

JUNGIAN ANALYSIS OF THE STORY ‘THE DISOBEDIENCE OF MAN’

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ABSTRACT

The mythic and folkloric psychic base of stories provides a medium of exchange and interaction between people of different generations. They form a decisive connecting link through which people stay together and carry the layered narratives of the people they belong to. Dr. Carl Jung was a pioneering psychiatrist who studied the mythic lore of mankind and proposed a more profound link among people. Using the tool of archetypal amplification he demonstrated an archetypal base. The present paper attempts a Jungian analysis of the story titled ‘The Disobedience of Man’ to understand psychic utterances in the context of Death.

Keywords: Death, Archetypes, Jung, Abassi

Introduction

Death has been a source of wonder and pain to man in equal parts. Humans have speculated and thought about death a lot of times but never has there been a certain answer as to the ‘why’ of death. It can be attributed to biological causes but there has also been the psychic damage that a death does which is universal and personal at the same time. Myths have been used as the vehicle to carry and share emotions and feelings and a binding connect amongst a set of people. They serve as a source of a deep emotional understanding that brings the stories of god home and find solace in their hearts and minds. The topic of death has been addressed in various ways throughout the world in tribes big and small. The Jungian tool of archetypal amplification is applied to the story to understand the origin of death and its acceptance.

Datum:

“The Disobedience of Man

When Abassi, the supreme God, created men, he feared that they might become his equals, and therefore he forbade them to settle on earth. But Atai his wife said she would see to it that this would not happen.

Then men were allowed to live on earth, but they were not allowed to procure their own food. They had to eat with Abassi in heaven, and when a bell rang summoning them, they had come for their meal. They were also forbidden to live together as husband and wives and to beget children, because this would make them forget God.

Man, obeyed God’s commands, but woman began to till the soil and she produced her own food. Soon the man found her food sweeter than the food of heaven. Then man forgot God and he tilled the soil together with the woman, and they lived together as man and wife.

One day Abassi asked about the woman, but the man said she was ill. Actually, he had hidden her away, because she was pregnant. The woman bore a son and later a daughter.

But Abassi knew what had happened. Now Abassi pointed out to Atai that his fears had been justified. The human beings had forgotten him. But Atai said ‘

‘They shall never be you equals.’

And she sent death into the world and he killed the man and his wife, and he caused discord among their children”(Beier,1966).

An Efik story (Nigeria)

ARCHETYPAL AMPLIFICATION

(Hypothetical Interpretation)

The story begins by highlighting the apprehension of the creator lord. The Supreme God is afraid of his own creation, of what it might become. He is governed by fear and the insecurity of man becoming his equal by settling down.

The sense of security that one feels in oneself is by developing a footing in the world, by settling down in a place, marking a place for oneself but also by being able to know himself. The ability of man to think about himself and reflect upon his own depths of being gives him the capacity to settle down. To be with oneself and to be able to understand oneself better but the lord is scared of man going down this path. Thus, he has forbidden him to settle or grow his roots in a particular place or orient himself in a specific manner. Life is an act of precision. An individual's life is determined by the space and time he is in, and he can only be at one place in any given time. He is settled and anchored in life in the three-dimensional world and thus can be located. Thus, even settling down at a particular place provides him a sense of orientation of being in the world.

It gives him axis to regulate his life. "Existence is only real when it is conscious to somebody. That is why the creator needs conscious man even though, from sheer unconsciousness, he would like to prevent him from becoming conscious" (Jung, 2012). Thus, the lord feared that man will become his equal and forget him.

Abassi is reassured by his wife that this would not happen. At the beginning the creator is living with his wife. Thus, there is already a psychic differentiation in progress before the arrival of man. The cosmic order of the world includes a set of parents. Both the creators are powerful and the task to discipline the man or to keep a check on him is handed over to the woman. She is the one deciding the order of the world. The feminine is governing the way life shall function because she acts as the protector of the word or the will of the god.

