THE FOUR CYCLES OF HERAKLES: TOWARDS THE VISUAL ARTICULATION OF MYTH AS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS

by

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ABSTRACT

My research involves the reassertion of mythic experience in a manner considered contemporaneously relevant. The relevancy resides in the Jungian assumption that myth structures psychic experience to the benefit of the individual and ultimately, society.

To this end, I have taken the hero myth of Heracles, and, by filtering it through Jung’s system promoting psychological maturation, that is what he called the individuation process, I have reconfigured it in fine art form.
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INTRODUCTION

Background to the research

In recognition of life’s binary base and the tendency for humans to preference one part over its complementary other; the Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist C.G. Jung, acknowledged mythology as an attempt by our forefathers (or mothers), to figuratively map the concealed, repressed and neglected aspects of our being. These aspects inhabit a common, hidden reservoir, that Jung referred to as the collective unconscious. It is from this universal source, the psychological base for all human life (Jung, 2002:156), that myths have arizen; and it is also, therefore, why Jungians have regarded their content as neither culture- nor time-bound.

According to Jung1, modern man has to re-connect with the timeless wisdom of myth to make contact with the creative powers of what he called the collective unconscious which is the deeper and even less accessible layer of what he called the personal unconscious (CW9i:par.3)2. The collective unconscious “contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual” (Jung, CW8:par.342). The inherited structural elements which constitute the collective unconscious are “systems of readiness for action [instincts], and at the same time, images and emotions” called archetypes (Jung, CW10:par.53). As the archetypes are unrepresentable because they cannot be perceived by consciousness, their effects can be consciously experienced as archetypal images, emotions and archetypal instincts. From the archetypal images are drawn recurrent images, called archetypal motifs, and when these are linked in a sequence, they form

1 Please note that throughout this dissertation, only Jung’s analytical viewpoints will be stated.

2 Where a reference which includes the abbreviation CW occurs, it refers specifically to The Collected Works of Jung, published by Princeton / Bollingen in volumes numbered 1 – 20. (See Source List)
a myth which can be presented visually, verbally, musically or dramatically. Jung referred to myth as *timeless wisdom* because it is not a product of ego-consciousness, but an archetypal, handed-down pattern of thought or behaviour, taking into account all aspects of life, both dark and light. As such, myth makes visible to consciousness the psychological foundation of all human life, past and present.

The most universal of archetypal images in mythology, is the hero; and it is the function of this hero to model the development towards an integrated personality which, in turn, will contribute to the creation of a healthy human collective. Jung claimed that four cycles can be discerned in the hero myth as well as in what he termed, the process of individuation, (that is the journey towards an integrated self). Accordingly, the goal of the first cycle is for the ego to realize and integrate the dark “other”, the shadow. During this cycle, the hero has to fight monsters, symbolic of the conflict between ego-consciousness and the negative aspects, i.e., the shadow of the unconscious. In the second cycle, the hero’s archetypal anima (his inner feminine counterpart) introduces him to his dual nature. Here the anima mediates between consciousness and the unconscious, making the hero aware of the pairs of opposites. The goal of the second cycle is to come to terms with the negative aspects of the shadow part of the archetypes, in order to reveal their equally positive creative attributes. During the third cycle, the archetypal wise old man reveals the meaning between the complementary pairs of opposites. “He” helps the hero to partially understand the symbol that unites the rational, form-giving capacity of consciousness and the irrational, raw material of the collective unconscious. Finally, the fourth cycle involves the unification of the different archetypes to form the self, the archetype of wholeness.

The equation of hero myth, in this case that of Heracles, to individuation process was based on the reading of myth as symbolic of the psychological development of the ego, the central subject of consciousness (Jung, CW 9ii:par.1). As Jung
would have it, (CW9i:par.288), the hero is an archetypal motif, symbolizing man’s struggle to overcome the forces of the unconscious (dragon, darkness, forest), achieving a broader base of consciousness (winning ‘the treasure hard to attain’) with the resultant release of energy, new equilibrium (between consciousness and the unconscious) and transformation (rebirth). Thus myth in its Modernist form, brings the two fundamental components of humanity’s being into dynamic relationship (Sharp, 1991:68).

**Hypothesis**

So, in the wake of Jung’s “modernization” of myth, specifically the hero myth, I arrived at my hypothesis, that is the proposition that a certain kind of imagery configured in the form of an installation will aptly convey myth as psychological process. To prove this, I needed to ask the following questions which I have presented as a hierarchy of problem statements:

**Statement of the problem**

How can the theories of Jung’s analytical psychology in relation to the four cycles of the Heracles\(^3\) myth, be expressed in an installation?

**Sub-problems**

In order to adequately address this problem, I in turn, identified the following sub-problems:

- What is Jung’s interpretation of the hero myth with specific reference to the myth of Heracles?

\(^3\) The spelling of “Herakles” with a “k” was used in the title of the dissertation when it was initially registered. However, further reading revealed that Jung spelt it with a “c,” “Heracles.” I have, since adhered to this.
- How do the four cycles relate to the hero myth as well as to the individual psyche’s development?
- What kind of imagery will most appropriately convey myth as psychological process?

**Rationale**

Jung valued the study of myth as a model for understanding the modern psyche. Why this understanding is necessary, is because it provides the individual with a perspective of the self that includes all the darks and lights of his own personality plus those of the imprints passed on from previous generations. With nothing excluded, and a conscious ego operating in relation to its constant, universal substratum, the collective unconscious, a human is able to negotiate his world fluidly and wholistically.

Furthermore, myth as psychological process is particularly relevant to the artist, since it provides a means of accessing a personal source of imagery, rich in form and layered in meaning. On the collective front, through what Jung called the active imagination, the artist with his / her form-giving abilities, is capable of bringing to conscious life the unconscious, instinctual processes of the psyche, so that others may view or re-experience the mythic dimension of being.

**Methodology**

With regard to the dissertation, I will be dealing with the problems by firstly, determining Jung’s interpretation of myth; secondly, showing how Jung’s interpretation of myth creates an awareness of and contact with the unconscious; thirdly, describing Jung’s interpretation of the archetypal hero myth; and fourthly, describing the process of individuation, its four cycles and the relevant archetypes. This will be followed by the application of individuation to the myth of Heracles, specifically to his twelve labours, thereby “individuating Heracles”; a
description of what Jung called active imagination and its relation to the twelve labours of Heracles; a description of the imagery deemed appropriate for the expression of the Heracles myth as psychological process; and finally, a description of the format and materials that would have to be used in giving form to this imagery.

In terms of the studio work, I will present an installation of assembled sculptures with each one, a combination of seamlessly joined found objects.

Given the work’s relation to Jung’s notion of myth, the installation is an intuitive response to the narrative, symbols, archetypal images and motifs identified as relevant to this dissertation. As such, it should reflect the archetypes inherent in the myth of Heracles as polyvalent metaphors rather than literal or realistic signifiers. Lastly, since the constituent parts of the installation stand as archetypal images, that is, embodiments of the unconscious, it is intended that in each viewer, they stimulate what Jung called “the active imagination.”

**Delimitations of the research**

The object of this dissertation and of the studio component is not to try and validate any specific theory in psychology or mythology as would a student in these two fields; but instead, to “master” the craft of transforming ideas and content into symbolic fine art form.

This research will be limited to the Heracles myth, according to Apollodorus’ version, as found in *The Library of Greek Mythology.*
1. JUNG AND MYTH

The scientific challenge to myth as something merely trivial, started in ancient Greece, when the terms mythos (words of a fictional or narrative nature) and logos (words making up a doctrine or theory) became distinct opposites. It was at this point that logos as rational thinking, together with epos or historia was preferred over mythos in its perception as fabrications from the imagination, or as fable. This preferencing was reinforced by the development in the West of the empirically oriented sciences to the extent that natural science, particularly, usurped the function of myth to define the origins and operations of our world.

Where myth attributes events in the world to the decisions of gods, science ascribes events to impersonal, mechanical processes (Segal, 1999:19).

Jung, however, perceived myth as more, and other than narratives or beginnings, and models of processes and interactions. Not in opposition to science, but from that perspective, he redefined the function of myth. Accordingly, he interpreted myth as symbolic of the psychological development of the psyche, and not as an expression of the literal world. Myth, he claimed, functions to reveal the existence of the unconscious and acts as a bridge between consciousness and the numinous contents of the unconscious which cause an alteration of consciousness. Bridging these two psychic realms is important, as psychological maturity depends on the recognition and then the bringing of them into a proper relation to one another. This process of maturity which Jung called individuation, may be impeded by at least two factors. The first is projection of unconscious content and the rejection by consciousness of this unconscious content as irrelevant. Projection happens because the unconscious part of the psyche cannot be directly perceived by the conscious mind; therefore, when the content of the unconscious is activated, it is projected as qualities of external

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4 The word psychic is used as a synonym of psychological and not as an indication of the supernatural, or parapsychological.
realities or other persons not belonging to the ego. The second factor, is that the dominant rational development of the conscious part of the psyche, strives to exclude the content of the unconscious because the latter is deemed as inferior, irrational and irrelevant. Since myth is expressed through symbolic images, it can bridge the gap between the discriminating, one-sided attitude of consciousness and the ambivalent, bipolarity of the non-judgmental unconscious which encompasses the pairs of opposites of the psyche; for instance, the dark / light and positive / negative aspects (Jacobi, 1974a:56).

Myth originates from the archaic part of the psyche, the unconscious. For a better understanding of myth, what it constitutes and the manner in which it functions, it is necessary to describe the psyche to a certain extent. This is difficult, as the multifarious and fluid nature of psychic phenomena negates any precise formulation of it as an all-inclusive theory of the source of these phenomena. Jolandi Jacobi (1974a:4) stated that:

Narrow, one-sided formulations kill the life of the psyche, whose mobile, dual face, seamed with paradoxes, refuses to such endeavors its secret, which can never be captured by strict conceptual methods. Its essence remains forever ambivalent and evades all efforts to unveil it. Yet, says Jung, it is ‘the only immediate experience we can have and the sine qua non [an essential condition / absolute necessity] of the subjective reality of the world.’

Therefore, even if a precise definition is impossible, it is important to attempt it, as it is the only way of reaching the source of creative imagination, the unconscious. Jung defined the psyche as consisting of consciousness, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. While the ego is experienced as the center of consciousness, the unconscious is an “exclusively psychological concept” one “which covers all those psychic contents or processes which are not conscious, i.e. not related to the ego in a perceptible way” (Jung, 1962:613). The personal unconscious consists of repressed or forgotten material, called complexes which originate from individual experience within consciousness. A mother-complex is a typical example of an individually acquired complex which is emotionally charged through an accumulation of
discordant or antagonistic feelings towards the biological mother. When the mother-complex is activated as an autonomous emotion of affect, disturbing the individual's reactions and upsetting sound judgment, it is outside of the will of the conscious ego. “The negative effect of a complex is commonly experienced as a distortion in one or other of the psychological functions (feeling, thinking, intuition and sensation)” (Sharp, 1991:39). The harmful affect of the complex can only be discharged when it is intellectually understood and assimilated through emotional experience. Only when it is experienced and understood in this way, can it become part of the conscious realm, resulting in a release of the energy that was blocked by the complex. The released energy can then flow in a new direction for a more balanced distribution of psychic energy. When this happens, the complex has been resolved, and a natural relationship towards the mother in this instance, will be possible.

Jung was emphatic that the complexes are the building blocks of the whole of the psyche; and as such have both negative and positive attributes. Because of their dual nature, they can be both destructive and constructive; in the case of the latter, stimulating an individual to aspire to new heights and achieve new possibilities. The personal unconscious mainly consists of complexes that have once been conscious but have subsequently moved into the unconscious realm because they have been repressed; whereas the complexes that Jung called archetypes have never been conscious as they originate from the collective unconscious. This psychic realm is not of a personal nature, but is the inherited universal part of the brain-structure, a “collective substratum” which is similar in all human beings (Jung, CW9i:par.3). This is not a case of inheriting ideas, but of inheriting the underlying pattern regarding the possibilities of ideas which are ubiquitous (Jung, CW9i:par.136). Now, while the integration of content from the personal unconscious “has the effect of a release and often of healing” (CW8:par.591); in the case of the collective unconscious, “the invasion of the complex … is a very disagreeable and even dangerous phenomenon.” The reason for this is that the activated archetypes are in direct conflict with
consciousness, as the latter has no means of coping with or understanding the
mythical expression of the collective unconscious. Whereas the mother-complex
of the personal unconscious is manifested through a unique, problematic
relationship with the mother in external reality; in the collective unconscious, it
would be an impersonal problem, one common to all of humanity, of “every
man’s dealings with the primordial maternal ground in himself” (Jacobi,
1974a:26). According to Jung (CW8:par.325):

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

This darkest, eternally present “matrix of every human psyche”, that is, the
unknown part of the collective unconscious strata of the psyche, is the origin of
the mythical as well as the source of psychic energy and the creative
imagination. Once the meaning of activated archetypal content is made
conscious by a personal emotional or instinctive experience, and understood (as
far as possible, as it can never be fully fathomed), it can be realized through the
form-giving capacity of consciousness and expressed as symbols in a creative
activity. This process can be achieved through various creative activities; in this
instance, through utilizing the Active Imagination to create a certain kind of
imagery that will aptly convey the labours of the Heracles myth. Active
Imagination enables consciousness to make contact with the source of creativity,
the collective unconscious, whereby the individual can translate the myth
reflecting the subject’s psychological processes, which are then expressed in
symbolic language. This process brings about a more harmonious and
interactive relationship between the content of the unconscious and
consciousness. Jung applied the word translate to a spontaneous, psychological
activity which cannot be pinpointed in materialistic or biological terms, because it
relates to spirit, and spirit in the Jungian sense, is a purely psychological concept.
bearing no relation to religion. It is an archetype which is experienced as an
enlivening, heightening of conscious. Jung claimed (CW8:par.643) that

If we are to do justice to the essence of the thing we call spirit, we should
really speak of a ‘higher’ consciousness rather than of the unconscious,
because the concept of the spirit is such that we are bound to connect it with
the idea of superiority over the ego-consciousness.

Another way to make contact with the unconscious is through the interpretation
of personal dreams. However, these are normally contents activated from the
personal unconscious and are, therefore, not from the timeless sphere of the
mythic archetypal realm of the collective unconscious.

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are the inherited, universal patterns
of potentiality in human experience and behaviour.

Archetypes may be considered the fundamental elements of the conscious
mind, hidden in the depths of the psyche...They are systems of readiness for
action, and at the same time *images and emotions*. They are inherited with
the brain structure – indeed they are its psychic aspect (Jung,
CW10:par.118).

They are unrepresentable, dynamic systems which can only be experienced
indirectly when they are activated as numinous archetypal images, or archetypal
instincts when actualized within consciousness. The numinous qualities of the
archetypal images, refer to their controlling power of fascination when they are
activated within consciousness, endowing the latter with a sense that they are of
the utmost fundamental importance and, therefore should not be ignored. Jung
suggested that the archetypal instinct

is experienced as physiological dynamism, while on the other hand its
multitudinous forms enter into consciousness as images and groups of
images, where they develop numinous effects which offer, or appear to offer,
the strictest possible contrast to instinct physiologically
regarded...Psychologically..., the archetypes as ... image[s] of instinct ...
[involve the move towards] a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of
man strives...(CW8:pars.414&415).
Therefore, the archetypes are manifested as ever-continuing natural processes, such as the biological urges for self-perpetuation and preservation, as well as eternally present internal “structures determinant of psychic life and life in general, as it aims for spirituality (Jung, 1962:557). Jacobi refers to these two sides of the archetype as a downward orientation towards “natural biological, processes – the instincts;” and the upward, spirit-oriented archetypal “images and ideas” (1974a:39).

More relevant to this research, however, is that from the archetypal images are drawn recurrent images, called archetypal motifs, and when these are linked in a sequence, they form a myth which can be symbolically translated into any of the arts.

To conclude, myth takes into account all aspects of life, both dark and light, nature and spirit. As such, it is the psychological basis of all human life irrespective of time and place. Thus, when a myth is reinterpreted it is able to connect us with the psychological inheritance that we share with all of humanity, past, present and future. Herein lies the meaning and value of myth: to connect us with those essential parts of the psyche that have broken away and become part of the content of the unconscious which is out of the conscious ego’s reach. Residing inaccessibly in the unconscious as numinous archetypal content, they become destructive, incapacitating the conscious mind by distorting its clear judgment. This state of possession is caused by the numinosity that is “totally impervious to the conscious will and put[s] the subject into a state of seizure, of will-less subservience” (Jacobi, 1974a:12). The first step in the prevention of this hostage by the archetypes of the collective unconscious, involves coming to grips with what Jung termed projection.
1.1 Projection

Since the archetypes are by nature unconscious, they do not seem to belong to the ego. When the archetypes are activated as archetypal images, they are perceived as qualities of external objects or persons; in other words, they are experienced as projections. This occurs when unconscious content that needs to be expressed within the subjective psyche is, instead, perceived in an opponent who does not possess these qualities. Unconscious content is projected because it is easier to recognize it in other people. Distasteful qualities disowned by a subject are encountered as shortcomings in others. Jung further claims (1962:783) that projection has an alienating effect when the subjective content is cut-off from the subject, and is transferred to external objects through which it is then experienced. Our ancient ancestors projected their archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious onto the events in nature, or in the heavens and then personified these as gods and goddesses. Jung stated clearly that “all the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man’s consciousness by way of projection – that is, mirrored in the events of nature. The projection is so fundamental that it has taken several thousand years of civilization to detach it in some measure from its outer object...But the very fact that this process is unconscious gives us the reason why man has thought of everything except the psyche in his attempts to explain myths. He simply didn't know that the psyche contains all the images that have ever given rise to myths, and that our unconscious is an acting and suffering subject with an inner drama which primitive man rediscovers, by means of analogy, in the processes of nature both great and small (CW9i:pars.7&8)

Thus was the human psyche’s contradictory qualities played out figuratively by heroes, gods, goddesses and demons in the mythic narratives created by our forebears, be they Greek, Goth or Nordic.

