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**THE WOUNDED HEALER:
A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THEMATIC MATERIAL OF THE
WOUNDED HEALER ARCHETYPE IN CONNECTION WITH THE
THERAPEUTIC HEALING PROCESS**

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis project is a critical analysis of Greek mythology, particularly the myth of Asklepios as The Wounded Healer, and why the best therapists often embody this archetypal energy in alchemical transformation. Mythology has been used to inform practice in the helping professions throughout history, and in our era still is used as a metaphor for how we think about helping and healing. Mythos is a philosophy of thought that combines not only reason, or that of logos, but the innate feelings behind them. Renowned psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, referred to myth as the expressions of the collective unconscious which are rooted in the psyche. The mythic approach is one that addresses the world in a narrative and indirect way. Subjective aspects, such as individual feelings and personal experiences, become pertinent to the mythology.

There have been a number of various treatment interventions that have been used in clinical practice to help patients who have experienced trauma in their lives. Such therapeutic interventions may include art, dance, or music amongst others as a method to express oneself through creative means. Another intervention is that of literature which can be found in the practice of depth psychotherapy. The essence of catharthism is the purification or purgation of emotions through an expression of an art form. Depth psychotherapy combines the approaches of psychology and mythology to help a client that is psychologically suffering to uncover the meanings embedded in their unconscious minds to promote healing by becoming conscious of repressed traumas, thoughts, and feelings. This particular Greek myth of Asklepios examines the ideology of the wounded healer archetype. The wounded healer, after recognizing and healing from their own traumas, is compelled to help others realize that they can do the same.

Keywords: Greek mythology, Asklepios, wounded healer, depth psychotherapy,
narrative, helping professions, medicine

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
METHODS	17
FINDINGS AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS	18
DISCUSSION	20
APPENDIX	24
REFERENCES	28

INTRODUCTION

The following thesis covers a vast amount of material and provides only what explanation is necessary to help the reader understand the research question on a very basic and fundamental level. For a paper of this length, the background information has been significantly modified and shortened to fit the parameters of this specific thesis. It is by no means a comprehensive piece. What is contained in this thesis has the potential to be further developed in the near or distant future as this is just an introduction to a prevalent issue. Before any sort of action can be taken, first a new perspective must be taken into consideration. What follows is meant to shed a new light on ancient practices and principles that we have since forgotten about or lost connection with. The time is coming when we need to rekindle the relationship with our ancestors and hear what they have to teach us about healing.

There are many different types of interventions that have been used in clinical practice (i.e., dance, art, music etc.) and one that is of interest is that of literature, or mythology in particular. The myth of Asklepios examines the importance of the archetypal energy behind the wounded healer. As mentioned in the abstract of this thesis: myths are the expressions of the collective unconscious; therefore, mythology is a means to help identify traits embedded in the psyche. The mythic figures, then, are created with the purpose of bringing archetypal energy to life. It is through these archetypes that we are able to translate human experiences.

This thesis will make reference to the concepts of Jungian depth psychotherapy. Carl Jung (1875-1961) was a psychiatrist from Switzerland who founded analytical psychology.

A few of the important concepts that will be referenced in this thesis are: psyche, collective unconscious, and archetype. Jungian theory is one that is very much driven by experience. It can be metaphorically thought of as one foot planted firmly in reality and the other in the world of myth and dreams. The psyche is defined as:

The totality of all psychological processes, both conscious and unconscious...The way in which the psyche manifests is a complicated interplay of many factors, including an individual's age, sex, hereditary disposition, psychological type and attitude, and degree of conscious control over the instincts. (Sharp, 1991, p. 107)

Jung divided the psyche, or mind, into three parts: consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious is defined as:

“A structural layer of the human psyche containing inherited elements, distinct from the personal unconscious” (Sharp, 1991, p. 35). Jung writes:

The collective unconscious—so far as we can say anything about it at all— appears to consist of mythological motifs of primordial images, for which reason the myths of all nations are its real exponents. In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious...We can therefore study the collective unconscious in two ways, either in mythology or in the analysis of the individual. (Jung, 1969, para 325)

Furthermore; “The more that one becomes aware of the contents of the personal unconscious, the more is revealed of the rich layer of images and motifs that comprise the collective unconscious” (Sharp, 191, p. 36). And lastly, archetypes are defined as:

“Primordial, structural elements of the human psyche...Archetypes are irrepresentable in themselves but their effects are discernible in archetypal images and motifs” (Sharp, 1991, p. 27). Jung also thought of archetypes as “instinctual images”; or in other words, the forms assumed by instincts (Sharp, 1991, p. 28).

Archetypes will manifest on a personal and collective level. On a personal level, archetypes will manifest through complexes (Sharp, 1991, p. 28). A complex is: “An

emotionally charged group of ideas or images...In the same way that atoms and molecules are the invisible components of physical objects, complexes are the building blocks of the psyche and the source of all human emotions” (Sharp, 1991, pp. 37-38). And on a collective level, archetypes will manifest as characteristics of entire cultures (Sharp, 1991, p. 28). It is the responsibility of each new generation to attempt to seek new understanding of whatever manifests itself. The archetypal image is: “The form or representation of an archetype in consciousness...Archetypal images, as universal patterns or motifs which come from the collective unconscious, are the basic content of religions, mythologies, legends and fairy tales” (Sharp. 1991, p. 29).

