

Jung, Mormonism, and the Dialectics of Exaltation

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Throughout our academic and clinical careers over the last 30 years, we have been consistently impressed by Jung’s critiques of traditional Christianity. These are critiques which we as Mormons—who are generally viewed by the rest of Christendom as cultish “black sheep”—often share. What has always been especially intriguing to us as Mormon academics and counselors whose research and practice have been deeply influenced by Jung is how Mormon Christianity often seems quite consistent with Jungian thought at precisely those points where he found traditional Christianity wanting. Whether or not Jung was actually familiar with Mormonism—and if he was, how much he knew about its doctrines and practices—would make an interesting topic for historical inquiry. In this article, however, our purpose is not historical but theoretical and clinical. By illustrating how the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) can help to fill in some of the gaps that Jung found in mainline Christianity, we hope to lay groundwork upon which further research may explore how Jungian principles and LDS tenets might fruitfully interact both theoretically and clinically.

We focus on three of Jung’s most frequent and telling critiques of Catholic and Protestant Christianity, which we as Mormon Christians (and thus neither Catholic nor Protestant) share. These critiques relate to (1) the Augustinian doctrine of evil as a *privatio boni*, or mere absence of good, not as an ontological thing-in-itself; (2) the absence of the feminine face of deity in Christianity, until the papal promulgation of the doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in 1950, which



Trees at the Gualala River, 1998, silver gelatin print, 13.5" × 13.5".

Jung felt was a step in the right direction but still a far cry from a full inclusion of the feminine principle in the creative powers of deity; and (3) the loss of the Gnostic vision of deity as an *Anthropos*, or divine human, an archetypal image which Jung prized because of its great therapeutic efficacy as a symbol of the integrated Self, but which traditional Christianity had forfeited in its reduction of Deity to the abstract principle of *Logos*.

THE DIFFICULT DOCTRINE OF THE VICIOUS VACUUM

The notion that evil is simply the absence of good struck Jung as philosophically indefensible. Promulgated by St. Augustine in the 4th century, the doctrine became, and remains, a pillar of traditional Christian metaphysics and axiology. Jung contended that ascribing to evil only the pseudo-existence of an accidental “something” (which at the same time, of course, is somehow also “nothing”) that has fallen away from the fullness of being is to negate the fact that a quality exists and can be meaningfully discussed only insofar as it has an opposite. *Up* is an empty concept without the notion of *down*. Perpetual left turns may be possible on a race track, but in the eternal circuits of the universe, the idea of veering *left* implies the option of also going *right*. Defining *left* as merely the “absence of right” or *down* as the “absence of up” is a linguistic and ontological absurdity, which, however much it might have served Augustine’s rhetorical purposes of skirting a basic philosophical quandary, is counterintuitive. The doctrine of *privatio boni* disingenuously “ignore[s] the reality of evil . . . and thereby dismiss[es] it with a euphemism” (Jung, 1953, par. 603, fn. 152). In the wake of the Holocaust, Jung poignantly observed that “one could hardly call the things that have happened, and still happen, in the concentration camps of the dictator states, an ‘accidental lack of perfection’—it would sound like mockery” (1968, par. 96).

Jung the therapist could not simply wink at the manifest existence of evil—its pull and potency—and remain true to his experience and duty as a physician of the soul:

If the things which we call “good” are really good, then there must be evil things that are “real” too. . . . It is pointless to gloss over these things, because that only lulls one into a false sense of security. Human nature is capable of an infinite amount of evil, and the evil deeds are as real as the good ones so far as human experience goes and so far as the psyche judges and differentiates between them. (1953, par. 97)

Of course, standard Christian theology could shrug off Jung's insight as merely a psychic, not an ontological, one and simply dust off the tired theological gambit of laying all evil at Satan's door. But was that an answer that could ultimately satisfy anyone? For even if we grant Satan's existence, the question then arises of where Satan came from in the first place. Did God create him? If so, then God is the origin of evil, and Satan can hardly be blamed for doing so well that for which his Maker fashioned him. Alternatively, did God *not* create Satan? Then where did he come from? In this case, Satan begins to look like a god himself—opposite and perhaps even equal to the god of traditional Christianity. But with this explanation we have the full apparatus of Manicheism on our hands—as anathema to Christianity as the vision of God as the author of evil. (However, see Pagels, 1979, for the argument that what today are called “heretical” doctrines were sometimes just as significant in the primitive church as what would later be hegemonically codified as orthodoxy.)

