

Jung and Goddess: The Significance of Jungian and post-Jungian Theory to the Development of the Western Goddess Movement

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*If that which you seek you find not within you,
you will never find it without.
For behold, I have been with you since the beginning,
and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.*

*‘The Charge of the Goddess’
Quoted in Curott, 1998: 277*



For Nane...a light in the darkness.

Abstract

This study is concerned with the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the development of the contemporary Western Goddess Movement, which includes the various self-identified nature-based, Pagan, Goddess Feminism, Goddess Consciousness, Goddess Spirituality, Wicca, and Goddess-centred faith traditions that have seen a combined increase in Western adherents over the past five decades and share a common goal to claim Goddess as an active part of Western consciousness and faith traditions. The Western Goddess Movement has been strongly influenced by Jung's thought, and by feminist revisions of Jungian Theory, sometimes interpreted idiosyncratically, but presented as a route to personal and spiritual transformation.

The analysis examines ways in which women encounter Goddess through a process of Jungian Individuation and traces the development of Jungian and post-Jungian theories by identifying the key thinkers and central ideas that helped to shape the development of the Western Goddess Movement. It does so through a close reading and analysis of five biographical 'rebirth' memoirs published between 1981 and 1998: Christine Downing's (1981) *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*; Jean Shinoda Bolen's (1994) *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage*; Sue Monk Kidd's (1996) *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine*; Margaret Starbird's (1998) *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine*; and Phyllis Curott's (1998) *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess*. These five memoirs reflect the diversity of the faith traditions in the Western Goddess Movement.

The enquiry centres upon two parallel and complementary research threads: 1) critically examining the content of the memoirs in order to determine their contribution to the development of the Goddess Movement and 2) charting and sourcing the development of the major Jungian and post-Jungian theories championed in the memoirs in order to evaluate the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian thought in the Movement. The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the original research question: what is the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory for the development of the Western Goddess

Movement? Each memoir is subjected to critical review of its intended audiences, its achievements, its functions and strengths, and its theoretical frameworks.

Research results offered more than the experiences of five Western women, it also provided evidence to analyse the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the development of the Western Goddess Movement. The findings demonstrate the vital contributions of the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, and post-Jungians M Esther Harding, Erich Neumann, Christine Downing, E.C. Whitmont, and Jean Shinoda Bolen; the additional contributions of Sue Monk Kidd, Margaret Starbird, and Phyllis Curott, and exhibit Jungian and post-Jungian pathways to Goddess. Through a variety of approaches to Jungian categories, these memoirs constitute a literature of Individuation for the Western Goddess Movement.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia 'Iolana', written on a light-colored background.

Printed name: Patricia 'Iolana

Chapter 1

Introduction

Telling our stories may possibly begin a great revolution, unleashing the power to turn the world's great order around.¹

1.1 The Query

This enquiry is concerned with the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the development of the contemporary Western Goddess Movement, which includes the various self-identified nature-based, Pagan, Goddess Feminism, Goddess Consciousness, Goddess Spirituality, Wicca, and Goddess-centred faith traditions that have seen a combined increase in Western adherents over the past five decades and share a common goal to claim Goddess as an active part of Western consciousness and faith traditions. This study sets out to examine ways in which women encounter Goddess through a process of Jungian Individuation as demonstrated in the source material. Evidence will exhibit how the Western Goddess Movement offers a 'way of knowing' aligned with Jung's Path of Individuation, builds on Jungian and post-Jungian theory, represents a variety of perspectives, and provides a literature of Individuation that helps to guide others through this transformative psycho-religious process.

1.1.2 The Source Material

To gain a thorough understanding of the impact Jungian and post-Jungian theory have had on the birth and development of the Western Goddess Movement one must first begin by understanding the choices contemporary women are making in their spiritual awakenings to Goddess—these personal perspectives are culled from five exemplary women's *rebirth memoirs* published between 1981 and 1998.² The memoirs serving as source material for this enquiry are: Christine Downing's (1981) *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*; Jean Shinoda Bolen's (1994) *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage*; Sue Monk Kidd's (1996) *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine*; Margaret Starbird's (1998) *The Goddess in the Gospels*:

¹ Christ CP (1979) *Womenspirit Rising*, 243.

² In earlier publications and presentations, I have used the term 'spiritual' to describe the five memoirs. Upon reflection, a more accurate description of this particular contemporary Western genre is *rebirth memoir*.

Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine; and Phyllis Curott's (1998) *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess*. All five memoirs were written by well-educated, influential Western women. The memoirs were selected based upon my request to adherents from various faith traditions within the Western Goddess Movement for recommendations of highly-influential texts that helped to shape their Path. Recommendations were taken from a range of adherents, men as well as women, including several solitary practitioners, academics, and a foremother of the Western Goddess Movement: Carol P Christ. These memoirs were the top five suggestions of exemplary and highly-influential works within the Movement. These works are classified as 'rebirth memoirs' because each memoir documents the author's spiritual and personal transformation (rebirth, which in these five cases involves a process of Jungian individuation) through their unique and extraordinary experience with Goddess.³ The understanding of 'rebirth' demonstrated in the memoirs is not dissimilar from the Christian belief of the soul's rebirth upon baptism—as one of the authors in this study describes a feeling of being '[...] twice-born: into life at birth, and now through mystery, into a new state of being or new consciousness.' (Bolen, 1994: 51) These memoirs are documenting an internal rebirth; it is not the somatic rebirth found in reincarnation-based faith traditions around the world.⁴ Jean Shinoda Bolen summarises the potential psychological power of this rebirth genre when she writes:

We must remember how and when each of us has had an experience of the Goddess, and felt healed and made whole by her. These are holy, sacred, timeless moments, and as numinous as they may have been, without words they are difficult to retrieve. But when someone else speaks of a similar experience, it can evoke the memory and bring back the feelings, which restore the experience. Only if we speak from personal experience does this happen. This is why we need words for women's mysteries, which, like everything else that is of women, seems to require that one woman at a time birth what she knows. *We serve as midwives to each other's consciousness.* (Bolen, 1994: 79-80, emphasis is mine)

Bolen encapsulates the influence demonstrated by the memoirs at the heart of this study and each author's intent to serve as 'midwives to each other's

³ Baumlín TF and Baumlín J (2004), 120.

⁴ Although many adherents of Goddess-centred faith traditions also believe in corporeal reincarnation.

consciousness.’ It is this midwifery that is at the heart of this genre; all of these authors, as will be examined further in the following chapters, wrote and published their memoirs to serve as guidebooks for others to follow.

That is not to say that this literary genre does not hold some inherent challenges when utilised as source material for a critical theological examination. From a literary perspective memoirs are a form of “fictive” literature—a term used to indicate the author’s selective use of events and experiences, perhaps with embellishment, to tell traditionally non-fictional stories of personal pilgrimage or Numinous revelation. As such, this genre of literature holds inherent limitations such as criticisms of fictionalisation, embellishment, and revision to events and recollections contained within the memoirs. While these criticisms are valid and worth taking into consideration when evaluating the source material, these potential weaknesses are circumvented by focusing this study on the Jungian and post-Jungian theories that are prevalent in the memoirs rather than on the primary personal, and potentially embellished or fictionalised, experiences of the individual.

1.1.3 The Analysis and Preliminary Findings

My analysis centres upon two parallel and complementary research threads: 1) critically examining the content of the memoirs in order to determine their contribution to the development of the Goddess Movement *and* 2) charting and sourcing the development of the major Jungian and post-Jungian theories championed in the memoirs in order to evaluate the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian thought in the Movement. The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the original research question: what is the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory for the development of the Western Goddess Movement? Preliminary close readings and cross-analyses revealed both distinct differences and shared ideas resonating throughout the memoirs. One common thread, discovered in the earliest assessment of the content, shifted both the focus of the study and the background information required to understand exactly what was being documented. The authors independently revealed an unconventional, yet collective understanding of Goddess based on Jungian and analytical psychology. This was an unexpected feature of the five memoirs and

not originally a criterion for inclusion. The impact of this discovery shall be examined throughout this study.

Preliminary findings indicate that this Movement is much more than a few women (and men) who self-identify as Goddess Spiritualist—a remnant of the New Age Movement and consciousness-raising groups of the sixties. Jung is often credited as the ‘progenitor of the New Age Movement’. (Paglia, 2006: 8) These memoirs define a social, psychological, and *theological* movement led by, but not exclusive to, women. The term *thealogy* has been defined in many ways over the years since its first documented uses in 1976.⁵ I prefer the essence of the root words: *Thea* (Goddess) and *logos* (word, discourse, reason) whereby *thealogy* means *to discourse about Goddess*. It is a movement that is Goddess-centred and offers guidance and knowledge on Goddess as understood in numerous anthropomorphised forms from the Virgin Mary to the ancient and more ambiguous *Magna Mater* (Great Mother). The memoirs represent individual perspectives and offer ‘ways of knowing’ that are psychological, mythological, humanist, Protestant Christian, post-Christian, Roman Catholic, and Wiccan. I will utilise the term ‘ways of knowing’ throughout this study; opposed to using the psychological term ‘construct’ or the theological terms ‘creed’ or ‘dogma’. This choice of terminology was consciously made in order to fully embrace and convey the plural and polydoxical paths offered in the various rebirth memoirs. The diversity expressed in these five memoirs mirrors the range of the faith traditions in this common collective I refer to as the Western Goddess Movement. The authors in this study are all self-professed, active members of various sects of this wider community.

