *Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 33.

³⁴ Jung, "Mysterium Coniunctionis," *C.W.*, vol.14, par. 710, p. 499.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, par. 673 & par. 710, p. 499 & p.472.

³⁶ I wish to acknowledge the direction I have taken from Robert Aziz with regards to the connection between the alchemical process of "shutting down" the body and the approach taken to the body in shadow work. The discussion which follows regarding the analysis of the complexes and its connection to the retraining of the instinctual drives is also directly attributable to conversations with Robert Aziz.

³⁷ Jung, "Mysterium Coniunctionis," *C.W.*, vol.14, par. 742, p. 521.

³⁸ Marie-Louise von Franz, *Psyche and Matter* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992), p. 179.

emotional themes” which influence the way we perceive and respond to situations.³⁹ When the process of differentiating out the drives has taken place, they are retrained to operate in a natural manner. This infuses the body with energy, “reanimating” it in a new way. The integration of consciousness with the “retrained” body serves as a necessary *rite d’entree* for further levels of spiritual transformation.⁴⁰ (The process whereby an individual differentiates-out the drives and subsequently retrains them involves following the lead of the compensatory images supplied by the unconscious. As previously noted, this process will be discussed in the next chapter.)

The objective of Dorn’s third stage is for the “newly configured” individual to be opened-up to the totality or the *unus mundus* – the one indivisible world underlying phenomenal reality.⁴¹ “We conclude,” Dorn writes in summarizing his opus, “that meditative philosophy consists in the overcoming of the body by mental union [*unio mentalis*]. This first union does not as yet make the wise man, but only the mental disciple of wisdom. The second union of the mind with the body shows forth the wise man, hoping for and expecting that blessed third union with the first unity [i.e., the *unus mundus*, the latent unity of the world.] May Almighty God grant that all men be made such, and may He be one in All.”⁴² We may find a parallel to the *unus mundus* in Jung’s concept of synchronicity. Synchronicity is the meaningful paralleling of inner states (usually dreams) and external events. Jung

³⁹ Aziz, “Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology,” p. 4 (text: 67); A. Samuels, B. Shorter, and F. Plaut, *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 33-35.

⁴⁰ Aziz, see fn. 39.

⁴¹ “Undoubtedly the idea of the *unus mundus*,” Jung tells us, “is founded on the assumption that the multiplicity of the empirical world rests on an underlying unity, and that not two or more fundamentally different worlds exist side by side. . . . Rather, everything divided and different belongs to one and the same world” Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W., vol. 14, par. 767, pp. 537-538.

⁴² Dorn, as quoted in Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W., vol. 14, par. 663, p. 465.

recognized, through his observation of synchronistic events, a relationship between the individual and the totality. "If mandala symbolism," as Jung writes, "is the psychological equivalent of the *unus mundus*, then synchronicity is its parapsychological equivalent."⁴³ Synchronistic events are, as Aziz explains, the "tangible presence" in a space and time bound world of the *unus mundus*.⁴⁴ Through the conscious participation in these events, the individual is opened-up to the totality.

In concluding the section on alchemy, we can state that although the alchemists moved strongly in the direction of effecting an integration of spirit and instinct, they had a pronounced philosophical orientation. This limited their engagement with the body.⁴⁵ This is very much in contrast to the Eastern traditions to which we now turn.

Within the East there are several traditions which bring the body into the process of balancing spirit and instinct in a way the alchemists did not. These Eastern traditions, primarily Taoism and the different Tantric movements, employ methods that direct or train instinctual drives. Examples of these methods are the breathing techniques associated with meditation and the sexual techniques of Tantric Yoga and Taoism. The limitations of the paper are such that I have chosen to focus my discussion on one specific Taoist tradition, a school of inner alchemy known as *nei-tan*, literally the "inner elixir."

Central to the Taoist understanding of life is the *Tao*. The Tao is the single principle which governs all the activities of nature, both visible and invisible. It is the path, or track,

⁴³ Ibid., par. 662, p. 464.

⁴⁴ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 133.

⁴⁵ Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W., vol. 14, pars. 774-775, pp. 542-543.

along which all of nature travels.⁴⁶ While the Tao itself is unchanging, it brings “all things into existence.”⁴⁷ From the Tao emerges the two polar energies, *yin* and *yang*. Yin is the dark passive principle often associated with the feminine, while yang is the light active principle corresponding to the masculine.⁴⁸ Through the interaction of yin and yang phenomenal reality comes into existence.⁴⁹

Taoism consists of two main streams, philosophical Taoism known as *Tao chia*, and religious Taoism, *Tao chiao*.⁵⁰ In both *Tao chia* and *Tao chiao*, life is considered a function of the harmonious interaction between yin and yang and their associated energy fields. A belief central to Taoist thought is that life can continue indefinitely if an individual sustains ‘perfect harmony’ between yin and yang.⁵¹ *Tao chia* understood the continuation of life to be without individual form. *Tao chiao*, on the other hand, developed systems and structures to pursue the continuation of an individual body. Within *Tao chiao* itself there are two schools of thought. One school pursued unending life in an immortal physical body while

⁴⁶ R. Wilhelm, explanation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower, A Chinese Book of Life*, trans. Richard Wilhelm. trans. from the German by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1962), p. 11.

⁴⁷ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 37.

⁴⁸ Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber et. al., eds., *The Encyclopaedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1994), p. 428.

⁴⁹ *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, p. 12.

⁵⁰ *Tao-chiao* emerged out of the confluence of four distinct sources in China around 4 B.C.E. These sources were: the literary works of Lao-Tzu, Chuang Tzu, and Lieh-Tzu; a school of hygiene that focused on the interconnectedness between physiology and cosmology; a school of alchemy; and a faith movement that pursued a belief in “the Isle of the Blest” where the secret of immortality was located. The unifying thread amongst all the variant sources was the quest, in one form or another, for immortality. Robert D. Baird and Alfred Bloom, *Indian and Far Eastern Religious Traditions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 201- 202; Fischer-Schreiber, p. 357.

⁵¹ David H. Smith, *Chinese Religions* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), p. 99.

the other pursued an immortal soul body or what is called a *diamond body*. *Nei-tan*, with which we are specifically concerned here, belongs to the latter category. If we were to describe the diamond body of *nei-tan* in psychological terms, it would be as an intensification of consciousness strong enough to survive bodily death.

In *nei-tan* it is believed that the immortal soul enters into the individual at the moment of conception. Upon birth it divides into a polarity consisting of the “superior” mind and the “inferior” mind.⁵² For the spiritual journey to progress, the superior mind must gain control over the inferior mind in a process similar to the integration of the shadow in Analytical Psychology or, as we have seen, in the creation of an *unio mentalis* in medieval alchemy. When the superior mind has succeeded in subordinating the inferior mind, work may begin on the second stage.

The objective of the *nei-tan* second stage is the emergence of the diamond body. To accomplish this, the superior mind must “gather-in” and “distill” *ching* and *ch'i*. As we will see, this is a process that involves training instinctual drives and their energy. We will begin with *ching*. *Ching* is the menstrual flow of a woman and the secretions of the uterus and vulva as well as the semen of a man.⁵³ In its refined state, it consists of primordial vitality “distilled” from these physiological substances. In *nei-tan*, some of the methods that evolved to “gather-in” and “distill” *ching* were sexual techniques.⁵⁴ *The Essence of Medical Prescriptions* was compiled in the tenth century by a Japanese physician. Drawing on

⁵² Fischer-Schreiber, p. 138; *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, pp. 12-16.

⁵³ R.H. van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* in Howard Levy and Akira Ishihara, *The Tao of Sex* (Lower Lake, California: Integral Publishing, 1989), p. 16; Fischer-Schreiber, p. 72.

⁵⁴ We can be fairly certain that sexual techniques were indeed practised literally as there were long-standing disagreements between those Taoist schools who pursued sexual techniques as a means of spiritual cultivation and those who argued sexuality should be an “exclusively inner experience.” Fischer-Schreiber, p. 105.

sources which date back to the Han, Sui, and T'ang dynasties,⁵⁵ this Taoist-based text includes thirty chapters on sexuality subtitled "Within the Bedroom."⁵⁶ "Within the Bedroom" is attributed to P'eng Tsu, known as P'eng the Methuselah, a sage whom legend has it lived for 900 years.⁵⁷ In this work, P'eng provides advice for males on how to "gather-in" *ching*. P'eng recommends maximizing contact (penetrating deeply during intercourse), minimizing leakage (emitting semen as infrequently as possible), changing women often and having intercourse with virgins. In another ancient text, *The Secrets of the Jade Bedroom*, equivalent direction is given to females. As the text explains "not only should the male element be nourished, but the female element should likewise be." For the female element to be nourished, the woman needed to "gain" her partner's semen while not giving-up any of her own "liquid essence," that is to say, secretions from the uterus or vulva.⁵⁸ *Ching* that was not discharged during sexual contact was to be "returned" to the brain.⁵⁹ "Causing the *ching* to return to the brain," or *huan-ching pu-nao*, was accomplished in two steps. The first step involved employing manual techniques to prevent emission of semen while the second consisted of the superior mind using concentration and imagery to guide *ching* along the spinal column to the brain.⁶⁰ Once in the brain, *ching* was "distilled" to primordial

⁵⁵ The oldest dynasty is the Han. It extended from 202 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. Michael Harkavy, ed., *The New Webster's Encyclopedia* (Naples, Florida: Trident Press International, 1996), p. 474.

⁵⁶ Levy and Ishihara, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Levy and Ishihara, p. 15; Medical practitioners in ancient China considered the average life span of a man to be approximately 100 years. If a man was deteriorating by age 50, it was because he was not controlling his sexual emissions, that is to say, he was wasting his *ching*. Levy and Ishihara, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Levy and Ishihara, pp. 8, 15, 16, 27.

⁵⁹ Fischer - Schreiber, p. 105; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 5, pt. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 197.

⁶⁰ Needham, pp. 197-198: While both sexes worked on returning *ching* to the brain, only males used manual

vitality which was said to nourish the brain and the *ch'i* and thus support the creation of the diamond body.⁶¹

In review, we may describe *nei-tan* sexual techniques dealing with *ching* as having two objectives. The first objective is to “gather-in” as much *ching* as possible through sexual contact while not losing any through emissions. The second objective is to distill primordial vitality from accumulated *ching*.⁶² To understand these objectives, we may again refer to the concept of ‘shutting down’ the body in shadow work as described in the section on medieval alchemy. “Gathering-in” as much *ching* as possible -- while not emitting any -- parallels the objective to be achieved through the “shutting-down” of the body in shadow work. That is to say, both objectives are about blocking the unconscious dissipation, or “leakage,” of vital energies. In the case of *nei-tan*, “leakage” occurs through conventional sexual activity undertaken without proper consciousness. With effective shadow work therefore, as with *nei-tan* sexual techniques, the vital energies that are prevented from dissipating are transmuted in such a manner that they are put in the service of higher levels of consciousness.⁶³

In the above paragraph, a comparison was drawn between *nei-tan* sexual techniques and aspects of shadow work in Analytical Psychology. We will now move to contrast the “gathering-in” of *ching* in *nei-tan* with the “accumulation of instinctuality” in

techniques to prevent the emission of their *ching*, i.e., semen.

⁶¹ Needham, p. 198; Fischer-Schreiber, p. 244.

⁶² Another way in which *ching* can be “gathered-in” is by swallowing the saliva that accumulates in the mouth during meditation. It is believed that this saliva constitutes a distillation of vital essences and is thus beneficial to swallow. Fischer-Schreiber, p. 347.

⁶³ The explanation of the critical role played by consciousness in this process was given to me by Robert Aziz.

traditions which do not integrate instinctual drives. "Gathering-in" as much *ching* as possible, while not emitting any, is a form of *purposefully* accumulating instinctuality, or energy, at the unconscious level. In *nei-tan*, as we have seen, this accumulated energy is transformed and placed in the service of higher levels of consciousness. In traditions which do not integrate the drives, ascetic practices which have as their objective the "shutting-down" of sexual tendencies, function to block the flow of libido. This leads to an *unintentional* accumulation of instinctuality. These traditions do not work to "redeem" the accumulation -- i.e., they do not transform it and place it in the service of consciousness -- but rather, continually repress the energy. As a consequence, the accumulated instinctuality "leaks" out into "excesses and aberrations of all kinds," as we saw in the earlier examples of St. Jerome and medieval cloistered women. Our discussion will now return specifically to *nei-tan* and the problem of the cultivation of *ch'i*.

As methods were developed for "gathering-in" and transmuting *ching*, specific techniques were also developed to work with *ch'i*. In its refined form, *ch'i* is the life force or energy that "pervades and enlivens all things" in the cosmos.⁶⁴ *Ch'i* may be worked on both inside and outside of the body. Examples of methods that involve the body are: breath control meditation, physical exercises, dietary programmes, and pharmaceutical methods.⁶⁵ A method for balancing *ch'i* outside the body is *Feng Shui*, the practice of aligning man-made structures and their surrounding landscapes with the forces of nature. The *nei-tan*

⁶⁴ Fischer-Schreiber, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2, p. 143; Harold D. Roth, "Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoist Thought," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51, no. 2 (December 1991): 603.

practitioners strong orientation to inner work led them to choose breath control meditation as a primary method for cultivating *ch'i*.

In that *ch'i* is especially associated with the breath, rhythmic meditative breathing is often used to "gather-in" *ch'i*.⁶⁶ Once *ch'i* has been "gathered-in," it may be guided by the superior mind into specific areas of the body. "Guiding the *ch'i*" is accomplished using concentration and imagery.⁶⁷ By consciously guiding the *ch'i*, a system of channels is opened in the body through which this vital energy is able to circulate in an unobstructed fashion.⁶⁸ The first channel opened is "the lesser celestial circulation" which runs between the lungs, kidneys, liver and heart. The "lesser celestial circulation" forms the foundation for the "grand heavenly circulation." The "grand heavenly circulation" is composed of two channels. The first begins at the lowest tip of the spine then travels up the back along the vertebral column to the head. This channel is fed by an ascending current of *ch'i* depicted as dragon, or yang energy. The second starts at the top of the head then moves through the face, chest and the surface of the abdomen to the base of the spine.⁶⁹ It is infused by a descending current symbolized as tiger or yin energy. At first the two currents of "the grand heavenly

⁶⁶ A number of different methods of breath control mediation were associated with inner alchemy. Only one variation has been presented here. It is based on a description of the process by Chang Chung-Yuan in *Creativity and Taoism, A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art, and Poetry* (New York: The Julian Press, 1963).

⁶⁷ Kristopher Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. K.C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 137.

⁶⁸ The process of opening channels consists primarily of clearing blockages in pre-existing pathways. Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, trans. F. Keirman, Jr. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. 470.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245; Chang Chung-Yuan, pp. 143-151.

circulation” are intermittently linked. To create a continual flow of energy within the body, an “unbroken connection” between the currents must be established.⁷⁰ When the two currents are joined, it is described as a synthesis of yin and yang, tiger and dragon. It is at this point of integration that *shen*, the “embryonic” form of the diamond body, first emerges.⁷¹

We may describe *shen* as a new level of consciousness forged by the superior mind “gathering-in” and transmuting *ching* and *ch'i*. *Shen* represents a synthesis of spirit and instinct which, like the *unio corporalis* in medieval alchemy, fulfills a prerequisite for the next stage in the spiritual journey -- the blossoming of the golden flower.

The golden flower begins to take form and unfold when the individual, through the newly realized *shen* which is still in its embryonic form, opens to Tao. Consciously engaging Tao at this level is also described as enlightenment or a “return to the source.”⁷² This level of encounter with the totality serves to nourish and intensify the embryonic *shen*. As it states in *The Hui Ming Ching, The Book of Consciousness and Life*: “‘Take maternal care of the awakening and the answering.’ The two energies nourish and strengthen one another . . . ‘Daily growth takes place.’”⁷³ Through this, *shen*, the diamond body or immortal soul, undergoes a process of maturation to the extent it is able to burst free from

⁷⁰ *The Hui Ming Ching, The Book of Consciousness and Life* in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, p. 74; Chang Chung-yuan, p. 156.

⁷¹ Fischer - Schreiber, p. 245.

⁷² *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, trans. Mokusei Muyuki in Fischer-Schreiber, p. 349.

⁷³ *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, trans. Wilhelm, p. 75: The first part of the above quotation, that is, “Take maternal care of the awakening and the answering,” was excerpted by the *Hui Min Ching* from the *Leng-yen-ching*.

the body, “like a butterfly from its chrysalis,” upon death.⁷⁴

We may draw a parallel between the blossoming of the golden flower and self-realization in depth psychology. In *The Hui Ming Ching* it states, “the glance of one who has attained fulfilment *returns* to the beauty of *nature*.”⁷⁵ In psychological terms, the fullest approximation of self-realization may also be described as a *return to nature*. As Aziz explains, this is about following the compensatory lead of nature inwardly through dreams and outwardly through the “synchronistic patterning of events.” Through this process we regain the natural balance of spirit and instinct and open to the experience of inner and outer worlds connecting and working together.⁷⁶

To summarize the section on *nei-tan* it is clear that this particular spiritual journey was not an exclusive pursuit of spirit. In *nei-tan*, instinctual drives and their energies were engaged and transmuted through methods such as sexual techniques and breath control meditation. These processes worked to support the emergence of *shen*. Only through this new level of consciousness, a synthesis of spirit and instinct, could the full maturation of the diamond body take place. As Teacher Tou of the Western sacred mountain (*Hua Shan*), a thirteenth century Taoist sage, states: “if the *ching* is abundant it can be [sent up to] nourish the brain, if the brain is nourished it can strengthen the *chhi* [*ch'i*], and if the *chhi* is copious it can complete and perfect the *shen*.”⁷⁷ Integrating spirit and instinct was thus not only

⁷⁴ Smith, p. 99.

⁷⁵ C.G. Jung, commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, trans. R. Wilhelm, trans. from the German by Cary Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1962), p. 133.

⁷⁶ Aziz, “Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical,” pp. 9 & 24 (text: 71 & 92)

⁷⁷ Needham, vol. 5, pt. 5, p. 120.

integral to the *nei-tan* spiritual journey, it was also indispensable -- a *sine qua non* for the emergence of the immortal soul.