Of course, Jung was quite aware that most people, despite their theological confession, actually live their lives in a way that relies on their intuitive knowledge that evil *is* real—perhaps eternally real and autonomous—and that it is precisely because it is real that it is an ineradicable pole in the psychospiritual dualism of human moral experience. It was primarily as a psychiatrist, then, that Jung objected to the doctrine of *privatio boni*, for it bore the fruit of the therapeutically disastrous conclusion: *omne bonum a Deo, omne malum ab homine*. If darkness does not *really* exist ontologically—and *should not* exist psychologically—then the individual who strives to be “good” has no choice but to either repressively deny his or her own darkness or disingenuously blame it on others, both of which ploys eventuate in the whole range of ethical and psychological problems relating to projection. Simply from an energetic standpoint, the denial of one's own darkness is spiritually enervating, for

one of the facts of [the psychology of unconscious processes] is the polaristic structure of the psyche, which it shares with all natural processes. Natural processes are phenomena of energy, constantly arising out of a “less probable state” of polar tension. This formula is of special significance for psychology because the conscious mind is usually reluctant to see or admit the polarity of its own background, although it is precisely from there that it gets its energy. (Jung, 1963, pp. xvi–xvii)

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that is to acknowledge and honor it as the psychospiritual fact that it is. Not doing so because, at some level, one believes that only

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the light of the *Logos* is real leads to a grotesque transformation and eruption of the very psychic energy one is trying to stifle. The result is a tragi-comic caricature of virtue, a perfumed but pallid person who sees in everyone but him- or herself the cause of all the world's woes and is always pointing the bony finger of reproof in their direction. Sadly, this is too often the picture of tra-

ditional Christian “piety”—which Jung had seen plenty of growing up in a Swiss parsonage with a preacher father (Jung, 1963).

It is not that Jung did not advocate a virtuous life. A conservative Swiss, he certainly did, insisting on personal probity and social responsibility in himself and others (despite what may have been certain personal and professional ethical lapses; Hayman, 2001). His was ever a warning voice against the rising tides of individual and political evil in “modern man without a soul” and the mass culture that had spawned its mass man. However, Jung reminded an eviscerated Western culture of an important Gnostic precept—namely, that virtue is not a simple affair. It is a Giacomettian *chiaroscuro*—a study in black and white. Truly compassionate and creative attitudes and behaviors (still the best working definition of virtue) grow not out of being *perfect* (which is, in any case, impossible) but from being *whole*, which was both Jung's and the Gnostic's preferred translation of *τελειωσις*—a word which traditional Christianity unrealistically renders as *perfection*. Not by being *perfect*, said Jung, but by being *whole*—facing and integrating the imagery and energy of the individual and collective unconscious—could a person become mature, compassionate, and potent. Attaining wholeness—not being paragons of perfection but simply being as good as one *can* be without denying who one inevitably *is*—is therefore the goal of psychotherapy: “to integrate opposites that were previously projected” (Jung 1963, par. 86). *Here* was a definition of virtue that appealed to common sense. Jung warned traditional forms of pietistic Christianity that if they turned a blind eye to these fundamental facts of human existence and continued to cling to

therapeutically destructive doctrines, they would become a stumbling block to the attainment of psychospiritual health.

THE LDS VIEW OF EVIL AND ITS THERAPEUTIC CONSEQUENCES

We would like to preface our discussion of LDS theology by stating that our understanding of the doctrines of our church does not necessarily reflect the church's official positions, although as members of that church we do attempt to be as consistent with those positions as our lights allow. That said, we argue that the LDS understanding of darkness is quite different from that of Catholic and Protestant Christianity. This difference can inform an approach to therapy that we believe is consistent with classical Jungian precepts and practices—and that can interact with them in many useful ways. To illustrate this point requires a brief discussion of our church and some of its relevant doctrines.

Even though the “Mormon” Church (or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, its preferred appellation) was officially organized in 1830, the LDS account of evil began to coalesce as early as 1820, when Joseph Smith, Jr., a 14-year-old boy, had his “First Vision.” Just a few years before his eventual martyrdom at the hands of a mob in 1844, at the age of 38, Joseph wrote about the vision. He relates that he had gone to a grove near his family farm in upstate New York in order to pray about which of the many churches, among those that were competing for allegiance in the clamorous environment of America's second great religious awakening, was the true church. The earnest youth wanted only to know which church to join.

In response, God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph in bodily form as two distinct individuals (not as somehow mystically conjoined members of a monistic “trinity”) and told him that all of the churches of traditional Christianity had lost the true doctrine of Christ—the one promulgated by the original apostles and the primitive church. He should join none of them. Indeed, it would later become clear that he had been chosen for the millennially consequential role of founding the church of the new and final dispensation, the Restored Gospel, preparatory to the Second Coming of Christ, which would happen in the “near” but undisclosed future. Joseph's account of the theophany in “The Sacred Grove” bears citing at length:

I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence that I could not speak. Thick darkness

gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!* (*Joseph Smith, History 1:15–17*)

To be sure, the boy's experience might be explained as an adolescent psychotic rupture attended by a flooding of archetypal contents. However, for those of us who credit the account as veridical, it is one of the major pillars upon which the church's claim to validity rests. What is more to the point for our present purposes, a closer reading of the account begins to reveal the quintessentially dialectical nature of LDS theology.