Previously mentioned in the abstract of this thesis: the essence of catharism is the purification or purgation of emotions through an expression of an art form. In Jungian analysis, the cathartic method is defined as: “A confessional approach to treating neurosis, involving the abreaction of emotions associated with a trauma” (Sharp, 1991, p. 33); and abreaction is defined as: “A method of becoming conscious of repressed emotional reactions through the retelling and reliving of a traumatic experience” (Sharp, 1991, p. 11). While Jung abandoned these above mentioned methods as effective tools in trauma therapy, understanding how they operate in the mythology is important to this thesis. Jung referred to neurosis as “the suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning” (Jung, 1932, CW 11, para. 497). He also said, “neurosis is always a substitute for legitimate suffering” (Jung, 1938, p.92).

The wounded healer is someone who has experienced the burdens of pain, suffering and loss, and transcended these experiences into a vital source of wisdom and compassion. The word compassion itself originates from the Latin stem word *compati*

meaning, “to feel pity”; *com* meaning, “with, or together” and *pati* meaning, “to suffer”. Therefore, the word compassion literally translates “to suffer with, or together”. In her article, “The Wounded Healer: A Jungian Perspective”, Larisey (2012) says “The most skillful clinician, rather than being a strong and capable model of good health, is one who has suffered from all sorts of illnesses and is being transformed by those agonies” (p.12). The wounded healer is able to feel and understand the burdens and pains of their patients because they themselves have also experienced it.

Carl Jung once said, “The doctor is effective only when he himself is affected. Only the wounded physician heals” (Jung & Jaffe, 1963, p. 134). Instead of sympathizing with the patient on a very one-dimensional level, the wounded healer is able to genuinely empathize in the shared experience. By “sitting in the fire” with the patient, the wounded healer fosters a relationship of vulnerability and trust. Let it be clear that the healer is not the master of the patient. Rather, the healer helps the patient become the master of their own self.

The wounded healer fulfills their soul purpose or meaning by helping others to heal. However, because a wounded healer is always in a vulnerable state so as to help their patients process through their own wounds, the wounded healer needs to be mindful so as to not let their patient’s wounds infect their own. The wounded healer is always at risk when helping others because they are continuously acknowledging their own wounds for the benefit of the patient. “Our sorrows and wounds are only healed when we touch them with compassion”(Kornfield, 1994, p. 31). By looking at one’s wounds and nurturing them through a gentle and compassionate mind, the wounded healer is able to then teach their patients how to foster healing through caring for their own wounds. It is

when wounds are rubbed with dirt and covered with a bandaid that the trauma slips into the unconscious and manifests in unexpected and unpleasant ways in the form of complexes.

When a complex is constellated it replaces the ego as the authority figure in the psyche and will remain in control until the constellation is complete. If this is an unconscious process, complex can lead an individual to act, do, or say things that they normally would not. However, if an individual attempts to understand this process and recognize it for what it is, an emotionally charged reaction, then it becomes more conscious to the ego and less potentially reactive. By interrupting the constellation with an acknowledgement of how one's behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are simply rooted in previous experiences or traumatic events, the complex will eventually become less and less reactive. The healing process consists of reconciling with one's symptoms of traumatic experience.

Carl Jung uses a diagram to describe what he refers to as the lines of communication in a relationship¹. There are six lines that make up the diagram, each contains a double set of arrows suggesting that communication between the different paradigms flows in both directions; therefore, there are twelve lines of communication that information can pass through in a therapeutic relationship (Sharp, 1991, p. 150). This diagram looks like a rectangle of arrows with another two arrows running diagonally across the shape. The top arrow of the diagram illustrates the conscious flow of information whereas the bottom illustrates the course of unconscious information. The analyst (therapist) is represented on the left side of the diagram and the analysand (client) on the right.

¹ See Figure 1

Each of the two individuals has a relationship with the shadow parts of themselves. The shadow self is defined as, “hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized” (Sharp, 1991, p. 123). In this case, the shadow self of the healer would be the wounded and the shadow self of the wounded would be the healer. The analyst, or healer in this situation, is relatively conscious of their wounds. However, despite an in-depth analysis of their afflictions, their wounds live a shadowy existence and have the potential to be reconstellated in certain situations (Sharp, 1991, p. 150). Especially if they are working with an individual whose wounds resemble their own, in which case they would experience some countertransference. The wounded, or the client in this situation, has a natural potential to be a healer themselves but it is temporarily unable to access that ability (Sharp, 1991, p. 150). The unconscious information is just as important as the conscious information. Bringing unconscious traumas to the surface of consciousness bridges the gap between suffering and healing.

It is important to note that the analyst needs to maintain a constant relationship with their unconscious self so that they may remember that they embody a wounded healer archetype and not a savior archetype (Sharp, 1991, p. 150). The therapist is not responsible for the growth or healing of a client. The purpose of a therapist should be to help their clients to recognize the strength and healer within themselves. A therapist should never take credit for a patient's successes.