In concluding this chapter it may be restated that in Analytical Psychology, spirit and instinct are understood to exist as complementary forces at the level of the unconscious. At the conscious level, however, there is often tension, or imbalance, between the poles. As we have seen, the spirit-instinct polarity has been handled in different ways by the spiritual traditions. Some traditions do not integrate instinctual drives, some allow drives a measure of expression but do not integrate them fully, a few work to balance the poles. Analytical Psychology maintains, however, that for spiritual wholeness to be achieved there must be a balance in which "spirit is grounded in instinct." Tattooing, as we shall see, functions to support this integration.

II

TATTOO AND THE TRANSCENDENT FUNCTION

Jung's model of the psyche consists of two domains, conscious and unconscious. The conscious domain consists of everything known to the individual. Its point of reference is the ego. The unconscious domain has two levels -- personal and collective. The personal level contains material unique to each individual. It is acquired over the course of a life time and consists primarily of information which was once conscious but subsequently forgotten or repressed. The personal unconscious, Jung tells us, also contains material which never had sufficient intensity to enter consciousness in the first place like subliminal perceptions and weak sense impressions.¹ The collective unconscious consists of the archetypes.² To recall, the archetype is a dynamism with two poles. One pole is the realm of instinct and is associated with "innate patterns of action." The other is the realm of spirit and is associated with "innate patterns of meaning." When we say certain patterns of action and meaning are "innate," it means they are common to all people. We can thus speak of the archetypes as *transpersonal factors*. The principal archetype is called the *self*. The self is the archetype of orientation and meaning for the totality of the psyche both conscious and unconscious.³ Another way we

¹ Jung, *Aion*, C.W., vol. 9, pt. 2, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pars. 1-8, pp. 3-5; Jung, *Psychological Types*, C.W., vol. 6, pars. 837-840, pp. 483-484.

² Jung, *Aion*, C.W., vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 13, p. 8.

³ Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, recorded and edited by A. Jaffe, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 199.

can think about the self is as the archetype of wholeness and unity.⁴

As Aziz points out, one of Jung's most important discoveries was that the psyche is a self-regulating system.⁵ Regulation is maintained through what Jung termed *compensation*. Compensation is a function of the unconscious. This is to say, compensation is the *natural action of the unconscious*.⁶ Compensation shapes or directs conscious attitudes so that unconscious contents can come to consciousness. To shape a conscious attitude, the unconscious either supports or redirects the conscious position. The unconscious supports when it is in agreement with the conscious orientation. When the unconscious is not in agreement, it presents a different position.⁷ For an example of the unconscious assuming a stance completely opposite the conscious orientation, we can return to the case of St. Jerome. To recall, St. Jerome practised harsh asceticism including celibacy. As such, we may describe his conscious position as exclusively oriented to the spirit pole of the archetype. His unconscious, on the other hand, assumed a stance strongly in support of the instinctual drives -- as evidenced in St. Jerome's repeated visions of dancing girls.⁸

⁴ Jung, *Aion*, C.W., vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 59, p. 31.

⁵ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 16.

⁶ In this context, function means "the natural action of a person, or thing." For example, "the function of the kidneys is to filter waste products from the blood." *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), p. 459.

⁷ Jung, "On the Nature of Dreams," C.W., vol. 8, par. 546, p. 288. Note: Jung in fact includes a third option, the neutral position. I have chosen not to include this option as it rarely occurs in clinical practice.

⁸ E. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 89.

It is important to note that compensation is “tailored” to the individual.⁹ Someone with a pessimistic view of life may, for instance, be compensated by the unconscious assuming an optimistic position. Another “pessimistic” individual may not, however, respond to optimistically-toned compensation but may respond if the unconscious assumes a darker, bleaker position. When the unconscious compensates in this manner -- i.e., by stressing or exaggerating the conscious position -- it is referred to as the principle of like curing like.¹⁰ To interpret compensation correctly we must consider how it has been individually tailored.

Some unconscious contents that need to come to consciousness are the shadow and the other complexes. The shadow, as previously indicated, is a Jungian term to describe the unknown aspects of the personality. These may be “inferior and guilt-laden,” or they may be more positive attributes.¹¹ We often assign, through projection, our unknown qualities to other people or objects. “The effect of a projection,” Jung writes, “is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it, there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into the replica of one’s unknown face.”¹² Compensation removes the veil that hides the shadow from us, in other words, it reveals our unknown qualities.¹³ This allows us to recognize and withdraw our projections. When projections are

⁹ Jung, “General Aspects of Dream Psychology,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 489-490, pp. 253-254.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Jung, “The Structure and Dynamics of the Self,” *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, pars. 422-423, pp. 266-267.

¹² Jung, “The Shadow,” *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 17, p. 9.

¹³ Aziz, *C.G. Jung’s Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 33.

withdrawn, we take responsibility for *all* aspects of our personality. We also comprehend the true nature of the person or object being observed.¹⁴ These are critical points for as Barbara Hannah writes, “real individual relationship -- in its highest sense -- is possible only when projections are seen as such; for, naturally, projections of bits that really belong to ourselves blind us to seeing the other persons as they really are”¹⁵

Through the process of compensation, complexes are brought to consciousness. In the previous chapter, complexes were defined as “repressed emotional themes.”¹⁶ Jung assigns to the complexes the following qualities: a strong emotional or feeling tone, their own specific energy, their own “inner coherence” and “wholeness,” and a highly “autonomous nature.” (To define them as autonomous means they can operate independently of consciousness.) Jung also describes complexes as “splinter psyches” or “fragmentary personalities.”¹⁷ The influence of the complexes on our lives is surprisingly pervasive. “It is the case,” Aziz writes . . .

that our everyday experiences trigger unconscious themes [*i.e., complexes*] of which one may or may not be aware. It is also generally true, furthermore, the more unaware one is of the unconscious theme in question the more problematic it tends to be. For example, as one is drawing romantically closer to another individual this experience may push the button on an unconscious theme -- a theme which has been constructed out of that individual's past experiences of intimacy. If that theme which is now activated contains unpleasant memories, an alarm goes off telling the individual to pull away, intimacy is dangerous. At the conscious level, the individual then begins

¹⁴ Jung, “Mysterium Coniunctionis,” *C.W.*, vol. 14, par. 710, p. 499.

¹⁵ Barbara Hannah, *Jung: His Life and Work* (London: Michael Joseph, 1977), p. 125 .

¹⁶ Aziz, “Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology,” p. 4 (text: 67); Samuels, et al., *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, pp. 33-35.

¹⁷ Jung, “A Review of Complex Theory,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 200-203, pp. 96-97.

to rationalize why the relationship can't work without ever realizing it is not a defect in the present relationship that is a problem, but rather a defect in his or her experience of intimacy which is now projected onto the present relationship.¹⁸

While the above excerpt is not long, it contains several key points concerning the complexes. These are:

1. Complexes are "repressed emotional themes."
2. They are constructed from past experiences.
3. Complexes become "triggered" when a present experience is associated either consciously, or unconsciously, with a past situation.
4. When they are "triggered," they are then projected on to a present situation.
5. When we are "in the complex," our perception is distorted and our behaviour influenced accordingly.
6. The more unaware we are of our complexes, the more problematic they tend to be, that is to say, the more vulnerable we are.

Through the compensatory process we are led to understand our complexes in the sense of what "triggers" them, what happens when we are in them, and very significantly, how we get out of them.¹⁹ In this manner, we are able to lessen their influence on our lives.²⁰

It is the case that the compensatory activity of the unconscious presents itself

¹⁸ Aziz, "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," p. 3 (text: 67).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ In classical Jungian theory, complexes may be either personal or archetypal. Personal complexes, with which we are concerned here, are to be worked through. Archetypal complexes, on the other hand, cannot be assimilated. "The reintegration of a personal complex," explains Jung, "has the effect of release and often of healing, whereas the invasion of a complex from the collective unconscious is a very disagreeable and even dangerous phenomenon." Jung, "Belief in Spirits," par. 591 in J. Jacobi, *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung*, trans. R. Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 23.

through dreams, slips of the tongue, lapses of memory, spontaneously humming tunes or singing songs, and in physical symptoms, to name a few possibilities. Dreams, to which we now turn, are the most detailed depiction of the ongoing dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. This dialogue often includes a statement about the dreamer's situation or problem and potential solutions to the problem. Through the dream image, the individual is compensated past, present, and future. For example, dream images show us how complexes are constructed from past experiences, how complexes affect us on a day to day basis, and how we can work out of the complexes.²¹ When we study dreams we effectively bring this information to consciousness where it may be utilized in the development of the personality.²²

In Analytical Psychology, dream images are interpreted *subjectively* and *symbolically*. To interpret a dream subjectively is to treat all dream objects and characters as aspects of the dreamer's own personality.²³ If an individual dreams of a specific neighbour, for example, the dream neighbour is understood to be portraying *not* the actual neighbour but instead a particular quality of the dreamer.²⁴ To interpret a dream symbolically is to

²¹ Aziz, "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," pp. 3-5 (text: 67-68)

²² As Jung states "dreams are our most effective aid in building up the personality." C.G. Jung, "The Practical Use of Dream Analysis," *C.W.*, vol. 16, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), par. 332, p. 153.

²³ Jung, *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 509-516, pp. 266-271.

²⁴ In Analytical Psychology, the option exists to interpret dreams at the objective level which equates "dream images with real objects." (Jung, "The Synthetic or Constructive Method," *C.W.*, vol. 7, trans. R.F.C. Hull [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977], par. 130, p. 84 and Jung, "General Aspects of Dream Psychology," *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 510, pp. 267-268.) As this option is not typically exercised in Analytical Psychology, I have chosen to present only subjective level interpretations. Aziz, "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," p. 7 (text: 69-70).

treat all the dream images and patterns as having not one meaning, but many.²⁵ The image of a computer in a dream, for example, may symbolize not only a machine that can compute quickly but also consciousness, or conversely, thinking disconnected from feeling -- to name a few basic possibilities. It is helpful to note that in the Jungian model, symbols are not only "single-self contained images," but also sequences and stories.²⁶

As can be appreciated, there is a degree of complexity involved in interpreting dream images. To determine the meaning of a dream one may have to consider the dreamer's situation, the symbols in the dream, what the symbols represent to the dreamer, and the structure of the dream itself, that is to say, how the symbols relate to each other.²⁷ If compensation is interpreted incorrectly, dreams will attempt to correct the situation. "If we have made a wrong interpretation or it is somehow incomplete, we may," Jung writes, "be able to see it from the next dream. Thus, for example, the earlier motif will be repeated in clearer form, or our interpretation may be deflated by some ironic paraphrase, or it may meet with straight forward violent opposition."²⁸

We turn now to an example of dream interpretation. The dream, originally presented in Jung's *Collected Works*, reads as follows: "*Many people are present. They are all walking to the left around a square. The dreamer is not in the centre but to one side. They*

²⁵ Jung, "The Significance of Dreams," *C.W.*, vol. 18, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), par. 520, p. 226.

²⁶ Jacobi, *Complex, Archetype, and Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung*, p. 77.

²⁷ Jung, "The Problem of Types in Dream Interpretation," *C.W.*, vol. 18, par. 520, p. 226.

²⁸ Jung, "The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *C.W.*, vol. 7, par. 189, p. 111.

*say that a gibbon is to be reconstructed.”*²⁹

In the way of background information, Jung tells us that the dreamer was a young man who had “neglected his instinctual personality in favour of an exclusively intellectual attitude.”³⁰ As a consequence, the man suffered from instinctual drives that periodically attacked him in the form of “uncontrollable outbursts.”³¹ (Prior to the dream, the young man in fact had a vision of being threatened not only by an elephant but also by a club-wielding ape-man -- both striking images of his primitive instinctual drives.³²)

We know from the above that the dreamer’s instinctual drives were repressed and problematic. We also know from clinical experience that dreams may use gibbons or other primates to symbolize primitive or unrefined instinctual drives. The key dream image thus appears to be the reconstruction of the gibbon. Within the given context, we may interpret this to mean that the individual’s primitive instinctual drives are to be reconstructed, that is to say retrained, to behave in a more natural manner. (To recall what was presented earlier, the development of the personality requires retraining the drives after they have been separated-out from the shadow and the complexes.³³) The retraining of the instinctual

²⁹ Jung, “The Symbolism of the Mandala,” *C.W.*, vol. 12, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), par. 164, p. 124.

³⁰ Jung, “Psychology and Religion,” *C.W.*, vol. 11, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), par. 56, pp. 34-35.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Jung, “The Symbolism of the Mandala,” *C.W.*, vol. 12, par. 117, p. 89.

³³ As noted in Chapter One, footnote 39, the concept of differentiating the drives from the shadow and the complexes then retraining them to behave in a more natural manner is directly attributable to conversations with Robert Aziz.

drives is thus the solution the dream is revealing.³⁴

We turn now to slips of the tongue, memory lapses, the spontaneous singing or humming of tunes, and physical symptoms. In comparison to dreams, these forms of compensation are limited in their presentation of the problem,³⁵ that is to say, they provide only an indication of the problem and reveal no solution. With a slip of the tongue we say one thing when we intend to say something else. For example, Freud writes of a member of parliament who referred to another not as "the honourable member for Central Hull" but as "the honourable member for Central Hell."³⁶ We know from this slip that the individual considered Central Hull to be hell. We might moreover understand this to mean that the individual considered parliament to be hell.³⁷ We need to inquire further, however, to find out what specifically makes it hell. If we were to analyse the man's dreams, for instance, we might find that he is introverted, has trouble being assertive and has an inferiority complex. We might also find the individual's dreams constructing solutions to address his issues -- i.e., ways to work on his inferiority complex or deal with his non-assertiveness. Dreams are thus able to identify the issues and complexes at work, and can construct solutions to the problems, all in a manner slips of the tongue cannot.

³⁴ As Jung explains it, "The reconstruction of the ape means the rebuilding of the instinctual personality within the framework of the hierarchy of consciousness." Jung, "Psychology and Religion," *C.W.*, vol. 11, par. 56, pp. 34-35.

³⁵ Jung, "The Transcendent Function," *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 154, pp. 77-78.

³⁶ Freud, "The Psychology of Errors," in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, trans. Joan Riviere, (New York: Liverwright Publishing, 1935), pp. 31-32.

³⁷ It is possible that the individual considered Central Hull (the place), rather than parliament, to be hell. In either case, we need to investigate further to develop a more comprehensive perspective of the problem at hand.

When we study ‘less comprehensive forms’ of compensation we are essentially identifying a tension between the conscious and unconscious positions. Freud, for example, tells the story of a series of memory lapses suffered by Ernest Jones, a long time associate. Jones once “allowed a letter to lie on his writing desk for several days for some unknown reason.” “At last,” Freud continues, “he decided to post it, but received it back from the dead-letter office, for he had forgotten to address it. After he had addressed it he took it to post but this time without a stamp. At this point he finally had to admit to himself his objection to sending the letter at all.”³⁸ As this excerpt highlights, memory lapses indicate a tension or split between the conscious and unconscious orientation. To discover what is creating this tension requires us to explore further. We may, for instance, find that Jones had intended to mail the letter to his brother. By talking with Jones about his brother we might find that their relationship is complicated by intense sibling rivalry. By referring to Jones’ dreams, we would find a full treatment of this rivalry as well as solutions for working through the problem.

Like a slip of the tongue or a lapse of memory, spontaneously humming a tune or singing a song indicates tension between the conscious and unconscious positions.³⁹ We begin to analyse the tension by exploring the words being sung or the tune being hummed. An individual may be spontaneously singing quite poignant songs about leaving home or taking a journey. If we were to investigate further we may find the individual is

³⁸ Freud, p. 51.

³⁹ Jung, *The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease*, C.W., vol. 3, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), par. 109, p. 54; Jung, *Experimental Researches*, C.W., vol. 2, revised R.F.C. Hull, originally translated by H.G. Baynes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 252.

about to go off to university. We might also find, however, that the individual is thinking only about how much fun it will be away from home without considering how much he or she may miss family and friends. In this case, compensation is supporting the individual by attempting to call to his or her attention the need for a more accurate assessment of the upcoming transition.⁴⁰

The above example serves to make an important point -- that being that when we speak of the existence of tension between the conscious and the unconscious, we are not necessarily talking about conflicting, or opposing, positions. Tension can also be a function of the conscious and the unconscious not being fully aligned. For example, both the conscious and the unconscious may be moving toward the same goal. The unconscious may, however, have information the conscious position needs to know, but doesn't know, to reach this goal. As the two positions are different, a tension is involved.

There are several places in the *Collected Works* where Jung describes physical symptoms serving as compensation for imbalances in the psyche.⁴¹ He writes, for instance, of a man who began to experience a "peculiar kind of vertigo . . . palpitation, nausea and particular attacks of feebleness and a sort of exhaustion." His symptoms were those of mountain sickness -- even though the man had not been at high altitude.⁴² When Jung talked to the man, he discovered the individual was one-sided intellectually and intent on rapid

⁴⁰ Jung, "The Language of Dreams," *C.W.*, vol. 18, par. 473, p. 208.

⁴¹ Jung, *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, *C.W.*, vol. 16, pars. 549-564, pp. 332-338; Jung, "The Philosophical Tree," *C.W.*, vol. 13, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), par. 455, p. 335.

⁴² Jung, "The Tavistock Lectures," *C.W.*, vol. 18, par. 161, p. 78.

career advancement. The individual's dream images revealed, furthermore, that he had a tendency to rush ahead without regard for proper preparations or human limitations. The man was thus behaving, Jung writes, as if assaulting a mountain -- climbing higher and higher without rest or the necessary equipment. This, Jung tells us, was the reason for the man's symptoms of mountain sickness.⁴³ (It is of interest to note that the physical symptoms not only served as compensation for imbalances in the psyche, but also employed the principle of like curing like. ⁴⁴) We turn now to how compensation works when we are faced with problems intrinsic to the human condition.