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Various scholars have highlighted the similarities between LDS theology and certain dialectical aspects of Gnostic, Zoroastrian, and Manichean dualism, with the eternal powers of Light and Dark engaged in perpetual combat (Ahlstrom, 1972; Bloom, 1992; Bushman, 1984; Quinn, 1998). As Bushman, one of the most respected interpreters of early Mormon history, has asserted:

[Joseph's] world was not created by [the] Enlightenment rationalism [that informed the Protestantism of his day] with its deathly aversion to superstition. The Prophet brought into modern America elements of a more ancient culture, in which *the sacred and the profane intermingled* and the Saints enjoyed supernatural gifts and powers as the frequent blessing of an interested God. (1984, p. 184, emphasis added)

No less an observer than Harold Bloom, Sterling Professor of Literature at Yale, and considered by many to be the premier American literary and cultural critic of the 20th century, has written in celebratory strains that “Mormonism is a purely American Gnosis” and Joseph “a religious genius, the most gifted and authentic of all American prophets, for there is no other figure remotely like him in our entire national history, and it is unlikely that anyone like him ever can come again” (Bloom, 1992, pp. 82, 109–110, 126, 193). Similarly laudatory observations about Joseph Smith’s personal greatness and Mormonism’s rich mysticism have been made at great length and in exhaustive detail even by one of the most controversial and antagonistic historians of the early Mormon Church, D. Michael Quinn, in his study *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Quinn, 1998). Although we agree that there are various aspects of LDS doctrine and practice that bear a striking resemblance to Gnosticism, we believe this is so not because Mormonism is simply a latter-day *gnosis* but rather because Gnosticism contained things that were true. That they should have found their way into the precincts of Mormon doctrine should not discomfit the believing Mormon. As stated in the church’s foundational “Articles of Faith”: “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (p. 13).

The point to note is that in Joseph’s vision and visitation, evil is not simply a theoretical absence, a syllogistic necessity, or a rhetorical gambit. It is real—so real, in fact, that it can be met and displaced only by the physical appearance on the scene of the two chief Gods of Light themselves—

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. The “thick darkness” that immobilized Joseph—a hefty farm boy well known in his day for his imposing physical stature and exceptional athletic prowess—

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threatening to stupefy and drag him off to a very corporeal destruction, is, to say the least, tangible. Here is a quasi-Manichean conflict of cosmic proportions being played out on the improbable stage of a pleasant forest clearing in early 19th-century rural New York. So real is this darkness that it is even personally identifiable as the daunting emanation of “some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being.” Jung rightly accused traditional Christianity of evading and eviscerating the principle of darkness. But Mormonism offers a full-bodied picture of darkness as not only physically immediate, embodied, and energetic but also eternally

self-existent. This darkness is a Kantian *Ding-an-sich*, a thing-in-itself, not an oxymoronic digression into unreality.

Of course, we would not want to press this parallelism too far. LDS theology is not Christian Gnosis or American Manicheanism. LDS doctrine asserts, in a manner and with a force that Gnostic and Manichean Christianity did not, that the forces of Light are ultimately superior to the forces of Darkness, which, despite their cosmic proportions and unquestionable substantiality, are ultimately defeated through our own best efforts and, above all, the Atonement of Jesus Christ. With Jung in his *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*, LDS doctrine maintains that the darkness of the “telestial world”—the one we presently inhabit, lying below the two higher spheres of the “terrestrial” and the “celestial” worlds with all their many subdivisions—is real and autonomous. However, Mormonism goes on to aver that this telestial darkness is also transitory and contingent. How can psychic darkness—not to mention cosmic darkness—be both eternal and transitory, autonomous and contingent?

The key to unlocking this paradox lies in the Leibnizian notion that there are, and always will be, countless intelligent, self-existent spirits—cosmic seeds of Kabbalistic light—who are eternally evolving toward some degree of cosmic exaltation. In fact, all of us who are presently alive on this planet form, as it were, a “cohort” of such evolving spirits. We must all be born on one of the innumerable telestial planets that are strewn throughout this “vibrational plane” of existence in order to receive a physical body and learn how to handle it wisely (Quinn, 1998). As there will *always* be spirit intelligences evolving to the point of telestuality, so there must always be telestial planets where these developing individuals can be “schooled” through the eternal, dialectical interplay of light and dark. Thus, telestial darkness is *real and eternal with respect to the eternal evolution and moral architecture of the cosmos as a whole*. Yet, telestial darkness is *transitory with respect to any particular person*, who will pass through this reality only as a stage of his or her holistic cosmic growth toward the “Light of Christ”—what Chardin (1975) called “The Super-Christ.”