Note, that there is an inherent difference between healing someone and curing someone. Curing someone is to eliminate the symptoms of disease through the use of medicine. Medicine is rooted in a science, and science comes from rational thought of the

mind. The word disease can also be understood as dis-ease. The essence of the word is discomfort. Healing, on the other hand, is to make or become whole again. Healing is an art that originates from the heart. “To do ‘psychotherapy’ is to ‘attend to the soul’ which is something that is quite different to the ‘mind’” (Dargert, 2016). When we look at the etymology of the word health, we will find that it translates into *wholeness*. If we think about all of the things that life consists of, we would have to include all of the bad along with all of the good; for there is not one without the other. So, “we are then faced with the challenging idea that illness, and indeed death itself form an inevitable part of that whole which makes up a fully lived life” (Dargert, 2016).

There is a certain kind of power in spoken words. Dr. Zahed (2014) includes a powerful quote by Yehuda Berg in his article “The Power of Spoken Words,”:

Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity. We can choose to use this force constructively with words of encouragement, or destructively using words of despair. Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt, to harm, to humiliate and to humble.

In storytelling, especially mythology, words have the power to leave an imprint on an individual’s mind and heart. It is the responsibility of the social worker clinician to use this knowledge of the power of spoken words as a tool to help their clients to heal. One must be careful with their intention behind their spoken words and practice self reflection diligently so as to do no harm. Self-reflection is an effective tool in recognizing any phenomena of transference or countertransference in the therapeutic relationship early on.

According to Michael Meade (2018), there are fundamentally two ways of explaining the world; the first is mythos and the second is logos. Logos is a form of rational thought process, seeking to find objective truths. It is the most commonly used approach today in the way that we view our world. Mythos, on the other hand, is a very

ancient way of thinking that approaches the world in a less direct and more narrative means. The word mythology means the study of myths. The root word, being mythos, is derived from the ancient Greek word “μῦθος” (pronounced *mûthos*) meaning tale or story. Mythology is composed of both facts and feelings. Subjective aspects, such as an individual’s feelings or personal experiences, become relevant and pertinent information (Meade, 2018). Meade (2018) expands on this idea of mythology as a narrative means to reality by saying:

A narrative method involves relating to the experience of others, a sense of feeling connected to them and feeling sympathetic to the suffering of others. Where logos would dissect and analyze in order to distinguish one thing for another to get at the truth, Mythos seeks to uncover hidden connections between things and underline patterns that shape a person and events in this world from within. Each of them, the logical way and the narrative way, can lead to meaning but each offers a truth of a different order. (Meade, 2018)

In his book *Myth and the Body*, Keleman (1999) describes myth as “A story that grows out of the history of bodily process to orient life and give values” (Keleman, 1999, p. 5). On a fundamental level, myth communicates a perspective of the social and personal word. On a deeper level, myth “tells about the trials and tribulations in the initiation into different stages of adult life. A myth is a social order that tells about familial roles, about conflict and resolution” (Keleman, 1999, p. 5). Like all stories, the stories told by mythology suggests a sort of emotional reality. In this emotional reality, we see ourselves as a character, we relate to different aspects of the story as we are experiencing them in our waking reality. Recognizing which characters we play and at what time can help us to recognize what stories we live in and how we live our life. By becoming conscious of our unconscious thoughts, feelings, and actions we discover and learn more about ourselves. This is one of the many functions of mythology. And so we

will read about the myth of Asklepios and how he represents the wounded healer archetypal energy. The question that this thesis proposes to answer is: What are the thematic elemental patterns that emerge from the Myth of Asklepios and how do they translate into therapeutic characteristics in the process of healing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

*The Myth of Asklepios*²

Apollo fell in love with the princess of Thessaly. Koronis was unfaithful to Apollo after conceiving the child. Her disloyalty was brought to the attention of the god by one of his traditional messengers, the crow. The crow is supposed to have been white, but Apollo turned the crow black in a fit of rage. Apollo sent his twin sister Artemis, goddess of the hunt, to shoot down Koronis with her golden arrows. With the unborn child still inside the womb, Apollo watched his beloved burn on a funeral pyre. The sight caused Apollo to become stricken with grief and he rescued the child from the horrors of death saying:

“I can no longer
bear in soul to kill my seed
with horror in the grasp of its own mother’s death.”
the flames gave him ingress, and in a stride he pulled
the child out of its mother’s corpse.

The child was given the name of Asklepios and given to Chiron, one of the wisest centaurs. Chiron was known for his heroic healing and teachings, becoming a master of the science of herbs and medicine. Chiron is another example of the wounded healer. Chiron suffered from a wound that would not heal as a result of being caught in the crossfire of one of Heracles’s arrows tainted with deadly poison belonging to the Hydra.

² See Figure 2

His wound caused him eternal torment because he was immortal, and his search for his own cure led him to discover how to heal others.

Asklepios learned from Chiron and eventually surpassed him as his teacher and mentor. Asklepios “also was said to have instituted psychotherapy by healing ‘with the words that can alleviate men’s tormented souls’ and by giving mortals the gift of healing dreams” (Tick, 2001, p. 18). Asklepios was gifted the traits of a healer by his divine lineage. Asklepios was granted his abilities of diagnoses, healing, and intuitive insight from his divine father, Apollo. Athena also gifted Asklepios healing abilities through two vials of blood from the legendary gorgon, Medusa. One gaze upon the head of Medusa could turn any mortal to stone. One vial contained blood from the right side of her body, which is said to have healing properties. While the second vial contained blood from the left side of her body, which slayed.