It is the case that we are at times confronted with problems or issues common to all human beings like birth, death, adolescence, sexuality, and relationship.⁴⁵ When we are faced with such problems, dreams reveal symbols and stories that parallel those found in myths and religions throughout the world. Examples of such symbols and stories are, as Aziz tells us, "dismemberment and renewal, wholeness and self-realization, the God-man, the hero, the mandala, initiatory ordeals and rites of passage, and the great mother" ⁴⁶ It is important to note that these symbols appear in dreams of people who have no acquired knowledge of them. (This means that these symbols are in fact emerging from the collective or archetypal

⁴³ Ibid., pars. 161- 201, pp. 78-94.

⁴⁴ To recall, the principle of like curing like is when the unconscious compensates by stressing or exaggerating the conscious position.

⁴⁵ Aziz, "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," p. 4 (text: 67- 68); The paragraph follows Aziz's work as presented in "Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," pp. 4-5 (text: 67-68) and Aziz, *"C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity,"* p. 53.

⁴⁶ Aziz, *"C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity,"* p. 53.

levels of the unconscious.) Aziz describes this type of compensation as *transpersonal compensation*. To continue with Aziz . . .

I could use as a case example of such transpersonal compensation the dream of a five year old boy. The boy's younger brother had become ill with a neurological disorder that resulted in his sudden and unexpected death. The whole family was grief stricken, especially the children who as much as adults seek understanding. During this time of crisis, the five year old dreamt that his aunt, his father's sister, sneezed and the baby was now alive and okay. They could go and pick him up at the hospital.

The five year old child certainly would not have known that one says 'God Bless you' when someone else sneezes because it has long been believed that the soul may escape the body at that moment in the absence of an appropriate blessing. The child would not have known, furthermore, that the belief most likely came from the notion that breath and life are one and the same, such as we find in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The child would not have known that his dream was a rebirth dream in which the soul of his brother was being reborn following his death through the sneeze of his aunt, much as the soul carried within a woman for nine months is separated out from her body at the moment of birth. The child would not have known, moreover, that his aunt, having been the child's caregiver when his mother was at work, was a most appropriate choice as the second mother through which the second birth should occur. The five year old child certainly would not have understood the subtleties of interpretation I have presented here to illustrate transpersonal compensation. What the child did know, however, was that his brother who had died was now alive.⁴⁷

In the way of summarizing what has been presented above, we can state that when we are faced with *transpersonal problems* the psyche responds with *transpersonal solutions*.⁴⁸ (This is how Aziz characterizes Jung's understanding of the archetypal psyche.) In the above example, the transpersonal problem was the death of a family member. The transpersonal solution constructed by the dream was an experience of rebirth, that is to say,

⁴⁷ Aziz, "Synchronicity and The Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology," pp. 4-5 (text: 67-68).

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 4 (text: 67).

a consciousness stuck in death was released, through the dream, into a consciousness of rebirth. Another way to describe this compensatory event would be to say the point of view of nature or the unconscious was conveyed to that child. As the excerpt indeed indicates, the child experienced this as healing.

Ultimately, compensation is concerned with the comprehensive development of the personality. Jung termed this process *individuation*. Through his study of long dream-series, Jung came to realize that “apparently separate acts of compensation arrange themselves into a kind of plan.” “They seem to hang together,” Jung writes, “and in the deepest sense to be subordinated to a common goal, so that a long dream-series no longer appears as a senseless string of incoherent and isolated happenings, but resembles the successive steps in a planned and orderly process of development.”⁴⁹ Central to Jung’s understanding of “this planned and orderly process” is his concept of the self, the archetype of orientation and meaning. Jung describes the self as both the *spiritus rector* and the *goal* of individuation.⁵⁰ As the *spiritus rector*, the self is an active force which, through compensation, guides and directs the individuation process.⁵¹ As the goal, the self is one’s ultimate spiritual wholeness.⁵² Another

⁴⁹ Jung, “On The Nature of Dreams,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, par. 505, p. 289.

⁵⁰ “As early as 1918,” Aziz writes, “Jung began to understand that the self as the archetype of orientation and meaning is both the director of this comprehensive developmental process, that is to say, its *spiritus rector*, and that toward which the process is directed, its goal.” Aziz, “Synchronicity and the Transformation of the Ethical in Jungian Psychology,” p. 18 (text: 78).

⁵¹ Jung, *Aion*, *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 411, p. 260.

⁵² Jung also describes the self as the “the essence of psychic wholeness,” and “the totality of conscious and unconscious.” Jung, “The Holy Men of India,” *C.W.*, vol. 11, par. 959, p. 582.

way we may think of individuation is as a conscious journey toward wholeness ⁵³ -- which is to say, our deepest meaning.

Compensation brings to consciousness the unconscious contents necessary for individuation. Analytical psychology typically describes this as occurring in three phases -- the realization of the shadow, the differentiation of the *anima* and *animus*, and the emergence of images of the self. As we have already discussed the shadow, we will begin with what Jung called the anima and animus. The anima is the contrasexual image in the man while the animus is the contrasexual image in a woman.⁵⁴ In their undifferentiated states, the anima is a caricature of the feminine principle of *Eros*, or relatedness, while the animus is a caricature of the masculine *Logos*, logic and goal orientation. Prior to differentiation, they are also contaminated with aspects of the shadow. In this "condition," they are projected onto members of the opposite sex. Compensation leads us to withdraw our animus/anima projections. We are also led to differentiate-out our contrasexual images from our shadows. This allows us to develop real relationship to each other and true relatedness and goal orientation within.⁵⁵ Jung writes, furthermore, that a differentiated anima or animus functions as a guide or psychopomp to the deeper, collective levels of the psyche and to images of the self, to which we now turn.⁵⁶

⁵³ Jung, "The Symbolism of the Mandala," *C.W.*, vol. 12, par. 330, p. 222.

⁵⁴ Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 391.

⁵⁵ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 34.

⁵⁶ Jung, *Aion*, *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, pars. 33 & 56, pp. 16 & 29-30; Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, New York: Double Day & Company, 1964), pp. 180-181 & p. 193.

When sufficient personality development has taken place, dreams begin to reveal images of our innate wholeness. These transpersonal symbols are the same, Jung writes, “as those which mankind has always used to express wholeness, completeness, and perfection.”⁵⁷ Transpersonal symbols of the self include mandalas, quaternities, Buddha and Christ figures. The self may also be represented by flowers, trees, mountains, lakes, and a whole range of animals such as “elephants, horses, bulls, bears, white and black birds, fishes and snakes.”⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ We can distinguish dream images of the self from “ordinary” dream images of flowers, trees, mountains, etc. by their numinosity⁶⁰ and by the profound experience of healing they convey.⁶¹ Jung tells us they are distinguishable because they “transcend the scope of the ego-personality in the manner of a daimonion”—that is to say, in the manner of a demi-god.⁶² Indeed, the conscious experience of these images conveys that the ego does not constitute the totality but is instead a part related to a much larger whole.⁶³

As the above suggests, for individuation to proceed the ego must give-up its claim

⁵⁷ Jung, “The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,” *C.W.*, vol. 7, par. 186, p. 110.

⁵⁸ Jung, *Aion*, *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 304 & 351, pp. 195 & 224.

⁵⁹ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 21.

⁶⁰ Jung, *Psychological Types*, *C.W.*, vol. 6, par. 791, p. 461.

⁶¹ Jung, “A Psychological Approach to the Trinity,” *C.W.*, vol. 11, par. 285, p. 191; Marie-Louise von Franz, *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), pp. 365-368.

⁶² Jung, *Aion*, *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 356, p. 226 in Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 21-22.

⁶³ Jung, *Aion*, *C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 9, p. 5.

to the “superordinate position” within the psyche and must instead place itself in the service of the self.⁶⁴ Jung specifically talks about these dynamics in terms of the *transcendent function*.⁶⁵ The transcendent function is a Jungian technical term used to describe how new levels of integration emerge out of the dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious, the ego and the self.⁶⁶ Another way we can think of the transcendent function is as a dialectical process. To describe something as dialectic is to assert a *thesis* meets an *antithesis* to produce a *synthesis*, or *new third*.⁶⁷ It works as follows. The conscious position, or ego position, is the thesis. The unconscious position is the antithesis. The unconscious position comes forward to compensate the conscious position. The conscious position works to integrate the unconscious position. What emerges from this interaction -- i.e., that which is incorporated into day-to-day life in the sense of what really changes -- becomes the third or the synthesis. The synthesis then becomes the next thesis which the unconscious comes forward to compensate, and so on in an endless process. [The degree to which the ego integrates the unconscious position is also, we might note, the degree to which the ego has placed itself in the service of the self.]

When compared to the ultimate spiritual wholeness attempting to emerge, the

⁶⁴ Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 196 in Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 18.

⁶⁵ Jung, “The Transcendent Function,” *C.W.*, vol. 8, pars. 131-193, pp. 67-91. Particular note should be taken of pars. 184 -185, p. 88 & par. 193, p. 91.

⁶⁶ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 25.

⁶⁷ Jung, “Principles of Practical Psychotherapy,” *C.W.*, vol. 16, par. 1, p. 3: see also Claire Douglas, “The Historical Context of Analytical Psychology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, eds. P. Young-Eisendrath and T. Dawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 22 and J. Jacobi, *The Psychology of C.G. Jung* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 66.

synthesis will always be relatively imperfect and in need of refinement.⁶⁸ The transcendent function is, in this way, an ongoing process of bringing progressive levels of spiritual wholeness into life. It is never, *per se*, complete. As Jung writes, "The goal is important only as an idea; the essential thing is the *opus* which leads to the goal; *that* is the goal of a life time. In its attainment 'left and right' are united, and conscious and unconscious work in harmony."⁶⁹ The transcendent function is thus intrinsic to the ongoing integration of spirit and instinct and we see it at work in the practice of tattooing -- to which we now turn.

We may think of tattoos as symbols in the transcendent function. As such, the tattoo may represent any one of the three positions discussed -- conscious, unconscious, or synthesis. *Conscious position tattoos* depict the individual's conscious or ego position at a given point in time. *Unconscious position tattoos* represent unconscious contents that need to come to consciousness. That is to say, they depict the antithesis or counter-position. *Synthesis tattoos* express new levels of integration wherein previously unconscious contents have not only come to consciousness but have also been integrated in day-to-day life. Consistent with the ongoing nature of the transcendent function, synthesis tattoos become the first position. We determine the category in which to place a tattoo by its compensatory meaning to the individual.

The nature of tattooing is such that the individual can be led to engage the

⁶⁸ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 26-27; Jung, "The Function of the Unconscious," *C.W.*, vol. 7, par. 274, p. 177.

⁶⁹ Jung, "The Psychology of The Transference," *C.W.*, vol. 16, par. 400, p. 200.

transcendent function in quite a dramatic manner -- no matter which of the three positions the tattoo initially represents. To permanently etch something under your skin is an intense, painful, process. It certainly creates a more profound impact than recording an image in a dream journal. The following excerpt is taken from a letter originally submitted to the magazine, *Tattoo*. In telling us the story of her tattoo, a woman named Katy reveals how she was thrust, through tattoo, into this process of change. "About two months ago," as Katy writes . . .

I got a tattoo from Tribal Passage [*a tattoo shop*] . . . After I got the tattoo it was very strange because I kept thinking about a personal problem I was having every time I looked at it in the mirror. At first I thought the design was a sick reminder, but after about three weeks, I realized that the focus of this problem was actually helping me work through it. Now whenever I see the tattoo I feel strength from it because somehow the sight of it triggered my thoughts into overcoming the problem.⁷⁰

In the above excerpt, the tattoo depicts a problem Katy was having but was unable to resolve. The tattoo thus represents Katy's conscious or ego position. With the application of the tattoo, Katy is thrown into the transcendent function. She suddenly finds herself compelled to concentrate on the problem which is now graphically depicted in her tattoo. Its permanent placement on her body means it is "right there" for her to contemplate each time she looks in a mirror. Through this intense focus, the compensatory contents of the unconscious needed to solve the problem are brought to consciousness.⁷¹ We can thus speak of a synthesis having emerged out of the dialectic between thesis and antithesis,

⁷⁰ Letter from Katy, Lakehurst, N.J., in "Tattoo Mailbox," *Tattoo*, no. 95 (July 1997): p. 13.

⁷¹ As Katy states, "At first I thought the design was a sick reminder, but after about three weeks, I realized that the focus of the problem was actually helping me work through it." *Ibid.*

problem and solution. As Katy writes, "Now whenever I see the tattoo I feel strength from it because somehow the sight of it triggered my thoughts into overcoming the problem."

As Katy's experience suggests, a tattoo can lead an individual to engage the transcendent function in a way he or she otherwise would not. While a dream symbol may vanish with the break of dawn, the compensatory meaning of a tattoo is more likely to be held in consciousness because of its permanent placement on the body. Unlike dreams and visions, tattoos are, moreover, visible to other people. As such, tattooed individuals are typically confronted with questions like "What does your tattoo mean?" When others show interest in a tattoo, be it a furtive glance or a prolonged stare, the tattooed individual is led once again to focus on the tattoo's compensatory meaning. Through permanency, placement, and outside reinforcement, the tattoo thus works to support the holding of consciousness on a meaning that is of profound compensatory significance to the individual. In that, that meaning is brought into direct relationship to the body, the tattoo, I would suggest, makes a unique contribution to the integration of spirit and instinct.

III

THE COMPENSATORY IMPORT OF COLLECTIVELY MANDATED TATTOO

The initiative to tattoo takes its impetus in either collective/cultural directives or the individual desire for self-expression. When the impetus is in collective or cultural directives, the individual is essentially bound by collective or cultural rules, regulations, or even strong expectations, to become tattooed. When the impetus lies in the individual desire for self-expression, the individual is driven primarily by internal rather than external forces.

Tattoos that are collectively/culturally mandated become instruments for defining the individual's identity as it relates to the group and the group's as it relates to the individual. Such tattoos also provide collectively/culturally sanctioned symbols that mediate the individual to him or herself, to animate or inanimate objects, or to a deity or spirit.

Collectively/culturally mandated tattoos define the individual's identity as it relates to the group and the group's as it relates to the individual by indicating lineage, marital status, stage in life, family name, religious affiliation, and place in a collective hierarchy, to name but a few possibilities. Prior to the mid-1800's, the Maori of New Zealand tattooed extensively. Their tattoos, or *Moko*, were an integral part of an individual's social identity or *persona*.¹ Consisting of deeply engraved swirls and lines, *Moko* dramatically depicted

¹ Ronald Scutt and Christopher Gotch, *Skin Deep. The Mystery of Tattooing* (London: Peter Davies, 1974), p. 37; T.A. Simmons, *Ta Moko. The Art of Maori Tattoo* (Auckland: Reed Methun, 1986), pp. 129-143.

a person's occupation, 'proximity' to the gods, social status, and place in a tribal hierarchy, among other things.² In describing the *Moko* of one Te Aho Te Rangi Wharepu, T.A. Simmons highlights just how much information about a person and his/her relationship to the group can be conveyed in the individual's tattoos. As Simmons tells us, Wharepu's marks indicate that he was not only a Maori chief, but also "a *tohunga* who belonged to the first rank of *noaia* and, according to the two semi-circles on his lower lip, was a leading adviser to the *ahupiri*."³ (*Tohunga* were experts in a particular field of endeavour while *noaia* were "warriors who assisted in achieving political stability." *Ahupiri* were "paramount chiefs who had in their care a district or section of the country."⁴) Simmons goes on to note that "the unfinished lines on [*Wharepu's*] cheek and the joined up ray on the mouth indicate that he had rank equal to the second lineage."⁵ A picture of Wharepu's tattoos may be found in the appendix, page 108.

The use of a tattoo to depict an individual's place within a collective hierarchy, that is to say his/her rank, is not unique to the Maori. According to Herodotus, a 5th Century Greek historian, Thracians of "high birth" were tattooed.⁶ Historical records also tell us that during the 18th Century, the Quapaw Indians tattooed warriors and chiefs with the image

² Simmons, pp. 129 - 143.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 169.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 129 - 143.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 169.

⁶ Herodotus, *Herodotus*, vol. III, trans. by A.D. Godley (London: William Heinemann, Ltd, 1957), p. 7.

of a roebuck.⁷ We furthermore know that up until the turn of the twentieth century, the Haida of British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands tattooed chiefs with the crests of all the families within their jurisdiction.⁸ We can think of tattoos that indicate rank as analogous to military insignia. At a glance, they allow the individual to know his/her place in the collective or culture and the collective or culture to know the individuals. Such tattoos thus support not only the correct functioning of the individual, but also the correct functioning of the group within which the individual is contained.

For a somewhat different perspective on tattoos and rank, we turn to prisons in the former Soviet Union. Although tattooing was officially prohibited in Soviet jails, criminologist Arkady Bronnikov informs us that it was extensively practised by inmates nonetheless. In describing the role of tattoos in Soviet prison life, Bronnikov relates that they indicated the number and types of offences an individual had committed, his/her connections to organized crime (both inside and outside of prison), his/her world view, and how well he/she was enduring the prison experience, among other things. The absence of a tattoo also communicated specific information as neither white collar criminals nor political prisoners were generally speaking tattooed.⁹ As much of the above information

⁷ A.T. Sinclair, "Tattooing of the North American Indians," *American Anthropologist* n.s. 11 (1909): 389.

⁸ James Swan, "The Haidah Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia," *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge* 267 (1874) microfiche, p. 4 ; Marianne Boelscher, *The Curtain Within. Haida Social and Mythical Discourse* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), p.142.

⁹ Arkady Bronnikov, "Telltale Tattoos in Russian Prisons," *Natural History* 102, no.11 (November 1993): 50- 53.

correlated to an individual's rank in a four-tiered prison hierarchy,¹⁰ one could gain a sense of where an individual fit in the scheme of things with reference to his/her tattoos.¹¹ An eight-point star tattooed just below the collar bone, to turn to a specific example, typically indicated that the person was a professional criminal and an "enforcer" who thus belonged to one of the upper echelons of the prisoners' ranking system. Another tattoo design employed by enforcers was that of a Bogatyr, or "medieval Russian folk hero."¹² A tattoo depicting the black eyes of a fly, on the other hand, indicated that the person was a pederast, an offence which relegated the individual to the bottom of the inmate's classification scheme.¹³

While the situation of Soviet inmates was certainly different from that of the Maori, Quapaw, or Haida, their tattoos nonetheless functioned in a similar manner. That is to say, they allowed individuals to ascertain their place in the group, and the group to ascertain the individuals.