The purpose of this cosmic evolution, this “eternal progression,” is to bring a human being to the point that he or she can experience eternal joy in all its embodied fullness. As Jesus declares in the ancient scripture *The Book of Moses* (lost until its restoration to Joseph Smith in June 1830), “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (*Moses* 1:39). But this joy cannot be attained without embodiment, for in the LDS view, matter and spirit are inseparable. There is no such thing as unspiritual matter, nor can there be *immaterial* spirit. Joseph taught in 1843 that “all spirit is matter,

but is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes. We cannot see it, but when our bodies are purified, we shall see that all is matter" (*The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 301–302). One would not go wrong in discerning echoes of the Christian Renaissance alchemists in this

Mormon notion that resurrection entails the spiritual refinement of matter. For, "man is a spirit, the elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected [in the completed form of one's resurrected body], receive a fullness of joy" (*The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of*

Latter-day Saints 93:33). *The Book of Mormon*, another pillar of the Mormon faith, also proclaims that "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). There is no alternative, then, to passing through the agony of telestial embodiment—with all its impossible paradoxes and grinding dualisms—so as to learn what we need to know in order to attain the highest level of joy in the eternities. What is more, as physically and morally perfected beings with resurrected bodies in the eternal realms, men and women may continue to evolve—even to the point of becoming gods and goddesses themselves on infinitely more refined planes of existence. This tenet underlies the Mormon belief in a "plurality of gods," as we discuss presently.

Of course, these articles of LDS faith—the uncreatedness and spirituality of eternal matter, the evolution of preexistent and coeternal sparks of intelligence into divine status in a polytheistic "string" of universes, which each has its own God—continue to scandalize traditional Christianity no less today than they did almost 200 years ago. However, they accord quite nicely with Jung's understanding of the nature of matter and spirit. Wrote Jung: "Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable transcendental factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing" (1960, par. 418). Along with his friend, the Nobel prize-winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli, Jung further opined that "spirit and matter may well be forms of one and

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the same transcendental being” (1953, par. 392). These are words that Joseph Smith could have uttered without missing a beat.

In sum, with traditional Christianity, Mormonism believes in the eschatological triumph of the Light. It also insists upon the possibility of each person becoming a new creation in whom there is “no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). But along with Jung, it pragmatically acknowledges that such a state of being is not possible—and probably not even appropriate—on this planet. Mormonism accords nicely at this point—and in a way that other forms of Christianity do not—with Jung’s insistence that the self-existent reality and autonomy of darkness is dialectically necessary, both ontologically and psychologically.

We could state this dichotomy a little differently by saying that along with traditional Christianity, Mormonism understands *teleos* as “perfection” and aims at it—but it does so with Zeno’s arrow. For along with Jung, Mormonism also understands the impossibility of perfection in this dimension of being. For this reason, Mormonism endorses the Jungian translation of *teleos* as “wholeness.” On this dense plane of telestial reality, where, as Matthew Arnold wrote, “ignorant armies clash by night,” the best human beings (who, after all, are only *embryonic* gods) can do, is acknowledge the darkness both within and without, honor it as the deepening educative reality it is, and mature under its dialectical influence—understanding, as Shakespeare said, that “the ripeness is all.” In this way, and in this way *only*, can humans make the most of their experience of darkness instead of distorting it, and becoming distorted *by* it, in sterile attempts to ignore, repress, or argue it away.

For both Jung and Mormonism, the saving paradox of these existential facts is that our personal and collective darkness can lead to a life that is great and good if we will honor and integrate the power of darkness—the dynamism of the personal and collective unconscious. In this way, we may attain the goal of our brief but crucial mission on this telestial plane—increased and refined intelligence, deepened empathy, and the richer and more responsible exercise of our moral and physical capacities. Such growth in insight, passion, and compassion are precisely what gods and goddesses “in training” (which every person potentially is) must experience, and they experience it with exquisite, excruciating abundance on this telestial planet precisely because of its dialectical nature.

“OPPOSITION IN ALL THINGS”: THE ROOTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In this section, we shift our focus from the ontological and axiological dimensions of Jungian thought to consider some of the more striking

parallels between Jung's and Mormonism's *epistemological* assumptions. Dialectics is the key term here as well.

In the Platonic myth of the hermaphroditic Original Man, God is supposed to have divided the circular *Primal Person* into male and female to set in motion the process of human history. Jung read this myth as an epistemological allegory. "The splitting of the Original Man into husband and wife expresses an act of nascent consciousness; it gives birth to a pair of opposites, thereby making consciousness possible" (1968, par. 204).

The traditional Christian view of the genesis of human consciousness is quite different from Jung's. According to that exegesis, humanity lost its pristine state of consciousness because Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In order to restore humanity to its primal phenomenological purity, there would have to be an atonement—which the individual could not accomplish on his or her own, precisely because his or her consciousness was so degenerate that it was beyond saving itself. Jung felt that this view of the fall and restoration of consciousness was deficient for one simple reason—namely, that it was not really about *consciousness* at all.

For how, asked Jung, does human consciousness differ from merely animal consciousness? It differs because it "runs" on dialectical tension. It isolates and identifies the various, and often contradictory, conceptual interpretations and ethical possibilities inherent in most situations. It then attempts—in an almost Piagetian manner—to accommodate, synthesize, or choose from these complexities to reach a multivalent conclusion, which now becomes not only the basis for principled action in the present but a starting point for a new round of dialectical discrimination and resolution in the future (cf. also Riegel, 1979). Eve's putative "transgression" in the garden should not, said Jung, be interpreted as the *descent* of pure consciousness into something lesser, but rather as humanity's *ascent* into consciousness in the first place. The story of Adam and Eve is not about humanity *losing* its divine identity—it is about *gaining* it.