To procure food is forbidden and so was living together as man and wife or begetting children. Abassi himself lived with his wife and as the benefactor of man-kind. He is father of all humanity and even though human race existed as duality and men and women partake equally in the activities but they are forbidden to engage in any sexual activity. The God is able to bear fruit but the man is forbidden from the same. It is a time before time and works on the arrangement of a call which is made using the bell. The ringing of bell acts as a mechanism to regulate the time of the day and signal food. It is a time when each man exists as an individual as he is not able to engage with the opposite sex. He is not able to know the woman. It is a stage of development the child is born and is completely dependent on the parents for his survival. He is able to engage himself only as per the directions of his family where obedience is still considered a virtue and is of utmost importance. The stage where the separation from the family takes place is yet to happen. Abassi fears that if they live as man and wife or form a family, they would forget him. "*Relationship coagulates*" (Edinger, 1994). They would not pay attention to him. When the men start living with their wives and form a family, they are able to create a world within the world. They are able to create life by themselves. "Sexuality is not mere instinctuality; it is an indisputably creative power that is not only the basic cause of our individual lives, but a very serious factor in our psychic life as well... We could call sexuality the spokesman of the instincts, which is why from the spiritual standpoint sex is the chief antagonist... because the spirit senses in sexuality a counterpart equal and indeed akin to itself. For just as the spirit would press sexuality, like every other instinct, into its service, so sexuality has an ancient claim upon the spirit, which it once—in procreation, pregnancy, birth, and childhood—contained within itself, and whose passion the spirit can never dispense with in its creations. Where would the spirit be if it had no peer among the instincts to oppose it? It would be nothing but an empty form" (Jung, 1960).

The story of civilization begins with the capacity to be able to grow food and live within a settlement. It is a story where the sacred is separated from the profane. The whole of the universe no longer remains magical but it is reduced to some place or object.

The heaven is the place where the humans are nourished. They dwell with gods as Adam and eve dwelled with the god in the Garden of Eden before being expelled (Genesis 2:8-9). "In the paradise age the people are in union with the gods. This represents the state of the ego that is as yet unborn, not yet separated from the womb of the unconscious and hence still partaking of the divine fullness and totality" (Edinger, 1992).

The humans have been asked not to form any kind of bond with each other but rather periodically day after day renew his relationship with god by eating with him in the heavens and hence remember him. "Through the *participation mystique* life is pumped into us from outside in the form of unconscious motivations, for which, since they are unconscious, no responsibility is felt. Because of this infantile unconsciousness the burden of life is lightened" (Jung, 1976).

The sound of bells has been associated with the places of worship since time immemorial. Men have been called to remember the gods in his heart with the sounds of the bells. The sound of the bell creates ripples in the environment and transports the consciousness of the listener with ease. One is able to alleviate oneself from the mundane and be with the gods just by listening to the bell. It is melody which calls from above. The Church bells used to sound every hour, the prayers in the temples are incomplete without bells. The Santa Claus is shown coming with bells in his hands. The association of bell with god and hence prayers is deep and intimate. It blocks all sounds of the world and the commotion within oneself and brings the thoughts and consciousness to gods. One is able to get to god just by being in the rhythm induced by the sound of the bells. The bells signaled a call for food in the heaven. Food is the basis of existence of life. It is what keeps us alive. The food provided by the gods is the continuous gift of life that is being shared with the humanity by the gods. The gods do not differentiate and hence everyone is guaranteed a comfortable life within the confines of heaven. The man is able to live on earth but he is not able to grow his own food. Thus, the man is not able to use the earth or interact with the earth physically. He is neither able to sow the seeds of the food nor he is able to grow his seeds inside the woman. The earth is as alien and as unapproachable to him as the woman. The use of the earth for reaping anything out of her is a forbidden act for man. Anything that gets forbidden invites more attention to itself. It is out of human habit or curiosity that one does exactly what one is not supposed to. The consequences of forbidden events form the part of divine design. Abassi thinks that man will forget him if he gets involved with act of growing food or is allowed to beget children. The existence and wellbeing of man relies on the goodwill of god earned through his obedience to the divine will. His ability to be able to follow through the instructions is mark of his merit and earns him food. The blind faith that man is supposed to have on god is characteristic of the initial period of development of the ego from the Self. To remember god one has to stay away from the woman as man and wife and have no need to till the earth. In the present context the earth is populated by the divine couple and they restrict them to procreate any further.