At times, tattoos mediate sub-collectives to the main collective. Egyptian Coptic Christians, for instance, have lived for centuries within a much larger Muslim community.

¹⁰ At the top of this hierarchy were *pakhans*, or ring leaders. Below *pakhans* were "authorities, enforcers, fighters or soldiers." As their name[s] suggest, these individuals were responsible for carrying out *pakhan's* orders. Bronnikov furthermore informs us that *pakhans* and authorities were not only professional criminals, but also members of high standing within organized crime gangs -- both inside and outside of the prison system. The third level, or "men," were those "hard labourers whom [were] capable of standing up for themselves." The bottom tier consisted of the "outcasts, or untouchables," those broken by their prison experience. Bronnikov, p. 53.

¹¹ As Bronnikov puts it, "The immediate reaction of newcomers to a camp when they first see the tattooed prisoners is respect and a certain fear, as well as an understanding of the tattooed prisoners' seniority." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 53 & 57.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

For centuries, Coptic Christians have also tattooed crosses on the insides of their wrists, allowing them to easily discern who is or is not a member of their own group.¹⁴ While this facilitates the functioning of the Coptic sub-collective, it also allows Muslims to recognize Christians and treat them accordingly. The Coptic tattoo functions moreover “as a deterrent dissuading any Copts from later converting to Islam.”¹⁵ Another way we may think of this is as irreversible, self-imposed segregation. While there is always an element of segregation in sub-collectives, the above example points to how a tattoo can be a statement of intentionally, though respectfully, not belonging to the other. Punk rockers and outlaw bikers, on the other hand, are sub-collectives that use tattoos to not only reinforce their distinctiveness, but to also indicate a rebellious attitude toward the mainstream and its associated values.¹⁶

Throughout the ages, tattoos have been used not only to indicate self-segregation, but also to ostracize publicly those the main stream considers unacceptable in some way. The ancient Greeks, Romans, and the Japanese, for instance, tattooed individuals convicted of certain criminal offences.^{17 18} Up until the later years of the 17th Century, the Japanese moreover used tattoos to distinguish easily, and thus further isolate, an entire class of people

¹⁴ Tim Coleman, “The Vanishing Art of Egyptian Tattooing,” *International Tattoo Art* (May 1999): 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ D. Wojcik, *Punk and Neo-Tribal Body Art* (Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1995), p. 17; Buzz, “Mid-West Ink. The Colour of Things in Milwaukee,” *Tattoo*, no. 20 (September 1990): 26-29.

¹⁷ C.P. Jones, “Stigma: Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 148-149.

¹⁸ D. Richie and I. Buruma, *The Japanese Tattoo* (New York: Weatherhill, 1996), pp. 12-13. The Japanese in fact tattooed those convicted of serious criminal offences up until the late 17th Century.

known as the “untouchables.”¹⁹ The Nazi tattooing of Jews is a contemporary example of tattoos being used to denote permanently the “undesirable” nature of an entire group or collective.²⁰ As Jews have long considered it religiously unacceptable to be tattooed,²¹ we may furthermore describe the Nazi practice as a concerted effort to induce states of self-alienation amongst their Jewish victims.

When tattoos are used to call negative public attention to an individual or group, they not only permanently ostracize but also perpetually punish. In that the mark that punishes and segregates is engraved into the body itself, such tattoos work against an integration of spirit and instinct.

We turn now to how collectively/culturally provided tattoo symbols may mediate the individual to him/herself, that is to say, facilitate self-relationship.²² We know from Analytical Psychology that the development of the personality is supported by the unconscious. The developmental process will be supported either by symbols that spontaneously emerge through the compensatory process, as discussed in the previous

¹⁹ In describing the “untouchables,” Richie and Buruma inform us that this class consisted of both the *hinin*, or “non-people,” and the *burakumin*, or “village people.” These two groups “lived in separate communities” and worked at tasks the mainstream found offensive, like executing criminals, digging graves, slaughtering animals, and leather working. Richie and Buruma, pp. 12 - 13.

²⁰ During recent years, it has been suggested that individuals with H.I.V. should be also be tattooed -- presumably as a means of ensuring that others are informed of their [potentially] infectious condition. Henk Schiffmacher, *1000 Tattoos* (London: Taschen, 1996), p. 17; Mark Gustafson, “*Inscripta in fronte*: Penal Tattooing in Late Antiquity,” *Classical Antiquity* 16, no.1 (April 1997): 96.

²¹ Victor Turner, “Bodily Marks,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 2, ed. M. Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 271.

²² Note: For the balance of this paper, the phrase collective/cultural will be reduced to collective. Likewise, the phrase collectively/culturally will be reduced to collectively. This is merely to reduce awkwardness. It is not meant to imply cultural aspects are no longer being considered.

chapter, or it will be supported by specific archetypal or transpersonal symbols that have been collectively adopted.²³ It is important to note that the origins of collectively adopted archetypal symbols lie in the unconscious. This means that these symbols, though now presented at the conscious level, still possess a healing effect. When a collective adopts an archetypal symbol, like the “hero” for instance, it modifies it along certain collectively determined lines. That is to say, collectives have their own socially sanctioned takes on specific archetypal themes. Among the Sioux, for example, the hero is depicted as a highly successful warrior. In the Mennonite sub-collective, on the other hand, the hero is the one who refuses to engage in battle. For the Inuit, the hero is the hunter who is capable of taking a large game animal like a whale or bear, yet within the Greenpeace organization, the hero is the individual who risks his/her life to save animals.

To present another example of a transpersonal or archetypal symbol that has been collectively adopted and modified, we turn to the mandala or sacred circle. When we look at mandalas in various collectives, we find that not only are their designs all different, but that it is not atypical for them to contain an image of a deity in their centre. As Jung relates in discussing the import of mandalas in Eastern religions, they may contain a central image of Shiva and Shakti embracing or “Buddha, Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara . . . one of the great Mahayana teachers, or simply the *dorje*, symbol of all the divine forces together, whether creative or destructive in nature.”²⁴ In Christian mandalas, the central place may

²³ The distinction between fixed and spontaneous symbols, and the discussion that follows, is derived from work presented by Aziz in *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 9-10.

²⁴ Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 125, pp. 97-98 in Esther Harding, *Psychic Energy, Its Source and Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963), pp. 389-390.

be accorded a depiction of Christ “surrounded by the evangelists”²⁵ or Mary “seated with God the father and God the son.”²⁶ Among the Navaho, Pueblo, and Sioux, the centre of the mandala may contain an image (or item) representative of Father Sky and/or Mother Earth.²⁷ As the preceding indeed suggests, a collectively adopted and modified version of a mandala depicts a specific collective’s understanding of ultimate wholeness.

When an individual is presented with a collectively adopted and modified archetypal or transpersonal symbol, it not only activates the unconscious such that energies are released to support the developmental need in question, but also works to direct the emerging development along collectively determined lines. The compensatory import of such symbols is thus not individually tailored, as is the case with symbols which spontaneously emerge through the compensatory process, but is rather directed toward the group and the individual’s development as it relates to the group. For help in understanding how collectively adopted and modified archetypal symbols may work in the practice of tattooing, we turn to “hero” tattoos.

Collectives have long used tattoos to indicate exceptional individual achievements like killing enemy warriors,²⁸ taking a bear or a whale,²⁹ or completing an arduous spiritual

²⁵ Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 242.

²⁶ Harding, pp. 389-390.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390; Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, pp. 213-214.

²⁸ Sinclair, “Tattooing of the North American Indians,” p. 389.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 373-374; Joy Gritton, “Labrets and Tattooing in Native Alaska,” in *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), pp. 188 - 189.

pilgrimage.³⁰ As highly visible permanent reminders of outstanding accomplishments, such tattoos not only increase their owners' stature within their community, but also work to "awaken" the hero within others who see the tattoos. That is to say, hero tattoos not only work to activate unconscious energies within those who see the tattoos, but also function to direct this energy into those exceptionally difficult tasks most valued by the collective in question.

A particularly vivid account of a tattooed hero is recounted by one John Heckewelder, an 18th Century Christian missionary who worked among the Indians of what is now Pennsylvania and Ohio. Heckewelder's narrative is of value not only for his graphic description of the hero's scarred and tattooed body, but also because he draws our attention to the powerful effect these images had on others. The text reads as follows:

In the year 1742, a veteran warrior of the Lenape nation and Monsey tribe, renowned among his own people for his bravery and prowess, and equally dreaded by their enemies, joined the Christian Indians who then resided at this place [Bethlehem, Pa.]. This man, who was then at an advanced age, had a most striking appearance, and could not be viewed without astonishment. Besides that his body was full of scars, where he had been struck and pierced by the arrows of the enemy, there was not a spot to be seen, on that part of it which was exposed to view, but what was tattooed over with some drawing relative to his achievements, so that the whole together struck the beholder with amazement and terror. On his whole face, neck, shoulders, arms, thighs, and legs, as well as on his breast and back, were represented scenes of the various actions and engagements he had been in; in short, the whole of his history was there deposited, which was well known to those of his nation, and was such that all who heard it thought it could never be surpassed by man.³¹

³⁰ J. Carswell, *Coptic Tattoo Designs* (Beirut: Harb Bijjani, 1958), p. 12; A. T. Sinclair, "Tattooing -- Oriental and Gypsy," *American Anthropologist* n.s. 10, no. 3 (1908): 362-363.

³¹ John Heckewelder, "Indian Nations," *Mem. Hist. Soc. Pa.*, vol. 12, Phila., 1876, p. 206 in Sinclair, "Tattooing of the American Indians," pp. 391-392.

In using words associated with numinosity -- that is to say, astonishment, amazement, and terror -- Heckewelder's narrative reveals the archetypal or transpersonal nature of his encounter with this impressively tattooed warrior.³² It may thus be suggested that Heckewelder's unconscious was indeed activated when he was presented with this highly visible embodiment of the hero. As we can well imagine, the sight of this individual would have worked to awaken the hero within many who saw him.

We turn now to a discussion of how collectively mandated tattoos are used to mediate or build bridges between the individual and objects in the surrounding world, both animate and inanimate. Individuals use tattoos to build bridges when they not only wish to "acquire" specific characteristics associated with an object, but to also "secure" protection. Similarly, tattoos are used either to indicate, or deepen, special relationships. We will begin discussing these concepts in relationship to animal tattoos.

Since time immemorial, people have witnessed the physical attributes of the animals around them. The fleetness of a deer, strength of a bear, or acuity of an owl's night vision are capabilities which far surpass those of the average human. Not surprisingly, individuals throughout the ages have attempted to acquire for themselves those "animal attributes" which would improve their lives in some way. To this end, the men of New Georgia marked their shoulders with the image of a frigate to gain "the enormous wing strength" of this particular bird.³³ In a similar fashion, the people of the Micronesian

³² Jung, "On the Psychology of the Unconscious," *C.W.*, vol. 7, par. 109, pp. 69-70.

³³ W.D. Hambly, *The History of Tattooing and its Significance* (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1925), p. 100. In this particular example, the mark is a cicatrix or scar and not a tattoo. I elected to include it nonetheless as in this context the cicatrix or scar functions in the same manner as a tattoo.

Islands tattoo images which suggest a dolphin's movements. The Islanders believe this type of tattoo will not only assist them in swimming, but will also afford them protection from sharks. The later idea is based on an understanding that sharks avoid dolphins and are thus repelled by the sight of a dolphin tattoo.³⁴ (A picture of a dolphin tattoo maybe found in the appendix, page 108.) For another example of an animal tattoo, we can turn to Burma where it is not uncommon for an individual to "adopt the image of a cat or tiger as his body design . . . to secure the stealth and agility of that animal."³⁵

As a graphic ongoing reminder of an animal and its characteristics, an animal tattoo heightens the individual's state of identification with that animal. This may "awaken" those animal attributes which already exist within the individual. It may also lead the individual to not only intensify his/her observation of the animal, but to also integrate into his/her own life some of the observed traits. In these ways, an animal tattoo works to both release instinctual drives and to support the individual in retraining the drives to behave in a more natural manner. As we have discussed throughout the paper, these are important steps in the integration of spirit and instinct. In that an animal tattoo leads an individual into a heightened state of identification with an animal and its world, it furthermore works to bring the individual into a deeper state of attunement with nature itself.

Following what has been presented above, we will now re-examine the tiger tattoo for its more comprehensive compensatory possibilities. We know, for example, that tigers

³⁴ V. Vale and A. Juno, eds., *Modern Primitives: An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual* (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1989), p. 136.

³⁵ Hambly, p. 96.

mate naturally. Through a tiger tattoo and a resulting heightened state of identification with a tiger, an individual's own sexual drives may awaken more fully.³⁶ We know, furthermore, that tigers can see at night and are at home in the wild. As such, an individual who is identified with a tiger may come to feel more comfortable in the dark and being alone in the woods. Similarly, by observing that a tiger is a resourceful hunter taking only what it needs to survive, an individual may very well moderate his/her own eating and drinking behaviours. Tattoos are not only mediatory symbols between the individual and animate objects, as we have just discussed, but they are also mediatory symbols between the individual and inanimate objects. An interesting example of this is the "motorcycle" tattoo, the most popular of which is the Harley-Davidson eagle and shield.³⁷ A depiction of a Harley tattoo may be found on page 109.

The Harley-Davidson eagle and shield is the brand logo of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle company. As a dominant factor in the world of biking, Harley-Davidson accounts for more than "half the heavy weight bikes sold in the United States and one in four world wide"³⁸ For those familiar with the ninety-six year old company, its logo evokes the numerous positive aspects of the Harley legend, that is to say, its history, its

³⁶ In Thailand, tiger tattoos are "believed to provide potency." We might think of this as loosely related to the concept of more fully awakening the sexual drives. Diane Umemoto, "Tattooed Charms," *TattooTime*, no. 2, ed. Don Hardy (Honolulu: Hardy Marks, 1988), p. 23.

³⁷ Jim Pisaretz, "The Ultimate Harley Tattoo," *Tattoo*, no. 12 (Winter 1988): 6; While Pisaretz's article is somewhat dated, a 1999 *National Post* article (anecdotal in nature) suggests his information concerning the popularity of Harley tattoos is still valid. In paraphrasing Damian McGrath, the article states, "Harley Davidson [sic] is the most tattooed corporate logo." [McGrath is the "Web master" behind the on line magazine, "tattoos.com."] Mitchel Raphael, "Celebrating Body Art Electric," *The National Post*, 16 June 1999, B4.

³⁸ Joyzelle Davis, "Harley Tries to Stay Ahead of the Pack," *The National Post*, 18 August 1999, D3.

reputation as “the best bike ever built,” its high cost, and its strong nationalistic associations.³⁹ When an individual adopts a Harley tattoo, he/she is choosing to be permanently identified with the ideal motorcycle of a specific collective as well as a whole range of values and beliefs associated with this particular group.

One type of organization that is particularly fond of both Harley-Davidsons and motorcycle tattoos is the outlaw biker gang.⁴⁰ While owning and riding a motorcycle is a precondition for membership in the majority of these criminal societies,⁴¹ a biker’s machine is far more than just a means to join the group or a mode of transportation.⁴² We may in fact describe many outlaw bikers as passionately attached to their bikes. Just how strong this attachment may be is well expressed by a member of the Rebels outlaw biker gang who tells us, “Its my bike. Its my dream. There is very little else that’s as important to me.”⁴³

The closeness of the outlaw biker to his/her motorcycle is reinforced through the standard outlaw practice of extensively customizing the bike. The degree to which outlaw bikers customize their machines is brought sharply into focus by Wolf who tells us such

³⁹ Daniel Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 37-43; Pisaretz, pp. 6-8.

⁴⁰ Among many outlaw gangs, Harleys are a prerequisite for gang membership. Wolf, pp. 37, 40, 351, 358; Lavigne, pp. 70-71. A member of an outlaw biker gang highlights the import of Harleys to outlaw bikers when he tells us, “To some, a Harley is just another motorcycle. To a biker a Harley is magical, for only a true biker can bring a Harley to life, and in return, only a Harley can bring life to a biker.” Wolf, pp. 37.

⁴¹ Wolf, pp. 8-9.

⁴² Yves Lavigne, *Hell’s Angels Taking Care of Business* (Toronto: Deneau & Wayne, 1987), p. 83; Wolf, pp. 351-360.

⁴³ Wolf, p. 30.

changes are in fact “the symbolic trademark of an outlaw biker.”⁴⁴ Wolf furthermore informs us that only custom work that is done by the biker him/herself is respected within the outlaw community.⁴⁵

While the process of virtually rebuilding the bike, bolt by bolt, contributes to the biker-bike bond, so too does riding a customized machine. Riding a highly individualized bike, or “chopper,” is not an easy task. Custom work is undertaken not to make the bike easier to ride or more comfortable, but rather to create a lean, stripped-down machine that symbolizes raw power⁴⁶ and the “guts” and commitment it takes to be a “real biker.” To this end, tires may be reduced in size, front brakes omitted, rear-shocks removed, and a comfortable seat replaced with a narrow, low-slung saddle.⁴⁷ Lavigne neatly summarizes the difficulties inherent in riding a “chopper” when he tells us it “looks sleek and graceful,” but is, in fact, a “bitch of a machine to handle.”⁴⁸

We turn now to a description by a biker of his motorcycle tattoo. The tattoo itself is depicted on page 109. In telling the story of his tattoo, the biker reveals how an individual may become so close to his/her bike that he/she comes to see it as necessary for “total fulfilment.” The text reads:

My tat, which artist Shotsie Gorman has captured so realistically, is an

⁴⁴ Wolf, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Wolf, p. 48.

⁴⁶ Wolf, p. 46.