To prevent projection and promote maturation, intellectual knowledge serves perhaps only an introductory function. It cannot in itself solve the problem. What will bring the negative qualities to consciousness, is an individual's direct,
emotional experience of them. Once they are made conscious, the shortcomings can be dealt with, liberating not only the individual but others from these projections. What is important, is that this process enables a person to identify, differentiate, and then separate the qualities that belong to the personal psyche from those belonging to the external environment. It is of critical necessity to reverse projection, otherwise the compensating power of the unconscious will be impeded. This happens when the activated archetypal content is projected and, therefore, disposed of as belonging to other people, thus losing its personal message meant for the modification of the subject’s own consciousness. The subject is consequently robbed of an opportunity given by the activated content of the unconscious, which has been specifically expressed to point out an attitude or quality within consciousness needing correction.

To prevent losing the meaningful, compensational value of myth, Jung emphasized that the symbolic language of myth should be interpreted on a subjective level. This is an approach where the persons or situations, narrated in the myth, are interpreted as symbolic representations of factors belonging to the subject’s own psyche (Jung, 1962:599). By contrast, the objective analysis of myth denies the opportunity to reverse projection, referring as it does to actual persons and situations in the outside world (Sharp, 1991:93). It becomes apparent then that a healthy psyche cannot be supported by the rational ordering and intellectual understanding of the conscious mind only, because the latter is incapable of coming to terms with the instinctual collective psychic substratum.

1.2 Preferential Development of the One-Sided, Rational Ego-Consciousness

The connective power of myth is important to correct an imbalance in the psyche when there is a dominant development of the rational, critical ego-consciousness, and a devaluation of the unconscious as irrational and irrelevant. Jung described the main difference between the conscious and the unconscious
realm as that between discrimination, an ability of the conscious mind, and unity, the tendency in the unconscious to place opposites in a unified field. This fundamental difference will result in a conflict between the dominant rational conscious and the unconscious, as the discriminating conscious mind will not be able to embrace the pairs of opposites in the same way as the unconscious. In the archetype of wholeness, the self, the opposite two realms of consciousness and the unconscious are united. Both Sharp and Jacobi pointed out that rational comprehension cannot come to terms with the wholeness of the total psyche. Sharp stated the “essential nature of the self [as the archetype of unity, the psyche as a whole] is unknowable, but its manifestations are the content of myth and legend” (1991:119). Jacobi emphasized that the “archetype represent[s] a profound riddle surpassing our rational comprehension…[T]here is some part of its meaning that always remains unknown and defies formulation” (1974a:31).

Ego-consciousness will attempt to resolve the incompatibility of the opposite modes of the two realms by repressing the content of the unconscious. This action causes neuroses, a splitting of the psyche, with a loss of the source of valuable creative energy, capable of transforming consciousness by bringing it into conscious relationship with the unconscious. Once the archetypes are repressed, they revolt against their inferior status by being activated within consciousness to compensate for its one-sided development. These autonomous, activated archetypes cause psychological disturbances. One example is an emotional outburst that the individual cannot control through the will of rational consciousness. If these affected emotional disturbances are ignored, the collective unconscious can flood consciousness to such an extent, that the latter becomes totally confused and cannot function in relation to outer reality. These extreme reactions of the archetypes are in opposition to Jung’s description of the neutral disposition of the unconscious:

In itself the unconscious is neutral, and its normal function is to compensate the conscious position. In it the opposites slumber side by side; they are wrenched apart only by the activity of the conscious mind, and the more one-sided and cramped the conscious standpoint is, the more painful or dangerous will be the unconscious reaction. There is no danger from this sphere if conscious life has a solid foundation. But if consciousness is
cramped and obstinately one-sided, and there is also a weakness of judgment, then the approach or invasion of the unconscious can cause confusion and panic or a dangerous inflation, for one of the most obvious dangers is that of identifying with the figures of the unconscious. For anyone with an unstable disposition this may amount to a psychosis (CW14:par.184).

Therefore, the dominance of either rational consciousness or the irrational unconscious, will lead to an unstable mental state. At present, the emphasis on the conscious rational intellect is what is creating chaos and confusion in life in general. While the masculine principle (spirit), the Logos, is forever striving to promote consciousness by analysis and discrimination leading to contradiction; the feminine principle (matter), Eros, characterized by acts of protection, containment and synthesis and as the darkness of the unconscious, fosters growth and fertility. A healthy psyche needs a balance between the male qualities of the conscious intellect and the female qualities of relatedness and emotional interconnectedness. As a one-sided development of the psyche is both limiting and destructive, the importance of myth as a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious becomes more apparent.

Myth makes us aware of an earlier time when the center of consciousness, the ego, felt totality dependent on a “higher and mightier non-ego” (Jung, CW14:par.520) of the collective unconscious. During this time ego-consciousness knew that it could not control nature (the feminine / unconscious) by a force of will. People kept mysterious secrets under fearsome oaths, that Jung reckoned was “the imperative need to participate in a or perhaps the secret without which life loses its supreme meaning” (CW14:par.312). The act of secrecy, the hiding, is indicative of numinous, indefinable, symbolic unconscious content, “which extracts from consciousness a tribute of constant regard and attention” (Ibid.). Therefore, archaic man’s emotional connection to or dependence on the collective unconscious was translated in their reverence for the ancient mysteries, making them an effective part in the promotion of health, growth and fertility. This is beneficial to the totality of the psyche, because in this
way, consciousness acknowledges the existence of the unconscious, allowing the latter to perform its compensatory function. According to Jung, modern man has to re-connect with this timeless wisdom of myth to make contact with the creative archetypal powers of the unconscious which maintains the vitality of consciousness.

In order for this to happen, a new re-presentation of myth is necessary since the old mythic sensibility cannot be recovered, because our ego-consciousness has become too well-developed to be totality dependent on the collective unconscious. Therefore, a new interpretation of myth has to be found to reveal the numinous contents of the collective unconscious, enabling the individual to connect with his timeless instinctual nature. Through the symbolic interpretation of myth, the instinctive energies of the collective unconscious can become a new source of energy available to consciousness, where they are given form through creative activity. In this manner, consciousness can pay tribute to the “symbol which is the root of all creative activity and … is fed by the power of the initial imperceptible archetypes, working from out of the depths of the psyche … [to create] the realm of the spiritual” (Jacobi, 1974a:47). The archetype is the source that provides the symbol with the energy for creative imagination, thereby lifting the ego-conscious to the realm of “higher consciousness”. A reasonable deduction then, is that a better understanding of the symbol will provide an answer to the kind of imagery that will aptly convey myth as psychological process.
2. **MYTH: A GATEWAY TO THE UNCONSCIOUS**

When interpreting myth, the archetypes are manifested and given form in the conscious mind as archetypal images. These can be translated and expressed as symbol. The symbol is the “essence and image of psychic energy,” claimed Jung (Jacobi, 1974a:75). Every symbol is determined by an archetype, but the latter is not necessarily the equivalent to a symbol. The difference is that the archetype possesses a nucleus of psychic energy which provides the ground plan for the manifestation of the symbol, making the archetype become discernable. Every individual will give form to the archetype in a different symbolic manifestation, as his personal attitude and situation will influence his manner of expression, either in a positive or negative way. No matter what form the symbol takes, it will always be determined by and possess the numinosity of the archetype. A statement by Jung, partly quoted in the previous chapter, elaborates:

> The psyche is, in fact, the only immediate experience we can have and the *sine qua non* of the subjective reality of the world. The symbols it creates are always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are moulded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind. The archetypes are the numinous, structural elements of the psyche and possess a certain autonomy and specific energy which enables them to attract, out of the conscious mind, those contents which are best suited to themselves (CW5:par.344).

According to Jung, the psyche’s capability for image-making is what sets man apart from other animals. “He” has an inborn need to understand and express his experience in and of the world, in a realistic, as well as a symbolic manner. This symbolic, imaginative view of the world, adds another enriching dimension to man’s perception. Through the symbol, an equal physical and psychological bond is created with the world, although for Jung, “the archetype does not proceed from the physical facts but describes how the psyche experiences the physical fact” (CW9i:par.260). Here he used the myth of the solar hero. In this kind of myth, the psyche translates its experience as the course of the sun, and how the latter reflects the process of psychological development “accompanying
the physical process.” In such a myth, the linked archetypal motifs can be translated as the psyche’s experiences of the temporal, material world and how this external reality reflects the inner processes of the conscious and unconscious psyche. Therefore, myth has an ambivalent character that is inclusive of opposites like the eternal / temporal, and the dark of night / light of day. The purpose of myth is made visual in a symbol, but behind the visible, an “invisible, profounder meaning is hidden” (Jacobi, 1974a:par.77). Jung and Jacobi used both Doering’s and Bachofen’s definition of the symbol on various occasions. Doering defined symbols as “metaphors for the eternal in the forms of the transient; where the two are “thrown together,” fused into a unity of meaning.”\(^5\) The ambivalence of the symbol is echoed in Bachofen’s comparison of the different ways that the symbol and the word convey meaning.

Symbols then have the ability to fuse together the disparate concepts of the eternal (collective unconscious) with that of the transient (consciousness) into a unitary expression. Thus, the symbol is the best way to give form to the unknown or relatively unknown content that cannot be expressed in any definite way. The expression of a specific, known thing or identifiable association is regarded as a sign. A symbol however, carries prospective meaning, in that it obliquely yields or points to a broader, more inclusive yet open field of vision. For example, the Greek god, Hermes’, caduceus is symbolic of the backward / forward flow of energy between the two psychic realms. Two serpents are

\(\text{\cite{5}}\) Oskar Doering, *Christliche Symbole*, 1933, p. 1

\(\text{\cite{6}}\) J.J. Bachofen, *Versuch über die Gräbersymbolik der Alten*, in *Mutterrecht und Urreligion*, Kröner edn., 1954, p. 52
entwined in opposite directions around his magic wand, “...penetrating from the known into the unknown world” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1996:143). The more universal and further away the archetypes are from the personal unconscious and ego-consciousness, the more forcefully and numinously will consciousness experience its symbolic manifestation. As an example, when fire, water, earth or wood are utilized as symbols, their material reality tangible to all of humanity throughout time, acquires the corresponding intangible quality of the archetypal realm. Therefore, the dividing line between these elements as belonging either to the immaterial and eternal or to the material, temporal realm, becomes blurred. When this happens, these types of universal symbols achieve a unique level of enriched meaning, one transcending\(^7\) consciousness and the rational mind.

In this context, a symbol’s meaning is not accessible to the conscious rational intellect, because the intellect will try to literally interpret the symbol as if it were a sign. This will lead to confusion or misunderstanding, as the symbol cannot be rationally understood, since there is always an inexplicable element attached to it. Moreover, interpretation of the symbol as a sign deprives it of its binary nature and its capability of synthesizing opposing elements. This is the reason why Jung insisted that myth should be interpreted symbolically, specifically because it is able to unite the impersonal, timeless archetypal realm of the collective unconscious with the opposing personal, time-bound, conscious realm of the psyche. Although the symbol is given form by consciousness and is, therefore perceivable, it remains an intuitive expression of ideas which cannot be wholly, conclusively or logically known, because they stem from the collective unconscious which is not a fixed, finite and logical entity. The symbol embraces both realms as it is “neither abstract nor concrete, neither rational nor irrational, neither real nor unreal. It is always both” (Jung, CW12:par.400). A symbol not only unites the opposites of conscious and the unconscious, but also develops

\(^7\) Jung did not use the word transcend in a metaphysical sense, but to imply that which is beyond consciousness.
the four psychological functions of thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition at the same time. Normally, one function is well-differentiated and the others less so, to varying degrees. However, this situation is beneficially changed by a symbolic interpretation of myth involving all four psychological functions. Jacobi stated that the symbol unites the opposites and as such

is a totality which can never be addressed only to one faculty in man – his reason or intellect, for example – but always concerns our wholeness, touches and produces a resonance in all four of our functions at once. The symbol as ‘image’ has the character of a summons and stimulates a man’s whole being to a total reaction; his thought and feeling, his senses and his intuition participate in this reaction and it is not as some mistakenly suppose, a single one of his functions that is actualized (1974a:88).

Developing the four psychological functions benefits both the irrational and the rational realms: thinking, enables recognition of meaning; feeling, determines value judgment; sensation, perception of what is present in reality; and intuition, which connects the past, present and future, provides an idea of origination and the potential for development. Thinking and feeling are rational functions of evaluation, using logic and intellect; whereas, sensation and intuition relate to the irrational senses of sight, smell, taste, sound, touch and a “sixth sense,” the intuition. A sound integration of the four functions, connects an individual with his past, present and future, and enables him to experience a more meaningful relationship with his own psyche and his environment. So, when consciousness reacts to the symbol with all four of the psychological functions, the symbol transforms the previous conscious attitude, releasing blocked energy within consciousness for a better flow of psychic energy between the two realms. Jung stated that “the formation of a symbol cannot take place until the mind has dwelt long enough on the elementary facts, that is to say until the inner or outer necessities of the life-process have brought about a transformation of energy” (CW8:par.47). This means that symbols have the capacity to transform and redirect the archetypal, instinctive energy towards a more spiritual level of “higher consciousness” for a more wholesome, meaningful, imaginative and productive life. For instance, the image of a serpent has many possible readings, all
depending on its definition and the attitude of the interpreting conscious mind. The serpent as symbol, may be indicative of either the lower instinctual impulses (from the dark underworld); or of the movement towards the higher, spiritual realm, as the dynamic transformation of the psyche in flux (birth, death and rebirth), is represented by the snake’s ability to cast off its skin as it grows. The serpent is often depicted encircling the vessel where a transformation takes place. This transformation is often a result of purification through fire, a symbol for the spirit. Therefore, the movement towards the spiritual higher consciousness is the hidden meaning behind the visible symbol.

Thus working with symbol, helps the individual to attain the essential insights necessary for the continuous transitions from unconsciousness to conscious knowledge, and from one phase of life to the next. This function of the symbol as mediator, making the transitions between the unconscious and the conscious realm possible, Jung called the transcendent function. In this capacity, the symbol unites what was formerly divided and forces the psychic energy into a common channel. Sharp defines the transcendent function as “essentially an aspect of the self-regulation of the psyche. It typically manifests symbolically and is experienced as a new attitude toward oneself and life” (1991:136).

Without the formative power of the conscious mind, the images of the archetypes of the collective unconscious cannot be realized; while without the nourishment of the creative, raw material of the unconscious, the conscious mind becomes rigid. Since man possesses both the masculine, form-giving capacity of consciousness, as well as the feminine, primal qualities of the creative collective unconscious realm, he is able to create symbols. The invaluable function of the symbol then, is to facilitate an experience of the collective unconscious indirectly without being overpowered by it. The symbol, as a construct of myth, thus allows the individual to consider both his archetypal instinct and his intellectual capacity in the quest for healthy psychological balance.
More specifically, Jung regarded the solar hero in myth as a symbol of the developing ego’s psychic energy. The general outline of such a myth which follows, accentuates the psychological import of its main character, the hero, and prepares the reader for the introduction to Heracles.
3. THE HERO MYTH REVISITED

Archaic man projected his experience of his inner conflict between good and evil, in a symbolic expression of the hero’s fight with the dragon, running parallel to the alternating light of day and darkness of night. Likewise, the daily course of the sun, being swallowed by darkness and then reborn the following morning, can be seen as a reflection of the hero’s various cycles in the birth of life, to death and rebirth. Jung compared the journeys of the hero to the wandering of the sun, and therefore, classified the hero as a solar myth. He perceived the hero to be

first and foremost a self representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness. But consciousness, continually in danger of being led astray by its own light ...longs for the healing power of nature, for the deep wells of being and for unconscious communion with life in all its countless forms (CW5:par.299).

Jung was emphatic that a myth should be interpreted on a subjective level. Consequently, all the different personified archetypes within the myth refer to parts of the hero’s own psyche and psychological processes. The personified archetypes include the mother\(^8\), the father, the shadow\(^9\), anima, the wise old man and the self. The travels of the hero and the conflict between consciousness and the unconscious can be seen as a psychological drama, where the hero appears as the son (ego-consciousness) fighting to resolve the oppositional forces of light (consciousness) and darkness (the unconscious). The mother is the personification of darkness, symbolic of the collective unconscious, which the hero has to overcome, to develop his ego-consciousness. The mother is associated with matter, with water and the earth. As the previous quotation indicated, the dark mother constantly tries to overcome the light of the son, by

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\(^8\) As myth originates from the archaic collective unconscious and not the personal unconscious, the word mother in this document refers to the universal, archetypal sense, unless mother is specified as the personal mother in real life.

\(^9\) The shadow, the anima and the wise old man will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.
either swallowing or devouring the light of consciousness. This is indicative of the need of the unconscious for the form-giving power (masculine quality) of consciousness to manifest the unrepresentable archetypal ideas.