Asklepios became renowned as the greatest healer in the Mediterranean world.
 And all who came to him for treatment
 Of malignancies or wounds
 From shining spears
 Or bullet stones
 Or ravages of summer heat or winter’s cold he healed accordingly:
 Some with soothing incantations, some with
 Beneficial potions, some with ointments
 Rubbed on limbs, and some
 He brought to health by surgery. (Tick, 2001, p. 19)

Asklepios was so well known for his abilities that it was rumored that he could awaken the dead. His life came to an end when Zeus killed Asklepios with a thunderbolt for bringing someone back to life.

Temples³ of Asklepios

After his death, Asklepios became so reverently honored that he was eventually given the title “god of healing” and raised to walk among the immortals. His temples and healing sanctuaries became sacred places as his influences spread throughout the Mediterranean, originating from his first sanctuary located in Epidauros.

In any therapeutic practice, Apollo’s gifts translate into understanding of the inner disease-and-healing process itself and the germinating and reading of dreams. Diagnosis and understanding are the healing arts derived from reason; dreaming and reading their mysteries are the arts derived from spirit. (Tick, 2001, p. 23)

The sanctuaries and temples dedicated in honor of the god, brought healing through the method of dream incubation. Dream incubation can be thought of as a sort of questing. “The healing sanctuaries of ancient Greece attended to spiritual and emotional needs as much as they did to the physical needs of its patients” (Dargert, 2016). Those individuals who sought healing in the sanctuaries and temples were considered to be incurable of their severe psychological, spiritual, or physical afflictions.

Patients attempting to be healed during a brush with the divine must commit to a state of cleanliness and chastity in order to be purified and worthy (Tick, 2001, p. 4). Upon being purified, the patients would then be called by an initial dream to move into the *abaton* of Asklepios. “The abaton was the sleeping chamber; the name literally means ‘The place not to be trodden’” (Tick, 2001, p. 4). In his book, *Ancient Dream Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy*, Meier (1967) translates the word abaton to mean “the place not to be entered by the unbidden” (p. 56). The etymology of the word abaton, in both ancient and modern Greek, is “βατός” (pronounced bat'-os). The word batos is interpreted as “passable, capable of passing through by foot”; therefore, abatos means exactly the

³ See Figures 3-4

opposite: “impassable by foot”. The word then transforms into abaton which means “an impassable place”. Thus, the sanctuaries and temples of Asklepios were not easy to access. The purpose of these sacred enclosures were to bring about healing; hence, the reason for their location being tucked away from the mundane was to intensify the spiritual and psychological powers associated with the dream questing. The seeker waits, for several hours or several days, in a narrow chamber resembling a sort of womb, awaiting a healing dream or a vision from the deity in any number of his different forms. “The god touched or treated the afflicted part of the person, or provided instruction, or advice. Thus a cure was effected. It was the epiphany, the visit of the god through a dream, that healed” (Tick, 2001, p. 5).

The Rod⁴ of Asklepios

The rod of Asklepios is an important symbol with regards to the healing process. There is a serpent that coils itself around the rod he holds. The serpent symbolizes Mother Earth and transformation simultaneously. However, in Judeo-Christian religions, the snake is traditionally thought of as a curse or the fall of man. That is not the case here. Under these circumstances, the serpent is a symbol of transformational healing. “Asklepios was an advanced practitioner of snake healing, particularly the inner transformation of poisons and identity transformations symbolized by shedding one’s old skin” (Tick, 2001, pp. 24-25). Healing practices surrounding snake worshiping were widespread throughout the Mediterranean region. Priests and priestesses practicing such traditions would permit the snake to bite them; thereby building up resistance to the poison over a period of time while propelling themselves into altered states of consciousness in sacred healing rituals (Tick, 2001, pp. 25-26).

⁴ See Figure 5

Crazywise

Phil Borges and Kevin Tomlinson (2017) co-directed a documentary called *Crazywise* that takes a new perspective on psychosis and how to transform psychological crisis into an opportunity for growth and change. This growing conversation has shed a new light on the need for alternative treatment approaches that focus on recovery, fostering social support, and a meaningful purpose. The documentary consists of several interviews with various health professionals, incorporates the experiences and teachings of tribal and indigenous cultures, and follows the stories of two individuals who transform their psychological suffering into a new understanding and appreciation for life.

A man named Adam Gentry from Seattle, Washington tells his story about struggling with depression and bipolar manic episodes shortly after his 20th birthday. His family and close friends described him as compassionate, kind, intuitive, and funny before becoming very angry. Adam spent four years taking all sorts of medications with up to 15 pills in a day; none of which helped him. Actually, Adam says that the medications did more harm than good; it changed him, and not for the better. Adam lost everything as a result of the mental health system failing him. He lost his sense of identity. His relationships with his close friends and family were severed as a result of his worsening mental state. Adam decided he wanted to change his life. He quit all of his medications at once, which is a very dangerous and risky thing to do without medical supervision. Adam described himself as “a drug addict, alcoholic that hated everyone” before making this change. And after a ten day silent meditation retreat, he returned to life as “a sober, life-loving vegan and complete health nut” (Borges et al., 2017).

