

BISHOP, Paul – GARDNER, Leslie (eds.). *The Ecstatic and the Archaic. An Analytical Psychological Inquiry*

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This volume contains valuable insights to the connection between archaic and ecstatic from different perspectives (psychological, psychoanalytical, philosophical, historical and others) as they were and are seen in western history and prehistory. The common denominator of all the chapters is the prominent attention paid to trans-subjective dimension of psyche as it is researched from the mid 19th century, when probably the best perspective both the ecstatic and the archaic can reveal its role in cultures, societies and individual life.

Both editors are prolific authors with the focus on post-Jungian studies. Paul Bishop (Glasgow) specializes on German letters (Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Jung), authored *On the Blissful Island with Nietzsche and Jung* (2016), *Ludwig Klages and the Philosophy of Life: A Vitalist Toolkit* (2017), *Analytical Psychology and German Classical Aesthetics* (two volumes), and is an editor of *The Archaic: The Past in the Present* (2012). Leslie Gardner (Essex) established *International Journal of Jungian Studies*, co-founded *International Association of Jungian Studies*, is author of *Rhetorical Investigations: G.B. Vico and C.G. Jung* (2010). The volume is divided in free thematic parts: (1) psychological (ecstatic in its psychological aspect), (2) philosophical, (3) historico-geographical (examines ancient ecstatic in distant non-western cultures) but we are reminded that “while nearly all the chapters draw to a greater or lesser extent on the thought of C.G.Jung, they are by no means ‘Jungian’ in their assumptions or interpretative framework. Indeed, some contributors explicitly question Jung’s approach, while others still find in him a resource that can explain the archaic, the ecstatic, and the interrelation between the two” (Bishop-Gardner 2018, p. 8).

In fact, this volume resulted from a conference held in July 2016 at the Freud Museum in London. The proper name of that conference – *Ecstatic Ancient/Archaic Thought and Analytical Psychology: An Inquiry* – was a sort of provocation because it challenged “the dominant discourse in the arts and humanities”, i.e. questions postmodern discourse where “what we are talking about does not exist” and where there is no origin (*Ursprung, arché*) and where “we have to talk about ‘provenance’ (*Herkunft*) and ‘point of reference’ (*Entstehung*)” (Bishop-Gardner 2018, 1). As far as there is nothing outside the text (the self), there is also no *ekstasis* (in postmodern approaches there is only a *tissu*, web or network) and, moreover, “there

certainly isn't a canon; although, in a way, there is, for the new canonicity resides precisely in the denial of canonicity, and in the destruction, ridicule, or avoidance of the canon" (Bishop-Gardner 2018, 1). Post-modern discourse also lacks ecstatic in its narrower meaning – its erotic and sexual aspect – because even ecstatic collapsed into "discourse".

Both London conference and this volume follow the thesis according to which ecstatic-archaic manifests through *Grenzlebnisse* or *Grenzsituationen* or *Grenzerfahrungen*. According to Bishop and Gardner it is impossible to escape archaic dimension of existence as well as it is impossible to escape unconscious. Both emphasize that "while the postmodernists deny the very idea of the archaic and show disdain for its ecstatic manifestations, there is nevertheless a strong tradition of scholarship that investigates the archaic and the ecstatic" (Bishop-Gardner 2018, 2). But interest in archaic dimension of being and its ecstatic aspect is a part of Western thought. It was reminded to us in three-part documentary series *Magnetic North* by Jonathan Meades (first broadcasted on BBC Four in 2008) or a collection of papers entitled *The Archaic: The Past in Present* (2012). However, as Gardner reminds us, "exploration of the ecstatic dimension of the archaic remained (...) a desideratum in the field of 'Archaic Studies'" (Bishop-Gardner 2018, 3).