The woman tills the soil and grows the food. The man is intrigued by her produce and tills the soil with her, living as man and wife. 'The women were the one who were providers of food; they knew the secrets of the earth. They were the one who knew the secrets of vegetation agriculture and could tell one plant from the other. The human repositories of knowledge, about the food practices were women to begin with' (Neumann, 1982). The man starts to find her food sweeter than that of the heaven and starts living as man and wife. "Adam and eve were expelled from the paradisaal, pre-ego condition after the crime of eating the forbidden fruit...ego development is associated with the experience of evil, criminality and guilt" (Edinger, 1994).

The change that woman introduces by producing from the earth brings in a change in their relationship status. It is the introduction of the concept of belongingness. An intimate interaction with the earth conjoins man with the destiny and ways of matter besides his active involvement with the heavenly or the spiritual world. The woman by procuring the food develops a place of dwelling and nourishment. It is the food earned by toil and hard work, which makes it taste sweet. It is a result of a process and leads to an experienced understanding of the world and of oneself. It involves an inward reliance on oneself and one's own efforts. It is the capacity to grow life and sustain it. Food is the life substance; it is the process of making the earth home. It is making it of one's own. The tilling of the soil and producing food is the ability to construct one's on reality different from that provided by the heavens. Hence it has the capacity to make man forget gods. The man lives with a woman forming conjugal bonds; thus, he develops the capacity to engage and interact with the woman and via her with the earth. He is able to make home. Food initially being the prerogative of god and later on taken on by man is moving towards man's ability to partake in the work of god and not just relying on his benevolence. It signals evolution and strength on part of man. He is able to form a relationship with the opposite sex and live under the same roof. It is the advent of culture, an introduction of a specific way of life. He is able to divide the earth and derive from the earth as per his own needs and capacity. He is

able to harness the fertility of the earth and of the woman in a regulated manner and establish a sense of belongingness with both. The woman shows her the way to the food and adopts the way of life to live with him. He understands the earth and the woman in a connected manner and is able to create and sustain life by himself. "The acquisition of consciousness is a crime, an act of *hybris* against the power-that-be; but it is a necessary crime, leading to a necessary alienation from the natural state of wholeness. If we are going to hold any loyalty to the development of the consciousness, we must consider it a necessary crime. It is better to be conscious than to remain in the animal state. But in order to emerge at all, the ego is obliged to set itself up against the unconscious out of which it can and assert its relative autonomy by an inflated act" (Edinger, 1992).

His devotion to god was regulated each day by the call for food. The basis of relationship was food being which was consumed each day and had to be renewed each day. The man forgot about god because the food of heaven promised life but it did not allow any scope of knowledge or interaction with the earth or nature. The heaven is place of constancy and certainty but it does not allow exercising human will or potentiality. It did not allow man to know himself through his body but engaged only his mind and the spirit. The woman is more attuned to nature than man hence she is able to produce the food. She is able to join in the rhythms of the earth and work with it without dominating it. The heaven food might have a soul but without substance. It is not just by blind act of faith but by conscious intention does the work get to fruition and is enjoyed by the senses.

On enquiring about the woman god is informed that she is ill, but she is hidden by man due to her pregnancy and goes on to give birth to a boy and a girl. After the consummation of marriage, the woman gives birth to two children. He hides his pregnant wife from the eyes of god. Similar to the fact that the seed hides inside the earth before it produces the plant. The seed of man develops inside the womb of the woman in darkness. He is incapable of keeping it a secret forever but still attempts to deceive god by lying to him. The man is able to produce and sustain life by himself now. He is able to regulate his own activities by himself and has withdrawn his energies from god. They are able to perform and mirror the functions of god on earth. The two children are mirroring the dualities of nature.