The second testimony comes from a woman named Ekhaya Esima from NYC, New York. Ekhaya experienced extreme paranoia in her twenties, hearing voices and seeing dead people. She attempted suicide several times and tried to get help from the mental health system. Ekhaya also took various medications and she described them all as changing her, both physically and physiologically. She felt “drugged up” (Borges et al., 2017). It became too much for her to bear and she gave her children up for adoption. Ekhaya found her meaning and purpose as a wounded healer through a peer-led mental health organization and spiritual healing. She has since rekindled her relationship with her children and she is now actively engaged as a mental health and spiritual advocate (Borges et al., 2017).

Crazywise teaches us that tribal and indigenous cultures think differently. Rather than view mental illness as a disease with no cure or a hopeless cause, Crazywise emphasizes the importance of a strengths-based perspective. Such cultures view, what we would call, symptoms of mental illness as signs that a person is gifted with the abilities of the wounded healer. Those who experience hearing voices or seeing visions in an indigenous culture are taken under the wings of an elder who provides them guidance with respect to their special sensitivities. These individuals transform their abilities into gifts that they then use for the benefit of their tribal community. These individuals become the most respected and honored medicine men and women and bring healing and guidance to their tribe.

Application of the Wounded Healer Archetype to the Therapeutic Healing Process

Born to a divine father and a mortal mother, Asklepios has several resemblances of a Christ-like figure. “Like Jesus, he was a manifestation of the archetype of the wounded healer and savior who knows our suffering because he has experienced it” (Tick, 2001, p. 17). The pattern of birth origins in myth is symbolic for the wounded healer. Being born to a mortal mother, the wounded healer experiences incarnation and therefore understands the struggle of the human condition, all of which is essential to the role of a wounded healer (Tick, 2001, p. 20). The wounded healer must walk a middle path between divine and human.

Born into the violent confrontation between his mother and father, Asklepios’s birth is rooted in a primal wound, of which he had to overcome (Tick, 2001, p. 21):

He was saved from dying flesh by an act of god, saved from the decay of the earthly by the heavenly, the immortal. Further, like other divine figures to which his pattern is related, by being snatched from his dead mother’s womb and the devouring flames of her funeral pyre, he experienced a resurrection. (Tick, 2001, p. 21)

In retrospect of this symbolism, a wounded healer is one whose “spirit” or “soul” would have died as a result of family conflict, if it wasn’t for some divine act of intervention that saved them. The archetypal energy behind the wounded healer is what makes—therapists, guides, physicians, ministers—the best healers. The archetypal mentor is another important role in the wounded healer’s journey. For Asklepios, it was the wise kentaure by the name of Chiron. Being half human and half horse, Chiron represents both the nature and the human worlds. Apollo represents the divine. And Asklepios brings all three worlds together; mastering gifts of the healing arts of the natural, human, and spiritual worlds. The wounded healer must be able to bridge the three worlds;

harmonizing the tensions between their mental and emotional wellbeing in the process. Like any mentor/apprentice relationship (or therapist/patient relationship) the true healer will surpass the mentor in time. If mentor does well to pass on their wisdom to the student, the student will take that wisdom and grow. When applied in a clinical profession, the patient will take what knowledge and wisdom is offered by the therapist, learn to apply it, and continue to build on it so that in time they can pass it on to others and the roles will be reversed.

The archetype of the wounded healer is also central to the Christian Gospels. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says the following:

If I do not wash you, you have no part with me...For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Most certainly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, neither one who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (John 13:1-15, English Standard Version)

Here, Jesus is embodying the archetypal energy of the wounded healer. It was tradition in those days for the lowliest person in the room to wash the feet of those who return after a journey. By humbling himself, he reinvents what it means to be a healer in the helping profession (Larisey, 2012, p. 13). In psychotherapy, there is an alchemical foot-washing that takes place in the therapeutic relationship (Larisey, 2012, p. 13). “The primary requirement for becoming a psychotherapist is not the intellectual training. It is not the methods and techniques. It is simply the willingness to kneel and be washed” (Larisey, 2012, p. 13).

Another aspect of the myth that can be translated into the therapeutic healing process is the significance of a sacred space. In this context, the use of the word sacred is meant to describe a space that is safe and possesses the qualities of the ethereal. The

temples of Asklepios and the sleeping chambers are kept sacred so that a human can experience a connection with the divine. This image of the bed on which the sick would lie is translated into the concept of the analytic couch in therapy. The notion of the analytic couch originates from this myth and took nearly two millennia to make an appearance in modern medicine (Dargert, 2016). Therefore, the therapy room echoes that of the temples and the couch that of the sleeping chambers.

Depth psychologists attempt to understand the manifestations of the unconscious minds of their patients “through the study of dreams, images, symptoms, slips of the tongue, spontaneous humor, meaningful coincidences, as well as interpersonal engagements” (Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2018, What is Depth Psychology?). This approach to psychological suffering encourages patients to look at unconscious material in their psyches: things that have been repressed or things unknown. The process of healing begins with recognizing what has been buried in the unconscious. By exploring the importance of whatever material arises, and by integrating it into the conscious mind, an alchemical transformation of consciousness takes place. This understanding of the individual can be applied to cultures and society at large. All of these processes impact the psyche.