The Mormon reading of the story of Adam and Eve is quite similar to Jung's. In both interpretations, Eve's act is necessary and good. We sense this in the words, cited above, of the 6th-century B.C.E. Jewish prophet Jacob, when he declared that "Adam fell that *men might be*; and men are that they *might have joy*" (*Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 2:25, emphasis added). LDS doctrine reverses the sexist view of traditional Christianity that the first woman was the primal mother of all our woes. Instead, we unequivocally revere her as our "glorious Mother Eve" and celebrate her incomparable wisdom and "noble nature" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 138:39; *LDS Bible Dictionary*). She saw, as her literalistic,

legalistic husband did not, that the only way to full human consciousness lay in eating the fruit of opposition—the knowledge of “good and evil.” Eve’s complex moral intuition in the garden evinced a heroism that far exceeded her husband’s simplistic conformity. As in such 2nd- and 3rd-century Gnostic texts as *The Gospel of Philip* and *The Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)*, Mormonism celebrates Eve as “the mother of all living” (the meaning of her name, *Havah*), not only because she gave birth physically but because she pioneered the path to consciousness. In this sense, Mormonism concurs with the view of Eve as presented in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, a Gnostic account of Genesis 1–6, in which the author, a 3rd-century C.E. Gnostic Christian, relates: “The spirit-endowed woman [Eve] came to [Adam] and spoke with him, saying, ‘Arise, Adam.’ And when he saw her, he said, ‘It is you who have given me life. You will be called “Mother of the living.” For it is she who is my mother. It is she who is the physician, and the woman, and she who has given birth’” (Robinson, 1990, p. 164).

“Opposition in all things” is thus the foundation of consciousness, as *The Book of Mormon* prophet Lehi explained. Lehi, a messianic Jew, fled Jerusalem around 600 B.C.E. and brought his family and others to the American continent because he had been granted a vision of the impending fall of Jerusalem and the ensuing Babylonian captivity. In words that we feel Jung would endorse, Lehi lays out his “epistemology” with economy and power:

For it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body, it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility. Wherefore it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; . . . there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. (2 Nephi 2:11–12)

The student of Jung’s alchemical research will have no trouble identifying this “compound in one” that has “neither sense nor sensibility” as the *massa confusa*—the alchemical *prima materia*. This prelapsarian Edenic substance must undergo the refining dialectical fires of the phenomenological *calcinatio* in order to become alive. Eve’s genius lay in the fact that she was the first human being to understand this—to see that without opposition “there would have been no purpose in the end of [humanity’s] creation.” Without her act of cosmic daring, God’s plan of wholeness and happiness—available only in the abundance of

an integrated consciousness—would have been defeated, turned into “a thing of naught.” Eve discerned that only by proclaiming and embracing the *blessing* of duality could she produce the *lapis philosophorum* of a truly *human* consciousness in the *vas hermeticum* of complex moral experience. Eve is not only the first prophetic teacher in human history but also its proto-chemist. She is to be revered as the Mother of human joy, not excoriated as the root of human suffering. She is, indeed, “the Mother of the *living*.”

Perhaps it is not putting too fine a point upon the matter to call Eve humanity’s first psychotherapist as well. Through being willingly wounded by the two-edged sword of existential duality, she is in a position to hear the ultimately wise words of the felicitous snake, who, as in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, speaks a great and positive truth to Eve when he teaches her that only by eating of the fruit shall her and Adam’s “eyes . . . be opened” so that one day they will become “like gods.” The serpent’s words point to the culmination of Mormon psychospiritual development and the symbolic goal of Jungian therapy—

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becoming gods. That Eve is the first human being to understand this is implied in the Hebraic triple pun on the words “Eve,” “serpent,” and “instruct”: *Havah*, *hewya*, and *hawa*, respectively (Pagels, 1979, p. 30). “Our glorious Mother Eve,” instantiating the process of her husband’s “eternal progression” toward divine awareness, has blazed the trail for all of her children’s potential exaltation. It will perhaps not be surprising, therefore, to see that LDS theology asserts the existence of a Mother-God as well as a Father-God in heaven.

GOD THE FATHER/GOD THE MOTHER

Jung unquestionably helped lay the groundwork for the current critique of monotheism’s exclusion of the feminine principle in its image of God. It is arguable that without Jung’s work and the discovery of the Gnostic Christian literature at Nag Hammadi in 1945, postmodern feminist theology would lack much of its ideological and textual scaffolding. It is

fitting that some of the most important Nag Hammadi literature is contained in the “Jung Codex.”