Where do these studies start and where do they lead? Bishop and Gardner quote Plotinus describing merging of consciousness (ego) with the divine (archetype). They add, however, that the connection of archaic with ecstatic is not limited only to Antiquity and constitutes a stream of modern authors who usually fall outside (or are pushed outside) the mainstream of academic enquiry. Quoting Nietzsche's unpublished fragments (1881) they remind us that archaic-ecstatic has to do with leasing limited and narrow attitudes of ego:

"Stop feeling to be such a fantasized ego! Learn step by step to throw away one's supposed individuality! Discover the errors of the ego! Gain insight into egoism as an error! Understand that its opposite is not altruism! That would mean showing love towards other apparent individuals! No! Go blond 'you' and 'me'! Experience cosmically!" (Bishop-Gardner 2018, p. 3)

In short, we find ourselves in the area of ego's "modern", "rational" or "post-modern" fantasies. We are in the area Rudolf Otto called *numinous*. Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902) called the same field "cosmic" or "archaic". Jung suggested different perspectives to view the same area of human experience. Focused on the issue of polarities or *conjunctio oppositorum* or a paradox, Jung in his recently published Red Book differentiates

between “spirit of this time” and “spirit of the depths” saying: “in order to reach to spirit of the depths one must escape from ruling discourse of one’s time” (Drob 2012, 26). The same issue – tension between two opposites – mentioned Gian Piero Quaglini differentiating Jung’s “anima thinking” and “persona thinking”: “the persona-thought needs people who keep on thinking it, in an imitative, repetitive way. These individuals will cosine the thought image of some theoretical cage, which could even become a place for association” and “concern itself with whether or not others regard the thought in the same or in a different way“ whereas „anima-thought is not concerned that others could think in a different way [...] it is concerned about thinking things that are different from those already thought of in the past“ (Quaglini 2015, 91). Similarly in Jung’s masterpiece *Symbols of Transformation* there is a differentiation between “directed thinking” and “dreaming or fantasy-thinking” (Jung 1986, 18, 20) or David L. Miller writing about “edge-talk” in theology (Miller 2015, 153-167).

Those who theoretize about archaic usually research in mythology and mythological. Karl Kerényi asserts that “mythology gives a ground, lays a foundation”, but at the same time “it does not answer the question ‘why’ but ‘whence’”. To explain this “ground” Kerényi reverts to Greek word *arkhai*:

they form the ground or foundation of the world, since everything rests on them. They are the *arkhai* to which everything individual and particular goes back and out of which it is made, while they remain ageless, inexhaustible, invincible in timeless primordiality, in a past that proves imperishable because of its eternally repeated rebirths (Kerényi 1969, 7).

For Kerényi mythology is “the direct unquestioning return to the *arkhai*, a spontaneous regression to the ‘ground’” (Kerényi 1969, § 4, p. 7) but at the same time it is still alive in us:

The ideal primary mythology [hovers] as it were between the one origin and the fixed monadic vision of it. Living mythology, on the other hand, expands in infinite and yet kapely multiplicity, rather like the plant-world in comparison with Goethe’s ‘primal plant’. We must always keep our eyes on both: the historical Many and the unitive principle that is nearest to the origin (Kerényi 1969, 24).

This volume can be viewed as a series of different perspectives or various movements between Western and Eastern, past and present, mainstream and the edge but – as the editors emphasize – always with some quality of unspeakable because “the archaic and the ecstatic share the quality of

being beyond articulation (...) both cry out for rehabilitation in our safe, sterile, box-ticking environment of the endless reinforcement of mindless platitudes and *idées reçues*” (Bishop-Gardner 2018, 8).