At the same time, the ego-consciousness has to be tempered to prevent it from becoming inflated. Inflation is a state of possession or identification with only one aspect of the psyche. Possession by consciousness will lead to egocentricity which prevents psychological growth, because it can only be aware of its own existence; whereas identification with the unconscious will result in psychosis, a complete disconnection from consciousness. To keep a balance between the two realms, the hero has to fight his demons that are part animal, part human, and that represent the archetypal animal instincts. His aim is to transform lower base instincts to a higher spiritual level. In her devouring capacity, the mother is normally personified as the dragon or serpent; therefore they are archetypal motifs of the collective unconscious. These two reptiles are the guardians and protectors of the hidden treasure. They possess the negative and positive numinous aspects of possession, and creative potential respectively. The hero’s conscious attitude towards these aspects of his own psyche will determine if the positive or negative numinosity is activated. Once the hero realizes that the demonic, shadow parts of his psyche can be destructive or creative, the helpful goddesses appear to guide the hero when in need. Often they provide a solution to a riddle that he is unable to solve with either brute force or intellectual acumen. In this situation, the goddesses assist the hero in coming to terms with his other feeling-toned (intuition / sensation) psychological functions, allowing him to solve the riddle and continue on his travels. The goddess Athena, for instance, often provides key information as to how the hero can deal with demons from his underworld. She indicates how they can be transformed into positive psychic energy and, therefore, contribute to healthy relationships. Athena as a personification of the anima archetype, helps the hero to connect with his inferior qualities of emotional relatedness. Jung called the anima the hero’s soul, thus referring to her nature of reconciliation between pairs of opposites. Whereas the
mother and anima have the ability to unite opposites; the father strives to discern and discriminate through a separation of opposites. The differentiating function of consciousness is what Jung referred to as “consciousness continually in danger of being led astray by its own light”. However, the anima keeps the hero’s ego-consciousness in check by showing him how to respect and have a positive relationship with his darker “other” side. This is necessary as psychic energy, the libido, has to stay in flux, moving forwards and backwards between the two realms to prevent a blockage in the relationship between the two. A transitional flow provides the potential for transformation of the libido to a higher level of energy.

The father is the personification of light, symbolic of the spiritual, higher consciousness, who opposes the son’s longing for the embraces of the mother. This type of longing means that the hero is clinging on to an earlier, infantile state of mind, trying to escape his responsibility to overcome the necessary obstacles to psychological growth. The father is associated with spirit, with the air and fire and is often depicted as a king in hero myths. He steers the son (the hero) in a more spiritual direction, than is his longing for the instinctive maternal physical drives. In the process, the hero has to conquer the solar lion as one of his heroic deeds. The lion is symbolic of the old king who hands over his kingdom once his son has completed his tasks, so that he may prove his worthiness as successor to the crown. Both the father and the lion are from the realm of higher consciousness.

The wise old man appears after the hero’s dealings with his anima. One example of the wise old man is the sun who gives Heracles a golden cup with which to cross the oceanic waters of the maternal collective unconscious, when in search of the cattle of Geryon. The golden cup (cf. page 53) is an example of a symbol which makes the crossing between the realms possible and safe. Whereas the goddess points out the solution to the hero, the wise old man helps him to come to some understanding of the relationship between the pairs of
opposites. Once the hero has accomplished his great deeds, freeing individuals from enslavement (therefore, freeing himself), and has attained the treasure, a minor obstacle normally causes his undoing and death. In the Heracles myth, the hero’s gullible, jealous wife and the poison of the hydra indirectly caused his death, after which he is usually deified signifying a reconciliation with his parents which, in turn, signifies complete reconciliation. This indicates the formation of the self, the transcendental archetype of wholeness, inclusive of consciousness and the collective unconscious.

His travels take the hero to the four corners of the earth: north, south, west and east. During his journey he has to deal with different labours which involve the four elements of water, earth, air and fire. The first two elements are associated with the feminine and the latter two, with the masculine. Traveling in different directions, i.e., from north to south or west to east, the hero’s wanderings form a cross, implying the act of crucifixion of the old ways. This is necessary in order to allow for transformation and the creation of a new vitality in the process of psychological growth. Simultaneously, the hero encounters his anima who encompasses the pairs of opposites, thus compensating his thinking function through the stimulation of his inferior functions of feeling, sensation and intuition. “The hero symbolizes a man’s unconscious self, and this manifests itself empirically as the sum total of all archetypes, the father, and of the wise old man. To that extent the hero is his own father and his own begetter” (Jung, CW:par.516). Thus, the circumstances of the hero’s birth are symbolically rather than literally presented. Psychologically it means that

a content of the unconscious (“child”) has come into existence without the natural help of the human father (i.e., consciousness)...in psychological language [this] means that a central archetype [Self], has renewed itself [hero] (“been reborn”) and become “incarnate” in a way perceptible to consciousness (Jung, CW5:par.497).

In the myth of the hero there are certain universal patterns, or archetypal motifs. The hero’s birth is under abnormal circumstances: he is conceived during a darkness that lasts three days; he is one of a set of twins; he has two sets of
parents, one set mortal the other immortal; and he has two mothers, the physical mother who gives him mortality and the symbolical, and divine, immortal mother who grants him his immortality as a half-god. Often, the hero is in mortal danger as a baby and has to fight against a dangerous serpent, or serpents to prove that he is a demi-god. As a young child, he is abandoned by his mortal parents and adopted by the immortal set, or raised by strangers, far away from civilization.

These archetypal motifs continue during the early adult phase of the hero’s life. The goal is to overcome the symbolical, immortal mother, who acts as the protagonist. As such, she often creates obstacles that he has to overcome. Indirectly, she is the cause of him having to perform labours for an “inferior” person, one who determines the hero’s quests to find the “treasure hard to attain”. These labours include having to kill dragons, or monsters, i.e., his unacknowledged demons. During his travels, he is subservient to the feminine principle. This is suggested by the fact that he has to wear her dresses. Another universal pattern, is his night-sea-journey across an ocean that is wild and devouring. Having survived this ordeal, the monster of darkness has to be conquered, involving a heroic descent into the underworld of Hades, and then an ascent to earth again. This is indicative of the fourth phase of individuation when consciousness is integrated with the personal and collective unconscious realms, to form the transcendent self. Thus as Jung has determined, the hero myth fits comfortably into the process of individuation (CW:par.459).

Individuation is Jung’s term for the process of development and maturation of the individual’s personality. It is the process of psychological differentiation\footnote{Differentiation means the “development of differences, the separation of parts from a whole (Jung, 1962:539).} to achieve the unique psychological qualities of the individual, “distinct from the general collective psychology” (Jung, 1962:561). The aim is not one of striving for perfection, but rather for an increasing awareness of one’s unique
psychological make-up, “personal strengths and limitations”, on the one hand; and on the other, a more profound understanding of humanity at large. This individual “make-up” is greater than the ego, in as much as it is defined by an integrative relationship between the ego (consciousness) and the unconscious. In Jung’s own words: “I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the ‘self’” (CW9i:par.278), and it is one that does not exclude the greater human collective. Jung described the two principle aspects of individuation:

in the first place it is an internal and subjective process of integration, and in the second it is an equally indispensable process of objective relationship\textsuperscript{11} Neither can exist without the other, although sometimes the one and sometimes the other predominates (CW16:par.448).

The subjective process of integration occurs when projections are withdrawn from external persons, or the objective world, with the realization that the projected content belongs to the personal psyche. With an awareness of the projection as repressed content of the personal unconscious, the rich imagery of the collective unconscious is revealed, resulting in an enlargement of personality. Jung used the word personality to imply the individual part of the psyche that is developed through a differentiation from the collective values of society. An enlargement of personality changes an egocentric consciousness into one of consideration and participation in the world.

During the process of individuation, the unrepresentable, transcendent Self renews itself to form the hero child (perceptible to consciousness) whose unconscious is not yet differentiated. The ‘unconscious’ child will then grow up to separate his ego-consciousness from the unconscious (archetypal mother) to form his persona (to overcome the personal mother and for adaptation to

\textsuperscript{11} It should be noted that Jung referred to the collective unconscious as the objective psyche. Therefore, the objective relationship in the above quote could mean the individual’s interaction with his external world, as well as, his connection with his own collective unconscious.
Ego-consciousness is built up and differentiated on an ongoing basis. Later, he has to deal with his shadow by acknowledging and withdrawing his projection of his repressed contents from his personal unconscious. In so doing, the hero will realize and assimilate the positive potential of his shadow. Accepting responsibility for his shadow, the hero’s ego-consciousness is expanded and he gains some insight into his personality. This is the turning point at mid-life when the reconciliation with the collective unconscious begins. He has already ‘overcome the mother’ and now has to find his mother anew in the woman he loves. At this stage, the anima is activated as the archetype of emotion, connection and relation. She is the connection between the hero’s consciousness and the unconscious. She makes it impossible to ignore the positive and negative polarities inherent in all of the hero’s psychic life. Through her, the pairs of opposites become potential creative possibilities. Once the hero has dealt with his anima, he will encounter “The Wise Old Man” who will help the hero to understand the relation between the pairs of opposites. This will enable the hero to integrate his ego-consciousness with the unconscious contents, so that he can be transformed into the self; a self that “is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both consciousness and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness (Jung, CW12:par.44).

The major development in the process of individuation occurs during the second half of life, when the developed consciousness is able to safely deal with the contents of the unconscious. Regression occurs at mid-life because the focus has been on the building up of the ego-conscious adaptation to the external conditions and demands of outer world. Regression is the backward movement of the psychic energy towards an earlier mode of adaptation, when there was still a connection to the inner world of the psyche. This means looking back at the past before the ego’s striving towards the development of consciousness. The well-developed consciousness regresses because its thinking function fails to satisfy the individual’s need for feeling-toned quality in life. According to Jung:
“The entire mass of memories, has a definite feeling tone, a lively feeling [of irritation, anger, etc.]...beyond the realm of the conscious will, unconscious and uncontrollable” (Jacobi, 1974a:8). In other words, an influx of numinous content of the unconscious realm stimulates the individual with feeling toned affects in compensation for the dominant development of the thinking function. Regression is a confrontation with the problems which prevent progression in psychological development.

It is precisely the strongest and best among men, the heroes, who give way to their regressive longing and purposely expose themselves to the danger of being devoured by the monster of the maternal abyss. But if a man is a hero, he is a hero because, in the final reckoning, he did not let the monster devour him, but subdued it, not once but many times. Victory over the collective psyche alone yields the true value – the capture of the hoard [the treasure hard to attain], the invincible weapon, the magic talisman, or whatever it be that the myth deems most desirable (Jung, CW7:par.261).

Thus regression provides the qualities necessary for the compensation of consciousness. During regression, symbols are activated which, in mythology, tell the tale of the hero’s coming-into-being.

The hero myth, therefore, can be seen as a symbolic expression of the changing relation between the ego and the self, which is the regulating center of the psyche during psychic growth and maturation (Jung, CW12:par.44). The relationship between Jung’s process of individuation and the myth of Heracles will be considered next.
4. **INDIVIDUATING HERACLES**

There are four phases in the formation of the self. The first stage is when the archetype is still totally part of the collective unconscious and is formless. In this state the archetype has not yet been differentiated into its sets of two or four complementary components. The four may be described as good, evil, spiritual and material (chthonic); while the two as the masculine (consciousness) and the feminine (unconscious) qualities of the psyche. This correlates with the phase of childhood where the instincts are experienced on a largely physical level. At the end of this stage, there is a break down of the mask-like persona, with the realization of the darkness of the shadow within the personality. The second stage, is where the differentiation of the complementary parts, take place. During this stage, the archetypal image of the anima is manifested within consciousness, when she forces the conscious mind to accept and honour the existence of the collective unconscious and the creative potential. Therefore, this stage involves development on a more psychological than physical level. Here the anima helps to develop interconnective relations and the feeling-toned function within the soul of man. During the third stage, the meaningful relationship between the opposites is revealed through the archetypal image of the wise old man. This results in the instinctive drive of the libido changing its direction to flow towards an inward, more spiritual level. This is when consciousness becomes aware of the importance and creative potential of the numinous qualities of the collective unconscious. It is at this point, that what Jung called, the higher consciousness is created and the fourth phase reached. Here consciousness is integrated with the personal and collective unconscious realms to form the transcendent self.

According to Jung, the individuation process includes the early developmental years of the infant when ego-consciousness has not yet been differentiated, and the child’s mind is that of an undifferentiated collective unconscious. At this stage, psychological life is limited and takes place within “the magical circle of the
mother and the family” (Jacobi, 1953:119). As the child proceeds to develop, consciousness becomes differentiated from the collective unconscious. The child then becomes independent and separated from the mother.

4.i INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST PHASE: The Early Developmental Years and the Creation of the Persona

Heracles was the son of the greatest immortal god of the Greek pantheon, Zeus, and Alcmene who was known to be the most beautiful and wisest of mortal women. It was under exceptional circumstances that he was conceived. Zeus, abusing his power over the sun, moon and sleep, ordered them to make this one night last for thirty six hours. The conception during the three days of darkness is of significance, because it implies the process of birth and rebirth. This implies that the self has been reborn as the hero. It refers to Heracles’ entrance into the underworld for three days, during the last labour, indicative of the death of the old self and a rebirth of a new personality. Furthermore, Heracles was born under strange circumstances, because the jealous Hera (immortal wife of Zeus), prolonged Alcmene’s labour until Heracles’ cousin had been born. This child, named Eurystheus, was born two months prematurely in order to usurp Heracles’ future title as king of Mycenae.

Heracles’ early years were typical of the hero child. He had two mothers, Alcmene, the mortal mother, and Hera who personified the immortal mother. She was the possessive, devouring mother that he had to overcome to be free from his infantile longing for bondage to the mother. Alcmene feared Hera’s anger and abandoned the newborn Heracles. Subsequently, Zeus and Athena conspired against Hera in such a way that she unknowingly breastfed the baby, which reinforced the hero’s claim to immortality. Hera was his protagonist who would drive him to achieve the highest goals in life, despite her obvious hatred towards him. Heracles, one of a pair of twins, suggesting his dual nature as demi-god, showed that he was not a mere mortal by killing the serpents that Hera
sent. He also proved to his immortal father, Zeus, that he had the potential to be the killer of the giants. During this first phase of growth from infancy and childhood, Heracles strove to differentiate his unconscious to form and develop consciousness.

It is at this stage, that parents play an important role as they identify and respond to the child's unsuitable behaviour. As a result, the child represses those parts of instinctive behavior which are deemed unfit for personal development. This repressed material will form part of the child's personal unconscious. His collective consciousness is formed according to the values, morality and ideals of the society which nurtures him. A sense of personal identity is experienced, because the child becomes less dependent on the mother and more aware of his environment and collective human behaviour. At this point, he develops his conscious mind as he interacts with the external world. So, the child learns to reason, communicate and conduct himself according to his society's norms. Here, his extraverted or introverted personality is already established and is further built upon.

As a teenager, Heracles' mortal father, Amphityron, was unable to control his son's unsuitable behaviour, since he possessed supernatural strength and a violent, uncontrollable temper. Heracles applied his exceptional power in a destructive way when he killed his music teacher during a lesson because he was reprimanded for being lazy. Amphityron feared that Heracles would have more violent outbursts and sent him to live with the herders, hoping that this would teach him to conform to the group. He had to learn to obey the herd leader and care for the group, humans and animals alike. As a herdsman he had to develop a watchful awareness for his own protection and that of the vulnerable animals. It was a nomadic existence, demanding knowledge of pasture and nature. This is the stage where the individual must integrate with the greater community, and recognize personal strengths, weaknesses and base instincts. So, living with the shepherds, Heracles had to repress his negative instinctive
behaviour to allow for better social interaction. Here he was in the process of
developing how he wanted to be perceived by the outside world. This projection
(or mask) of a social identity is called the persona and it has two functions: the
mask protects the wearer and facilitates interaction with other people.

An undeveloped or neglected persona may result in tactless, uncivilized social
blundering. Heracles’ undeveloped persona was overpowered through the
hostility of Hera, resulting in a fit of madness which caused him to throw three of
his own children, together with two of his brother Iphicles’, into a fire. The
madness, brought on by the mother (Hera), is representative of the autonomous
emotional contents of the unconscious, overwhelming and possessing the under-
developed ego-consciousness. He had to develop his ego-consciousness and
learn to take responsibility for the negative autonomous instincts of the
unconscious. So, he condemned himself to exile. By separating himself from his
society, he could become introspective, helping him to establish his own identity.

Heracles might have condemned and exiled himself, but it was up to the oracle at
Delphi to decide the hero’s fate. To atone for his crime he had to settle in Tiryns
and, for a period of twelve years, perform twelve labours as determined by
Eurystheus, now the king of Mycenae. As payment, Heracles would be rewarded
with immortality. The number twelve is important as a time symbol: Heracles
had to perform twelve labours in twelve years in submission to the unconscious
in order to develop his individual personality (Jung, CW9i:par.433).

The first labour was to direct him to establish his persona as the solar hero. He
had to face the fact that he was both mortal and immortal, and had to take over
the kingship from the aged king, represented as the solar lion. One of the tasks
of the king was to protect and provide for his subjects. This meant the slaying of
dangerous monsters to make his kingdom prosperous and safe. In terms of the
individuation process, Heracles’ task was to learn to contain and resolve the
projections of his own negative qualities onto others. The first task took the hero to Nemea.

4.i.1 The First Labour: the Nemean Lion

The invincible Nemean lion, a solar symbol of power, was an enormous beast with a pelt immune to iron, bronze and stone. His parents, Typhon and Echidna, were of a dual nature. Their top halves were human (domesticated); while the lower halves were animal (wild). This implies that they represent both the archaic, instinctive power (unconscious), as well as the differentiated, ordered consciousness (Jung, CW5:265). Heracles learnt that with ideas (bow and arrows), choices, decisions, justice (sword), power and knowledge (club), one cannot conquer the destructive, negative instincts of man. One has to get close to them (owning up to negativity instead of projecting it), surround them (arms around lion’s neck), take control and strangle them with one’s own hands. Only through fighting them with one’s own weapons (skinning the lion with its own nails) can they become vulnerable enough to be overcome. Once ego-consciousness takes responsibility for the activated negative instincts, they can then be integrated and transformed into positive aspects.