Interestingly, feminine imagery of divinity *did* exist very early on in that line of thought that would eventually emerge as “orthodoxy” in late 2nd century. Did not the Lord compare himself to a hen brooding over her chicks in Matthew’s gospel? (Mt. 23:37), and did not Clement, the Bishop of Rome and successor to Peter, portray God as both male and female in an Egyptian epistle in 180 C.E.?:

The Word is everything to the child, both father and mother, teacher and nurse. . . . The nutriment is the milk of the Father . . . and the Word alone supplies us children with the milk of love, and only those who suck at this breast are truly happy. For this reason, seeking is called sucking; to those infants who seek the Word, the Father’s loving breasts supply milk. (quoted in Pagels, 1979, p. 68)

But the Dominical words were clearly poetic tropes, not doctrine. And as for Clement—well, he was suspected of secretly being a Gnostic initiate anyway, despite his high church office (Chadwick, 1968). By the time that the Catholic Church in Rome began to set the scriptural canon and establish its ecclesiastical hegemony at the close of the 2nd century, completing the task in the conciliar statements of Nicea and Chalcedon in the 4th and 5th centuries, feminine images of God had been fairly expunged and thoroughly discredited in mainline, masculinist Christian thought. Nevertheless, ambisexual images of God *were* still available in the scriptures of the “heretics,” until the effective eradication (probably in the late 5th century) of the Gnostic Christian Church. In the 3rd-century C.E. Gnostic document, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, for instance, God declares, “I am androgynous. I am both Mother and Father. . . . I am the womb that gives shape to the All” (Robinson, 1990, p. 156).

Also common in the non-canonical Christian scriptures were related images of divinity as a God–Goddess pair—an idea favored by the 2nd-century poet and philosopher Valentinus, the probable author of the influential Gnostic gospel, *Evangelium Veritatis*. Jung was also gripped by the image of the cosmically fecund union of the Divine Couple, portrayed (sometimes quite graphically) in all its various stages in the woodcuts from the *Rosarium Philosophorum*, around which Jung built his analysis of the alchemical *opus* in *The Psychology of the Transference*. And, of course, it is the *coniunctio* of this divine couple that produces the redemptive hero—*Mercurius Duplex*, the *salvator macrocosmi* in alchemy; and Jesus Christ, the *salvator microcosmi* in Gnosticism (Jung, 1953, par. 140, fn. 27). The image of the Heavenly King and

Queen in cosmically fertile embrace also exerts such great psychospiritual force because it archetypally embodies the synthesis of *anima* and *animus*: “As civilization develops, the primordial bisexual being turns into a symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self, where the war of opposites finds peace. In this way the primordial being becomes the distant goal of man’s self-development, having been from the very beginning a projection of his unconscious wholeness” (Jung, 1953, par. 294). What does all of this have to do with Mormonism?

One of the most compelling (and to the rest of Christendom, one of the most scandalous) building blocks in the temple of LDS theology is the idea that we not only have a Heavenly Father who possesses “a body, parts, and passions” in the celestial realms but that we also have an equally embodied and passionate Heavenly Mother. It is from their union that each of us was conceived as a spirit body and thus prepared to be born of a celestial union between two earthly parents. In the closing stanzas of one of the most beloved hymns in the LDS hymnal, we often sing:

I had learned to call Thee Father
 Thru thy Spirit from on high.
 But until the key of knowledge was restored
 I knew not why.
 In the Heavens, are parents single?
 No, the thought makes reason stare!
 Truth is reason, truth eternal
 Tells me I’ve a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence,
 When I put this mortal by,
 Father, Mother, may I meet you
 In your royal courts on high?
 Then, at length, when I’ve completed
 All you sent me here to do,
 With your mutual approbation
 Let me come and dwell with you.

For the Mormon therapist, the belief in a Heavenly Father *and* Heavenly Mother accords very well with Jung’s stunning insight that a person’s mother and father complexes often stem from a confusion of his or her *earthly* parents with the archetype (or, as we would prefer to put it, the *pre-mortal memory* of his or her *heavenly* parents). It would be difficult to overstate how psychospiritually liberating this distinction can be for our Mormon clients in dealing with their mother- and father-issues.

The image of God the Mother is also pivotal in Mormon temple worship, that literal *temenos* wherein the most sacred initiations and ordinances in our religion are performed. Although we are limited in what we can publicly say about those rites because of their delicate and sacred nature, it is enough for our present purposes simply to point out that marriage is the culminating sacrament that occurs there, it being the *conditio sine qua non* of one's own potential exaltation in the eternities as a heavenly couple, who will then have the wisdom and authority to organize a telestial world and literally populate it with their *own* spirit children.

In our church we are enjoined to pray only to God the Father, not God the Mother. Whatever the deeper reasons for this, it is certainly not because our Heavenly Mother is seen as less powerful or efficacious than our Heavenly Father. Paul counseled that an earthly couple should be "evenly yoked" (2 Corinthians 6:14), which, *a fortiori*, is surely required even *more*, not *less*, of a heavenly couple. Rather, we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, who, because he is a product of the same union that produced us, is also our "elder brother" (with the important difference that his telestial birth was enabled not by an earthly father but the Heavenly Father). What is more, since we assume that Jesus received all the endowments and passed through all the ordinances of temple worship, we conclude that Jesus was himself married while on the earth, for, as previously noted, marriage is the culminating sacrament in the temple. Thus, in LDS theology, salvation is a "family affair." And we might note in passing that the LDS vision of familial salvation offers one possible response to Jung's lament that "nobody can stand the total loss of the archetype [of the divine family unit]. When that happens, it gives rise to a frightful 'discontent in our culture,' where nobody feels at home because a [heavenly] 'father' and 'mother' are missing" (1953, par. 141). At any rate, for the authors, temple marriage reflects the very Mormon, very Jungian idea that creativity is born of a *syzygy* of the male and female principles—a couple that has psychospiritually evolved to the point of divine self-realization.