METHODS

Research Design

This thesis uses descriptive analysis to evaluate the relevance of the myth of Asklepios in the therapeutic healing process and to highlight certain thematic material as it translates to the alchemical transformation of patient to wounded healer. The curiosity

that elicited discussion surrounding this topic was one of personal interest and fascination with Jungian psychology and how it uses mythology and dream analysis to cultivate healing in therapeutic practice. Jungian depth psychotherapy is very demanding of an individual in that it requires a lot of time and effort to work on oneself.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

According to Nassaji (2015), “The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened” (p. 129). Additionally, qualitative research “is more holistic and often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes” (Nassaji, 2015, p. 129). This type of research method is common for conducting research in the social sciences (Nassaji, 2015, p. 129).

This particular thesis uses descriptive analysis to examine the thematic material of the wounded healer archetype in connection with the therapeutic healing process. The analysis will be summarized to provide specific examples supporting the analysis of the material. The data gathered will then be interpreted as qualitative data. The data collected for this thesis originated out of other sources. There were several sources consisting of peer reviewed articles, books, and a documentary. In analyzing the qualitative data, there were certain parallels that connected the mythology and archetypal energy to the evidence of true experience.

FINDINGS AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

As a western culture, we commonly think of mental illness as a limitation. We label individuals with psychological struggles as “ill” that seemingly suggests that they are “less than” or “broken”. There is a culturally demeaning discernment underlining the language surrounding the conditions of a person’s mental health, such that it creates a barrier that prevents open and sincere communication regarding a person’s sense of wellbeing or wholeness. It is a good reminder that we must be careful with the language and rhetoric we use. Depending on the connotation of the language, either positive or negative, we can either promote healing and open communication or we can hinder it and terminate it where it stands before it ever has a chance.

As previously illustrated by the testimonies from the Crazywise (2017) documentary, pharmacological therapy is unreliable and potentially harmful to its consumers. It’s expected that medication is supposed to alleviate the symptoms of mental illness so that a person’s life can become more manageable. However, often times the warning labels and side effects of the drugs are cautioning about the very thing the drug is supposed to help. For example, one of the more common side effects antidepressant medications are suicidal thoughts. It does not make sense why these prescription drugs would be causing the very thing they are meant to prevent. Instead, the medications generally tend to make an individual feel numb. It would only make sense that by numbing the pain of the thoughts or feelings an individual would feel somewhat dead on the inside. The unconscious is being flooded with information that is not being consciously processed, and is therefore worsening the symptoms.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a book, published by the American Psychiatric Association, containing all the various mental disorders, each associated with their own daunting descriptions, symptoms, and criteria. The number of disorders has significantly increased with each new edition. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2015), 1 in 5 Americans will suffer a psychological crisis in their lifetime. Seventy-five percent of crises occur before the age of twenty-four (NAMI, 2015). According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2019), only about half of the population who need professional services actually receive it. There is a certain stigma surrounding the conversation of mental health that prevents individuals from seeking help for fear of being weak or vulnerable.

According to the journal article, “The biomedical model of mental disorder: A critical analysis of its validity, utility, and effects on psychotherapy research” Deacon (2013) states: “Although neuroscience has undeniably revolutionized our understanding of the brain, it has failed to enumerate even one instance in which neurobiology alone can explain a psychological experience” (p. 851). He continues to note that, “Despite the emergence of novel technologies in recent decades...researchers have yet to discover a single biological marker with sufficient sensitivity and specificity to reliably inform the diagnosis of any mental disorder” (Deacon, 2013, p. 851). And yet, pharmaceutical sales for mental illness has risen dramatically in the last 20 years. In 1988, pharmaceutical sales were worth \$500 million (Borges, et al., 2017). In 2008, pharmaceutical sales increased to \$40 billion (Borges, et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION

What this thesis has attempted to illustrate is the importance and value of recognizing archetypal energy in mythology as a guide to or representation of everyday life. As pertaining to the wounded healer archetype, mythology helps us to understand that we can transform our sufferings into something beautiful that can be shared and used to foster healing. There are key themes across all of mythology that can lead us to a better understanding of ourselves, our situations, and our purpose. In her journal article “Analytical Psychology and Literary Criticism” Marie-Louise von Franz (1980) says, “It is inevitable that psychology should deal with literature, since both spring from the same womb: the human psyche” (p. 119). The therapeutic healing process is similar to the creative process in many ways. As mentioned in the introduction section, healing is an art that lives in the heart. This work is very much applicable in many different situations.

If we consider the client to be the artist by which they bring their creations or dreams to a therapist for processing, we can understand this dynamic in a much larger context. Creativity demands psychic energy. It is childish and eccentric, and it is the price one must pay to be the “instrument of spirit which reaches beyond himself” (Franz, 1980, p. 123). Just as there is a personal unconscious, there is the collective unconscious that we all share. Artists often embody the collective unconscious in their art. If it is well received by the public, then the issue or cultural trauma must be relatively conscious. However, if it is not well received, it is likely that the general population is not aware of the unconscious illness or symptoms.

Unconscious illnesses sometimes take hundreds of years to become known to the general conscious (Franz, 1980, p. 123). An artist’s work, if not accepted during their

lifetime, will likely gain public understanding and success with time once it moves from the collective unconscious to the general conscious. As a whole society, it will take a lot of time and effort and sacrifice for us to understand and heal our collective illnesses. It must first begin with “myself”. We all have a responsibility for doing the work it takes to better understand ourselves and our purpose in life.