The fact that the lion was killed in a cave is of special symbolic value. The lion did not choose to enter the cave, but Heracles drove him there, sealed off the one entrance (a pair of opposites: open / closed), making certain it could not escape. The beast was killed in the dark cave, an underground void which is similar to a grave. The cave as womb / grave is a place of creation and destruction, birth and death, in an endless cycle. The cave may also be seen as an expression of the feminine principle containing (nourishing / protecting) and transforming the masculine principle depicted by the solar lion. The sun is the center of the universe; without the sun, everything will die. In the darkness the treasure is found and can be brought back into the light. The cave is symbolic of the personal internal place of darkness which is imperceptible to consciousness.
In this unconscious realm, the process of transformation can be experienced (Moon, 1991:12). The dark cave also represents the terrible mother who devours those who enter, or psychologically speaking, the unconscious has the power to destroy the under-developed ego-consciousness. If the ego-consciousness is not strong enough, inflation, or, identification with the unconscious may take place (Jung, CW8:par.425), resulting in the individual being lost in, or swallowed by the unconscious. This is called psychosis or a loss of contact with external reality (Sharp, 1991:63).

By killing the lion, the defenseless inhabitants of Cleonai were delivered from the beast and its deprivations. Killing the beast within, or taking control of emotional, instinctive outbursts, means that these destructive impulses will not be projected onto other people. However, no archetype possesses only negative aspects - the positive side to the solar lion is the protective old king who is getting ready to be reborn as the younger solar hero, Heracles.

The hero’s supernatural strength was evident as he carried the dead beast on his shoulders, causing Eurystheus to become fearful of Heracles’ power. So, the king hid in a bronze jar at the gates of Mycenae. The fact that he was hiding in darkness and was inferior to the hero’s strength, suggests that he represented Heracles’ personal unconscious. Heracles had to return each conquered treasure of the twelve labours to the inferior function of his personal unconscious. His seemingly superior consciousness had to serve his own unconscious, which he deemed inferior, to achieve an integrated balance.

The treasure of the first labour was the recognition of the unconscious, the bringing of it to the light of consciousness causing the latter’s transformation. Jung suggested that the lion symbolizes the fire of emotion which illuminates new insight for conscious perception (Moon, 1991:92&93).
Part of the treasure was the lion pelt that Heracles wore as protection, causing the hero to appear as half man, half lion (beast). The hero’s conquering of the skin and then the wearing of it as a second skin, implies that Heracles overcame his animal instinct and transformed it into content suitable for consciousness. In other words, archetypal material was given form by consciousness.

The god or king who is represented as a lion-man expresses the harnessing of the lion’s independence and fierceness to protect the ordered world of gods and mankind. On the intrapsychic level, the appearance of such a man-beast might refer to a union that brings instinctual power into service of the ordered world of the Self (Moon, 1991:109).

The lion pelt may also be interpreted as the mask of the persona. The internalization of the collective ideals through the persona, is an inevitable phase for personal development, but becomes problematic if pursued for too long. Prolonged and excessive identification of ego-consciousness with the persona for the sake of social convenience, traps and robs the psyche of inner depth, leaving it vulnerable (Jung, 1962:551). Therefore, the persona disintegrates, resulting in an influx of the neglected inner life manifesting itself in the form of the shadow. In the second labour Heracles had to deal with his shadow, represented as the poisonous Hydra.

At this point, everything that was accepted in the past comes under serious scrutiny and all previous values are questioned. Jacobi quotes Jung:

The nearer we approach to the middle of life, and the better we have succeeded in entrenching ourselves in our personal standpoints and social positions, the more it appears as if we had discovered the right course and the right ideals and principles of behaviour. For this reason we suppose them to be eternally valid, and make a virtue of unchangeably clinging to them. We wholly overlook the essential fact that the achievements which society rewards are won at the cost of a diminution of personality (Jacobi, 1953:118).
THE FIRST PHASE: Early Adulthood and The Shadow

The meaning and purpose of the first and the second half of life is completely different, and a reversal (enantiodromia) of earlier ideals and values normally takes place. This part of the individuation process is difficult, because one has to deal with the unpleasant parts of the repressed contents within the unconscious, experienced as the shadow. There are different types of repressed content that becomes the “dark other” of the psyche. These include antisocial urges that the ego rejects, or the feeling-toned function that is suppressed when there is a one-sided development of the rational, thinking psychological function. On the other hand, consciousness could also repress positive material, like a talent, for instance, because it would take too much hard work and discipline to develop. When these talents, antisocial urges or inferior functions lie dormant long enough, they become part of the shadow. As repressed content, they will block the libido thereby inhibiting the creative aspects in the psyche. Compulsive behaviour and irrational emotional outbursts are indications of the activation of shadow content. The pride of ego-consciousness will resist the confrontation of the shadow; however the ego cannot stop the unconscious from projecting the shadow onto other people. The individual meets his shadow in other people, causing an increasing alienation from himself and external reality. This is a result of the fact that “projections change the world into the replica of one’s own unknown face” (Jung, CW9ii:par.17). The individual becomes isolated, because he lives a life of illusion, unable to distinguish the personal from the environment. A confrontation is necessary with the shadow, as it is the dark half of the personality which is deemed as inferior to consciousness. “The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness” (Jung, CW9i:par.44). Therefore, the shadow is projected onto the environment or other persons, because it is easier to recognize it in another person, as it is difficult to recognize the dark aspects within oneself.
4.1.1 *The Second Labour: the Lernaean Hydra*

As a second labour, Heracles had to kill the Lernaean Hydra. Hera purposefully raised the Hydra to become Heracles’ adversary, in order to force him to deal with his shadow. The monster had an enormous body with nine heads, of which the center golden head was immortal. Severing the hydra heads did not kill the monster, but instead an increasing number of heads would grow from the cuts. Heracles was fighting the Hydra by himself at this stage, and called for help. In response, Hera sent a crab that bit him on his foot. This represents intrapsychic regression, because the crab is a water creature and moves backwards and downwards. Jung claimed that “the crab is the symbol for the unconscious contents. These contents are always trying to draw back…” (Jung, CW7:par.138). Regression is going back to a more infantile attitude, with a reluctance to accept independence; however, a confrontation with the problems which prevent progression in psychological development is necessary for the compensation of consciousness. Regression at this stage, meant that Heracles was unable to face the labour alone, indicating a lack of adaptation to the realities of the labour; therefore, he had to rely on help.

The intention of the shadow is to be integrated with ego-consciousness to compensate and supplement the persona with the negative and positive qualities of the dark parts of one’s shadow. This process normally starts off with an open conflict between the persona and the shadow. Heracles’ persona could not accept the fact that the poisonous heads were a projection of his own personal shadow; therefore they could not be eliminated. By external projection they multiply and their poison spreads a negativity which creates a vicious circle. Heracles had to admit that he was not only that persona which he pretended to be, but also possessed the dark aspects of the shadow. Differentiation, that is separating the parts from the whole to be able to recognize each specific part, is necessary to elevate the shadow part of the unconscious to consciousness. Differentiation of the personal shadow is dealt with through insight, discernment
and the acceptance of its qualities. However, disowning or repressing the dark aspects of the psyche will result in making the shadow more inferior and more autonomous, as it will continue to be part of the unconscious. Normally, the shadow is disowned through projection, where the unacknowledged dark parts of the personality are experienced in others. At this level of unconsciousness, the activation of the repressed shadow will cause involuntary, inappropriate reactions and emotions because it cannot be controlled through the will or the moral judgment of consciousness. Once consciousness accepts the existence and qualities of the shadow, its good and creative aspects, such as normal instincts and insight, will become known.

Heracles was unable to overcome the hydra as the animal encircled his legs, making an escape from its poisonous breath impossible. This is symbolic of the possessive character of the shadow which blocks the movement of psychic energy, thus preventing psychological growth. After Heracles had killed the crab, he called on his brother’s son, Iolaus for help. In killing the crab, the hero stopped the regression of the libido. Heracles’ calling his younger nephew may be indicative of the more infantile state that was activated. The help of Iolaus (masculine) suggests a renewed focus on the strengthening of the conscious will to overcome the pull of the collective unconscious. The hero and his nephew set fire to the neighbouring forest, in order to neutralize the hydra’s poisonous breath so that they could get close enough to seize the monster. The fire and the burning of the forest are indicative of consciousness overcoming the unconscious, as a forest is a symbol for the collective unconscious. The only way of killing the heads was to cauterize each wound and to get rid of the immortal central head. The burning forest provided burning brands. Thus Heracles’ unconscious (forest) was brought to the light (burning brands) of consciousness, enabling him to fight his own shadow. The raw material of the collective unconscious provided psychic energy to consciousness where it was transformed into a new flow of energy that could deal with the shadow. The severed gold, immortal head was placed under a rock, a symbol of endurance
and eternity. This relates to the fact that content (gold and immortality) from the collective unconscious, cannot be destroyed or fully integrated into consciousness; once the shadow has performed its function of compensation, it sinks back into the possession of the objective psyche.

The poisonous breath of the monster infected everyone including the life-giving waters of the area, without even physically touching them. The monster and its swamp symbolize all of the malignant and sordid vices of man. While the monster is alive, these vices will prosper, poisoning the healthy parts of the psyche. Projecting the negative vices onto the outside world, blaming others for causing the unhealthy psyche is ineffective. It is only through finding the vicious immortal head inside the individual’s psyche and dealing with it there, that the malignant parts can be eliminated and healing can proceed. The heat of the cauterization is symbolic of the process of transformation since poison can be neutralized through intense heat. Once it is not infected anymore, the stream’s water can run clean again, thus restoring fertility. The clear water is a symbol of the “libido, which is not only creative and procreative, but possesses an intuitive faculty…” (Jung, CW5:par.182). Alternatively, the swamp (mud and water) was symbolic of the riches of primordial reality, the unconscious which possesses the powers of creation (Moon, 1991:76). While alive, the hydra deprived the inhabitants of its beneficial power of creation. This suggests that the poisonous hydra (shadow), prevented a healthy flow of the libido between the content of consciousness (inhabitants / the hero) and the unconscious. The barring of psychic energy prevents the formative power of the conscious mind from realizing the positive and negative qualities of the shadow with its creative nourishing raw material and functions of compensation. The nine-headed hydra, symbolic of the shadow, is the first major step in the individuation process. Without acknowledging the dark aspects of the personal unconscious, further

12 “Nine being the last of a series of figures heralds both an end and a fresh beginning, that is to say, a removal to a new plane...it starts the phase of transmutations” (Chevalier&Gheerbrandt, 1996:704&705).
psychological development will not be possible.

Heracles killed the monster next to a stream with three springs which was created by Poseidon’s trident when it cracked the earth at that spot. According to Jung, the trident (masculine principle) splitting the earth (female principle) produces water (libido), and water is a symbol enabling transition between the two realms of the conscious mind and the unconscious. Water has the capacity to cleanse and dissolve blockages. The stream had three springs, symbolic of the vitality and creative possibilities that the transformation of the shadow can bring about.

Heracles used the poison of the dead monster to overcome his enemies; by dipping his arrows in the fluid, his accurate arrows killed swiftly. This poison killed Heracles’ enemies, but was also the indirect cause of his own death. (cf. page 63). According to Beverly Moon, some refer to the hydra as a water snake which “seems to represent an energy or force that compels change within” (1991:113). This is the force that created Heracles’ final transformation.

Assimilation becomes possible with the realization that the shadow is part of our nature and is not wholly negative. So, without the shadow, one appears as a narrow-minded, two-dimensional person. Its positive side consists of instincts, impulses and intuitions, necessary for normal reactions and insights into the creative potential of the unconscious (Jung, CW9ii:par.423). “As in its collective, mythological form, so also the individual shadow contains within it the seed of an enantiodromia, of a conversion into its opposite” (Jung, CW9i:par.488). The shadow adds another dimension to complement the preferential development of consciousness, integrating part of the personal unconscious, resulting in a more complete knowledge of self. The Hydra and its re-growing heads, refer to the expansion and transformation of consciousness through the knowledge of the personal shadow.
Eurystheus refused to count this labour as a valid one, because Heracles demanded assistance. Similarly, in a psychological context, the archetypes (as the helpers, or agents, from the unconscious), cannot be summoned or forced by the conscious will. The collective unconscious cannot be consciously forced to activate the archetypal-images and archetypal symbols, but rises up when the situation necessitates its manifestation. When the shadow appears to compensate for the imbalance between the ego and the self, it is the first major step in the individuation process (Jung, CW9ii:par.42). During the second phase, Heracles strove to develop his ego-consciousness until it was ready to deal with the tension of the opposites in the third stage of the cycle. This forms the next phase of development within the process of individuation, when consciousness becomes aware of the tension between the opposites.

The second part of life is not about dissolving infantile tendencies and illusions, but recognizing the role that the tension between consciousness and the unconscious plays. It causes the transformation and renewal of the neglected aspects of the unconscious, for the self-regulation of the psyche as a whole (Jung, CW7:par.91). The assimilation of unconscious content forces ego-consciousness to take responsibility for the previously unconscious shadow.

4.2 THE SECOND PHASE: The Anima and the Tension between Opposites

The second phase of the cycle is at the mid-point of life. It is the development of an awareness of the dualistic nature of the psyche. Heracles could deal with his anima, as he had already come to terms with his shadow part of the personal unconscious. The anima is the unconscious female aspect which compensates for his conscious masculinity. It is influenced by the male’s experience of the opposite sex from an early age. Jung stated that one has to deal with the shadow, or further development of the psyche, for example, bringing the anima to some degree of consciousness, will be impossible (Jung, CW9i:par.600). It is
easier to assimilate the shadow because it is not an archetype of the collective unconscious, but is normally based in the personal unconscious. The content of the personal unconscious is on the borderline between consciousness and the unconscious and, therefore, can be more easily brought to consciousness than the content of the collective unconscious which is of a transpersonal nature. In myth, the shadow appears as the same sex as the dreamer. The darkness of the shadow hides numinous figures, with the anima or animus standing closest. They are endowed with the power of possession, and are projected as contrasexual. The man will experience the numinous figure as his anima and a female as her animus. Since I am dealing with a male hero myth, the focus will be on the male and his relationship to his anima.

4.2.1 The Third Labour: the Cerynitian Hind

As a third labour, Heracles had to bring the sacred hind of Artemis to Mycenae. Brute force could not be applied to capture the hind, because it had to be brought back unharmed. The hind’s golden horns indicated that it was an immortal, archetypal image. Artemis was a virgin, eternally youthful, and a ferocious hunter goddess of the woods and the mountains. She was associated with the nature of the night and her symbol was the crescent moon. Even though she hunted mortals and wild animals, Artemis was also the protector of young creatures (Tresidder, 2004:51). Both the moon and Artemis represent the feminine principle. This labour does not directly deal with the anima, but is relevant to the third phase of the individuation, because it was necessary for Heracles to become aware of and to honour the opposing feminine principle. The first half of life consists of breaking the bond with the archetypal mother and establishing the development of consciousness. In this labour the goal was submission to and acceptance of the sacred, enduring qualities of the feminine principle, which is representative of the creative aspects of the collective
unconscious. Heracles captured the animal next to a river\textsuperscript{13}.

Heracles’ patience was tested during this labour, because his dominant forceful aggression had to be tempered by patience in order not to harm the animal. Heracles did not kill the hind, but brought it down with an arrow, without harming it. The arrow is significant in that it suggests the masculine penetration of consciousness required to capture, or become aware of the importance of the feminine principle representing the unconscious.

4.2.2 \textit{The Fourth Labour: the Erymanthian Boar}

As a fourth labour, Heracles had to capture alive the Erymanthian boar, because it caused havoc in the countryside. On his way there, the Centaur, Pholos, entertained the hero and at Heracles persistent behest, he reluctantly opened a casket of wine that was the communal property of the Centaurs. Pholos and Cheiron were not related to the other Centaurs, as the two were the only trustworthy and kind-hearted beasts amongst them. Pholos roasted Heracles’ meat but ate his own raw, showing his capacity for hospitality. Once the casket was opened, the Centaurs became aware of the smell of wine and came to Pholos’ cave, armed with rocks and fir trees. The aggressive Centaurs used fir trees to hammer their enemies into the ground, which was similar to burying them alive in a grave. This is symbolic of the one-sided development of the archaic instincts of the dark unconscious and the resulting poor social adaptation. The Centaurs fled from Heracles’ arrows and took shelter with Cheiron, who lived in Malea. Unintentionally, Heracles wounded Cheiron. The wound turned out to be incurable, and he suffered for many years because he was immortal. Prometheus (cf. page 58) became immortal to put an end to Cheiron’s suffering, allowing him to die.

\textsuperscript{13} The water of the river suggests the vitality and creative possibilities that the transformation of the shadow can bring about. “The waters are often believed to be a symbol of chaos, or of the unconscious, that reality where all things rest in potentiality...This is the experience of renewal...on the intrapsychic level a restoration of the capacity to receive new life, new emotions, new ideas...”(Moon, 1991:452&453).
Pholos died when he pulled an arrow from a corpse, admiring the fact that such a small arrow could kill an enormous creature. The arrow head was poisoned with the blood of the Hydra. It slipped out of his hand and pierced his foot, killing him instantaneously. Therefore, the Hydra’s poisoned blood not only helped the hero to kill his enemies, but also his friends, as it indirectly killed the two good natured Centaurs.

A Centaur has the upper torso, arms and head of a man and the body and legs of a horse. The upper body was related to more elevated, spiritual thinking and the lower body represented the baser, primitive instincts. Pholos and Cheiron were socially well adapted; whereas the other Centaurs were wild, crude and possessed unbridled energy. Their dual natures were poorly integrated, with the sensual, instinctive side more dominant. Their masculine consciousness lacked integration with the feminine instinctive unconscious, necessary for a balanced psychological development. The Centaurs' dual nature was divided and destructive because of a lack of integration within their instinctual nature (bottom - horse) and their conscious intellect (top – man). Heracles possessed similar characteristics to them, but his developing consciousness became aware of the necessary tension and balance between the pair of opposites.