As powerful as this temple ordinance is, however, we as Mormon counselors frequently make clear to Mormon couples who come to us in distress that the temple ceremony that joined them is only the beginning, not the end, of the process that may (but is by no means guaranteed) lead to the status of a conjoined god and goddess. For it is simplistic, not to mention irreverent, to assume that a mere ceremony, even one as sacred as a temple marriage, could somehow "corner" God into granting glorification on the other side of this mortal veil, as if we could put the deity in our hip pocket as a voucher against some future claim.

As with Gnostic Christianity—and 1,500 years later with most forms of Protestantism—LDS doctrine insists that the sacraments of the institutional church are only visible tokens of a commitment to an invisible but much more important process of psychospiritual maturation.

What this means to us and our Mormon clients is that each partner must learn to withdraw his or her *anima* and *animus* projections from the other. As Jung declared in his still not adequately celebrated essay, “Marriage as a Psychological Relationship,” *not* to identify, embrace, and integrate the contra-

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sexual archetype as one’s own leads to a psychically and morally hurtful projection of one’s contrasexual issues onto the spouse. This greatly hobbles any relationship, of course, but the psychic laming of one’s spouse in a Mormon marriage also carries with it potentially grievous *eternal* consequences. Such a couple cannot attain that cosmically dynamic interactivity that powers a divine marriage; they must resolve their own *anima* and *animus* issues on the telestial plane. Needless to say, this metaphysically “high-stakes” perspective on marriage can create a therapeutically fatal “performance anxiety” for clients. However, if the Mormon therapist skillfully introduces the transcendental perspective in the course of marriage counseling, he or she can invest it with an archetypal numinosity and sense of moral urgency that not only Jung but virtually all transpersonal therapists consider the hallmarks of therapy that is lastingly healing at the deepest psychic levels (Cortright, 1997).

In sum, our belief in a Mother-God as well as a Father-God is essential to both our worship in the temple and our practice in the consulting room.

CONCLUSION: THE ALCHEMICAL “ANTHROPOS” IN MORMONISM

One of the doctrines that the traditional Christian world finds most disturbing in LDS theology is that of God as an “exalted man with a body, parts and passions.” Even more outlandish to Christendom is the assertion that those two beings, whom we call *our* Heavenly Father and Mother, are the Gods of *our* universe *only*. In Mormon cosmology, there

are many inhabited planets not only in *our* universe but countless *other* universes as well, so there are many Gods. Also completely unacceptable to traditional Christianity is the Mormon insistence that our Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father *were not always gods*. Originally Kabalistic seeds of light and intelligence themselves, they too had to evolve from the misty, primal reaches of pre-telestial existence; they too had to pass through travail, sin, and error on a telestial planet; and they too had to work through their issues as a couple in order to attain their present glorified state.

In the “King Follett Discourse”—one of Joseph Smith’s last sermons before his martyrdom in Illinois’ Carthage Jail, and certainly the most majestic of his many breathtaking addresses—Joseph, speaking impromptu at a funeral service in 1844, exploded the foundations of the nearly 2,000-year-old structure of traditional Christianity when he declared to the grieving crowd:

I will go back to the beginning before the world was to show what kind of being God is. What sort of being was God in the beginning . . . ? *God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret! If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible—I say if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man. . . .* In order to understand the subject of the dead, for consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary we should understand the character and being of God and how he came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so you may see. . . . These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are simple. *It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did.* (*The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345–346)

In an unabashed reversal of “orthodox” Christian theologies of every stripe, Joseph Smith declared that our God and Father is one of many Gods, a member of the council of Gods (which would explain the use of the plural nominative *Elohim* in the opening verse of *Genesis* to refer to deity), each of whom has organized and now administers a universe.

Every Father-God performs his divine labors only in partnership with the equally divine, equally creative power of a Mother-God. No more could a Father-God organize eternal matter into a universe than a man alone could engender a family without a woman! And *both* the Divine Mother and the Divine Father went through the telestial trials of their evolution on “an earth” like ours, where they became incarnate in order to learn about mortality, morality, and the governance of a physical body. This experience allowed them (individually and as a couple) to work through those passion issues of the personal and collective unconscious with which we, their children, are presently grappling in our telestial processes. In fact, it is precisely because Heavenly Mother and Father *have* gone through such things that they are able to fully sympathize with us. They are a God and Goddess of passion and compassion for the simple reason that they too once “dwelt on an earth” like our own before receiving their perfected resurrection bodies and developing into deities.