The act of man, of producing children angers Abassi and he informs Atai that now man will not remember him and his fears about man were right. "Gods rage make him involved with the affairs of man" (Jung, 2012). Hence death becomes a point of contact with the gods himself. Atai sends death amongst man-kind to make people die and create discord on earth. The woman on earth acts as the source of life, the one who brings life on earth and the woman of heaven acts as the source of death, the one who sends death on earth. The death is a masculine figure sent by the divine goddess. He acts her agent and kills people and makes them distrust each other. The man broke the trust of god so he is punished with conflicts and death. Causing chaos is one attribute of death. Death is a source of fear and brings a break in the rhythm in life itself. It disrupts the harmony of life and leads to imbalance. The goddess sends it as her agent to not let men be equal to god. Thus, only because man dies, he cannot be equal to god. Death exists prior to man. It is there acting as an equalizer; it cuts man to size. It causes the man and wife to die. He causes discords amongst the next generation. Death is sent personified to not let the man reach the level of god and as a punishment because he chose to forget him.

Man engages in conjugal relation with a woman and is accused by the god of forgetting him. The man is able to imitate the kind of relationship that God has with the woman. He is able to produce his food and produce children. The moving forward of life is accompanied by the collateral damage done by death. The earth no longer could work in a similar order as the heaven thus death as sent to disrupt and cause chaos. Death is an accomplice of the gods. Similarly, it is observed in Indian Mythology that the Goddess of death was created by Lord Brahma himself and unleashed on earth. Death is being sent by the creator lord himself. Thus, it is also the creation of the lord devoted to a specific purpose. Therefore, is as much part of the image of the lord and his own attributes like any other creation that he makes. On extrapolating it further and considering *pars pro toto* death being an attribute of the lord himself is also the Lord himself and is as much an active agent in all his creations as is the life-giving aspect. The conditions that bound man to heaven involved his voluntary dying to the world around him and deadening of his own senses. Man's psychic structure could not be complete without mirroring both the realities that he was part of, the cosmic as well as the earthly. His psychic development and differentiation of potentialities need him to live out the attributes of moth spirit and matter which come together in him and to survive on one mode of living is like walking on a single limb. Death is an attribute of nature and the life on earth, so it becomes the part of the life of man sent by the feminine mother of the world. The creator of the world lived with his wife, the creatures made by him were both man and woman and the children born were also son and daughter, thus the world since the beginning was working

in dualities and mimicking the skies. The duality of life is the beginning of life. It creates the push and pull which causes movement. The creation of the creator reaches fruition and is set in motion by the advent of death. Life and food itself were not complete enough for further evolution of consciousness and identity of man. It becomes imperative to attain a relative independence from the authority to become an individual in one's own rite. There are a few guidelines that man had to adhere to be allowed to function but he was not working towards anything in particular. The virtue of obedience is being highlighted by placing the cause of death as disobedience of man but an act without conscious intention or meaning cannot be virtuous to begin with. It was an act that was done without awareness and it was repeated regularly evident from the sound of the bell.

Conclusion:

The food that grew from the earth paved the way of life on the earth which also led to the birth of a future generation, thus the birth of man and the death of man followed each other. When man could produce children then he also started facing death. Since he hid the life that he birthed from god, god hid him from his children. Death dwells amongst the mankind on earth, alongside him causing discord. It is a characteristic feature of death that wherever it comes it causes discord as it causes a break in the usual flow of life. The man's ability to bring children also brings him closer to being god. The creation of god imitates him in his capabilities and is able to bring life into the world as the life was breathed into him. He is able to differentiate and yet maintain his form. The ability to nurture and create life is what is bringing man closer to being god but death takes that away. Thus, man's ability to create joins him to his Self but death acts as the regulating factor. Death is sent as a punishment which man is served for his ability to create and know the world. Death completes the process of creation. It brings things in motion as conflict and discord are also roots of movement and create necessities to be bridged. "Daring to follow an inner authority may be pictured as the murder of a projected authority, perhaps a parricide. Being an ego is inextricably connected with guilt, which is punished by *coagulatio*—confinement within the limits of one's own personal reality" (Edinger, 1994). Man's way of life, of settling down, tilling the soil and leaving the kids behind him to follow suite i.e. a way of life was governed bringing along with itself agriculture and marriage and an introduction of death in the world.

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