The hero found the boar in a thicket and chased it with loud cries into thick snow until it was exhausted. Heracles then caught the beast in a noose, and took it to Eurystheus in Mycenae.

During the winter solstice the sun is reborn, and days become longer. The boar was caught at mid-winter, suggestive of a turning point in the development of Heracles’ consciousness. The long periods of darkness were getting shorter, signifying the weakening of the unconscious necessary for the growth of consciousness. Winter was turning into spring with a re-awakening of creative energy, as it was time for enantiodromia: the psychological struggle will turn into
a flow of energy that will activate the spiritual aspect of the collective unconscious.

The boar may also be “read as” the archetypal image of the horned monster which represents the dark, instinctive aspect of the collective unconscious. It destroys or devours the smaller, or vulnerable individuals; therefore, it is indicative of the negative, life-destroying side of the collective unconscious (Jacobi, 1974a:154).

4.2.3  **The Fifth Labour: the Cattle of Augeias**

The hero had to clear away thirty years worth of accumulated animal waste, get rid of its foul smell and render the land fertile again. The king of Elis, Augeias, owned a huge herd of cattle, and as the fifth labour, Heracles had to clean the cattles’ dung from the stables and pastures in one day. He made two breaks in the wall that surrounded the cattle yard, and redirected two rivers to clean the area. However, Eurystheus refused to count this labour as valid, because Heracles demanded pay for it.

Bringing two rivers together to clear years of accumulated waste is symbolic of clearing the blocked libido and providing clear water for nourishment and growth. When the libido is blocked all creative thought is stunted. Heracles’ task was to become consciously aware of the self-regulation of the psyche. Great wealth needs to be controlled in a responsible manner, or else it may become destructive. The psyche’s libido needs to be cared for, because neither a flood nor a drought is advisable. The aim is for consistent, life-supporting flow.

4.2.4  **The sixth Labour: the Stymphalian Birds**

Heracles had to drive the Stymphalian birds away, because they became a plague and ravaged the crops. Wolves had preyed on the birds causing them to
retreat to the Lake of Stymphalis located in a thick forest. Heracles could not complete the labour without the help of Athene, his anima, his inner feminine side, his “invisible system of relations to the unconscious” (Jung, CW7:par.310). She provided bronze castanets which helped him to locate and drive the birds into the air, thus enabling him to shoot them with his arrows. The birds flew in great numbers as one mass, casting a threatening shadow over the landscape and its inhabitants. The scared inhabitants failed to take united action against the birds, costing them their freedom to roam the countryside. Their inability to unite and act also strengthened the power of the birds. In the previous labour, the king Augeias ignored the damaging effects his cattle had on the environment, and in this labour, the inhabitants chose to be ignorant and fearful rather than to act as a team to overcome a mutual obstacle. Ignorance, or a lack of awareness and respect for both sides of the pairs of opposites, is often at the source of suffering.

The birds were invisible and, therefore, could not be located. This is typical of the inferior function which is similar to ‘the dark side of the human personality (Jung, CW9i:par.222). The inferior function always stands in relation to its opposite since they both inhabit the same aspect of mind. When thinking is dominant, the inferior function of feeling is autonomous, and when activated, causes an irrational sensitivity which may lead to discord within relationships. Sensation and intuition are the irrational functions, and either could be the primary or inferior one. Unable to be located, the inferior function could not be made conscious, making integration with consciousness impossible. The birds were innumerable, because the inhabitants (ego-consciousness) refused to take responsibility for the control of the birds (collective shadow of the unconscious). Athene guided Heracles to the place of terror, the shadow. She is symbolic of the anima as psychopomp, the spiritual guide of a living person’s soul. As a personified archetypal image, she mediates between the hero’s consciousness and the shadow of the unconscious (Sharp, 1991:108). The noise of her castanets is what stimulates the awakening of consciousness to experience the
psychological function of sensation. Through her castanets, Heracles dispersed the birds, disintegrating the collective terror of the mass of birds. When awake and aware, all the senses can be activated so that things can be seen and recognized, thus, enabling their integration into consciousness. Athene brought the birds which were hidden in the thick forest into the open air where they could be seen. This is indicative of the shadow, the repressed content of the unconscious, which is acknowledged and then integrated into consciousness.

The waters [lake Stymphalis] represent chaos, the state in which all things are dissolved together as one; the heavens [the flying birds] represent the world of differentiation, where things can be seen by the naked eye as discrete and separate. It is the realm that is governed by the light of the sun, whereas the deeper one goes into the waters, the darker it becomes (Moon, 1991:232).

The birds were the natural enemy of the wolves. Wolves were dedicated, and often sacrificed to Apollo (Grimal, 1991:51), who symbolized “the defeat of violence, inspired self-control and the marriage of reason and intuition” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1996:35). All of these pairs of opposites have to be acknowledged during the third phase of individuation. According to Jung (CW12:par.338), the wolves destroy the negative qualities holding back new creation and the expansion of consciousness.

4.2.5 The Seventh Labour: the Cretan Bull

As a seventh task, Heracles traveled south, to the island of Crete, to fetch the wild bull that belonged to the Cretan king, Minos. This bull was probably the same one that Minos was supposed to sacrifice to Poseidon. Minos wanted to become the king of Crete and he claimed that the gods granted him this right. People believed that he was to be their king when Poseidon granted his wish for a bull to appear from the sea. Minos broke his promise to Poseidon when he could not sacrifice the beautiful animal, offering another one in its place. Poseidon made the Cretan bull turn wild, therefore, it was with difficulty that Heracles captured and subdued the
animal. He crossed the sea riding on the bull’s back and presented the animal to Eurystheus, who then set the bull free.

The bull is connected to both the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine (Moon, 1991:469). The sacrifice of a bull is for the renewal of life, because a bull is symbolic of life’s energy. By sacrificing and acknowledging the source of life, the process of transformation and the renewal of life can continue. The polarity of sacrifice and regeneration has to be accepted, because without death no rebirth is possible. The first half of life is the building up of ego-consciousness and its relation to the external world; whereas in the second half, is one of introspection with a focus on the internal psychic processes. Introspection is a process of reflection through a “mental activity that concentrates on a particular content of consciousness, an instinct encompassing religion [spiritual] and the search for meaning” (Sharp, 1991:114). Minos clung to the external beauty of the bull, despite the fact it was temporary. An over-estimation of the external qualities of the persona for too long is destructive, because the internal values will be neglected. Minos paid dearly for his mistake, because his wife fell in love with the bull and gave birth to the Minotaur.

4.2.6 The Eight Labour: the Mares of Diomedes

As the eighth labour, Heracles had to capture the man-eating mares of Diomedes and bring them to Eurystheus. Diomedes, the son of Ares, the god of war, was the king of the Bistones of Thrace, a quarrelsome and aggressive group of people. Diomedes did not approve of strangers in his land, and so, fed them to his mares. However, the king succumbed to the same fate when Heracles fed Diomedes to his own mares before he captured them. When he handed the horses over to Eurystheus, they were released and later killed by wild beasts. Handing the treasure back to the king (who personifies the personal unconscious), suggests that the treasure’s qualities have been acknowledged and reintegrated within the unconscious.
The effect of enantiodromia is clear in this labour. Diomedes feared the new, strange, or unknown, thereby making a transformation in consciousness impossible. Without renewal and transformation, the old will die. The king fed strangers to his mares and a stranger fed the king to his own mares.

4.2.7 The Ninth Labour: the Belt of Hippolyte

This labour took the hero in an Easterly direction, to the River Thermodon in north-eastern Asia Minor where the Amazons lived. Eurystheus’ daughter, Admete, wanted the belt of the Amazonian queen, Hippolyte. So, Heracles had to fetch the belt as a ninth labour. Amazons were female warriors who were the first to fight in battle while riding on horseback. They either removed, or pressed down their right breasts to improve their throwing of the javelin (Hard, 1997:207). They approved of their own manly qualities and seldom had sexual intercourse with men. When boys were born, their legs were broken to prevent them from traveling, or becoming warriors, as they had to become slaves to the females.

Hippolyte’s heavy warrior belt (Ibid.) was a gift from Ares and it was the symbol of her superiority over the other Amazons. Meeting Heracles at the harbour in Thermiscyra, Hippolyte promised to give him the belt. Hera disguised herself as an Amazon and spread the word that their queen was being abducted. The Amazons subsequently attacked Heracles, but he escaped after claiming the belt and killing their queen.

The Amazons were at war with their own feminine nature and were seemingly at war with society in general. Where, in the third labour, Heracles had to pay tribute to the sacredness of the feminine and the unconscious, in this situation, the reverse is the case. The Amazons had no respect for the anima of life and the aspect of relatedness. They identified with their masculine animus to such an extent that it destroyed their inherent feminine nature. Taking away the symbol of superiority, the belt, as well as killing their queen, forced the war hungry
Amazons to reconsider their identification with the destructive side of nature. They needed to compensate their aggressive nature, typical of the masculine aspect, with the relatedness of the feminine to achieve a balance. If this was not done, the libido would stagnate in the active side. The nature of the feminine is to nourish and provide the raw material that is manifested in the masculine; therefore, no creative life can be sustained under these Amazonian circumstances.

The third cycle in the process of individuation is where the hero meets the wise old man who assists in establishing meaning regarding the two opposites.

4.3 **THE THIRD PHASE: the Wise Old Man of Meaning**

4.3.1 **The Tenth Labour: the Cattle of Geryon**

As a tenth labour, Heracles had to capture the cattle of Geryon, the grandson of Oceanos, father of Poseidon. Geryon had the body of three men joined at the waist, and he lived on an island, Erytheia, near the ocean. Eurytion was the herder of Geryons' red cattle, and they were guarded by Orthos, the two-headed dog. In this labour, Heracles' travels covered the four directions: north through Europe, West to Tartessos, South to Lybia in Africa, and East to Hellespont. So, he traveled through three continents in order to conquer Geryon’s three bodies. The number three suggests that at this point Heracles' travels were in the third phase of the four cycles of individuation. It is also symbolic of the three personified archetypes of the shadow, anima and the wise old man. In this labour, Heracles meets the Wise Old Man, personified as Hephaistos. It is the start of the hero’s “Red, or Night Sea journey”. This journey involves immersion into the maternal waters which cleanses and heals, suggested by the sun’s drowning each night in the sea only to be reborn the next morning. This points to the psychological process of immersion in the unconscious for the activation and manifestation of the archetypal material necessary for transforming consciousness to a higher spiritual level. The night sea journey is the hero’s purifying baptism with fire and water. The ocean is the mother of all things and
the salt in its water is of a preservative nature. Jung connected salt with insight, understanding and wisdom (CW14:par.325). As “wisdom is never violent: where wisdom reigns there is no conflict between thinking and feeling” (Jung, CW14:par.334). Salt mediates between the dominant and inferior functions, thinking in consciousness and the feeling-toned qualities of the activated archetypal content; or as Jung quoted Picinellus on water and fire: “Two elements which stir up an implacable enmity between themselves are found in wondrous alliance in salt. For salt is wholly fire and wholly water.”\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, the third cycle in the process of individuation is about an understanding of the relationship between the pairs of opposites.

Heracles traveled through Europe, Libya and Tartessos to reach Erytheia. He got angry at the overpowering rays of the Sun and, so, shot arrows in its direction. For his bravery, the Sun offered him a golden cup\textsuperscript{15} to cross the Ocean. Arriving at Erytheia, he killed Orthos the dog, Eurytion and Geryon. The cattle were then driven into the cup and together they crossed the Ocean, after which Heracles returned the golden cup to the Sun.

On his way back to Mycenae, a bull broke loose and swam across the sea to Sicily. Eryx, the son of Poseidon, was the king of Elymoi. When the bull crossed the Eryx plain, he put it amongst his own herds. Heracles acquired the assistance of Hephaistos, personified as the archetype of the wise old man who looked after the rest of the herd, while the hero went in search of the missing bull. Hephaistos helped Heracles to reunite the herd. Reaching Elymoi, Heracles defeated the king three times and then killed Eryx because he refused to release the bull. Heracles managed to unite the bull with the rest of the herd of cattle, but

\textsuperscript{14} Picinellus, \textit{Mundus Symbolicus}, p. 711

\textsuperscript{15} “The Sun passed from East to West across the sky, from sunrise to sunset in a fiery chariot, and sailed back again in this golden cup by the way of the Ocean (which encircles the earth). We are to imagine that Erytheia, the Red Isle, lies in the Ocean beyond Spain” (Hard, 1997:208).
Hera sent a gadfly which caused the herd to disperse again. Heracles chased after them and recovered some. Those left behind became wild in the course of time. Blaming the River Strymon for all his travails, he filled it with rocks, making it unnavigable. Finally, on receiving the remaining cattle, Eurystheus sacrificed them to Hera.

Before Heracles could capture the cattle, he had to overcome the opposites of the sun and the ocean. These signify the archetypal elements of fire and water. The Sun’s gift of the golden cup is symbolic of the protective containment formed by the conscious mind, preventing us from being swallowed by the affects of the tumultuous activation of unconscious content. Jung stated (Sharp, 1991:68) that it depends on the strength of ego-consciousness, as to whether the individual will be able to undergo the process of individuation without identifying with the activated archetypes of the collective unconscious. When identification with the archetypes of the unconscious occurs, the negative activation of the devouring mother who wants to swallow the hero’s consciousness, is implicated. However, Heracles could travel safely in the cup across the sea, whilst experiencing the intense heat of the sun. His consciousness was transformed to a higher level of awareness by the purification of the Sun’s burning rays. The golden cup is suggestive of the vessel for transformation, sacrifice and purification. As such, it mediates between consciousness and the unconscious, and brings the hero in touch with all four of his psychological functions. Shooting the arrows of intellect and wisdom at the Sun of consciousness, an act representative of a rational thought and inner reflection in search for meaning, earned Heracles the golden cup. The cup was to prevent him from being devoured by the sea of the unconscious; therefore, the hero could come to terms with his inferior function’s emotional feeling nature. Drowning in this sea would have meant a complete inflation and identification with the unconscious, and therefore, a loss of consciousness, resulting in psychoses. Heracles survived this ordeal of reaching Geryon, owner of the treasure of the red cattle. Geryon’s three heads indicates a psyche where the heart, soul and spirit were well integrated (Jung,
His red (blood / fire / passion) cattle are symbolic of fiery emotions and the instinctive qualities necessary for a vital life. There are five prominent groups of instinctive factors, namely: creativity, reflection, activity, sexuality and hunger (Sharp, 1991:73). These instinctive activities of the activated collective unconscious, are similar to a herd that needs a shepherd to guide and order them by gathering them together, and driving them to suitable pastures for protection from wild animals. Instinctive factors can be either constructive or destructive. The creative instinct behaves in a dynamic way, driving the individual towards activity and reflection which can be done in a positive or negative manner. Heracles took control but not ownership of his instinctive qualities because, as activated archetypal content, they cannot be owned. Hera, personifying the collective unconscious, claimed some back by turning them wild, meaning that they cannot be subjugated by the will of consciousness. Heracles blamed his active libido (the River Strymon) for his inability to consciously control the archetypal instincts of wild emotion. Damming up the River, he lessened the intensity of flow within his libido, because he accepted the need of his ego-consciousness to integrate with the unconscious. Blocking the libido also infers that Heracles’ attitude became more introspective.

But no sooner are one or two of the channels of psychic activity blocked, than we are reminded of a stream that is dammed up. The current flows backward to its source; the inner man wants something which the visible man does not want, and we are at war with ourselves (Jung, 1933:202).

At this point, the process of enantiodromia was taking place. Previously, the goal had been the development of the ego-consciousness, now it is for the integration between consciousness and the unconscious. To this end, Heracles gave the cattle still in his possession, i.e., the fiery emotions and instincts now consciously acknowledged, back to the king of the personal unconscious, who sacrificed them to Hera. She then turned them back into the numinous qualities of the collective unconscious. At this stage, it becomes obvious that the inferior king personifies the personal unconscious and Hera, the collective unconscious. Thus the tenth labour is about a balance between a passionate, vital life of
conscious transformation, indicated by the element of fire, and the instinctive, creative content of the collective unconscious which is implied by the devouring mother, capable of drowning a weak ego-consciousness in a vast body of water. Jung referred to the necessary interactive relationship between the four elements, claiming that

were it not for the earth in our work the air would fly away, neither would the fire have its nourishment, nor the water its vessel (CW14:par.2).

4.3.2 **The Eleventh Labour: the Apples from the Hesperides**

As an eleventh labour, Heracles had to collect golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides. These apples were a gift to Zeus and Hera at their wedding. The sacred tree, from which the apples came, was guarded by an entwining serpent or dragon which could speak in different voices.

At the River Eridanos, the nymphs told him where to find Nereus, the only person who knew exactly where to find the golden apples and the Hesperides. Heracles found Nereus, a shape-shifter, while he was asleep and tied him up. Nereus, who personifies the archetypal wise old man, source of wisdom and enlightenment, assisted the hero in finding the relation between the pairs of opposites. While the anima helps the hero to recognize the existence and creative potential of the pairs or opposites; the Wise Old Man resolves the conflict between the pair of opposites, revealing how they can function together. Prometheus and Hermes also personify the archetypal wise old man when they assist Heracles during this labour and the twelfth task.

Nereus informed Heracles about the location of the apples in the garden of the Hesperides. The hero continued on his travels through Libya where he met another son of Poseidon, Antaios. Every time Antaios touched the ground he grew stronger, therefore Heracles killed him by lifting him into the air and crushing him to death. This was an indication of his earthly desires being
replaced by a more spiritual attitude; or that his literal side was transforming into a symbolic, higher nature. Antaios became stronger each time he touched the ground because the feminine earth is the source of nourishment, creative energy and support.