The grand key to the attainment of eternal life, then, is, as Joseph proclaimed in that funeral oration, to commune with God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, “the only wise and true God[s],” in order to learn to become like them. Hence,

you have got to learn to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings [and queens] and priests [and priestesses] to God, the same as all Gods have done before you—namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. (*The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 346–347)

Students of Jung’s alchemical studies will quickly descry in this account of human glorification the alchemical steps requisite to the creation of the *Anthropos*—Gnosticism’s “Eternal Human” and Jung’s symbol of the integrated Self. There is the *sublimatio* of one’s merely spiritual embodiment in the pre-telestial existence, the *coagulatio* of incarnation on a telestial planet, the *nigredo* and *mortificatio* of pain and death, the *calcinatio* of eternal progression in the purifying beneficence of “everlasting burnings,” and the procreative *coniunctio* of the Heavenly King and Queen as the consummation of the *opus*—all contained in the *vas hermeticum* of telestial experience, wherein “you have got to learn to be Gods yourselves”—both the therapeutic and religious *desideratum* for the Mormon Jungian therapist.

As Jung averred, this process does not come cheap. It requires that the individual submit him- or herself to a *katabasis*. Contrary to standard Christian doctrine, God is not God because he has, from eternity to eternity, been pristinely remote from darkness, blessedly enthroned in an antiseptic heaven, a divine exception to the experience of suffering and sin. God is God because he was refined in the alchemical cauldron of teletiality. As Jesus proclaimed to Joseph Smith in a revelation during one of Joseph's many brutal and unjust imprisonments (this one in Liberty Jail in Missouri in 1839), everyone—including the Messiah and his Heavenly Parents—must at some point drink the bitter cup of *katabasis* to its dregs in order to merit the highest degrees of glorification. This wormwood and gall mixed with honey are the paradoxical tonic of eternal growth, a liquid duality that always characterizes the mercurial *pharmakon athanasios*, that blending of the “creative and destructive” that the adepts called the *medicina catholica* (Jung, 1967, par. 125).

Jesus thus taught Joseph in a bitterly cold Missouri night, in the fetid “classroom” of a cramped cell in Liberty Jail, where the turnkeys frequently mixed poison and refuse into Joseph's few scraps of food, and where the ceilings were so low that he had not been able to stand up for months or even see a ray of sunlight, that even as “The Son of Man hath descended below [all things],” so must Joseph, so that even “if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (*The Doctrine and Covenants* 123:7–8). Like all great shamans, Jesus is letting Joseph know in this revelation that he himself journeyed to both *Hades* and the heavens in order to become fully empowered as a *psychopomp* and mediator. It cannot be otherwise, for “the shaman must first cure himself and his initiatory sickness, and only afterwards can he cure the other members of the community” (Walsh, 1990, p. 205)—a hard fact, to be sure, but one that is all the more pressing when the shaman is a *universal* savior and his community is *the entire human family* on this and other teletial planets.

One becomes a God or Goddess—an alchemical *Anthropos*—only after he or she has *resolved* all the dialectically requisite *nigredos* of teletiality. Indeed, the whole world is an alchemical laboratory for the refining of the potential god! And in the figure of the *Anthropos*, Mormonism, along with alchemy and Gnosticism, does not simplistically see God *anthropomorphically* but rather, in a marvelous instance of ontological optimism, sees men and women *deomorphically*. “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become,” the Mormon adage goes.

Harold Bloom is quite right, therefore, in proclaiming that Mormonism represents a high-water mark in the history of the world's religions in its "heroic enterprise in lessening the distance between God and man" (1992, p. 110). "Here," as T. S. Eliot (1971) wrote, "the intersection of the spheres of existence is actual"; and here, in Jungian terms, the dynamic melding of ego and archetype into something holy—and wholly new—occurs (Edinger, 1973).

In conclusion, for the Mormon Jungian the voyage leading to the discovery of the Self is at once a symbol and requirement of exaltation. On this trek, the maps are written in the cryptic language of archetypal images that are at once psychically rich and ontologically descriptive. The odyssey is rarely smooth sailing, for it is riddled with dualities that one must always be negotiating, like Odysseus steering his fragile ship between the jagged rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. Nor is it a journey that a person can take alone—but rather one that must be taken and negotiated with one's inner *and* outer contrasexual partner. Yet, for all of the perils of this journey—its sudden squalls, terrifying waves, confusing horizons, and unknown creatures of the deep—it is a trip worth making. Indeed, it is perhaps the *only* trip worth making, for it provides the only path that cuts through the mercurial waters, the *aqua vitae*, of the personal and collective unconscious to the shores of the Self, where, as in Jung's account of Nicholas of Flüe's vision, the dialectical becomes divine in the appearance of God "once as a majestic *father* and once as a majestic *mother*" (*CW* 9.1, par. 131). This *summum bonum* of Jungian therapy is also the goal of Mormon spirituality.

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