Strengths and Limitations

This thesis is a descriptive analysis of other sources of material. The human data collected by these other sources was done through a series of interviews or self-reports of experiences. Analyzing subjective data, while less scientific, can bring about a greater understanding of the complexity that makes up a person’s identity. The material analyzed in this thesis was gathered and organized accordingly to illustrate parallel themes across different sources. The patterns that emerge from the descriptive analysis seem to suggest commonalities in connection with certain trait characteristics of a person and their innate ability to help heal themselves and others in a therapeutic environment.

The limitations of this research exist in the inability to determine a cause and effect correlation between different variables. Only suggestions and implications from the data could be made to support the research. Analyzing other sources of data, there was no physical research conducted by the researcher as evidence to support this thesis. There was no manipulation of variables; hence, a statistical analysis cannot be concluded. The findings of this research may be open to interpretation by the reader. The results of this research cannot be replicated because of the nature of descriptive analysis.

Suggestions for Further Research, Implications, and Conclusions

Further research could be conducted through the use of focus groups to determine the effects of different methods of intervention on mental health and overall individuation of a patient with the purpose of analyzing the difference between the current methods of our mental health system as it is in comparison to the depth-psychotherapy. It may also include personal testimonies or statements from individuals included in the study. An IRB proposal would need to be submitted for approval before conducting any further research that would the collection of include human subjects data. Participants would need to be screened to be deemed appropriate for this study. Additionally, participants would need to fully comprehend and sign a document regarding confidentiality and patient rights. All documents would need to be successfully completed and in compliance with HIPAA law.

The descriptive analysis of this research suggests that there are holes in the mental health system. It also suggests that there needs to be new methods of intervention that focus primarily on fostering social connections, recovery, and developing an individual's purpose and overall individuation. This in-depth research provides us with a better understanding of how a person's subjective experiences are internalized and then transformed within the unconsciousness of the psyche to become enacted upon as archetypal energy under the social and cultural conditions within which we live. Understanding how this research applies on an individual and micro level enables us to comprehend its implications on a social, cultural, and macro level. Further analysis can help to anticipate the direction in which our collective wellbeing is heading and hopefully provide insight as to how heal the collective unconscious illnesses that plague our world.

APPENDIX

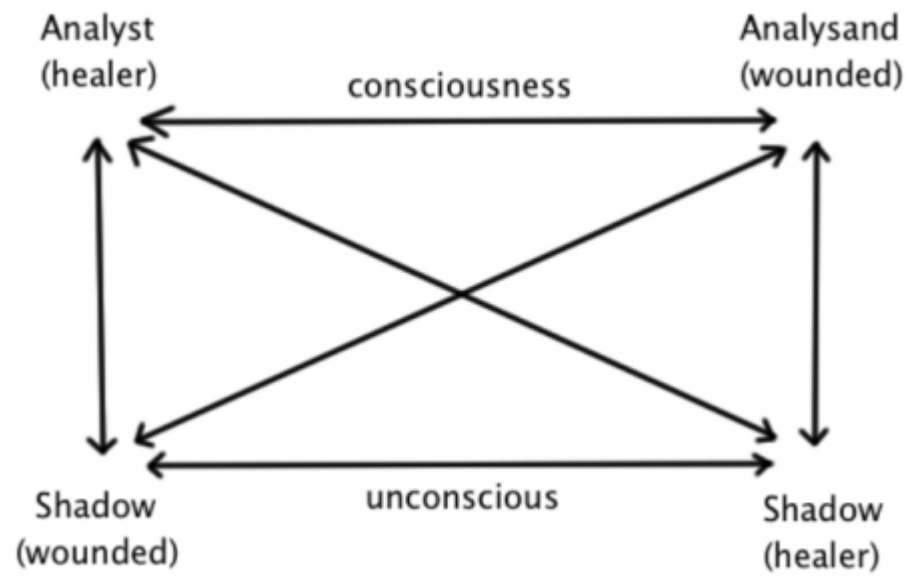


Figure 1 (Sharp, D. (1991). *Jung Lexicon: A Primer of Terms & Concepts*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, p.150)