The hero went through barren Egypt where strangers were sacrificed to Zeus, once a year. As Heracles was a stranger in the land, he was captured and tied up to be sacrificed by the Egyptian king, Bousiris, and his sons. Heracles managed to escape and kill all of his captors. The behaviour of the king implied that he was unable to deal with new and unknown factors within his psyche. He repressed these potentially creative factors to such an extent, that his psychological state became rigid and barren. This was because the “unknown” possesses the creative energy required for realization.

Passing through Asia, Heracles sacrificed and ate the meat of a bullock. In Greek mythology the bull is symbolic of the “unleashing of uncontrolled violence” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1996:131); therefore, sacrificing the bull is symbolic of the tempering of masculine strength to acknowledge and partially integrate the feminine aspect of the anima. Heracles was a solar hero, and by eating the flesh of the lunar bull, he accepted and integrated his anima. The differentiation of the anima is much more difficult than that of the shadow, because the anima is an archetypal image activated from the deeper strata of the collective unconscious (Jung, CW9i:par.439). The anima-imago\textsuperscript{16} could be of the mother, sister, wife, or the ageless image of the goddess or the chthonic mother. Without the anima, differentiation of and adaptation to the inner, psychological realities would be impossible, as she is a psychopomp. As such, she mediates between the conscious and unconscious contents.

\textsuperscript{16} The imago is not to be confused with image. In the imago the subjective perception is not identical with the object. If a man’s consciousness is not well-differentiated, the more numerous imagoes there will be. They will have a numinous quality, because of the unconscious projection (Jung, CW7:par.295).
Arriving at the Caucasos Mountains, the hero shot the eagle that fed on the liver of the bound Prometheus, and set him free. Heracles then presented the ever suffering Cheiron to Zeus, and asked if the Centaur could die in place of Prometheus. Zeus allowed the immortal Cheiron to die. So, Prometheus was released from the punishment for trying to improve the tragic fate of mere mortals by giving them the sacred sparks of fire that he had stolen from the gods. Since without fire, transformation is impossible, the sparks enable the mortals to create and transform. Through Heracles’ intervention, Zeus made peace with Prometheus. In return for his freedom, Prometheus rewarded the hero with the advice not to try and steal the apples himself, but to relieve Atlas of his heavy heavenly burden, and send him to fetch the apples. Succeeding in retrieving the apples, Atlas was not happy to resume carrying the sky, and so offered to deliver the apples to Eurystheus. Prometheus, as the wise old man, warned Heracles that Atlas would try and escape his eternal burden. The hero took Prometheus’ advice, and tricked Atlas into taking the burden on his shoulders again, relieving Heracles of the weight in order to resume his travels. The moment Atlas put the apples down and took the sky on his shoulders, the hero departed to deliver the treasure to Eurystheus. Taking over the weight of the sky from Atlas, meant that Heracles had empathy for other people’s burdens, but his responsibility was to deal with his own obstacles in life, as nobody else could do this for him - the process of individuation can only be subjectively experienced.

When Heracles handed the apples to Eurystheus, he returned them to the hero, because they were sacred and it “was unholy for them to be deposited anywhere else” (Hard, 1997:83). Athene, personifying his anima, carried the apples back to the Hesperides.

Even though the golden apples were guarded by the serpent-dragon, some wanted to steal the apples, including the daughters of the evening. The apples signify the fruits of wisdom and knowledge that man has always possessed, but has forgotten. Only the serpent has the knowledge that can be experienced by
man through revelation. Knowing different voices, or languages, the snake can reveal the knowledge to anyone who is willing to search and attain this treasure. This knowledge is of the creative nature of the collective unconscious; one that provides the possibility of an increased consciousness, transcending the bounds of the ego-consciousness, to the extent that it becomes all inclusive, and is personified by the transcendental self. Once it is realized that knowledge of the unconscious’ numinous contents (the apples) is inherent to man, then it no longer needs to be stolen or guarded by the snake.

The last labour is the culmination of the night sea journey, when the hero has to enter the darkness of the earth.

The complete swallowing up and disappearance of the hero in the belly of the dragon represents the complete withdrawal of interest from the outer world. The overcoming of the monster from within is the achievement of adaptation to the conditions of the inner world (Jung, CW8:par.68).

4.3.3 The Twelfth Labour: the Capture of Cerberos

As a twelfth labour, Heracles had to capture the dog, Cerberos, and take it to Eurystheus. Cerberos guarded the gates of Hades and could only be tamed above the ground. The dog was the offspring of the monsters, Typhon and Echidna. It had three dogs’ heads, a tail of a dragon with a huge number of different snakes on its back. Before Heracles could capture the dog, the hero had to be initiated into the death and rebirth rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries, because they ensured a better fate for initiates in the Underworld after death. Heracles was in special need of this initiation as he undertook the journey while still alive. In those times, all Greek speaking men and women had a right to these Mysteries with the exception of murderers. Therefore, the founder of the Eleusinian Mysteries, Eumolpos, purified Heracles of his murder of the Centaurs.
Hermes, personifying the archetypal wise old man of meaning, came to Heracles’ assistance when the hero entered Hades. The hero drew his sword at the sight of the Gorgon, Medusa, thinking that she was alive, but Hermes revealed that she was only an empty phantom. Learning to differentiate between the phantoms and the spirits of the dead, Heracles managed to save Perseus and Ascalaphos. These two mortals had grown fast to the rocks of Hades in punishment for their plans to marry Helen and Persephone, the daughters of Zeus. This suggests that they identified with the archetypes of the unconscious and were overwhelmed by the archetypal forces, resulting in psychosis. Once inside the gates of Hades, Pluto gave Heracles permission to capture Cerberos, as long as he used no weapons during the taming of the dog in the upper world. Heracles overcame Cerberos through spiritual strength that made the taming of the dragon possible, even though the hero was bitten by the dragon in the dog’s tail. As the “Hound of Hades”, Cerberos symbolizes the terrors of death and the individual’s fear of the darkness within. Heracles overcame the beast with his stranglehold of its head, which is indicative of the hero dealing with his own fear of death through awareness that death only precedes a rebirth. Even though Cerberos was loyal to Hades, the dog’s will was broken, enabling Heracles to take it to the upper world. Heracles was not to kill it, but take it from Hades (collective unconscious) to Eurystheus (personal unconscious) and back to Hades again. In breaking Cerberos’ will, Heracles was able to travel between both worlds, which meant not identifying with only one level of reality, as he prevented himself from being swallowed by either the conscious or the unconscious. Therefore, the hero survived his third series of baptism, by fire, water and the earth.

There are many threshold figures that guard the way to and from the unconscious.
The dog is especially apt since it combines conscious loyalty to a master, representing the ostensible sum of ego-consciousness, with the wildness of its jackal nature, representing the obscurity or at least unpredictability of the unconscious (Moon, 1991:100&101).

The ambivalence of the symbolism of the dog – its twofold nature as wild predator and domestic watchman – is expressed on an inner level as well. It seems to represent an aspect of human instinct that exists at the boundary between the wild, that which cannot be subjugated, and the tame; in other words, the unconscious and consciousness:

The dog is a threshold animal...Sometimes the archetypal dog is a barrier, sometimes a link; as a doorkeeper it is a controller of exits and entrances. The boundary kept by the dog-archetype is that between life and death, outer and inner, day and night; between the conscious and unconscious mind. Its image appears not only at the brink of death, but in transitional stages and at turning points in life: the point at which arrows change their direction; where despair changes into hope, poisoning into healing, and death into new life. From this position the dog-archetype controls the balance of life, for it stands at the centre, weighing sin against truth, evening up until there is equilibrium (Moon, 1991:191)

Heracles reached a turning point in his life with the completion of the twelve labours, and on his return to Thebes, he gave his wife Megara to Iolaus. Heracles wanted to remarry, as there was no future for him and Megara after he had killed their children. He killed more people in a bout of madness and was struck by a disease, both caused by his identification with the unconscious. The Pythia refused him a response when he went to the oracle, and so he tried to claim the oracle’s tripod to start one of his own. Apollo fought with the hero and Zeus had to come between them with a bolt of thunder because Heracles’ identification with the unconscious brought about inflation as “an exaggerated sense of self-importance” (Sharp, 191:72).

An inflated consciousness is always egocentric and conscious of nothing but its own existence. It is incapable of learning from the past, incapable of understanding contemporary events, and incapable of drawing right conclusions about the future. It is hypnotized by itself and therefore cannot be argued with. It inevitably dooms itself to calamities that must strike it dead. Paradoxically enough, inflation is a regression of consciousness into unconsciousness. This always happens when consciousness takes too
As punishment and to heal his disease which is indicative of complete inflation, he was sold as a slave to Omphale, where he had to serve his anima for three years. Man’s relation to his anima is that of the creative muse, a helpful guide to inner life, i.e., the search for a meaningful life. Her character and function is that of relation and not discrimination. As an active archetypal life force, she manifests to compensate for an overbearing conscious attitude. Though the effects of the anima could be made conscious and the contents partly integrated, the archetypal anima transcends consciousness and stays autonomous to a large extent. She should be constantly observed and kept in check (Jung, CW9ii:par.40), because failure to do this would result in the anima becoming increasingly inferior, leading to a negative activation of sensitivities or emotional outbursts that cannot be controlled by the will of consciousness. This can be prevented through the process of active imagination, an effective way of dealing with the figures of the collective unconscious.

During this time of enslavement to Omphale, personifying the anima, Heracles came across the body of Icaros and buried him. Icaros’ father, Daidalos made a sculpture of Heracles in gratitude. The hero did not recognize himself in the image of the sculpture, and so threw a stone at it because he thought it was a living person, indicating that he was still confused about his own identity and what was, or appeared to be, valuable. The hero resolved some of the issues involving his identity, since he was healed from his disease at the end of his three-year enslavement to the anima. The three years is suggestive of Heracles’ cycle of death and rebirth, a possible reason why he did not recognize himself in the sculpture, as he was going through a process of transformation.

Heracles undertook many other minor labours before he married Deianeira. When they crossed the river Evenos, the Centaur Nessos carried Deianeira across, because he said that the gods granted him the post of ferryman.
Heracles heard his wife’s cries as Nessos tried to abduct her, and so he shot him through the heart with an arrow dipped in the Hydra’s blood. Before he died, Nessos gave Deianeira a magic potion that would ensure Heracles’ undying love for her. This she applied to her husband’s tunic at a later stage, because she feared losing his love. As the potion was a mixture of Nessos’ semen, the Centaurs’ and the Hydra’s poisonous blood, the vile mixture burnt into Heracles’ skin.

4.4 **THE FOURTH PHASE: Self, archetype of wholeness**

4.4.1 **The death and apotheosis of Heracles**

Heracles literally shed part of his body when he ripped the shirt off his skin. This was necessary, because without shedding his body, the hero could not become a divinity; an integral part of the process was building a pyre on Mount Oeta. After Heracles had mounted the pyre, nobody was willing to set it alight even though the hero begged them. The fire was lit by a passing shepherd who was looking for his missing flock. Heracles presented his bow and arrows to the shepherd. As the pyre was burning, a cloud came and raised Heracles to heaven where he was reconciled with Hera.

Fire has two aspects, that of combustion and generating heat, and that of creating light. Therefore, Heracles was transformed by the intense heat, and taken up by the light of the fire. The light of consciousness brings freedom through direct knowledge and experience of the transcendent self.

The fire altar and the hearth have often served as centers of ritual activity for numerous reasons. Not only does fire give off light and warmth, it transforms the solid substance of nature and turns it into smoke that moves heavenward. Because of this characteristic of fire, it has often been believed that earthly things (animals or human beings) could be transferred to the heavenly realm through fire sacrifice (Moon, 1991:308).

Heracles’ apotheosis and reconciliation with Hera were caused by Deianeira’s possessive love and her fear of losing him: “the garment of Deianeira had grown
on to his skin, and it needs the desperate resolve of a Hercules to tear this Nessus shirt from his body and enter the consuming flames of immortality in order to be transformed into what he really is” (Jacobi, 1953:212). Another cause was the hero’s wounding of the Centaur’s heart. The poison contained the semen of the Centaur, which is suggestive of the lower instinctual sexual drive of the libido; the blood of the Hydra, representative of the negative aspect of the shadow; and the blood from the Centaur’s penetrated heart, indicative of the negative activation of the anima and experienced as emotional upheaval in a destructive relationship. Therefore, Heracles experienced the baptisms of water, fire, earth and blood. Through these baptisms, Heracles successfully transformed into his transcendent self. This is the archetype of wholeness, and is defined as a quaternion of opposites: body (physical), soul (emotional), mind (intellectual) and spirit (spiritual). The role of Heracles equates with a figure from the collective unconscious, namely, the fatherly, god-imago, or ‘mana personality’ with numinous, superhuman qualities. With these qualities, this figure is the structuring principle of the psyche which unifies the contents of the conscious and unconsciousness.

For the Heraclean myth to have any personal psychological significance, what Jung termed, “active imagination”, has to be employed. This will, therefore, be the subject of the next chapter.
5. ACTIVELY RE-IMAGINING THE HERO MYTH

Jung discovered the technique of active imagination, but did not invent it, because it has been practiced for a long time as a form of meditation. According to him (CW14:par.706), active imagination opens a line of communication between consciousness and the unconscious, by way of exploring qualities unknown to consciousness. An attempt at experiencing active imagination, should only be considered once ego-consciousness is properly developed and established in the outer world, which normally occurs at midlife. This is important, as the unconscious may swallow a weakly developed ego-consciousness, leading to psychosis. The aim is to achieve a connection with the archetypal contents for the transformation of creative ideas, but to prevent consciousness from identification with the unconsciousness. The Jungian analyst, Robert Johnson, quotes a part of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, where he compares the process of active imagination with Dante’s struggle to find his own path through the tangled growth in a dark forest:

In the midpoint of this journey that is our life  
I found myself passing through a dark forest,  
The right path through which had disappeared.

And what a hard thing it is to speak  
of that savage forest…(1986:165).

Searching for a personal path is suggestive of exploring the qualities unknown to consciousness, and is given method by active imagination as it directs the process of integrating the contents of the unconscious with consciousness through creativity, in my case, the creation of an installation of sculptures.

Active imagination is a dialectic between the two realms of consciousness, with the purpose of differentiating the parts that need resolving within the conscious mind. The process of active imagination starts off with a suppression of the conscious, judgmental mind and an induction of a state of mind open to receiving images from the unconscious. This is done through passive or indirect thinking,
which Jung compared to intuitive thinking, a state of contemplation, “letting images pass before the mind like dream-images” (Jung, CW17:par.207). With active imagination, this type of passive thinking is applied to a specific myth, noting the numinous qualities of the activated archetypes which purposefully affect and change the qualities within consciousness. The numinosity of the activated archetypes causes an emotional affect, which means that the initial passive thinking deepens to a feeling-toned participation in the translation of myth. The aim is to evaluate and respond to the implications of the emotional affects, searching for some association and meaning between the different images received from the unconscious. What is revealed may be interpreted on a symbolic level and translated through some form of creative self-expression. In other words, the process of active imagination can be divided into four stages. The first step, once the images have been received from the unconscious, is to reflect upon these images from different points of view, observing the various archetypal images. The second step, is to connect the archetypal images to the dynamic personal psychological processes. The third, is a symbolic interpretation of what these images mean in relation to the personality as a whole. The last step, is performing a ritual, in this case, the creation of an installation of sculptures, to make the archetypal images and their meaning concrete.

Active imagination is in strong contrast with passive imagination which is experienced through playful fantasies during daydreams. Through active imagination one does not “play” with the activated archetypes, but strives through thoughts and ideas, to evoke symbolic images honestly reflecting inner contents. This involves “an activation of the profoundest depths of the soul, intended to promote the emergence of salutary symbols” (Jacobi, 1974b:144).

In chapter three, it was established that myth is made visual through symbol, which, in turn, is determined by the numinosity of the archetype functioning to compensate for an imbalance within consciousness. However, only a symbol
that is “alive,” that is able to intimate unknown or relatively unknown content, will be able to unite and communicate between the disparate qualities of the unconscious and consciousness. While the logic of the intellect can only discern and separate opposites; the third reconciling function, or as Jung called it, the transcendent function, is able to mediate between the opposites of consciousness and the unconscious. The tension between the two becomes more intense when employing, active imagination as the person has to face his own conflicting ideas, values, instincts and perceptions, etcetera, as they rise to the surface. What the subject realizes in the process, is that what manifests in an immature person as conflicting opposites, are in fact, the complementary components of the psyche. Once the conversion from the oppositional to the complementary has taken place, the tension becomes a positive, creative driving force; one that is able to define archetypes as numinous symbols, i.e., symbols with a transcendent function.

Thus archetypes can be given form and assimilated into consciousness through a subjective, symbolic interpretation of myth. This means that all the different personified archetypes within the myth, refer to parts and processes of the individual’s own psyche. As such, active imagination allows a person to engage as a participant in the myth, which is projected as a universal psychological drama. In this way, myth provides a map for the exploration of the inner world of the psyche, and a resolution of the conflicts or destructive conditions that may have arisen from the denial of this world. To reiterate, every time a conflict between the realm of consciousness and the unconscious is resolved, the excess energy in the unconscious content is removed and depotentiated, so that blocked energy is available in consciousness for creative application. In this manner, consciousness is transformed through the spiritual archetype, providing insight and understanding to form an enlarged or higher consciousness (Jung, CW9i:par.398).

My personal experience of active imagination, helped to remove a tendency to work almost solely from a literal perspective. In the case of the Heracles myth, it
enabled me to develop an intuitive understanding of hidden meaning, of what lies beneath the surface of the many figurative images that inhabit this myth. My need for excessive manipulation and the will to control the materials of sculpture, was also transformed. It made me more open to the unexpected, inviting the participation of the creative energy from the unconscious. I now understand that impressive technical skill, expressing “safe” and “acceptable” ideas, does not mean either creativity or imagination. As a result, the sculptures are not representational, figurative images; instead, they are symbolic totems conveying the fluid, paradoxical character of the psyche.