These initial findings helped to shape the methodology and assessment of the material. The analysis of the content of the five memoirs will focus on five main areas of critical review: (1) Who is the intended audience? Are they reached? (2) What are the intentions of this work? What did it achieve? (3) How does the text function? (4) What are the significant strengths of the work? (5) What assumptions or theories underlie the work? And do they affect its validity? Each memoir shall be examined in depth, in the following chapters, firstly by summarising both the

⁵ ‘Iolana, P (2011) Radical Images of the Feminine Divine: Women’s Spiritual Memoirs Disclose a Theological Shift. In: ‘Iolana P and Tongue S (eds) *Testing the Boundaries: Self, Faith, Interpretation and Changing Trends in Religious Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publications, 13-30.

author and the memoir and then by addressing the five critical questions with a focus on Jungian and post-Jungian theory.

The preliminary analysis also revealed that, collectively, these five memoirs appear to chart the historical development of a number of important threads of accepted wisdom pertinent to the birth and development of the Western Goddess Movement in the US and beyond. These memoirs illustrate the influence of the substantial contributions of six individuals, who, along with the second wave of feminism in the United States, contribute significantly to the development of the Western Goddess Movement. Chronologically, they are: (1) Carl Jung's analytical psychology (1912-61); (2) Dr Mary Esther Harding feminist revision of Jung's theories and the birth of women's analytical psychology in America (1935); (3) Jung's heir apparent and grand theorist, Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother* (1955); (4) Christine Downing's ground-breaking memoir, *The Goddess* (1981) which is the first memoir in this study; (5) post-Jungian EC Whitmont's *Return of the Goddess* (1982); leading to (6) Jean Shinoda Bolen's *Crossing to Avalon* (1994), the second memoir to be examined in this study, which creates a bridge from Jung's analytical psychological theory to religious or spiritual praxis whilst revealing the extent to which Jung and post-Jungian ideas have been integrated into diverse emergent paths to Goddess. Alongside an analysis of the content of each memoir, the history, adaptation, and endurance of central Jungian and post-Jungian theories will also be examined.

1.2 Methodology

The preliminary findings established the required methodology and assessment of the source material. As a multidisciplinary research project, the optimum methodology for this study is also multidisciplinary and includes literary analysis, theological enquiry and Post-Jungian analysis; and is informed by the Depth Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972). This study is, at its centre, a theological enquiry mixed with psychodynamic ('depth') interpretations and framing. The underlying psychological and theological theories and concepts to the methodology alongside the questions of validity that these incorporated elements carry for this study shall be examined in greater detail in following sections. This study, however, has an ethnographic lens, in part, because it is designed to examine the impact of Jungian and post-Jungian theory on the

Western Goddess Movement in which this researcher has been an active participant for nearly thirty years. Serving this community both as a practicing adherent and in ministerial or shamanistic capacities as an ordained Pagan Minister⁶ there will be times in this study where information is corroborated or refuted based on my own experiences as an adherent in the Western Goddess Movement; the ethnographic perspective of this study is therefore included in my methodology.

1.2.1 Psychodynamics and Depth Psychology

By nature of the content revealed within the five rebirth memoirs, this investigation is psychodynamic. *Psychodynamics* refers to the unconscious, psychological forces that contribute to an individual's particular beliefs and/or behaviour—in this case religious praxis and experience. To be precise, this investigation utilises depth psychology to inform its methodology. In this context, *depth* is being used to refer to the layers of the unconscious psyche. There is a wide array of psychological schools of thought that centre upon the individual's unconscious mind. The acclaimed founding fathers of depth psychology include Wilhem Wundt (1832-1920), William James (1842-1910) and Pierre Janet (1859-1947). Janet's work heavily influenced the theories of both William James and Carl Jung. However, now over 100 years later, the schools of depth psychology are mostly divided between the theories and models of two of the most famous and controversial depth psychologists in the world: the Psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and the Analytical Psychology of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961).