The first part is introduced by Raya A. Jones’ chapter entitled *The Stream of Desire and Jung’s Concept of Psychic Energy* where Jones examines Jung’s theory of psychic energy, how it differs from Freud’s notion of libido, how it gets closer to Bergson’s vitalist philosophy and the fact that his notion of psychic energy carries vestiges of the hydraulic metaphor. In the second chapter named *The Characters Speak because They Want to Speak. Jung, Dionysus, Theatre, and Therapy* Mark Saban explores Jung’s work on the differentiation and personification of the complexes and the way these complexes can be revealed on the intra-psychic stage. Saban further investigates the Dionysian (i. e. ecstatic) implications of Jung’s model of psyche in which Jung’s goal was to bring opposites together. In his chapter Saban introduces Jung’s model of psyche where the paradoxical and theatrical can be combined. The third chapter by Yulia Ustinova is entitled *Ancient Psychotherapy? Fifth-Century BC Athenian Intellectuals and the Cure of Disturbed Minds* and it takes as its point of departure the focus on Hippocratic medicine on the body of the patient. Consequently mental diseases were viewed as resulting from humoral disbalance or trauma. Hippocratic therapy usually focused on purgation of the body and madness and purification were typically intertwined. Ustinova emphasizes the innovation came already in ancient Greece and from experts in using words. It was them who invented “speaking therapy” (Ustinova refers to age-long belief in the magical power of words) and Ustinova also explores the interest of ancient thinkers in psychology or psychotherapy. Fourth chapter authored by Alan Cardew, *Antiquity and Anxiety. Jung, Freud and the Impasibility of the Archaic* starts with questions about Freud’s and Jung’s anxieties about visiting Rome and Athens: “could the unconscious, with all its repressed desires, condensations, displacements and defensive obscurity, be something of a shield against that terrible, high ideal?” (Cardew 2018, 57). This is an interesting idea, especially if we are aware of the enormous influence exerted by antique cultures of Greece and Rome on the history of Europe and European thought. Jung studied in Basel, place inevitably associated with Basel school of classicism where Burckhardt, Nietzsche or Bachofen lived and where Nietzsche declared the death of God. According to Cardew “one way to survive classicism was to treat its order and culture merely as a beautiful Apollonian mask, which served to hide the abyss which lay beneath it” (Cardew 2018, 57). Both Freud and Jung were aware of the fact that primordial drives are not and could not be superseded and represent that part of human nature which

is subject to determinism. Here psychology touches biology, history and archeology. In the middle of the 19th century it was Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) who formulated biogenetic law (ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny) and the European thought (1850-1950) started shedding more light on archaic aspect of human society (Johann Jakob Bachofen, Jane Ellen Harrison, Robert Graves, Erich Neumann). For Cardew this process could be considered as a enantiodromic to previous tendency to idealize the classical societies/psychology: “where man once looked up, they must now look down” (Cardew 2018, 61). Cardew reminds us that Jung (similarly to Bachofen or Neumann) had visions leading rather down (not to Apollonian domain but to that of Dionysus), to the domain of instinct and not to higher spheres of Platonic eternal ideas. In other words, Jung separated himself from Platonism and its primordial ideas. Conceiving the archetype he rejected to give it Platonic form. Cardew describes in detail Jung’s rejection of Platonism.

Following chapter by Paul Bishop, *I must Get Out (of myself) More Often? Jung, Klages, and the Ecstatic-Archaic*, introduces a second part of the volume (Ecstatic-archaic history) and suggests that we cannot escape the archaic and that we cannot become oblivious of its ecstatic aspect. These are very anti-postmodern theses, but Bishop reveals that there is a growing literature on the archaic and ecstatic. Bishop emphasizes role of those (here Carl G. Jung and Ludwig Klages) who put emphasis on cultivating and nurturing cultural memory. If we do not do that it can return to us in much more dangerous forms. Ben Pestell’s contribution *Ecstatic Atoms: The Question of Oresteian Individuation* deals with archaic and ecstatic dimension of the theatre. The question that introduces us to Pestell’s idea is whether protagonists of Greek tragedies as psychologized characters can be viewed as personified forces. Referring to Greek goddess Athena in tragedy Oresteia Pestell argues that it can be viewed as a psychic force healing and unifying the individual and society in a way that supports Jung’s idea of individuation. The next chapter written by classicist Richard Seaford *Monetised Psyche and Dionysiac Ecstasy* introduces us to Jungian approach to pre-Socratic philosophy. Seaford is convinced that ideas from the distant past are relevant to understanding of our modern psyche. Seaford’s text is to certain extent an answer to Edinger’s Jungian understanding of early Greek philosophy.

In the final part – dedicated to ancient ecstatic in non-Western parts of the world – there are two chapters that shift discussion in totally different direction, thematically and geographically. In the first chapter *History, Philosophy, and Myth in Luo Guanzhong’s Three Kingdoms* Terrence Dawson focuses on the notion of “One China” referring to the archetype

more or less present in classical works of Chinese literature. Dawson pays attention especially Luo Guanzhong's epic *Three Kingdoms* or *Romance of Three Kingdoms* from the 14th century. It is a fictionalized history (covering the collapse of Han Dynasty to the reunification of China, i. e. 184-280 CE) beneath which one can find moral philosophy based on Confucius (c. 510 BCE). Dawson implies that Chinese view of history is based on moral philosophy and explores differences between assumptions of the Chinese thought/mentality and Graeco-Roman/Western thought.