⁴⁷ Lavigne, p. 84.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

expression of the way of life I've chosen. Riding my Harley solo or with my brothers is the closest thing to freedom I know. My hog is the most essential tool on the road to total fulfilment. The snake represents the fact that there is danger around every bend. But I have always been able to overcome the danger. I live the life I love, and I love the life I live.⁴⁹

We may think of it as a problem of attachment or dependency when a biker only feels capable of fully engaging life when riding on his/her bike.⁵⁰ Another way to describe this problem would be to say that the extent to which the biker lives through his/her bike prevents the individual from connecting to a wider range of life experiences. With its permanent placement on the body, a motorcycle tattoo continually evokes the bike's presence. As such, it also works to give the individual ongoing access to the experiences he/she feels while on the bike. (That is to say, those experiences or feelings previously accessible to the individual only through the bike, are now accessible to him/her on an ongoing basis.) In maintaining a constant connection between the individual and the experience of the bike, a motorcycle tattoo may thus serve to lessen the person's attachment to the actual machine.

In turning to discuss the specific ways tattoos have been used as mediatory symbols between the individual and a deity, it is worth noting that tattoo has been closely connected with the spirit world from ancient times. Indeed, several cultures have myths or legends that the art of tattoo was either a gift from the spirit world or brought back from the underworld

⁴⁹ Tim Falk, as quoted in Amy Krakow, *The Total Tattoo Book* (New York: Warner Books, 1994), p. 65.

Note: Based on the photo and accompanying text, I am assuming Falk is in fact an outlaw biker. This is not specifically stated within Krakow's text.

⁵⁰ Another Rebels biker reveals the degree of dependency that may exist between a biker and his/her bike when he states, "For a real biker that bike is an extension of himself and taking it away leaves a hole in his life big enough to drive a Mac truck through." Wolf, p. 43.

through a hero's efforts.⁵¹ One particularly interesting legend is recounted below. It was told to Douglas Light of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute by Solomon Bluehorn who "was well versed," Light tells us, "in all aspects of Cree and Saulteaux religion."⁵² "Long ago, in the Buffalo days," Bluehorn begins, "'a man had a dream. A Buffalo spirit came to him and said . . .

'My Grandson, I am the most powerful spirit of the Plains Cree. If you follow my instructions I will give you a great gift; it is a tattooing bundle.' This spirit was called the 'Buffalo that Walks like a Man' and under his instructions the man made the bundle. When the spirit gave this gift, he also taught the first owner the proper tattooing procedures, songs and prayers. Because of this gift, the man was considered to be one of the most influential medicine men of the Cree.'⁵³

As the above indicates, the Cree considered the art of tattoo a gift from the spirit world through a dream. The legend also tells us that tattoo came to be revered as effective medicine. We know that tattoos were in fact highly valued among the Cree because the normal price exacted for a tattoo was a horse a day. An "average" tattoo took two to three days and thus cost two to three horses, a considerable sum even in today's dollars. The Cree furthermore understood that it was not all about money for if an individual "dreamed that he must be tattooed . . . the work was done for free."⁵⁴

⁵¹ A.Gell, *Wrapping in Images. Tattooing in Polynesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 60, 61, 142, 255; W. van Gulik, *Irezumi, The Pattern of Dermatography in Japan* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), p. 205.

⁵² D.W. Light, *Tattooing Practices of the Cree Indians*, Occasional Paper No. 6 (Calgary, Alberta: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1972), p. 18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Alanson Skinner, "Notes on the Plains Cree," *American Anthropologist* 16, no. 1 in Light, p. 12.

An example of tattoos which mediate between the individual and a deity are those used to secure divine protection for battle. In Ancient Hawaii, it was believed that if prayers were chanted over tattoos while they were being inked, the prayers would be “captured” in the body “envelop[ing] the owner with permanent sacred protection.”⁵⁵ As such, Hawaiian warriors, particularly those of high rank, were tattooed for war.⁵⁶ A modern example of tattoo as “sacred armour” is the so-called “Stop Bullet tattoo” employed by the Karens in their struggle for independence from Burma.⁵⁷ As the name suggests, a “Stop Bullet” tattoo was considered capable of preventing bullet wounds. Soldiers in both the Khmer Rouge and Thai armies used tattoos in a similar capacity.⁵⁸

With its promise of divine protection, a sacred armour tattoo assists the individual in overcoming the fear of being killed. As such, the individual may very well feel stronger and perform more bravely in battle. Such tattoos may also function to awaken the individual to the warrior within. During times of war, ordinary individuals are often called upon to behave in extraordinary ways. The individual not only has to defend his/her own life, but may very well have to kill another human being and go for long periods of time without food, drink, or sleep. By awakening the warrior within, transpersonal or archetypal energies are activated such that critical resources may be brought to bear on the difficult

⁵⁵ A. Kaeppler, “Hawaiian Tattoo: A Conjunction of Genealogy and Aesthetics,” in *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), p. 168.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Schiffmacher, p. 11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

challenge at hand.

While the tremendous transpersonal or archetypal energies associated with the warrior are necessary for battle, they often present difficulties when the confrontation is over. This is particularly so when troops have been successful. As Edinger tells us, “Victorious warriors may be inflated by victory and might turn their strength against the village itself if they were [sic] permitted in.”⁵⁹ Another way to describe the problem would be to say the warrior is not only “puffed-up”⁶⁰ and arrogant but still charged with transpersonal energy and a willingness to fight. As a way of defusing this dangerous situation many collectives ensure that troops have, as Edinger puts it, “a few days cooling off period before reintegration into the community takes place.”⁶¹

Another way in which tattoos mediate between the individual and a deity is when they function as prerequisites for entering the spirit world. The idea that the individual must have a tattoo to travel “beyond” is common to a number of different collectives like the Polynesian, Inuit, Hindu, Kayan and Sioux.⁶² When a Sioux warrior died, his spirit would “mount his ghostly horse” and begin the arduous journey to the ‘Many Lodges of the Afterlife.’ Along the way, the warrior’s spirit would meet an old woman who would demand to see his tattoos. If he had none, the warrior’s spirit would be condemned to return to the

⁵⁹ Edward Edinger, *Ego and Archetype. Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992), p. 63.

⁶⁰ Jung, “The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,” *C.W.*, vol. 7, par. 110, p. 71.

⁶¹ Edinger, p. 63.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 51-59.

land of the living as a ghost.”⁶³ Among the Kayans of Borneo, to turn to a different example, tattoos are considered “torches to the next world.” Without them, “the journeying soul [will] wander forever in darkness”⁶⁴ In that prerequisite tattoos permanently mark the spirit or the soul, they are not physical characteristics. As such, they provide a means for allowing those who have died and no longer have defining physical features, like faces, to recognize others who have died.

Prerequisite tattoos work to ease anxiety over death and what lies beyond. On an ongoing basis, they serve to remind the individual that there is an existence after the body perishes. They furthermore assure the individual that he/she will be admitted to this existence, and once there be able to recognize others, especially relatives. That is to say, they are highly visible permanent promises that there will be a continuity of both identity and relationship in the afterlife. In allowing spirits and souls to know other spirits and souls, prerequisite tattoos may also be said to build bridges between the spirits themselves.

We turn now to collectively mandated tattoos which mediate a relationship between the individual and a deity along devotional lines. Kinsley tells us that religious devotion is characterized by “ardent affection, zealous attachment, piety, dedication, reverence, faithfulness . . . loyalty . . . and love for or to some object, person, spirit, or deity, deemed sacred, holy or venerable.”⁶⁵ Devotion may be expressed in prayer, meditation, asceticism

⁶³ Steve Gilbert, “A History of Pre-Columbian Tattooing in North America,” *Tattoo*, no. 89 (January 1997): 77; Hambly, p. 51.

⁶⁴ Hambly, p. 57.

⁶⁵ David Kinsley, “Devotion,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 321-322.

or religious pilgrimages.⁶⁶ It may also be expressed through a tattoo. With its permanent placement on the body, the tattoo allows the individual to express graphically intense loyalty and enduring commitment. If the individual is tattooed in a highly visible location, the tattoo also allows the individual to proclaim continuously his/her devotion in a very public manner.

Throughout the centuries many Muslims and Christians have chosen to become tattooed in conjunction with a form of devotion mentioned above, the religious pilgrimage.⁶⁷ When used in this manner, devotional tattoos are a means of not only intensifying the experience of the pilgrimage itself, but of also extending the devotional act long after the pilgrim has returned home. Whenever the individual contemplates his/her tattoo it will not only work to help him/her hold in consciousness the meaning of the pilgrimage but will also evoke the heightened devotional state associated with the spiritual journey. When others inquire about the tattoo, it will assist the individual in keeping both the meaning and feeling of the devotional experience 'alive' and ongoing. In conjunction with this last point, it is important to note that among several Christian communities, a tattoo was considered virtually indispensable proof that an individual had visited Jerusalem. In describing how the Armenian word for pilgrim and tattoo are almost interchangeable, Sinclair draws our attention to the value and role of "Jerusalem" tattoos within the Armenian community. As Sinclair writes:

It is an old custom for Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem to be tattooed there

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 322-325.

⁶⁷ Carswell, p. 24; Sinclair, "Tattooing: Oriental and Gypsy," pp. 362-364.

with some religious symbol, their name, or initials, and the date of their pilgrimage. The Armenian word for a pilgrim is *mahdesi* (*mah*, death, *desi*, I saw). Hence this name is applied to a tattoo mark done in Jerusalem . . . Since such pilgrims are practically the only Armenians tattooed, it has become the ordinary and indeed only word for tattoo mark in Armenian . . . The Armenian women as well as men make this pilgrimage and are all tattooed there in the same way. I have examined more than a hundred such devices, which they always show with pride as it is considered a great honor to be a Mahdesi. And they gladly explain all the details and significance of the designs, why and where they were made, and often give traditions about the origin, reasons, and antiquity of the practice. Such pilgrims are entitled to be called Mahdesi John, Jacob, etc., as the name may be.⁶⁸

A pilgrimage tattoo serves to link the individual to the community, and the community to the individual, in a number of different ways. As Sinclair points out, if one were to ask a pilgrim about his/her tattoo, it typically led to a very comprehensive and enthusiastic explanation of not only his/her own tattoo, but also Jerusalem pilgrimage tattoos in general. Another way we can think of such tattoos is as teaching devices. That is to say, they not only helped the individual hold in consciousness important details concerning the religious significance of his/her tattoo and devotional act, but also helped the individual talk to others about these details in a focused manner. In addition, such tattoos gave those who were interested in the pilgrimage something specific to ask about. The pilgrimage tattoo thus worked as both a memory device and focal point for informative conversation. We can well imagine that in times gone past, such tattoos may have served as valuable aids in bringing information about Jerusalem and the outside world into the

⁶⁸ Sinclair, "Tattooing -- Oriental and Gypsy," p. 302: As noted, the Armenian word for pilgrim and tattoo, *Mahdesi*, is composed of "death" and "I saw." As the Armenians also gave pilgrims new names, the idea of spiritual rebirth appears to have been associated with both the trip and the tattoo. Another way we can think of this is in terms of the tattoo marking the attainment of a new level of consciousness.

pilgrim's home community.⁶⁹

Through their questions and attention, others in the community would have helped the pilgrim hold the meaning of the tattoo and pilgrimage experience in consciousness on an ongoing basis. At times, however, this attention would have proven detrimental by promoting an inflationary state within the pilgrim. That is to say, the individual would have become 'puffed-up' and arrogant and more identified with his/her collective stature than with the real meaning of the devotional act. In the way of addressing this same point, Hambly writes:

Armenian Christians who make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem are in the habit of tattooing themselves with the date of the journey, also their name and initials. The tattooing is of the nature of a religious marking as it allies the possessor with a sacred journey for devotional purposes. At the same time, there is a tendency to claim social distinction for an act of religious devotion, and the body mark, though primarily of a religious character, will degenerate to an honorific social token according to the egotism of the wearer.⁷⁰

The following description is by an individual who, in 1612, witnessed the tattooing of a Christian pilgrim to Jerusalem. The pilgrim's name was Thomas Coryate. The quotation is of value not only for the details it provides concerning the various motifs and tattoo techniques of the period, but also because it affords us insight into Coryate's experience. The text reads:

'At Jerusalem this our Traveller [Thomas Coryate] had made upon the Wrist of his left Arm the Arms of Jerusalem, a Cross Crossed, or Crosslets; and on

⁶⁹ In that the pilgrimage to Jerusalem is a collectively adopted and modified archetypal symbol of the hero's journey, pilgrimage tattoos would furthermore have worked to awaken within others who saw the tattoos the impetus to undertake their own spiritual journey.

⁷⁰ Hambly, p. 75 in Carswell, fn. p. 26.

the Wrist of his right, a single Cross made like that our Blessed Saviour suffered on; and on the side of the stem or tree of that Cross these words written, Via, Veritas, Vita, some of the letters being put on one side of that stem or tree, and some of them on the other; and at the foot of that Cross three Nails, to signifie [sic] those which fastned [sic] our Saviour unto it: All these impressions were made by sharp Needles bound together, that pierced onely [sic] the Skin, and then a black Powder put into the Places so pierced, which became presently indelible . . . This poor man would pride himself very much in the beholding of those Characters and seeing them would often speak the words of St. Paul . . . I bear in my body the marks of Lord Jesus.' ⁷¹

We know from the above that Coryate was trying to identify with the suffering of Christ. As the process used to tattoo 17th Century pilgrims to Jerusalem was extremely painful and often resulted in severe inflammation and illness,⁷² this was not hard to do. We can well imagine that the pain Coryate experienced in acquiring his tattoos may have become linked to the images depicted in his tattoos. Each time Coryate contemplated his tattoos, he would not only have seen images associated with the agony of Christ, but would also have recalled his own ordeal. By permanently linking the two experiences in this manner, Coryate's tattoos would have continually supported him in his aim for devotional oneness with the suffering Christ.

As a step toward concluding our discussion of collectively mandated tattoo practices, we turn to some brief reflections on tattoo rituals in this context. We may describe collectively mandated tattoo rituals as either highly structured or minimally

⁷¹ M. Strachan, *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryate* (1962) in Scutt and Gotch, p. 27.

⁷² Scutt and Gotch, p. 27.

structured.⁷³ When a tattoo ritual is highly structured, collective traditions or norms determine not only the ritual's meaning, but virtually all major aspects of the ritual. That is to say, collective norms dictate who gets tattooed, the symbols to be tattooed, where on the body the tattoo will be placed, and the choice of tattoo artists. Collective norms likewise mandate the ritual's step-by-step process, subsidiary rituals (like singing or dancing), timing (when it will be performed), location (where it will be performed), and spectators (who can attend). In shaping the ritual so precisely, the collective seeks to ensure that the collectively provided meaning of the ritual is conveyed as accurately and as effectively as is possible.

To gain a more developed sense of what a collectively mandated highly structured tattoo ritual may in fact look like, we will examine a Haida ceremony. Before turning to this specific narrative, it is important to first outline some background information on Haida tattoo practices. During the 19th century, the Haida not only tattooed extensively but were also renowned along the Pacific North-West Coast for the stark beauty of their tattoo art.⁷⁴ Their tattoos were bold, single-line depictions of animals, supernatural beings, or natural phenomenon such as clouds, stars, or trees.⁷⁵ The Haida considered their tattoos "marks of honour" as they symbolized adult membership in the Haida nation, the specific family to

⁷³ The discussion that follows, in particular the distinction drawn between highly structured and more minimally structured tattoo rituals as well as the relationship between structure and the spontaneous emergence of the compensatory resources of the unconscious, was derived from Aziz's work as presented in C.G. Jung's *Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 9-11.

⁷⁴ James Swan, "Tattoo Marks of the Haida Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C., and the Prince of Wales Archipelago, Alaska," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1882-1883* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), pp. 66-69.

⁷⁵ Boelscher, p.143.

which an individual belonged, as well as the “social value”⁷⁶ of that family, among other things.⁷⁷ As the Haida acquired many of their tattoos during adolescence,⁷⁸ their tattoos served not only as a means of defining the individual’s identity as it related to family and tribe (and the family and tribe’s as it related to the individual), but also as a means of shaping Haida youth along collectively determined lines. That is to say, Haida tattoo practices worked to direct the development of their adolescents into those patterns of adult behaviour most valued by the tribe.

The following account of a Haida tattoo ritual was recorded around the turn of the twentieth century by an individual named John Swanton. Swanton himself received the narrative from one of his Haida associates who was an eye-witness to the ceremony.⁷⁹ This particular tattoo ritual was carried out as part of a *Walgal*, or house raising, potlatch.⁸⁰ As the tattoo ritual was conducted within the newly-built long house, it essentially served to initiate both the new home and the youths being tattooed. The account reads as follows:

⁷⁶ Social value included such things as the family’s relationship to the supernatural world and their wealth, both inherited and acquired. Boelscher, pp. 142-151.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 142; Swan, “Tattoo Marks of the Haida Indians” pp. 68 - 73.

⁷⁸ Boelscher, p. 142.

⁷⁹ John Swanton, “Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida,” *The Jessop North Pacific Expedition*, vol. 5, pt. I (New York: Stechert, G.E., 1905), pp. 140, 143, 162.

⁸⁰ This specific potlatch included not only a house raising and tattoo ritual, but also a spirit initiation. Swanton, pp. 162-171; Boelscher tells us it was common practice to tattoo Haida youths of “elevated social rank” during *Walgal* potlatches. (Boelscher, p. 142) A potlatch, or giving away of goods, was not only an integral aspect of Haida life but also a key device used by the Haida for social advancement. The more goods an individual could give away, the more status or ‘social value’ he/she would accrue. (Boelscher, p. 66) As noted above, a family’s social value was one piece of information conveyed by Haida tattoo designs.