The initial maquettes of twelve thrones, one for each of the labours, were too literal as I had interpreted each labour too rationally, using only thinking at the expense of the other three psychological functions - feeling, sensation and intuition, essential for the formation of a symbol.

The thrones were eventually abandoned and replaced with a disparate collection of old, found objects. These, together with old farm fence poles became the components that were variously configured to form the installation. This was more in line with Jung's viewpoint of synthesis through finality, because “finality assumes purpose but an essentially unknown goal...All psychological phenomena have some such sense of purpose inherent in them, even merely reactive phenomena like emotional reactions” (CW8:par.456).

The intention was to use these found objects with a minimum of manipulation and a focus on their integration. All of them have been used before, and, therefore, have qualities reflecting this: from the bleached whale bones and discarded animal horns to the weathered, sneeze wood of the farm fence poles forming totems, the work’s core.

The texture, massive size and irregular forms of the totem poles counteracted a personal inclination for symmetry within the configuration. Their complexity and
looming verticality, made me aware of a similar personal quality, my unwelcome, dark shadow. This dark other, had to be recognized and assimilated with consciousness to start the process of individuation, as no psychological development is possible without an integration of the shadow.

Throughout the entire process of making the work, I had to remind myself that I am not literally illustrating the twelve labours, but using them to initiate the expression of sculptures that allude to the secret forces (the numinous) repressed by consciousness, because they seem to be darkly threatening to the rational mind. Therefore, the installation is not a literal representation of the twelve labours of Heracles, but symbolic of the hero myth, i.e., the process of my individuation.

So, with an understanding that without light it is impossible to cast a shadow, and without form there would be no shadow, I started my personal process of transformation. I thus had to withdraw the projection of my shadow, and face the darkness within, in order to depotentiate the negative aspects of the shadow. As a result, I established a partnership with this inferior side which then revealed the equally positive factors hidden within its dark depths.

Employing the active imagination, I became aware that the hidden angles and awkward sides of the totem poles were similar to certain qualities buried within myself. These were the repressed contents of the personal unconscious, activated as my shadow. Once it was made conscious and had been assimilated, it introduced my animus which then guided the creation of the installation.

Once the poles were standing, their overpowering presence was unmistakable. As a forest of towering giants, I was able to walk between and around them, and to start seeing their potential as expressions of the hero myth / individuation process. Furthermore, by circumambulating the “forest”, I found that I could
distance myself from the conscious world and all that that implies, letting the
active imagination flow as I “consciously dreamt” of my “dark other”.
6. **Aspects of the dark other: The Studio Component**

Throughout the journey ideas would develop and transform, as a better understanding of the underlying symbolism of the Heracles myth was achieved. For instance, the initial idea was to make twelve thrones to indicate that kingship is granted at the completion of the twelve labours; but the idea of other people sitting on, and almost ‘owning’ each throne, did not reflect their true value and the subjective nature of their creation. They could neither be owned, nor sat upon, just as the archetypal images and symbols could neither be fully understood nor assimilated.

Only after I started to integrate horns around the upper parts of the totem poles (cf. figure 4), did I become aware that the first crowns for kings were made out of horns. Crowns were made from the horns of the animal that was killed, to honour it and ensure more animals for future hunts. The circular formation of horns near the top of the totem poles was done intuitively without prior knowledge. Only at a later stage, was the association made with the word *crown*, symbolic of authority and incomparability, with the fact that, placed on top of the head, it is symbolic of “the sacred point where heaven and earth come together” (Moon, 1991:280). In this instance, heaven represents the transcendent (unconscious) and earth represents life (ego-consciousness). Coronation is a very old custom rewarding excellence. Where once it was solely associated with figures of higher authority, who assumed responsibility for groups of people; today we have to bear our own crown and take responsibility for our own lives. The crown’s unbroken circle, is representative of the enduring timeless and universal character of the collective unconscious. Its complete circularity is also symbolic of the fusion between the individual and the king.

On the intrapsychic level, the crown represents the role of the Self, the unconscious center of the personality, which serves as a ruling principle in the birth and development of conscious personality. The Self provides a link between the personal and the transpersonal levels of the psyche...The crown as a symbol of the Self conveys its integrating and governing role (Moon, 1991:285).
In *Totem 2*, for example, the horns, placed in a ring around the bottom and the top of the totem (cf. figure 4), refer to the circle of the self and the self-regulation of the psyche, always striving from the lower instinctual base towards a higher spiritual goal.

The tall totem poles have been arranged in a centripetal spiral to reflect the process of circumambulation where the chaotic mass of the inherited unconscious is transformed through a personal experience of the numinosity of the archetypes, and then articulated by consciousness for better understanding. In such a formation, the movement is inwards, towards the centre. It therefore, relates to the symbol of the labyrinth (Colin, 2000:469), and they both refer to the individual’s journey towards his inner self and unity between the different aspects of his psyche. Jung stated that if the “life-mass is to be transformed a circumambulation is necessary, that is the exclusive concentration on the centre, the place of creative change” (CW12:par.34). He referred to the archetypal content of the collective unconscious as a “shapeless life-mass” that needs to be given form by consciousness. The process of circumambulation forces consciousness to think in paradoxes characteristic of the unconscious, thus giving form to its contents in consciousness.

This aspect of the process of circumambulation is found in Heracles’ first labour when he captured and killed the lion in a cave. This is indicative of the hero’s focusing on a centre, in this case the cave, symbol of the unconscious, to overcome the solar lion. The latter is a symbol of the archetypal self, as well as the immortal, fertilizing and energy-giving principle of the sun. The lion’s death and rebirth as the hero, meant that Heracles’ old, forceful, physical nature was in the beginning stages of transformation leading, ultimately to the birth of the self. As such, the lion is a symbol of resurrection (Von Franz, 1980:170).

At the beginning of this process, consciousness needs to be strengthened and transformed, in order not to be overwhelmed by the content of the unconscious;
in other words, not to be devoured by the mother. This process of spiritual
development refers to the sun’s positive side which makes growth and
transformation possible, but when the sun’s negative aspect is activated, its heat
and light can also burn, destroy and kill. Therefore, in Totem 1 (cf. figure 1), the
animal skin refers to the conquered lion’s skin which was used as a protective
covering for the vulnerable skin of the hero. Totem 1 is positioned at the outside,
left-hand, starting point of the spiral of twelve totems that form the installation.
As such, it is indicative of the starting point in the process of individuation where
projections are withdrawn. Therefore, the skin in Totem 1 suggests a protective
covering which negates some of the shadow’s autonomous power of possession
and its negative influences, once these qualities have been made conscious. By
conquering the lion in the cave of the unconscious, and then wearing the solar
animal’s protective skin, Heracles absorbed the animal’s capabilities, like his
night vision which enabled him to see and hunt in the darkness of the
unconscious. Furthermore, the hero managed to look into the overpowering
brightness of the sun which would blind a mere mortal, to lay claim to his future
immortality. The engraved golden dot (cf. figure 2), surrounded by a circle,
which is visible in the opening in the skin on Totem 1, is symbolic of this claim.
The circular marking, engraved into the wood, is a symbol of the self as well as
the sun (Jung, CW14:par.41). The importance of the marking is that the self “is
not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both [the]
conscious and [the] unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is
the centre of consciousness” (Jung, CW12:par.44). The dot surrounded by the
circle is also symbolic of the self’s aspiration throughout the process of
individuation, to be established as the psychic centre. Next to the circular
engraving in the opening, protrude two short, thick, blunt horns (cf. figure 2).
Their bluntness is indicative of the initial difficulties in coming to terms with
archetypes of the unconscious.

The animal skin in Totem 1 is a Xhosa amakhweta’s medicine bag. The visible
hairy side that covers a third of the totem pole, used to be the inside of the bag.
Figure 2  

*Totem 1, detail*
The reversing and covering of a considerable part of the top of the totem, implies introversion, i.e., when consciousness is trying to come to terms with the archetypes. This means a withdrawal of projections by preventing the archetypes from escaping before an interaction with consciousness. Accordingly, covering the top of Totem 1 with a medicine bag, is symbolic of healing the relation of the psyche to the self as well as to the environment, through the withdrawal of projections. Psychologically speaking, the hero is going through psychic transformation with the goal of uniting with the immortal self. This is in accordance with Von Franz’s statement that “the Self is born within the psyche as a divine child” (1980:251). This immortal inheritance is balanced by the passionate hot nature of the devouring lion, symbolized in the animal’s tail in Totem 1 (cf. figure 3), suggestive of the wild desires of the mortal hero.

In Totem 2 (cf. figure 4), there are many sharp and menacing horns. Looking at the significance of horns in relationship to heroes, it was found that warriors used to have helmets with horns to portray their power and strength in battle. Alexander the Great adopted the emblem of the two ram’s horns to symbolize his imperial power. Blowing on a horn could mean that ‘the horned one’ can be defeated, or used as a form of communication or warning. On the other hand, two horns, like a pitchfork, have connotations of evil and negative forces of destruction. Therefore, horns signify power and strength, but also the negative aspects associated with darkness and destruction. Whether the image of a horn is interpreted as negative or positive, depends on the attitude of the viewer’s ego-consciousness.

Totem 2 is about depotentiating the personal shadow to overcome the fear of inner chaotic elements. When this shadow is acknowledged, the equally positive qualities behind the shadow become clear. According to Jung, evil is driven by fear, the real adversary to a vital life. Fear poisons a healthy libido, because it causes infantile behaviour and bondage to the mother, resulting in a lack of
Figure 3  
*Totem 1, detail*
Figure 4  Totem 2
adaptation to the external world. Heracles did not succumb to fear, but with courage and spirit, he overcame the obstacles that the possessive and devouring Hera put in his way.

At the top of Totem 2 (cf. figure 5) is an old chipped enamel strainer, suggestive of discernment and the separation of the pairs of opposites, which themselves have both positive and negative sides.

Totem 2 relates to the second labour and how the hero’s actions affected his later life. In this labour Heracles overcame the snakelike Hydra and used the poison of the monster’s blood on his arrows to kill his enemies swiftly. On the other hand, the poison caused an enduring festering wound in an innocent Centaur, Cheiron, when he was unintentionally shot by Heracles. The immortal Cheiron pleaded to die to escape his agony. The hero’s poisoned arrows indirectly killed the only good natured Centaurs, Cheiron and Pholos, who were Heracles’ friends. Therefore the poison killed Heracles’ enemies and precious friends alike, and indirectly caused the hero’s own death, and his subsequent rebirth. The affects of the poison produced quick solutions, but at the same time caused problems that could not be resolved. The poison brought quick relief, but equally long suffering, not only for the hero, but to his friends as well. This refers to a projection of the shadow that can bring destruction and suffering to relationships in the external world. When this projection is withdrawn and resolved within, creative qualities that are hidden behind the negative shadow are discovered. In a similar way, the chipped strainer on top of Totem 2 separates and lets through substances that can be used in a positive or negative manner, once their qualities are consciously identified. In addition, the horns on top of the strainer point toward a positive attitude and awareness of the shadow that can penetrate deeper than just the negative aspects of the dark other.
Figure 5  
Totem 2, detail
Another interpretation is that the horns escaped from the Hydra through the holes of the strainer, and these represent the shadow elements that penetrate consciousness to allow assimilation. With this interpretation, the horns are suggestive of the “normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, [and] creative impulses,” that are hidden behind the negative qualities of the shadow (Jung, CW9ii:par.423). These positive qualities lead to greater responsiveness to stimuli, which is beneficial for creative expression, because imaginative decisions can be made with greater confidence, as the pairs of opposites were experienced in both their negative and their positive capacities.

The two strata of horns suggest that there are always two possibilities of interpretation behind the dreadful darkness. The shadow can be interpreted on a concrete and literal level, as belonging to a conflict between the person and others in the here and now; or it can be interpreted on a symbolic level where the shadow points towards the inner conflict between the paradoxical qualities of the unconscious.

The spiral metal in Totem 2 (cf. figure 4) is indicative of an open-minded, conscious attitude to the archetypal images which enables a higher level of realization within consciousness as an ongoing process throughout life. Furthermore, the metal spiral signifies the backward and forward movement of psychic energy, as it flows between consciousness and the unconscious. Lastly, according to Jung: “…the feminine principle… appears as the ‘lower’ (kingdom), or as (Crown), the equivalent below of…the upper crown” (CW14:par.652).

In Totem 3 (cf. figure 6), the horns forming a dominant horizontal, are indicative of the pride of the animal, signifying his age and hierarchy within the herd. Against the verticality of the pole / totem, their horizontality forms a cross, symbol of the self. This formation infers that the different archetypes of the collective unconscious, are concentrating their energy towards the one archetype of wholeness, the self. This is in accordance with Heracles shooting the hind with a
Figure 6  Totem 3
bow and arrow, which implies a focusing and directing of the libido to concentrate dissociated aspects in the psyche (Jung, CW14:par.3).

In the fourth labour Heracles had to deal with the Centaurs’ aggression when they smelled the wine that was their communal property. The Centaurs’ archaic instincts were well-developed which caused them to be driven into a frenzy when they smelled their wine. Dionysos left the communal wine of the Centaurs with Pholos under direct instruction to only open the wine when Heracles visited four generations later. Wine is a symbol of spirituality, knowledge and truth and was associated with immortality because it was the drink of the gods (Chevalier&Gheerbrant, 1996:1113). Centaurs are symbolic of man’s animal nature of violence and lust, as they often raped mortal women. Normally, this instinctual temperament is counterbalanced by spiritual strength, but the Centaurs’ consciousness was too poorly developed to keep their beastly character in check. For these reasons, the Centaur’s wine was hidden by another Centaur, Heracles’ friend Pholos. In the fourth labour, the hero had to overcome his negative archetypal instincts by making them conscious in order to capture the boar (sacred to the feminine principle because of the animal’s crescent-shaped tusks). (Chetwynd, 1993:197). The destruction that was caused by the boar, alludes to a negative activation of the archetypal anima. The boar was captured in snow, during winter which is followed by spring’s renewal of life.

The integrated whale bone at the top of Totem 4 (cf. figure 7) is representative of the turning point in the development of the hero with a renewal of consciousness, which is freed from the destructive side of the archetypal instinctive drive, ready to honour the feminine principle of regeneration. A whale is a symbol of the devouring archetypal Terrible Mother, suggestive of the unconscious swallowing and taking over the psyche, by taking the light of consciousness away completely. The whale bone (cf. figure 8) refers to the destructive bestial instincts, killing the higher, spiritual consciousness. Similarly, Heracles had to break the bond of the unconscious, as life is of little value without consciousness.
Figure 8  Totem 4, detail
On the other hand, a bone is the least perishable part of the body, therefore, this enduring quality points to both death and resurrection. Beverly Moon compared bones and stones as symbols of immortality and claimed that bones convey both permanence and order, which is always necessary for the human discernment of meaning [consciousness]. In a way, bones represent the enduring structural components of the psyche, the archetypes themselves (Moon, 1991:401).

Some of the poles were inverted. The parts that were previously buried under the ground became the crowns of the tall poles. *Totem 5* (cf. figure 9) is one example of this process of reversal: what was hidden was brought into the open. This is representative of making the dark, hidden contents of the unconscious known, as well as the cycle of death, being buried and then followed by rebirth. Both processes occur continuously throughout life.

The vertical yoke (cf. figure 9) implies release from enslavement and confinement and the resultant freedom of movement. Psychologically speaking, this means that the blockage in the libido has been removed so that the energy becomes available for transformation and creative thought. There is a leather strip (cf. figure 10) that spirals around the upper part of the yoke, echoing the metal pieces circling *Totem 2*. The leather strip suggests that the one-sided approach to life has given way to a more open attitude, one that incorporates the pairs of opposites in a more healthy psychic balance. The leather spiral leads the eye to the top of the rounded end of the yoke which points towards the stone that crowns (cf. figure 10) *Totem 5*. Part of the golden, round stone is broken to reveal a deeper, inner layer of darker substance (cf. figure 11). The roundness, the golden colour and the stone are all symbols of the self. The inner shadow, the layer within the stone suggests that consciousness is confronted with the pairs of opposites that are united in the self.
Figure 10  Totem 5, detail
In the sixth labour, the inhabitants were alienated from the countryside because they refused to come together as a group to get rid of the Stymphalian birds. As fear causes consciousness to perceive the activated archetypal images of the unconscious as dangerous and destructive creatures, the meaningful character of the archetypes was not revealed to the inhabitants. *Totem 6* (cf. figure 12) suggests both the destructive and constructive aspects of the archetypal images. The saw blades (cf. figure 13) are indicative of opposing acts of mutilation and creation in as much as they maim, if incorrectly used, or, if used correctly, contribute to the creation of an object. They may also remove unwanted material, thus facilitating potential development. The saw blades can cut grooves for the integration of materials. As such, they bring to realization the binary nature of the psyche.

*Totem 6* may also be interpreted as the anima’s influence of lifting the lower basic instincts towards a spiritual quality. This is suggested by the upward pointing teeth of the circular blade. The curved blade is supportive of and lifts the pointed horn above the top of the totem. The saw blades and horn are integrated with the totem indicating that all form different aspects of the self.

In *Totem 7* (cf. figure 14), the horns are as if upward pointing rays, and are, therefore, suggestive of the conscious, spiritual approach to the psychological processes. According to Von Franz:

...the sun is that which lifts up. In antiquity and such times people were puzzled at the fact that the sun raised the water by warming it, so that clouds were formed, and that when the sun disappeared the rain would come, so the sun was often spoken of as the principle of spiritual elevation. It is therefore that which makes things perfect; it exalts them to the heights and makes them visible (1980:150).