Freud and Jung enjoyed a six year collaborative relationship that began through mutual correspondences in 1906. Often writing long letters discussing psychological theories and interpreting each other's dreams, Freud and Jung bonded in friendship and mutual respect.⁷ When they finally met in person, they talked non-stop through the night. From the outset, the rapport between Jung and Freud was intellectually stimulating and exhilarating; for quite some time the two shared a discourse that inspired and broadened each other's work. Jung soon became Freud's psychoanalytic heir apparent. Over the years, however, it became clear that Freud and Jung disagreed on many core issues. Ultimately, Jung decided

⁶ Ordination completed through World Pagan Ministries.

⁷ For further reading see: McGuire W (ed) (1994) *The Freud/Jung Letters*.

that he needed to distance himself from Freud and differentiate his ideas from Psychoanalysis; therefore, Jung became the Father of *Analytical Psychology* to distance himself from Freud's *Psychoanalysis*. This public parting of ways became evident in 1912 when Jung resigned from Freud's International Psychoanalytical Association and published his *Psychology of the Unconscious* (later revised and republished in 1952 as *Symbols of Transformation*)—a work refuting many of Freud's core psychoanalytical ideas.

In the end, there were considerable differences between the psychological principles of Freud and Jung despite the fact that both were theorising about the unconscious psyche. Michael Palmer writes: 'Whereas for Freud the unconscious arises out of consciousness, for Jung consciousness arises out of the unconscious, the unconscious mind in this sense "pre-dating" the conscious mind.' (Palmer, 1997: 95)⁸ Susan Rowland summarises the differences between these two conflicting schools of psychological thought; she writes:

A fundamental divergence in the works of Jung and Freud remains deeply implicit in their distinct psychologies today. Jung is a theorist of the image; Freud of the word. For Jung, the unconscious image was primary; it was reality. The application of 'theory' to the unconscious image [which is what Jung accused Freud of doing in psychoanalytic method] risked corrupting its purpose and function. Images are the way the unconscious thinks and speaks. (Rowland, 2002: 7)

From a theological perspective there was another, vital difference between the theories of Freud and Jung. For Freud, the presence of religion was the *cause of neuroses* and should be avoided, whereas for Jung: '[...] it is not the presence of religion which is a symptom of neurosis but *its absence*.' (Palmer, 1997: 92, emphasis is mine) Jung's focus on the importance of religious belief to psychological health and wholeness would be central to his contribution to the development of the Western Goddess Movement.

1.2.1.1 Collective Unconscious

At the centre of Jung's Analytical Psychology lies the *Collective Unconscious*. Socrates' Theory of Forms and Plato's 'Perfect Forms' were the basis for Jung's theories. (Jung 1968, 1995) However, the terminology, psychological methods and

⁸ For further reading see: Palmer M (1997) *Freud and Jung on Religion*.

theories applied by Jung frame his own understanding of the ancient models; in a 1936 lecture, Jung defined the Collective Unconscious as:

[...] a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition. [...] Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of *archetypes*. (Jung, 1968: 42, emphasis in the original)

Jung believed this autonomous psychic realm was a level of consciousness that everyone could tap into because it carries all *a priori* knowledge from the dawn of humanity. It is a pool of information, archetypes, symbols, and myths that is accessible psychically to all. In his text, *Psychology and Religion*, Jung states: 'The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes but in the living mental organism of everyone.' (Jung, 1938: 41) Jung believes the Collective Unconscious functions autonomously and brings to consciousness everything the individual needs on a psychic level.

What is both fascinating and frustrating about Jung's theory of the Collective Unconscious is that this realm of the psyche cannot be scientifically verified or proven (nor disproven) in any way. Jung views this autonomous unconscious realm as pure and uninhibited by consciousness. In analytical psychology, the Collective Unconscious is not only the key to an individual's potential as human being, it is also the key religious experience; Jung writes, '[...] the unconscious mind is capable at times of assuming an intelligence and purposiveness which are superior to actual conscious insight. There is hardly any doubt that this fact is a basic religious phenomenon [...].' (Jung, 1938: 45-6) Moreover, he theorizes that the Numinous is ever-present in the Collective Unconscious in the form of an archetype. According to Jung, this archetype (as all archetypes) present themselves to the individual from the Collective Unconscious in images, visions, and dreams. Jung's understanding is not so dissimilar from Christian or Jewish understanding; In Numbers 12:6 it is written: 'he said "Listen to my words: When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.'" (NIV) The significance of this numinous archetype shall be explored further in a following section. According to Jung, this archetype can present itself in a number of ways; however, it is the idea that the Collective Unconscious is the realm of the Numinous that connects Jung's theories to

theology in an intriguing way. Jung does not question the existence of the Numinous; rather, Jung's analytical psychology actively seeks an archetypal experience with the Numinous as archetype. (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 347) Jung's theories of the Collective Unconscious place the creation of the Numinous' *image* in the hands of humanity; his models appear to allow for personal discovery to enable one to live religiously or spiritually in harmony with whatever image of the Numinous resonates with them, in whatever belief system that individual may prefer.