In the night those who were to be tattooed were called, and with them they practised giving away blankets. They counted out the same number of stones as there were blankets. Then they imagined the chiefs to be seated, and practised being tattooed in front of them, and giving away blankets. The day after, they called them to put the tattoo-marks on. At once they painted their faces. Those in the house shouted to the people to come in and look on. When the spectators were all in, they began dancing, and sang property-songs. Those who were to be tattooed began dancing. The wife [*of the chief sponsoring the potlatch*] stood at the end of the line, wearing a painted hat. When they had sung four songs, they put eagle feathers on the dancers. The house was filled with eagle feathers. Then they stopped. Those who put the feathers on them were given cotton cloth. When that was over, they had those who were to be tattooed sit down in front of the chiefs. Sometimes two took a fancy to be tattooed by the same chief. Now they beat the ground with a baton, mentioned the chief's name, and said, "So and so sits in front of you [to be tattooed]." Then they began to put on the tattoo-marks. They tattooed their arms, their chests, their thighs, their upper arms, their feet [and sometimes their backs]. As they tattooed, they washed their tattoo-marks out with water in an earthen dish. They assigned to each one who did the tattooing a dish and cotton cloth with which to wipe the marks out. The dish was called 'washing out of tattoo-scars with stick.' All that day they spent in tattooing and finished it. The day after, they began to give away property. All who were tattooed were given new names⁸¹

In reading through the above account, we gain a sense of just how complex and formalized a tattoo ritual may in fact be. We also gain a sense of how those being tattooed would have been virtually emersed in the collectively provided meaning of the ritual. That is to say, the individual would have been presented with the idea of initiation into Haida adulthood (and all that Haida adulthood entailed) not only through the symbols being tattooed but also in many additional forms -- through the songs, the dances, the location selected for the ritual (the newly built long house), and the granting of new names, etc. In

⁸¹ Swanton, p. 169; Eagle and Raven are the two primary moieties, or divisions, within the Haida nation -- thus the eagle feathers noted above. In addition to the functions of the Haida tattoo ritual we have previously discussed, this particular ritual was designed to more closely align members of the two moieties. To this end, individuals were tattooed by members of the opposite clan.

presenting the collectively provided meaning of the tattoo ritual in a variety of different ways, the collective not only seeks to intensify the impact of the ritual but also tries to ensure that everyone in the group understands the socially sanctioned picture.

In contrast to those rituals we have just discussed, collectively mandated tattoo rituals which are more minimally structured afford individuals with a greater degree of choice. Just what the choices may be is a function of the specific collective. During the 1940's and 50's, for instance, it was standard practice for members of "Pachuco" gangs to tattoo a small cross between the thumb and index finger on the outside of the hand.⁸² ("Pachuco" gangs are those Mexican American street gangs located in the urban *barrios* of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.⁸³) While a Pachuco gang member had no choice as to the design of the tattoo, and where it was to be placed on the body, we can well imagine that he/she may have been able to select the tattoo artist, the location for the ritual, which fellow gang members and/or friends would attend, and songs to be tattooed to, to name but a few possibilities.

When a tattoo ritual allows a degree of individual choice, "openings" are provided for the spontaneous emergence of the compensatory resources of the unconscious. In selecting a song to be tattooed to, the Pachuco gang member may have chosen a piece whose lyrics, for example, contained significant, unconscious compensatory contents. During the intensity of inking the tattoo, these unconscious contents may well have come

⁸² Alan Govenar, "The Variable Context of Chicano Tattooing," in *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of The Human Body*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), p. 210.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

to consciousness where they could be processed by the individual.

For a specific account of a minimally structured tattoo ritual, we turn to a narrative recorded in 1675 by Otto Friedrich von der Groben, a pilgrim to Jerusalem. In recounting his own experience of becoming tattooed, von der Groben draws our attention to how he was given a choice in tattoo designs. His text also reveals that although minimally structured tattoo rituals may consist of little more than actually inking the tattoo, the intensity of the process is such that there will still be a powerful encounter with the symbol(s) engraved. The narrative reads as follows:

‘There came a Christian from Bethlehem who had a whole sackful of figures cut in wood, from which I [*von der Groben*] selected the designs here represented . . . First he washed my arm with pure wine, moistened the wood block a little, and sprinkled it with ground charcoal. Then he pressed it upon my arm. That done, he mixed and made ready some gunpowder and vinegar in a glass, much like ink, and stuck two fine sewing needles into a stick, which he dipped into the gunpowder mixture like a pen. He took hold of my arm with one hand, and with the other went over the design that had been drawn out, prick by prick. This he did so deeply, that the blood flowed at every prick, and caused considerable pain . . . After that he squeezed my arm with his hands in such a way that all the pores opened, and the blood spurted out as if from a syringe. That done, he rubbed an abundance of the gunpowder mixture into my arm making it completely black . . . Afterwards, I had to carry my arm in a bandage for two days. When the two days were up, he washed my arm clean with strong wine, and began to prick the second design . . . He who is of weak constitution may well be on his guard . . . because the pricks cause considerable swelling in the arm, and through the inflammation often bring about a fever that is very dangerous . . . and can easily result in death.’⁸⁴

Whether a collectively mandated tattoo ritual is highly structured or more minimally fixed in terms of form, it works to shape the experience of not only those being

⁸⁴ Scutt and Gotch, p. 27; In retelling part of this narrative, Scutt and Gotch inform us that the designs carried by the tattoo artist included “a plan of the Via Dolorosa, Christ carrying the Cross, the Holy Grave, the Ascension, and the Jerusalem Coat of Arms, together with the various inscriptions.” *Ibid.*, p. 27.

tattooed, but also those who may be participating in any subsidiary rituals or “merely” watching. We can understand how this works if we think of collectively mandated tattoo rituals as collectively adopted and modified archetypal, or transpersonal, sets of symbols. (Both “initiatory ordeals and rites of passage” are examples of transpersonal sets of symbols, or processes, which have been collectively adopted and modified.⁸⁵) When such sets of symbols are presented during a collectively mandated tattoo ritual, they work not only to activate unconscious energies in all present, but also to direct these energies along collectively determined lines. In this way, collectively mandated tattoo rituals work to sweep all present into the collectively provided meaning of the ceremony.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, collectively mandated tattoo may hold significant compensatory import for the development of the individual personality. It moreover functions to support the group, and the individual as he/she relates to the group. In working to support the group, and the individual as he/she relates to the group, collectively mandated tattoo stands very much in contrast to tattoo as individual self-expression, the discussion to which we now turn.

⁸⁵ Aziz, C.G. *Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 53.

IV

TATTOO AS INDIVIDUAL SELF-EXPRESSION

Since the late 1960's, there have been some striking changes in tattoo as it is practised within Canada and the United States. Not only has there been a tremendous increase in the number of people getting a tattoo and a substantial diversification in their socio-economic backgrounds, but tattoo as individual self-expression now constitutes a major form of the art.¹ In conjunction with these key developments, tattoo's once limited design base has opened-up completely.² It is now possible for an individual to select a tattoo design from a wide range of standardized tattoo motifs or work with an artist to create a customized piece.³

When the impetus to tattoo originates in the individual desire for self-expression, the tattoo symbol may be a statement of where the person is at, or where he/she needs to go. It is in terms of where the individual needs to go that the tattoo symbol may play an important role in supporting the development of the individual personality. In the past, the collectively adopted and modified archetypal symbols and rituals associated with the Jewish and Christian religious traditions sufficed to meet the developmental needs of the

¹ V. Lautman, *The New Tattoo* (New York: Abbeyville Press, 1994), pp. 14-19; M. Mason, "Every Picture Tells a Story. From Sailor to Sales Rep: Tattoos Go Mainstream," *Newsweek* 117, no. 1 (January 1991): 60-61.

² C. Saunders, *Customizing the Body. The Art and Culture of Tattooing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp. 18-20; Lautman, p. 16-18.

³ While our exploration of tattoo as individual self expression will primarily focus on the North American tattoo scene, we will at times make use of European examples. As is the case in North America, Polhemus and Randall inform us that tattoo as individual self-expression has flourished in Europe since the early 1960's. T. Polhemus and H. Randall, *The Customized Body* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1996), p. 24.

majority of individuals within the West. In presenting us with the essence of Jung's Terry Lectures, Aziz however informs us that as early as the 1930's, these symbols and rituals were losing their "efficacy for ever-increasing numbers of people in the West."⁴ In the following quotation Aziz goes on to explain why these symbols and rituals are no longer sufficient for many. The excerpt is of particular value not only for this explanation, but also because it pinpoints a concept at the core of Jung's psychology of religion -- that being that our innate longing for wholeness is at times only met through a direct engagement with the spontaneously emerging compensatory contents of the unconscious. As Aziz's text reads:

Clearly, the religious attitude that most interested Jung was the quest for a highly personalized experience of wholeness -- the quest for a highly personalized experience of truth. For genuine seekers of such individualized revelation, the more collective forms of religious rituals, Western or non-Western, which use a very limited symbolism, invariably prove inadequate The distinguishing feature of Jung's concept of religious ritual is, then, what we might describe as the search for a highly personalized experience of wholeness through direct relationship to the spontaneous manifestations of the unconscious. 'The religious need,' Jung would write in a later work, 'longs for wholeness, and therefore lays hold of the images of wholeness offered by the unconscious, which, independently of the conscious mind, rise up from the depths of our psychic nature.'⁵

In that numerous contemporary individuals are no longer able to connect to an experience of meaning within the limits imposed by traditional religious structures, a great many people find themselves searching outside these systems for just such an experience.⁶ That is to say, they find themselves in highly individualized quests for those

⁴ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11; The quotation Aziz draws from Jung is from "Answer to Job," *C.W.*, vol. 11, par. 757, p. 469.

⁶ Aziz, p. 10; In speaking to the same problem Edinger writes, "One of the symptoms of alienation in the modern age is the widespread sense of meaninglessness We seem to be passing through a collective

symbols which will support the development of the personality and the emergence of the self, or innate wholeness. With its unlimited symbolic base and ritualistic aspects, tattoo as individual self-expression has become something of a forum, it may be suggested, for both finding and engaging those symbols which will contribute to the modern journey of the soul.

When the initiative to tattoo originates in the individual desire for self-expression, the individual goes beyond the limited symbolism of the Jewish and Christian religious traditions. When this is the case, a wider range of developmental needs may be compensated through tattoo, as we shall see.

In the pursuit of self-expression, the individual may select a standardized tattoo design or create a customized piece. From the late 1800's up until the 1960's, standardized tattoo images, also known as *flash*, were restricted to a very narrow range of highly conventionalized motifs.⁷ While flash is still a staple of the tattoo industry, it now consists of a tremendously diversified range of designs. Included in this expanded inventory are pieces influenced by aboriginal tattoo patterns, like those of the Maori and Haida, as well

psychological reorientation equivalent in magnitude to the emergence of Christianity from the ruins of the Roman Empire. Accompanying the decline of traditional religion, there is increasing evidence of a general psychic disorientation. We have lost our bearings. Our relation to life has become ambiguous. The great symbol system which is organized Christianity seems no longer able to command the full commitment of men or to fulfill their ultimate needs. The result is a pervasive feeling of meaninglessness and alienation from life. Whether or not a new collective religious symbol will emerge remains to be seen. For the present, those aware of the problem are obliged to make their own individual search for a meaningful life. Individuation becomes their way of life." Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*, p. 107.

⁷ In describing tattoo images of this period, Sander's writes that they "tended to be relatively crude and highly conventionalized with death symbols (skulls, grim reapers, and so forth), certain animals (especially panthers, eagles and snakes), pin-up styled women, and military designs predominant." Sanders, p. 18.

as traditional Japanese work.⁸ Flash designs are easily copied onto an individual's skin by means of an acetate or stencil. Since these designs can be traced, a tattoo artist need only be technically competent to ink a flash tattoo. Those tattoo shops which are oriented toward flash work typically display the standardized designs not only in their windows and all along the walls within the tattoo parlour, but also in large binders within easy reach of any prospective customers. An individual who comes into such a shop looking for a tattoo is thus presented with hundreds of designs from which to choose.⁹

While the majority of contemporary tattoo establishments are still oriented toward flash work, it is the case that many now have at least one or two artists capable of inking a custom design. There are also a relatively small number of tattoo studios devoted exclusively to custom tattoo art. Essentially, custom work may translate virtually any symbol imaginable into a tattoo. A custom tattoo may, for instance, be a completely unique work created by either the tattoo artist or the client him/herself. It may likewise be an adaptation of an image seen in a comic book, movie, T.V. show, or piece of art, to name but a few possibilities. Given the technical demands and artistic challenges that often accompany custom work, it is not uncommon for these tattoo artists to have a formal education in the fine arts and training in such things as colour theory.¹⁰

When an individual searches for a custom tattoo design, the quest itself may lead the

⁸ A. Rubin, "The Tattoo Renaissance," in *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), p. 235.

⁹ It is not uncommon for flash to be personalized in some way. An individual could, for instance, modify a flash design of a butterfly by having it placed on a depiction of his/her favourite flower.

¹⁰ Rubin, "Tattoo Renaissance," p. 235; While it is not uncommon for people to ink their own tattoos, our primary focus here is on work that is done within a more formalized setting.

individual into an engagement with the compensatory process in a manner that might not otherwise have occurred. In contrast to the flash approach which limits the individual to those designs already created, the custom approach is open to using virtually any conceivable symbol. It is thus very receptive to the spontaneously manifesting compensatory contents of the unconscious. This receptivity will be highlighted as we explore several ways individuals may arrive at a custom tattoo symbol, the discussion to which we now turn.

Tattoo artists tell us it is not uncommon for individuals to come into a tattoo shop with only a vague or poorly-defined sense of a design they would like.¹¹ If such an individual decides he/she would like a flash tattoo, the person is typically left alone to choose a design from those on display. If such an individual opts for a custom tattoo, a different process unfolds. To create a design that will be meaningfully related to a specific client, a tattoo artist must ask a series of questions. Through this process, the individual may be led to think more deeply about what the tattoo actually means to him/her. In the following excerpt, a tattoo artist first sketches out a typical "hazy" search scenario. He then provides us with examples of the types of questions he asks to try and discern a suitable image. The text reads:

(Customers say,): 'I thought I'd get a tattoo because I've always wanted one and because my uncle had one and my grandfather had one. I'd really like to have that tattoo (they had). Do you have that girl in the martini glass or whatever the thing is.' . . . Look, *[responds the tattoo artist]* that was a particular tattoo that was important to your uncle or your grandfather or whoever but what does it have to do with you right now? What's going on in your life?

¹¹ V. Vale and A. Juno, eds., *Modern Primitives: An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual* (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1989), p. 153; Sanders, p. 102; "Don McDonald. Abstract Flow," *Tattoo Flash*, no. 33 (June 1999):10.

What are you doing? What do you want? What do you see? What do you feel? That's what I'm interested in.¹²

As we can imagine, having to produce answers to such thought provoking questions may well result in an individual coming to a more developed sense of where he/she is at and where he/she needs to go. The fact that these answers are to be used to create a very permanent symbol may moreover intensify the concentration the person brings to bear on the task. Not only may this notion of permanency intensify activity at the conscious level, but we can also expect it to activate things at the unconscious level. As such, the process may well result in the coming to consciousness of unconscious compensatory contents.

In contrast to what was described above, certain individuals have a fairly established idea of what they are looking for in the way of a tattoo symbol yet need help in creating just the right design. When this is the case, the interaction with the custom artist focuses not so much on general life questions, but more on refining a specific idea and how best to depict it. In the following narrative, law student Hal Israel describes how he and tattoo artist Paul Booth created his full back tattoo. A picture of this tattoo may be found in the appendix, page 110. As Israel writes:

'I really can't believe I have this piece. . . . It is my interpretation of Justice as filtered through Paul's mind. I found many different obscure pictures of our Lady Justice and sent them to Mr. Booth over a seven- month period, along with letters explaining my views . . . when I arrived at his shop for the initial sitting, Paul had this drawing done and it was like he was reading my mind.'¹³

¹² Sanders, p. 102.

¹³ Longjon, "Hal Israel," *Tattoo*, no. 72 (August 1995): 34.

The article which contains Israel's narrative goes on to explain the meaning of his tattoo.

The text continues:

Lady Justice is no longer blindfolded because in law as in life, there are special circumstances. And the scales she holds are starting to break because, *[as Israel himself now relates]* 'When the weight of the word of the law, becomes more important than those it affects, justice is then broken down, the lion at Justice's feet represent the state when he is awakened by the breaking of the scales, he will not be subtle. The lion is never subtle.' ¹⁴

To understand why Israel felt he needed such an extreme tattoo, it is important to know that his journey to law school was not easy. When Israel was twenty-six years old, he had all of a grade eight education and had spent "fifteen years of hard living on the wrong side of the law." ¹⁵ A number of physical ailments that had developed because of his life style forced him to slow down and assess his life -- where he had been, and where he was going. At this point in time, the reality of his situation came to consciousness for him. In a major transformation, Israel worked through many of his problems then went back to school. He eventually earned admittance to Yale. ¹⁶ By learning Israel's story, we come to see why this symbol would hold great compensatory significance for his life.

As Israel's narrative indicates, for an individual to design a tattoo which accurately depicts a personal understanding of a collective ideal, like justice, he/she must separate-out his/her own position from that of the groups. If the concentration brought to this task is intense enough, those unconscious contents necessary for the development of the individual

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

personality may well come to consciousness.

At the heart of a great many searches for custom tattoo symbols is the client-tattoo artist relationship, as the above examples indeed suggest. While this relationship may focus on an exchange of ideas and imagery at the conscious level, it is not uncommon for the unconscious to participate in quite a striking manner. Specifically, certain tattoo artists tell us tattoo symbols for particular clients may spontaneously emerge in their intuitive flashes, visions or dreams.¹⁷ Cynthia Witkin is one tattoo artist who recounts that it is not uncommon for her dreams to reveal just the right symbol for a client. In the following excerpt which describes Witkin's work, we read first about her efforts to gather the information she needs to create highly personalized tattoos. Our attention is then drawn to how regularly Witkin's dreams support her work by revealing solutions to design problems, that is to say, how the unconscious at times solves problems the conscious mind cannot.

The text reads:

One method she [*Witkin*] often uses is to make customers relate their life story and how they see the tattoo as an aspect of it. She makes her customers reflect on what they're doing by asking why they want a certain image. She also has them visualize having the tattoo as their lives change and they grow older. 'I like a week to reflect before I actually do the design,' she said. 'I think about the person's ideas, their story, what they look like. All of this comes into play when I do the final design.'