The light of the sun, symbolic of the qualities of consciousness that are uplifting and clarifying, needs the feminine qualities of the void, the vessel and the solidity of material to show off and reflect the sun’s rays. The positive qualities of unconscious are to relate and connect. The anima reminds consciousness that
Figure 13  
*Totem 6, detail*
Figure 14  Totem 7
the individual needs to relate to his inner values for a soulful life. Without being confronted by the opposites, consciousness will revert to its one-sided modus operandi, thus splitting the personality. In Totem 2 the strainer is on top of the pole, whereas the rounded, metal part with draining holes (cf. figure 15) in Totem 7, is lower down, and on the same side as a metal tail. This is indicative of a more related association between consciousness, symbolized by the metal drain, and the tail, inferring the unconscious. The tail has to keep the metal drain head of discernment, and the horns of conscious penetration, related to the instinctive qualities of the unconscious in order to prevent dissociation between the thought processes and the feeling-toned soul. As Von Frans quoted from an old Greek text: “Take the head, but beware of the tail,” or “Unless the head has integrated the tail, the whole substance is nothing” (1980:116).

The penetrating horn has a hollow inside that can be used as a vessel for containment. The horn extends into the void, but is also shaped around a void. In ancient times, a burning coal for the kindling of a new fire was carried in a horn while traveling. Fire was important for survival, cooking, keeping warm and to keep wild animals at bay. The enantiodromian structure is clear: the horn (taken from the animal) was used as vessel for the fire to protect archaic man from being devoured by the horned beast. This is suggestive of the penetration and development of consciousness by and out of the unconscious. The contained fire is symbolic of the light of consciousness protected against being devoured by darkness again.

The horn may also be said to represent psychic integration masculine and feminine attributes: its outer form, male, its inner space, female.

While, in the seventh labour Heracles traveled to the South (Crete); the eighth labour took the hero to the North (Thrace) to deal with the king Diomedes’ man-eating mares. In Totem 8 (cf. figure 16), the skull is indicative Diomedes’ destructive dominant development of his consciousness, because he feared the
unpredictable, uncontrollable unconscious. Therefore, this situation is the opposite of the previous labour where king Minos thought his ego was equal to the transcendent archetypal self. Diomedes’ need for control of the known and conventional resulted in his need to destroy the strange and exotic qualities of the unconscious. Instead of withdrawing the projection of his dark qualities, the king saw these unacceptable traits in strangers which he fed to his man-eating mares. In *Totem 8*, the horns protrude from the rim of a vertical shape (cf. figure 16) that is similar to a mandorla (almond, lozenge, flame, and vulva), in the centre of the totem pole. The horns pointing towards the centre of the mandorla, are suggestive of the destructive penetration of consciousness when it becomes hardened towards an inner life. Rigidity in consciousness is a result of being cut off from the nourishment of the creative unconscious. The almond shaped mandorla is associated with the lozenge, symbolic of the union of the upper and lower worlds, heaven and earth. The mandorla is often used to frame pictures of saints, as it “symbolizes the harmonious marriage which transcends the dualism of matter and spirit, fire and water, Heaven and Earth” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1996:16). The mandorla points to the archetypal wholeness of the Self. The horns point toward the central line of the mandorla, which implies that consciousness is negative towards the self-regulation of the psyche, striving for a balanced relationship between consciousness and the unconscious. The horns of consciousness thus prevent the manifestation of the contents of the unconscious in outer reality; while at the same time, projecting in a threatening manner into the environment (cf. figure 17). This obstructs the anima’s influence in creating a feeling of relatedness, as the outward pointing positions of the horns, threaten to impale a person when trying to get close. In a similar way, the blinding brightness of the sun, which is representative of consciousness, prevented the king from perceiving the positive aspects of the unconscious. Therefore, no new ideas are allowed to develop; only the stale, the safe and the known are acceptable. The conscious mind requires humility to acknowledge its need for the unexpected content of the unconscious so that a healthy psyche may be achieved. The king’s attempt to live in one aspect of the psyche, led to
Figure 17  Totem 8, detail
him to be devoured by consciousness’ burning rays as when the sun stands still and is not part of a natural cycle.

By contrast, the skull (cf. figure 16) as container in *Totem 8*, is also suggestive of the reservoir of the life-force of both body and spirit. As such, the skull is perceived as the meeting place of consciousness and the unconscious; the point where a “living connection with the other, dark side” is possible (Von Franz, 1980:145).

For the ninth labour Heracles’ journey took him to the East (Scythia) to claim the belt of Hippolyte, the queen of the Amazons. Here Heracles had to address a situation that was a reversal of the fourth labour, to some extent. The Centaurs, with the exception of two, showed a total disregard for the feminine principle; while the Amazons were extremely antagonistic towards the masculine principle. By contrast, in the fourth labour, the hero showed his respect for the feminine principle as he could not kill the boar which was sacred to the moon: the live, wild pig had to be carried on Heracles’ shoulders to Eurystheus. The Amazons broke a golden rule by disregarding the valuable interaction between the two sexes. In breaking the bones of the male infants, they impaired their mobility so that they could not travel or fight in wars. The female warriors took away the boys’ freedom by making them male servants in female households. This implies possession by the animus which in females, may manifest positively by assisting with intuitive, spiritual thinking; and negatively, in the form of overbearing, opinionated attitudes. The possession caused them to hold “fixed ideas, collective opinions and unconscious, *a priori* assumptions that lay claim to absolute truth” (Sharp, 1991:23). Any type of communication is impossible under these circumstances, as this one-sided viewpoint locks out any possibility of compensation. Therefore, being possessed by the animus is in direct opposition to the process of individuation which is inclusive of all opposites.
In *Totem 9* (cf. figure 18), the white “teeth” (cf. figures 19 & 20) are bones from the flippers of a whale, and therefore from the part that steers, balances and directs the animal. They are placed in a relation that suggests the upper and lower part of a mouth. As such, they signify the ability to “grind” opposites into a digestive bolus; in other words, their action results in giving conflicting or differentiated opposites the shape of harmonic complementarity. The whiteness of the bones implies the absence of life and colour; especially red, the colour of blood and passion.

With the previous three labours Heracles journeyed to the South, North and East. To complete the tenth labour he traveled to the West (Spain) to capture the oxen of Geryon. This is the start of his night sea journey where Heracles had to overcome the sun and sea; in other words, his purifying baptism of fire and water. During this phase, the hero was assisted by the wise old man who engendered a better understanding of the relation between the conflicting pairs of opposites.

*Totem 10* (cf. figure 21) alludes to the beneficial qualities of healing, cleansing and transformation, i.e., the positive aspects of fire, symbolic of consciousness, and the ocean, symbolic of the unconscious. This sculpture is the biggest and simplest of the 12 *Totems* as it implies the moment of revelation, when insight is provided into the relation between the conflict of the opposites. At that moment, a person experiences being in a central point where all the opposites and functions seem to meet in balance: intellect, emotion, intuition and sensation.

Beneath its head, the whale bone narrows, and it is here that it joins the sneeze wood pole. The small decorative points (cf. figure 22) of the whale bone protrude in places from the top of the wooden pole and are extended right to the bottom.
Figure 18  Totem 9
Figure 19  Totem 9, detail
Figure 20  Totem 9, detail
Figure 21  
*Totem 10*
Figure 22  Totem 10, detail
In this manner, the whale bone is not placed as a crown on top of *totem* 10, but forms part of it. The whiteness of the bone implies that a long process of purification and transformation has successfully been undergone, resulting in the integration of matter and spirit.

In *Totem 11* (cf. figure 23), the two horns signify both the healing power of communication through the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious; and the destructiveness of a war between the two realms for a dominant position of power within the psyche. In labour eleven, the tree with the golden apples was protected by a dragon serpent. Similarly, the ram’s horn (cf. figure 24) is suggestive of the serpent that protects the vessel containing the secret knowledge of the gods. When asked, the serpent revealed that knowledge includes good and evil, i.e., the power to heal or corrupt.

The Greeks equated the ram’s horn with Hermes, who was the messenger from the gods, representative of the archetypal wise old man. Hermes either conveyed the wisdom of the gods in a truthful manner, or as a lie, which is similar to the serpent’s revelation of good and evil. Normally, in the initial stage, knowledge is perceived to be of a destructive nature: for instance, meeting the personal shadow means facing and relating to that unbearable negative aspect of the darkness within. But this knowledge or consciousness of the shadow, later also reveals the positive, creative aspects of the dark other. Corruption means that the increased consciousness leads to inflation, with an outlook that it does not need the irrational, nourishing power of the unconscious. Part of this inflation means that the enlarged conscious mind thinks it can and should control the unconscious. This re-enforces the break in man’s connection with his instinctive nature as well as his environment. On the other hand, a more humble conscious attitude, gives more careful consideration to that unknown part of the psyche, resulting in man living his life in harmony with the conscious and unconscious parts of his psyche. This is implied by the circular shape where the ram’s horn, the kudu horn and the sneeze wood join.
Figure 23  
Totem 11
Figure 24  Totem 11, detail
**Totem 11** is also symbolic of how I tried to keep an open mind, inviting communication with the unconscious to reveal that which needs to be modified in consciousness, but which is not clear and obvious. Therefore, the ram’s horn is protective and supportive of the upwards spiraling, tapered kudu horn, as it symbolically strives for Selfhood.

The leather bag in **Totem 12** (cf. figure 25) was an old bag once used for carrying dispatches during the Second World War. As such, it is representative of the backwards / forwards movement between the three realms of heaven, earth and the underworld. This, in turn, is indicative of the integration of the shadow, anima, wise old man and the self.

The vertical totem with its short horns pointing to either side, suggests the cross, symbolizing the quarternty of the self. With this twelfth labour and **Totem 12**, the hero has reached the end of his punitive tasks and completed his journey to individuation.

Although each totem was created individually, using a variety of found objects integrated seamlessly into the horizontal fence poles, the intention was always that they would function jointly to form an installation, shown in a bare, light space, in order for them to be read as both a single and a collective silhouette.

The centripetal spiral was chosen to suggest circumambulation as well as a formal hierarchy of labours. When viewed collectively, these totems become solid manifestations of *aspects of the dark other* (cf. figures 26 & 27). Their strong, vertical sense is compounded and multiplied. The various bones, horns, skulls, saw teeth and other not yet recognizable forms, integrate to create a dark, looming presence which is both mysterious and numinous.
Figure 25  Totem 12
The transformed sneeze wood poles, indicate my subjective interpretation and experience of the journey of the hero. The hovering totems suggest myth as the psychological drama of the hero and his battle with his own dragons - the numinous qualities of his dark other.

Figure 26  Detail of Installation
The intention of this research was to determine how the theories of Jung's analytical psychology, in relation to the four cycles of the Heracles myth, could be expressed in an installation.

Accordingly, I then first established how Jung equated myth, particularly the hero myth, with the psychological process of integrating ego consciousness with humanity's psychic base line, the collective unconscious. Here, I found that what Jung termed the individuation process involved unearthing archaic modalities of being called archetypes, and it was these that defined an image as symbol, the basic construct of myth.

Next, following Jung, I determined that myth was indeed the gateway to the unconscious, since through its symbolic nature, it is able to bring together opposites in dynamic relation.

With regard to the hero myth specifically, I discovered and described how the challenges met by the hero, may be paralleled to the psychological drama that unfolds in the process of transforming the ego into the transcendent self.

Then, in “individuating Heracles”, I related his early development and his subsequent labours to the process of individuation. In the first cycle of this process, it was established that the hero is required to deal with the shadow by acknowledging and withdrawing the projection of the repressed contents of his personal unconscious, thereby realizing the positive potential of his shadow. During this first stage, archetypes are still totally part of the collective unconscious and are formless.

During the second cycle, it was shown how the hero is assisted by his contra-sexual anima, to become aware of the dualistic nature of the psyche. Here the
anima is the unconscious female aspect which compensates for his conscious masculinity.

In the third cycle, I described how the hero meets the wise old man of meaning. This is the phase of immersion in the unconscious required for the activation and manifestation of the archetypal material which, in turn, is necessary for transforming consciousness to a higher spiritual level. Here, the wise old man reveals that the opposites need not be conflicted because they are complementary.

Next, I established that it was in the fourth cycle that the hero integrates the shadow, anima, wise old man and the self. Thus the last traces of the persona are removed in or by fire to enable the hero to transform into a transpersonal being. This means that the hero becomes the centre of the conscious and the unconscious “realms”.

Finally, in the last two chapters, I showed how by “actively imagining” the Heracles myth, I was able to re-form and re-frame the myth in terms of assembled totems forming an installation. This re-working was in line with Jung’s claim that myth should be interpreted on a subjective and symbolic level, because only then can it beneficially structure psychic experience. I therefore set about creating the twelve totems in such a way, that they do not literally represent the narrative of Heracles’ twelve labours, but instead, evoke a sense of facing “aspects of the dark other” on the journey towards psychological maturity. For example, the dark almost silhouetted profiles of the sneeze wood totems, with their additions of bone, skin and metal in varying forms, assert a presence of archaic, if not primeval menace – the unacknowledged contents of the collective unconscious. In the case of their centripetal arrangement, the installation is suggestive of the journey towards the inner self. The opening of the spiral is at the left with Totem 1, followed by Totem 2, with the twelfth one in the centre. This is indicative of the assimilation of the archetypes of the shadow, the anima
and the wise old man in the striving towards the formation of the self. The spiral
formation also reflects the process of circumambulation, where the chaotic mass
of the inherited unconscious is transformed through a personal experience of the
archetypes’ numinosity, and then articulated by consciousness for better
understanding. With the process of circumambulation the focus is on the centre,
the place of creative change, the source and destination of all mythic journeys.

I therefore conclude, as Jung had proposed, that the hero myth mirroring the
psychological life-cycle he defined as the individuation process, may be re-
figured to capture the experience in a contemporary art form.

Figure 27    Aspects of the dark other
SOURCE LIST:


APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Active Imagination:** This is a “method of assimilating unconscious contents (dreams, fantasies, [myth]) through some form of self-expression” (Sharp, 1991:12&13).

**Amplification:** “A method of association based on the comparative study of mythology, religion and fairy tales, used in the interpretation of images in dreams and drawings” (Sharp, 1991:15).

**Archetype:** Archetypes are the “primordial, structural elements of the human psyche” (Sharp, 1991:27).

**Archetypal image:** “Archetypal images, are universal patterns or motifs which come from the collective unconscious, are the basic content of religions, mythologies, legends and fairy tales” (Sharp, 1991:29).

**Archetypal motif:** “There are types of situations and types of figures that repeat themselves frequently and have a corresponding meaning” (Jung, CW9i:par.309).

**Assimilation:** This is the process of “integrating outer objects (persons, things, ideas, values) and unconscious contents into consciousness” (Sharp, 1991:30).

**Collective Unconscious:** “The collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual” (Jung, CW8:par.342).

**Compensation:** “A natural process aimed at establishing or maintaining balance within the psyche” (Sharp, 1991:37).
**Complex:** “[A complex] is the image of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and is, moreover, incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness” (Jung, CW8:par.201).

**Differentiate:** “The separation of parts from a whole, necessary for conscious access to the psychological functions” (Sharp, 1991:46).

**Ego-consciousness:** The ego is the centre of consciousness.

**Enantiodromia:** “Jung’s term for the view that eventually all things become transformed into their opposites” (Reber, 2001:240).

**Identification:** “This term connotes a psychological process in which the personality is either partially or totally dissimilated from itself. Identification is an estrangement of the subject from himself in favour of an object in which the subject is, to a certain extent, disguised” (Jung, 1962:551).

**Individuation:** This is the process of psychological maturation.

**Libido:** Libido is psychic energy in general and is not a concept of predominant sexual meaning.

**Myth:** “Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche…” (Jung, CW9i:par.261).

**Numinous:** “Descriptive of persons, things or situation having a deep emotional resonance, psychologically associated with experiences of the self” (Sharp, 1991:92).

**Persona:** “The ‘I,’ usually ideal aspects of ourselves, that we present to the outside world” (Sharp, 1991:97).
**Personal Unconscious:** The personal unconscious is the content of the unconscious that is personally acquired and is specific to the individual ego.

**Projection:** “An automatic process whereby contents of one’s own unconscious are perceived to be in others” (Sharp, 1991:104).

**Psyche:** “By the psyche I understand the totality of all the psychic processes, both conscious as well as unconscious” (Jung, 1962:588).

**Regression:** Regression is going back to a more infantile attitude, with a reluctance to accept independence, but a confrontation with the problems which prevent progression in psychological development is necessary for the compensation of consciousness.

**Repression:** “The unconscious suppression of psychic contents that are incompatible with the attitude of consciousness” (Sharp, 1991:117).

**The Anima:** The anima is man’s soul-image, his spiritual guide, influencing “his ideas, attitudes and emotions” (Sharp, 1991:19).

**The self:** “The archetype of wholeness and the regulating center of the psyche; a transpersonal power that transcends the ego” (Sharp, 1991:119).

**The Shadow:** The shadow is the “hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized…Before unconscious contents have been differentiated, the shadow is in effect the whole of the unconscious. It is commonly personified in dreams by persons of the same sex as the dreamer” (Sharp, 1991:123).

**The Wise Old Man:** The wise old man is “an archetypal image of meaning and wisdom. In Jung’s terminology, the wise old man is a personification of the masculine spirit” (Sharp, 1991:148).
**Transcendent function:** “A psychic function that arises from the tension between consciousness and the unconscious and supports their union” (Sharp, 1991:135).

**Unconscious:** “The concept of the unconscious is…an *exclusively psychological concept* and not a philosophical concept in the metaphysical sense” (Jung, 1962:613).

**Wholeness:** “A state in which consciousness and the unconscious work together in harmony” (Sharp, 1991: 147).