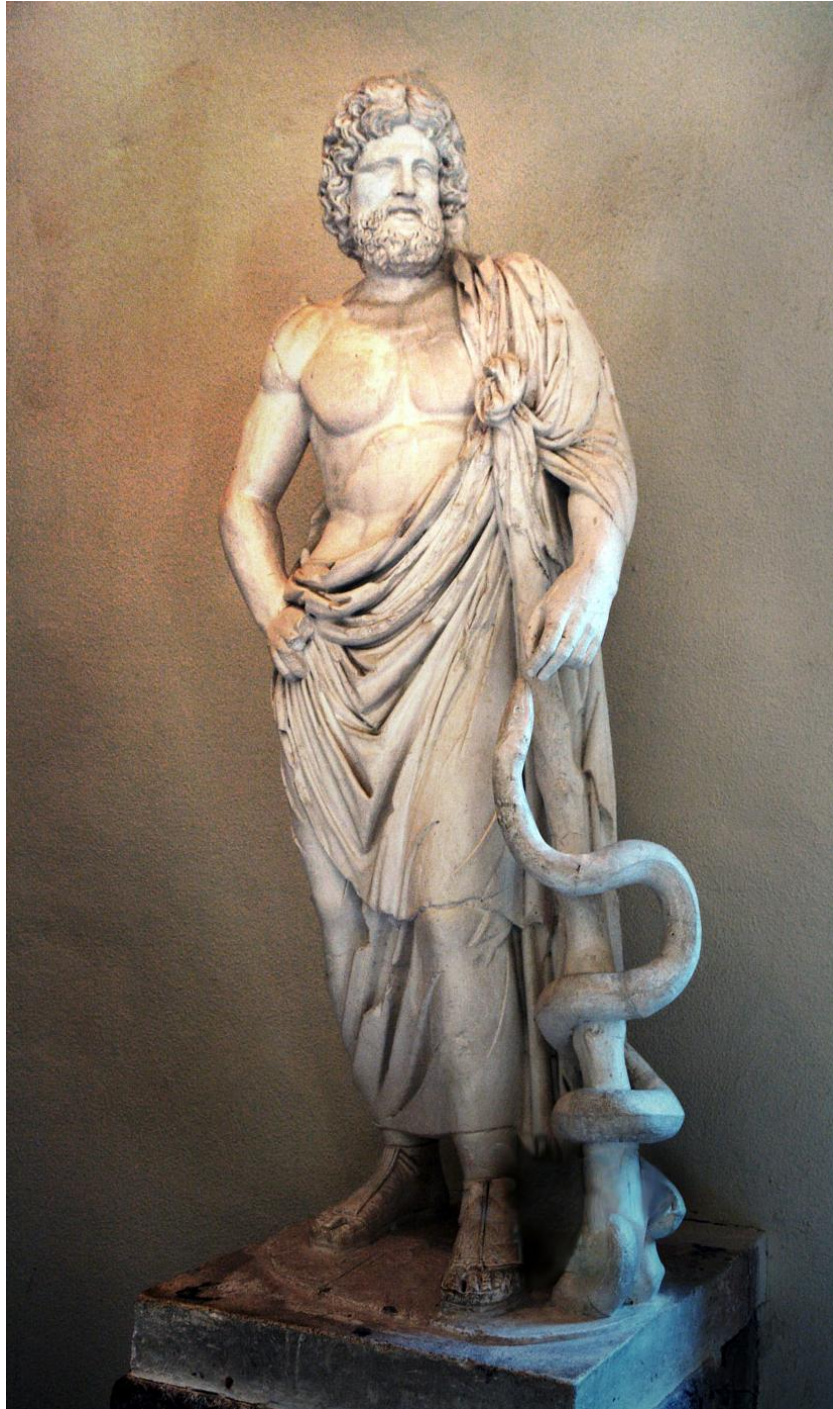


Figure 2 (Mehnert, M. F. (n.d.). Statue of Asklepios)



Figure 3 (Wellcome Collection. (n.d.). *Facade of temple of Aesculapius at Epidaurus*)

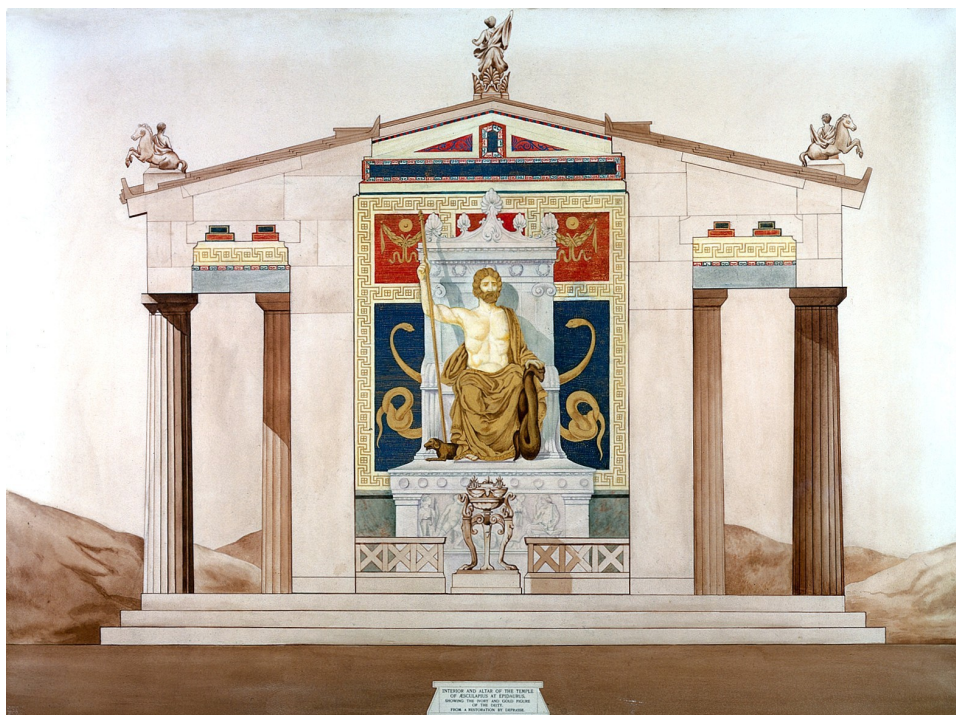


Figure 4 (Wellcome Collection. (n.d.). *Altar and statue of temple of Aesculapius at Epidaurus*)



Figure 5 (Wellcome Collection. (n.d.). Coluber Longissimus Aesculapius snake coiled round staff)

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