'I also try to put the mark together in a very personalized way,' [*Witkin*] said 'based on what the person tells me. For instance, I had a man come in who wanted a lizard design done. In the course of hearing his story, he related that he had once been struck by lightning. As I did his design, I incorporated a lightning bolt on the lizard's back. That certainly meant a lot

¹⁷ As one tattoo artist tells us "sometimes it comes to me like a lightning flash I know exactly what they think or what image they want. It has that feel that there is just real clear contact with their kind of visual vocabulary. I try to synthesize those ideas into the kind of image that will satisfy them and will be somewhat conventional." Sanders, p. 102.

more to him than a generic lizard design.'

She finds the design process more difficult when the elements don't fit together neatly. In many cases, the more problematic designs come to her in a dream. She says she has had many instances of these dream visions and the design that arrives has always been the one the customer is most excited about.¹⁸

For an example of a symbol related to a specific client spontaneously emerging in a tattoo artist's vision, we turn to a narrative that focuses on the work of the late Jamie Summers. Summers was known for a "mediumistic approach" to finding tattoo symbols as well as her exceptional tattoo art.¹⁹ Another way to describe a "mediumistic approach" is to say the tattoo artist works to bring to consciousness, through his/her own psyche, symbols of significant compensatory import for his/her clients. The narrative, as written by one Dick Teresi, reads:

To do this, [*i.e., create a tattoo*] Summers spends weeks, and sometimes months, conducting personal consultations and preparing sketches for her subjects before executing the final tattoo. She sees her role as somewhat psychic . . . and acts as a medium, trying to bring out on the skin what is within.

Meeting with one prospective client for months, Summers kept envisioning a double cocoon with a butterfly above trying to pry the silken package open. When told of this, the woman was stunned: Born seven minutes before her twin sister, she suffered from a lifelong anxiety that she may have tried too hard to control her younger sister's life.²⁰

In the Witkin excerpt, we are told that the designs that arrived in Witkin's dreams were always the ones her clients were most "excited" about. In the Summers narrative, we are told her client was "stunned" when presented with the image the artist had repeatedly

¹⁸ George McFadden, "Cynthia Witkin. Visions of Abstract Ink," *International Tattoo Art* (February 1995): 56.

¹⁹ Rubin, "The Tattoo Renaissance," p. 257.

²⁰ Dick Teresi, "Psychic Tattoos," *Omni* 9 (1981): 134; Rubin, "Tattoo Renaissance," p. 257.

envisioned. In using words like “excited” and “stunned,” the passages reveal that the symbols evoke strong emotional responses from the clients and thus in all probability relate to their experience at a deep level. As such, we can imagine that these symbols hold significant compensatory import. In the Summers example, we are given enough information about her client to offer an interpretation as to what this compensation might be, and how the symbol might function as a tattoo.

To recall, Summers presents her client with an image of a butterfly attempting to pry open a double cocoon. Given what we know about the woman’s story, it may be suggested that the image is meant to reveal that she and her twin sister are enmeshed at some level. It is telling us that the woman’s experience of life with her twin is that they are still bound to each other. As we know, you cannot have a life of your own if you are that tied to another. In portraying a butterfly attempting to pry open the cocoons, something a butterfly would not normally do, the unconscious is not only revealing the problem and that it urgently needs resolution, but it is also pointing to a solution -- that being, to un-mesh the woman.

As a permanent and very graphic depiction of her situation, this tattoo will work to keep the woman thinking about both her problem and its solution in an ongoing manner. In this way, she may come to learn all she needs to learn about her relationship with her twin.

Whenever the tattoo artist takes a major role in the development of the tattoo symbol there is always the risk that the design may prove to be more related to the artist’s own conscious or unconscious dynamics than those of the client. This is an issue

about which Summers herself was deeply concerned. Summers' understanding that the tattoo symbol should be about the client, not the tattoo artist, was in fact instrumental in her repudiation of the views of her former mentor, leading tattoo artist Ed Hardy. "Ed Hardy," as writer Arnold Rubin explains it, "continued to be an important factor in Summers' perception of tattoo, insofar as she had come to reject everything she felt he stood for -- particularly, what she regarded as the projection of the artist's ego on another person's body."²¹

In continuing our reflections on the search for a tattoo symbol, we turn to long-term and short-term symbols. We will begin with long-term symbols. To recall, the tattoo symbol is compensatory when it is related to where the individual needs to go. Another way we can talk about where the individual needs to go is in terms of developmental stages, or goals. As we have discussed, major developmental stages in the individuation process are coming to terms with the shadow, integrating spirit and instinct, and becoming properly related to the anima/animus. It is important to recall that these are not one time events, but rather ongoing processes. Those tattoo symbols which are concerned with these stages may well prove to hold long-term comprehensive compensatory value. As such, they will be effective tattoos in terms of supporting the development of the personality. It is the case that our most long-term comprehensive developmental goal possible may be described as an experience of the self, the archetype of wholeness and unity.²² To recall what was presented in Chapter Two, such experiences are described as numinous and profoundly

²¹ Rubin, "Tattoo Renaissance," p. 257.

²² Jung, *Aion, C.W.*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 59, p. 31.

healing. They are also described as being able to convey to the ego that it does not constitute the totality but is in fact a part related to a much larger whole.²³ A tattoo depicting such an image may well hold truly exceptional long-term compensatory value.²⁴

In the following excerpt, a film maker by the name of Brooke Berdis reveals that her key criterion for getting a tattoo was in fact finding a symbol that could withstand the test of time. The symbol she eventually had tattooed was not a flash design, nor one created by a custom tattoo artist, but rather based on an image that spontaneously emerged when Berdis was doodling. As her narrative reads:

‘I had wanted a tattoo ever since high school. I promised myself that if I still wanted one five years later, and if I found an image I could live with *for the rest of my life*, that I would do it.

One day, when I was stuck on a script, I was doodling the two flowers that always cheer me up instantly: sunflowers and daisies. The film strip in the image just happened -- film is my passion. If you want to get deep about it, the tattoo signifies a union of female and artist.

I’ll be proud to show my tattoo to my grandchildren, and hopefully they’ll see it as a sign of commitment rather than temporary insanity.’²⁵

A picture of Berdis and her tattoo appears on page 110. When we study her tattoo, we see that the film strip Berdis drew moves up and around the flower(s) in a snake-like manner. It may thus be suggested that the film strip represents not only her career, but also serpent energy, or kundalini. Kundalini is an archetypal or transpersonal concept. It is the name given to the cosmic or creative energy that is present in nature in its entirety. When

²³ Jung, *Psychological Types*, C.W., vol. 6, par. 791, p. 461; Jung, “A Psychological Approach to the Trinity,” C.W., vol. 11, par. 285, p. 191; Jung, “Aion,” C.W., vol. 9, pt. 2, p. 5.

²⁴ Jung, *Aion*, C.W., vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 304 & 351, pp. 195 & 224; Aziz, C.G. *Jung’s Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 21.

²⁵ Brooke Berdis in Krakow, *The Total Tattoo Book*, p. 166.

kundalini is inert within the human body, it is typically envisioned as a serpent lying coiled at the base of the spine. When kundalini becomes active, it is said to ascend, snake-like, from the base of the spine to the top of the head opening new levels of consciousness as it rises.²⁶ It may be suggested that the image that emerged and was tattooed essentially takes Berdis' life and work and places it in an archetypal context, that is to say, it gives an archetypal basis to what she is doing. Through this compensatory representation, Berdis is being linked to the transpersonal energies that support her work. We can well imagine that such a tattoo will hold long-term comprehensive compensatory import for Berdis.²⁷

As noted above, the symbol Berdis "selected" for her tattoo was not a flash design, nor one created by a custom tattoo artist, but rather an image that spontaneously emerged. This serves to introduce an important point -- that being that, ultimately, the compensatory import of any given tattoo symbol is not a function of where it came from, or who produced it, but rather its compensatory fit with the individual.²⁸ The simplest flash design may prove to hold long-term compensatory significance for one person, while another individual may find a comparable level of compensation in a very intricately designed custom piece. Similarly, a tattoo which proves to hold long-term comprehensive compensatory meaning

²⁶ Beverly Moon, ed., *An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism* (London: Shambhala, 1997), p. 353; *The Encyclopedia for Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 190-191.

²⁷ The suggestion that Berdis' tattoo symbol places her life and work in an archetypal context associated with kundalini was given to me by Robert Aziz.

²⁸ Tattoo artist Tee Jay provides an excellent description of just how compelling the right symbol may be when she tells us: "Most people, when they get a serious craving for more skin art, are usually in the process of becoming a new person. They may not even understand why they are drawn to a specific design until much later. That's why I believe in letting tattoos find you. The perfect design is the one that bites you on the end of the nose; the one that nothing in the world could stop you from getting done." "Intimate Enlightenment: Tee Jay," *Tattoo Flash*, no. 26 (April 1998): 10-12.

may be the product of a sophisticated search or one impulsively selected from a wall of flash in a seedy, run-down tattoo parlour. The reason that the latter approach at times works is that many flash tattoos depict archetypal or transpersonal themes.

It is the case that not all searches for tattoo symbols result in tattoos which hold long-term meaning. Some indeed have short-term or more limited meaning. While such symbols are natural products of the compensatory process and of significant import in helping the individual come to terms with immediate issues and/or relatively minor day-to-day concerns, they are a problem when they are permanently engraved on the body. Unlike a dream image or a jacket sporting a crest, a tattoo symbol which proves to hold only short-term or more limited meaning neither dissolves with the passing of time nor can it be simply discarded. As such, these tattoos continually work to focus the individual's attention on less comprehensive or 'outgrown' positions.

To understand what an outgrown tattoo may mean in terms of the development of the personality, we can refer to the differences between Freud's and Jung's understanding of how psychic contents are to be treated. According to Jung, psychic contents have not only a causal, or historic, aspect, but also a meaning for the future. It is their future orientation which draws psychic energy forward and ultimately produces development. Freud, on the other hand, taught that psychic contents are to be interpreted strictly on the basis of their causal, or antecedent, aspects. Jung contended that when psychic contents are treated in this manner, it inhibits the forward flow of psychic energy. As Aziz writes, "Exclusive application of the reductive method serves to bind the forward movement of

psychic energy and with it the development of the personality.”²⁹ In that an outgrown tattoo perpetually focuses an individual’s attention on a past position, it may well work like an “exclusive application of the reductive method” and thus be a stagnating influence on development.

Outgrown tattoos not only draw their owner’s attention to past positions, but they also work to convey this same information to others -- at times to the tattooed individual’s deep dismay. Bob Baxter provides us with a measure of insight into just how upsetting some individuals find this to be when he writes, “I’ve heard several tattooed compatriots bitch about some old tattoo or other that they won’t even show because they’re so embarrassed by what it says about them. I can understand that. It’s like having strangers leaf through your high school yearbook when you had a flip hairstyle or a face full of braces. It makes you want to crawl under the sofa.”³⁰

While some individuals choose not to deal with the issue of a tattoo whose meaning has been exhausted, many people feel compelled to come to terms with the problem. One way this may be attempted is to accord the symbol new meaning. “I was going to get it covered,” writes one such individual, “but decided not to. I’ve had it since I was 16 and I guess its part of me now. Its the first tattoo I got . . . my boy friend did it with a needle and india ink. It reminds me of what I was into in that part of my life. It’s a way of marking the

²⁹ Aziz, *C.G. Jung’s Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 16: The discussion concerning the differences between Jung’s and Freud’s positions draws on Aziz’s distillation of the two men’s respective perspectives as presented in *C.G. Jung’s Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 15-16.

³⁰ B. Baxter, “Editor’s Comment,” *Skin & Ink, The Tattoo Magazine* (July 1997): 4.

changes.”³¹

Another way individuals resolve the issue of outgrown tattoos is to have them removed through laser surgery. While the results that may be achieved with this procedure have improved drastically in recent years, it is still a very expensive and time-consuming process. Writing in 1994 and quoting in U.S. currency, Lautman tells us that “The pulse-laser process costs, on average, between two hundred and three hundred dollars per treatment, with the length and number of treatments depending on the size of the tattoo.” “For example,” as Lautman continues, “a typical two-by-three inch takes about twenty minutes; a three-by-five inch tattoo can require up to three treatments, and large tattoos are tackled in ten-by-ten inch segments.”³²

A particularly popular approach to dealing with the problem of an outgrown tattoo is to have it either covered over or integrated into a new design.³³ When an individual makes this choice, he/she once again engages in the quest for a tattoo symbol. Having had to come to terms with the very graphic problem of an outgrown tattoo, the person may well spend considerable time thinking about his/her next tattoo symbol and whether it will prove capable of holding meaning for a life time. Despite a person’s best efforts to find a

³¹ Saunders, p. 131.

³² Lautman, p. 118.

³³ In presenting us with anecdotal evidence, Sanders suggests that approximately 30% of tattoo work done is cover-up work. While a significant portion of this trade may be attributed to the problem of short-term symbols, a considerable percentage is also aimed at correcting the work of so-called *scratchers* -- i.e., incompetent tattoo artists. C. Sanders, “Drill and Frill: Client Choice, Client Typologies, and Interactional Control in Commercial Tattooing Settings,” in *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, ed. A. Rubin (Los Angeles, Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1988), p. 223.

more lasting symbol, it is impossible to predict where one will be ten or twenty years down the road. As such, the individual may still end-up with a tattoo whose meaning is outgrown.

We turn now to discuss those tattoo rituals which take place in conjunction with tattoo as individual self-expression. When the tattoo ritual is individually based, it is the individual, not the collective, who makes all the key decisions. Chief among these is whether the ritual will be highly structured or more minimally fixed in form. The individual is now ultimately responsible not only for all the critical elements associated with the tattoo -- its meaning, the symbol to be tattooed, the tattoo artist, etc., -- but also the design and implementation of the actual ceremony.

When an individual decides to undergo a highly structured tattoo ritual, he/she constructs a complex ceremony which may include subsidiary rituals such as dancing, drumming and chanting. As is the case with collectively mandated highly structured tattoo rituals, the added structures should all work to convey the meaning of the tattoo. The extent to which this is achieved will be the extent to which the individual's encounter with the symbol is intensified.³⁴

When the meaning of the individually based highly structured tattoo ritual is transpersonal in nature, the ceremony will work to sweep everyone present into its compensatory meaning. It does so by working to activate transpersonal or archetypal

³⁴ As was noted in the previous chapter, fn 73, the distinction drawn between highly structured and more minimally structured tattoo rituals, as well as the relationship between structure and the spontaneous emergence of the compensatory resources of the unconscious, was derived from Aziz's work as presented in C.G. Jung's *Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, pp. 9-11.

energies in those attending, as is also the case in highly structured collectively mandated tattoo rituals. In contrast to collectively mandated tattoo rituals, however, individually based ceremonies do not work to direct this energy along collectively determined lines, but rather allow it to flow into the service of each individual's own developmental needs.

When a person decides to be tattooed in a highly structured ceremony, he/she typically turns to a tattoo artist for help in constructing and conducting the event. Pat Sinatra is one tattoo artist known for her work in this area. In describing how such rituals typically unfold within her studio, Sinatra provides us with a sense of what such an experience might feel like. She also draws our attention to the types of structures that may be added and how these forms are directed at supporting the individually based meaning of the tattoo. As her narrative reads:

'The tattoo ceremony . . . usually takes place during one of the eight traditional celebrations of the cycles of the year, or during the dark or full of the moon. The tattooee, or celebrant, can invite friends to participate in the ritual. We start by smudging or purifying the space by burning sacred herbs. . . . We then form a circle, join hands, and begin breathing silently and deeply. We are all connected as we gather together to support and help nurture the growth and transformation of the celebrant. I usually break the silence by speaking about the symbolism of the chosen design, and the auspiciousness of the time chosen for this transformation. I then ask the celebrant to tell, in his or her own words, what the tattoo will accomplish. Each remaining participant then offers a word, idea, blessing . . . whatever . . . to help charge this tattoo talisman. The energy is raised, grounded, and the clasped hands are released. We begin the tattoo.' ³⁵

We turn now to briefly explore those individually based tattoo rituals which are more minimally structured in terms of form. It may be suggested that the vast majority of

³⁵ Margot Mifflin, *Bodies of Subversion. A Secret History of Women and Tattoo* (New York: Juno Books, 1997), p. 108; In describing Sinatra's work, Mifflin points out that Sinatra at times incorporates elements of Wiccan and/or Native American religious practices into tattoo rituals. Mifflin, p. 108.

individually based tattoo rituals not only fall into this category, but basically consist of little more than actually engraving the image. The minimal amount of structure and the intensity of the tattoo experience means that this type of ritual is receptive to the spontaneous manifestation of unconscious compensatory contents, as we shall see in the following two narratives.

In our first example, tattoo artist Shotsie Gorman relates his experience of inking a tattoo in memory of a dead child. In the way of background information, it is helpful to know that individuals have long used tattoos to try and deal with the death of a loved one. While earlier versions of such tattoos typically consisted of images such as tombstones or crosses with "In memory of" inscribed on them, modern tattoo techniques now allow the engraving of photo realistic works. A photo realistic work is, as the name suggests, a tattoo which replicates a photograph as closely as possible. Some of these works are astonishingly life like. (An example of a photo-realistic tattoo is included in the appendix, page 111.) As we can well imagine, having a photo-like depiction of a deceased loved one engraved into the body is likely to be a particularly forceful encounter with an image. Gorman's narrative, to which we now turn, highlights how intense such a tattoo ritual may be for both the person being tattooed and the tattoo artist. As Gorman recounts:

‘I did a portrait of a child who was killed in a cyclone nearby. It was a really spectacular tattoo. I helped the father cross over the pain. At one point while I was tattooing, I had to leave the room. It was so powerful. I wanted to be able to capture something for him and I think I did. My dreams that night were filled with the experience. That tattoo is one of the best pieces of work I’ve done.’³⁶

³⁶ Shotsie Gorman, "The Tattooists," in Krakow, *The Total Tattoo Book* (New York: Warner Books, 1994), p.102.