In the last chapter by Catriona Miller *Enki at Enkidu: God of Directed Thinking* explores Sumerian concepts of *abzu* and *mē* and relates them to Jungian model of psyche. Both concepts are closely related to the myth of Innana and Enki (god of all attributes of civilization usually considered a tricksterian god which is something Miller disagrees with) where Innana visits Enki. Enki gets drunk and gives her large number of *mē* (Enki dwells in his underwood temple Eridu where he keeps *mē*). Following the meaning Enki regrets his generosity and wants his *mē* back but Innana escapes to her city of Uruk and gives it to local people. According to all the evidence this myth pre-dates Graeco-Roman mythology usually associated with psychoanalysis and analytical psychology.

Thus, in the myth of Innana and Enki we are introduced to pre-Graeco-Roman underwood which reveals totally different characteristics. As Miller explains: “the *abzu* is not the underwood (the Great Below), but it is not in the everyday world either. It has been defined as ‘sea, abys; home of Enki in one glossary’, as ‘a freshwater ocean’” (Miller 2018, 152). Nature of *abzu* changed with historical period (Babylonian *abzu* is watery and oceanic, Sumerian *abzu* has different substance; “in Babylonian period *abzu* underwent transformation and contains monster, or at least, like Kronos in the Greek cosmology, a monstrous father”, Miller 2018, 156), but it was always a significant part of the Sumerian concept of the cosmos which did not belong neither to heavens nor to earth. In contrast to Graeco-Roman underwood *abzu* had nothing to do with dead – it was viewed as a space that could be entered and left, space between everyday world and underworld, contained both water and clay, it was creative and fecund, but not chaotic or destructive without any logic and meaning. Miller reminds us about a poem Enki's Journey to Nippur where *abzu* is “pure place, where fates are determined” (Miller 2018, 153).

Another notion which deserves re-evaluation is a notion of “trickster god”, label usually attributed to Enki among modern academics. Enki is not one of the most powerful gods in Sumerian pantheon but he is frequently mentioned with and well disposed to humanity. One of his titles is “image fashioner” or “shaper-creator” or “wise one” what reminds us of Jung's

thesis about unconscious psyche: permanent creation of primordial/archetypal images. According to mythology Enki is a creator of humans, he creates them from the clay of the *abzu*, but he is not a creator, but a fashioner, an image maker. As we can see, Enki's characteristics and its location indicates that he can represent not yet directed thinking of later historical periods (Graeco-Roman) because he represents the in-between conscious and unconscious. According to Miller, here "we gain a tantalising glimpse into an era of a less differentiated consciousness, one not resident in the airy heights of heaven, but moving freely between the heavens, the city, and the *abzu*; (...) this figure is gradually replaced by more violent male warrior gods battling to maintain a strict border between the conscious and the unconscious realms, between perceptions of order and chaos, but losing something of Enki's flexibility and creativity" (Miller 2018, 157).

Miller's contribution to this volume can lead to radical shift in the way we view evolution of consciousness where Jung's concepts of directed thinking (thinking in words) and dreaming/fantasy-thinking merge. For Jung "directed thinking (...) is manifestly an instrument of culture (...). The secret of cultural development is the mobility and disponibility of psychic energy. Directed thinking (...) is a more or less modern acquisition which earlier ages lacked" (Jung 1986, 16) Whereas directed thinking "operates with speech elements the latter is effortless, working as it were spontaneously, with the contents ready to hand and guided by unconscious motives. The one produces innovations and adaptation, copies reality, and tries to act upon it; the other turns away from reality, sets free subjective tendencies, and, as regards adaptation, is unproductive. (...) history shows that directed thinking was not always as developer as it is today. The clearest expression of modern directed thinking is science and the techniques fostered by it" (Jung, 1986, 18-19). Perhaps Miller's view on Sumerian divinity of Enki opens the door to deeper research and insight into this border region between the consciousness and the unconsciousness.

This book is an excedent exemplification of the width and breadth of today's multidisciplinary where past and future, local and distant, conscious and unconscious, common and extraordinary, scientific and magic meet and merge and where special vision and insight are required. Bishop's and Gardner's "ecstatic and archaic" is an example of the "edge-talk" David L. Miller speaks about and it is an invitation to move beyond dominant postmodern academic discourse of today.

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