When Gorman tells us he had to “leave the room” because what was unfolding was so powerful,” and when he informs us that his “dreams that night were filled with the experience,” he is revealing how deeply his own unconscious was activated during the tattoo ritual.³⁷ In telling us that inking the tattoo helped “the father cross over the pain,” Gorman is also indicating that something transformative may well have taken place for the father of the dead child.³⁸

The second example we turn to also deals with the transpersonal problem of the death of a family member. In a letter to the magazine, *Tattoo*, a young woman by the name of Valerie vividly describes how the healing resources of the unconscious spontaneously emerged during the engraving of her tattoo. As Valerie writes:

‘I am 26 years old. Last December I had my late husband’s portrait inked on my left arm. While it was being done, I felt as if he was alive again. It was a fantastic experience, and I’ll never forget it. I did not even feel the pain, I was just too impatient to show it to the world. Since then, I have received only compliments for its beauty, not only from people of my own generation.’³⁹

In telling us about her tattoo experience, Valerie provides us with enough information to discuss it in terms of the transcendent function. Given the enormity of her

³⁷ Unfortunately, Gorman does not go on to relate the contents of his dreams so we have no way of knowing what was trying to come to consciousness for him in conjunction with this event.

³⁸ In the following excerpt, tattoo artist Brian Evertt provides us with further insight into just how intense such tattoo rituals may prove to be for both the tattoo artist and the individual being tattooed. As Evertt writes, “Often, when I’m doing something as personal as tattooing, it breaks down a lot of barriers that you normally have with someone you don’t know. . . . But, when I’m tattooing somebody, because its such a personal experience and because its a tattoo of something or someone that they love, these barriers come right down. Like, if its a lost child, they’ll share with me all the things about this child in their life . . . they will tell me all about this child during the time we’re doing the tattoo. And I’ve had tears in my eyes when they’re telling me. I’ve had them tell me about how this child came to pass. And its very very touching and its a heart-wrenching experience when you’re doing the tattoo.” Bob Baxter, “Brian Everett. The King of Route 66,” *Skin & Ink, The Tattoo Magazine* (September 1997): 32.

³⁹ Valerie, Paris, France, “Tattoo Mailbox,” *Tattoo*, no. 39 (November 1992): 15.

loss, it may be suggested that the woman was probably experiencing considerable sadness and despair. We may describe this as the conscious position, or thesis. The antithesis is represented by the image depicting her late husband. As we can imagine, this may well symbolize not only who the man was, but also the complex range of thoughts, feelings, and memories the woman will have about him. In the dramatic exchange of the tattoo ritual, thesis meets antithesis, sadness meets memories, and a third emerges -- that being, the woman's fantastic feeling that her husband is alive again.

To understand how such a dramatic shift may have occurred, it is worth considering that something else also comes forward for the woman during the tattoo ritual. It may be suggested that what also transpired was a dialectic between the ego, which experiences death as incommensurable loss, and the self, which experiences death as a joyful time in that it finally achieves complete wholeness.⁴⁰ This understanding that the ego and self have vastly different views on death is derived from the work of Aziz. In interpreting an experience Jung had in conjunction with the loss of his mother, Aziz writes "Perhaps more than any other experience, death confronts us with the reality of just how different the points of view of the ego and self are." As Aziz continues . . .

From the point of view of the self, our physical death is not viewed as it is by the ego, principally as a time of loss, rather, it is viewed as a time of gain, for it is finally to be united with that from which it has been separated. Accordingly, death is often represented from the perspective of the self as a wedding. 'In the light of eternity,' Jung explains, 'it [death] is a wedding, a *mysterium coniunctionis*. The soul attains, as it were, its missing half, it achieves wholeness.'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Aziz, *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, p. 60.

⁴¹ Ibid. The quotation Aziz draws from Jung is from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 314.

It may thus be suggested that during the intensity of the tattoo ritual, the self managed to make clear to the woman's ego something of its own very different and far more comprehensive perspective on death. As the woman's letter indicates, her experience that day was deeply compensatory. Through its dramatic presence on her body, Valerie's tattoo will work to not only evoke her memories of her husband, but it will also work to keep her continuously in touch with the healing she experienced during the tattoo ritual. That is to say, it will function to "keep the healing going." We can well imagine that such a tattoo will hold truly considerable long-term compensatory meaning for this young woman.

In concluding the chapter, we turn to two excerpts that highlight the transcendent function at work in inked tattoos. We shall begin with a narrative recounted by one Philippe Durand. In telling us his story, Durand draws our attention to how he experienced his tattoos as instrumental in helping him come to terms with his "unhealthy aggressiveness." Durand's story is of particular interest not only for the "healing power" he accords his tattoos, but also for their gruesome, macabre imagery. A picture of one of Durand's tattoos may be found on page 111. The text reads:

'Tattoos had the effect of a psychotherapy on me. They exorcised all my bad dreams, they chased away the hatred, the violence that was eating me up. For instance my piece with a man devouring flesh (maybe human flesh) acted out all the unhealthy aggressiveness which, so far, I had the worst time to control . . . Without the ink discovery, I would have certainly turned bad, and I might have been in jail today. Instead, I became more social, more pleasant with my fellow human beings. I even feel free and happy to be alive . . . Not only that, but the healing power of my tattoos saved my marriage and made me return

to my paint and brushes. Its funny because when people discover what's on my body, they immediately think I am a violent man. If only they knew!' ⁴²

As Durand's excerpt reveals, he experienced himself as being "eaten up," or devoured, by his hatred and aggressive outbursts. We can well imagine that his life was indeed being destroyed by his behaviour as he also informs us that his relationship with his wife was in trouble and that he had stopped painting. In portraying a man eating raw flesh, perhaps even "human flesh," Durand's tattoos depict his problem and its devouring aspects. His tattoos thus take the conscious position or the thesis.

While Durand interprets his tattoos as having acted out all his "unhealthy aggressiveness," it is also the case that they would have forced him into an extremely graphic encounter with his problem day in, day out, seven days a week. This is an important development as a careful reading of Durand's text suggests he was not only unable to grasp the compensation being presented in his dreams, compensation that was in all likelihood seeking to address the same problem, but was also probably trying to repress it.⁴³ When Durand's conscious position is tattooed, the unconscious compensatory position or antithesis comes forward. The counter-position is quite simply his more related, gentler side. As Durand's story reveals, this was a side of Durand that hadn't shown itself, a side that had been repressed by the other. Through this interaction between thesis and antithesis, aggressiveness and relatedness, a synthesis emerges and Durand experiences

⁴² Michelina Miraglia, "Alain Meyer. A French Impressionist -- 90's Style. Philippe Durand," *Tattoo*, no. 39 (November 1992): 9.

⁴³ This suggestion is based on Durand recounting that he was having bad dreams. As we can well imagine, they were in all likelihood depicting the problem at hand.

his life as radically transformed.⁴⁴ In that Durand's tattoos helped him come to terms with his aggression, which we may also describe as primitive instinctual drives, they may moreover be said to have contributed quite directly to the balancing of spirit and instinct in consciousness.

In contrast to Durand's tattoos which employ vivid and shocking imagery, our final example focuses on a tattoo whose lines are quite simple. As we shall see, it nonetheless proved very effective in helping an individual recover from devastating addictions. The text reads:

After years spent destroying himself through drug and alcohol abuse, K. brought her friend to Charon [*a tattoo artist*]. A tattoo was designed, a symbol of evolving spheres (representing wholeness) which are reaching out for protection. A year after the tattoo was applied, K.'s friend admitted that the piece had 'haunted' him from the moment the ink sank under his skin, and this sensation had made his recovery 'inevitable.'⁴⁵

As the narrative suggests, K's friend is still in a state of addiction when he goes to the tattoo artist. We may thus describe the conscious position, or thesis, as a state of fragmentation. We are told that the tattoo that was designed symbolizes wholeness. The tattoo thus represents the unconscious position, or antithesis. When K's friend tells us he experienced this tattoo as relentlessly haunting, he is in all probability describing an

⁴⁴ Anecdotal comments within popular tattoo literature suggest that Durand's experience of violent tattoo imagery as healing is not unique. As another individual relates, "you'll probably be pleased to find out that most people who wear darkside imagery . . . say they haven't become any more cranky or corrupt since they got their alarming art. Quite the contrary. By wearing imagery with an evil edge, they feel they've yanked their personal dark demons out of the shadows and into the sunlight where they can keep a watchful eye on the troublesome critters" Leo Green, "Richard Bearden. Mean and Nasty by Design, Not Necessarily by Nature," *Tattoo*, no. 68 (April 1995): 7. We cannot, however, assume that all violent tattoo imagery will have a healing effect. Such depictions may in fact intensify the problem by heightening the individual's state of association with his/her violent tendencies.

⁴⁵ Michelle Delio, "Tattoo Transformation," *Tattoo*, no. 91 (March 1997): 78-79.

experience of being continuously linked, through tattoo, to those archetypal or transpersonal energies that support his healing and movement toward wholeness. Out of this powerful dialectic between his addicted state and the healing energies of the unconscious, fragmentation and wholeness, a synthesis emerges. That is to say, the individual's behaviour changes to such an extent that he recovers from his addictions.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to bring the perspective of Analytical Psychology to bear on the practice of tattoo to reveal its compensatory role. As one of the most difficult challenges in the compensatory process is the integration of spirit and instinct, the paper has paid special attention to this problem and to how tattoo functions to support its resolution.

Chapter One outlined the problem of the tension between spirit and instinct then highlighted the comprehensive nature of this issue by reflecting on how it has been handled by various spiritual traditions. As has been explained, spirit and instinct are the two poles of the archetype. As such, they configure typically human ways of acting and perceiving. While spirit and instinct are complementary factors at the unconscious level, tension frequently exists between them at the conscious level. For one reason or another, an individual may become primarily oriented to the body and its instinctual drives or almost exclusively focused on intellectual activities. Analytical Psychology contends that if the personality is to evolve, such one-sidedness must be resolved and both poles balanced in consciousness.

In Chapter Two, the focus turned to Jung's self-regulating model of the psyche and compensation, the process through which regulation is maintained. Using both personal and transpersonal symbols, the compensatory process addresses the past, present, and future developmental needs of the individual personality. By engaging in the compensatory process, an individual may not only balance spirit and instinct in consciousness, but also

come to terms with the shadow, learn to relate to the anima/animus, and experience the emergence of the self, or innate wholeness.

The transcendent function is a specific way of talking about the compensatory process. As has been revealed in this paper, we may think of the tattoo as a symbol in one of the stages in the transcendent function -- conscious, unconscious, or synthesis. With its permanent placement on the body, the tattoo is unique in the way it forces the individual into a direct, intense encounter with the symbol associated with one of these three stages. In intensifying the encounter with the symbol, the tattoo increases the efficacy of this process. More specifically, the shock of engraving a symbol into the flesh may quite dramatically throw an individual into the process of change. With its permanent and very graphic placement on the body, the tattoo moreover works on an ongoing basis to help the individual hold the compensatory meaning of the symbol continuously in consciousness. Through their attention and questions, others who see the tattoo may likewise lead the individual to once again focus on the meaning of the engraved image. In that the meaning of the tattoo is brought into direct relationship to the body, the tattoo moreover heightens the consciousness of the connection between spirit and instinct, and thus it may be suggested, moves us in the direction of balancing the two poles.

It is the case that tattoo may be either collectively mandated or a function of individual self expression. Chapter Three explored collectively mandated tattoo. Drawing on a diverse range of examples, it has been pointed out that when tattoo is collectively mandated, it becomes an instrument for identifying the individual with the group, and the group with the individual. Collectively mandated tattoo moreover provides socially

sanctioned symbols which not only support the group, but also have a compensatory meaning related to the development of the individual personality. Specifically, these symbols mediate the individual to him/herself, to animate or inanimate objects, or to a spirit or deity. As was pointed out, one reason why many collectively mandated tattoo symbols are compensatory is because they are collectively adopted and modified archetypal symbols. When an individual is tattooed with such a symbol it works to activate archetypal, or transpersonal, energies to support the developmental need in question. While such symbols are compensatory in this manner, they also, as was explained, work to shape the emerging development along socially sanctioned lines.

In recognition of the totality of the tattoo process, attention has also been paid to tattoo rituals. Collectively mandated tattoo rituals may be described as either highly structured or more minimally fixed in form. When the tattoo ritual is highly structured, the collective provides not only the meaning of the tattoo, but also a complex ceremony that typically includes subsidiary rituals like highly structured dancing and drumming. The purpose of these added structures is to not only intensify the collectively provided meaning(s) of the ceremony, but to also ensure that everyone present understands it. In that collectively mandated tattoo rituals consist of archetypal or transpersonal sets of symbols, they not only act on those being tattooed, but they also work to sweep everyone present into the collectively provided meaning of the ceremony.

In contrast to highly structured collectively mandated tattoo rituals, more minimally structured collectively mandated tattoo rituals focus almost exclusively on the striking of the tattoo. While this may decrease the ability of the ritual to convey its socially

sanctioned message to others who may be present, the intensity of tattoo is such that the individual being inked is still led into a dramatic encounter with the collectively provided symbol. It is important to furthermore recall that minimally structured rituals afford choice. An individual may, for example, be able to choose where on the body he/she would like the tattoo placed. With choice, as was discussed, there are more windows of opportunity for the spontaneous manifestation of unconscious compensatory contents.

In the fourth chapter, the paper turned to tattoo as individual self-expression. When the impetus to tattoo lies in the individual desire for self-expression, the tattoo symbol may be a statement of where the person is at, or where he/she needs to go. It is in terms of where the individual needs to go that the tattoo symbol may play an important role in the development of the personality.

In the past, the collectively adopted and modified archetypal symbols of the Jewish and Christian religious traditions were able to meet the developmental needs of the majority of individuals within the West. As has been explained, a great many contemporary individuals are no longer able to connect to an experience of meaning through the limited range of symbols and rituals provided by these traditions. Numerous people thus find themselves searching outside Judaism and Christianity for just such an experience. With its unlimited symbolic base and ritualistic aspects, tattoo in the contemporary North American context has become a means for individuals to both find and engage those symbols which will support the modern search for wholeness and meaning.

When the impetus to tattoo originates in individual self-expression, the individual moves beyond the symbols offered by the Jewish and Christian traditions. When virtually

any conceivable symbol may be engraved into the skin, the tattoo may function to support a wider range of developmental needs.

In the quest for individual self-expression, an individual may select either a flash design, or custom tattoo. When an individual opts for a custom piece, he/she engages in a process which often proves very receptive to the spontaneously emerging compensatory contents of the unconscious. In reflecting on the search for a tattoo symbol, it was explained that effective tattoo symbols in terms of supporting the developmental process are those which hold long-term comprehensive compensatory meaning. As such, particularly effective tattoos may well be those which depict our most long-term comprehensive developmental goal possible, that is to say, an experience of the self or innate wholeness attempting to emerge. While a search for a tattoo symbol ideally results in a tattoo which proves to hold significant long-term compensatory import, many prove to have only short-term or more limited meaning. As these tattoos continually focus the individual's attention on outgrown positions, they may well be a stagnating influence in terms of development. Not only are outgrown tattoos a problem in the manner just suggested, they furthermore often prove embarrassing to the individual who bears them. As the most popular resolution to such a problem is to have the outgrown image covered over with a new tattoo, many individuals are once more led into a search for a symbol.

When the paper turned to individually based tattoo rituals, it was pointed out that while highly structured tattoo rituals do exist, the majority are minimally structured. Minimal structure combined with the intensity of tattoo means these rituals are open and receptive to the spontaneous emergence of unconscious compensatory contents.

In concluding the fourth chapter, two specific examples that detailed the transcendent function at work through inked tattoos were presented. The first example focused on an individual's problem with aggression. Through particularly gruesome imagery, a conscious position tattoo proved very effective in helping an individual come to terms with his more violent tendencies. In the second example, a tattoo symbol depicting the unconscious position linked an individual suffering from an addiction with those transpersonal energies instrumental in his healing and evolution toward wholeness.

By explaining how we can think of tattoo as a symbol in the transcendent function, and by revealing the intensification of the compensatory process that can occur through tattoo, this thesis has disclosed tattoo's role in psychic compensation. Whether tattoo is collectively mandated, or undertaken in the pursuit of individual self expression, its compensatory value is profound. The fact that tattoo can prove so instrumental in supporting change is perhaps one of the most significant reasons for its persisting presence over thousands of years. In closing, it is hoped that this thesis has not only provided new insight into the meaning of this age old art, but that it has also inspired individuals to think about what symbols, if any, they themselves would be willing to translate into a tattoo.

APPENDIX

Te Aho Te Rangi Wharepu
T.A. Simmons,
The Art of Maori Tattoo
(Auckland: Reed Methun, 1986),
photo plate # 20.

Dolphin Tattoo
Tattoo Artist: Dan Thome
"Photos, Photos, and More Photos!"
Skin & Ink, The Tattoo Magazine
(September 1999): 59.

A Classic Harley-Davidson Tattoo
 Tattoo Artist: Roy Boy
 Jim Pisaretz,
 "The Ultimate Harley Tattoo,"
Tattoo, no. 12
 (Winter 1988): 9.

Tim Falk's Biker Tattoo
 Tattoo Artist: Shotsie Gorman
 Amy Krakow,
The Total Tattoo Book
 (New York: Warner Books, 1994),
 p. 65.

Hal Israel's Full Back Tattoo
 Tattoo Artist: Paul Booth
 Longjon, "Hal Israel,"
Tattoo, no. 72
 (August 1995): 35.

Brooke Berdis' Tattoo
 Tattoo Artist: Ilija, Venice Tattoo Studio
 Amy Krakow, *The Total Tattoo Book*
 (New York: Time Warner, 1994), p. 166.

A Photo-Realistic Tattoo
 Everlasting Tattoo Studio
 Bob Montagna,
 "Everlasting Aaron:
 Put on a Happy Tattoo,"
Tattoo, no. 48
 (August 1993): 86.

Philippe Durand's Tattoo
 Tattoo Artist: Alain Meyer
 Michelina Miraglia,
 "Alain Meyer. A French Impressionist --
 90's Style. Philippe Durand."
Tattoo, no. 39
 (November 1992): 10.

Note: Durand's tattoo is on his
 back.

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