1.2.1.2 Archetypes

The *archetypes* reside in the Collective Unconscious. Jung's archetypes are autonomous forces that act from the Collective Unconscious on the individual raising elements of the psyche that demand attention. (Jung 1968) The concept of archetypes permeates contemporary Western culture, and as discussed in the previous section its recorded origins date back to the beginning of Socratic and Platonic thought. CG Jung cannot be credited for coining the term as Jung himself states; "Archetype," far from being a modern term, was already in use before the time of St. Augustine, and was synonymous with the "Idea" in the Platonic usage.' (Jung, 1982: 103) Jung was responsible, however, for bringing this universal concept into the field of psychology and adapting Plato's theories of the Perfect Forms to the symbols and images presented by his patients.

Jung describes the archetype in Socratic terms as existing alongside the history of humankind. He states: '[...] the archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a *faculas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given *a priori*.' (Jung, 1982: 107) He goes on to say:

The primordial image, or archetype, is a figure - be it a daemon, a human being, or a process - that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. When we examine these images more closely, we find that they give form to countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, so to speak, the psychic residual of innumerable experiences of the same type. (Jung, 2003: 94)

Jung perceives the archetype as capable of independent action; 'The archetype is a force; it has autonomy. It can certainly seize you.' (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 294) The implication here is that an archetype can suddenly and unexpectedly rise from the Collective Unconscious and 'seize' one's psyche perhaps stopping all

other psychic functions and forcing immediate, conscious attention and action. As such, the archetypes are not only the contents of the Collective Unconscious; they are also the driving force behind the Collective Unconscious.

For Jung, the significance of the archetype was evident in his theories, models, and clinical practice; it was the cornerstone upon which his life's work rested. He truly believed that '[...] there are present in every psyche forms which are unconscious but nonetheless active-living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions.' (Jung, 1982: 107) Furthermore, Jung held that the archetype was central to the individual's connection to the '[...] *participation mystique of primitive man with the soil on which he dwells, and which contains the spirits of his ancestors.*' (Jung, 2003: 95, emphasis in the original)

On an individual level, whilst often unnerving, experiencing an archetype holds potentials that lead to personal transformation. However, on a collective level, the archetypes are the contents of the collective unconscious, and the archetypes also speak *to and from* a collective psyche. Jung explains:

[...An archetype] summons up a voice that is stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthrals and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind [...]. (Jung, 2003: 95-6)

The danger of archetypes, especially archetypes that summon 'the destiny of mankind' is their rejection. In *Aspects of the Feminine* Jung writes:

Whether he understands them or not, man must remain conscious of the world of the archetypes, because in it he is still part of Nature and is connected with his own roots. A view of the world or a social order that cuts him off from the primordial images of life not only is no culture at all but, in increasing degree, is a prison or a stable. (Jung, 1982: 122)

Jung goes on to say: 'Failure to adapt to this inner world is a negligence entailing just as serious consequences as ignorance and ineptitude in the outer world.' (1982: 93) In other words, Jung's primary concern in his theories and models was to get the individual to shift his or her focus from the outside world to the inner world of the psyche; through this individual transformation, one could, in Jung's views, then impart change into the world.

1.2.1.3 Jung's Shadow

A key construct of Jung's Collective Unconscious and archetypes is Jung's theory of the Shadow. Similar to the Anima archetype, Jung singles out the Shadow to define its importance. (Jung 1976) Of all the archetypes found in the Collective Unconscious Jung believes: 'The most accessible of these, and the easiest to experience, is the shadow, for its nature can in large measure be inferred from the contents of the personal unconscious.' (Jung, 1976: 145) In other words, Jung believes the Shadow is '[...] the negative side of the personality.' (Jung, 1976: 147) Although the Shadow will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter, it is important to note here, however, that Jung's concept of the Shadow has theological implications. As an archetype, the Shadow is a force of negativity that must be dealt with by the psyche of the individual. Jung's theories would offer an alternative to the theological construct of sin and evil as parts of ourselves that must be repressed and refrained from; instead, Jung offers a system whereby one must integrate and embrace one's shadow instead of running from it or suppressing it from consciousness. However, for Jung, ignoring the Shadow brings even further peril as then the negative side of one's personality is allowed, perhaps, to dominate uncontrolled. Jung writes: 'Although, with insight and good will, the shadow can to some extent be assimilated into the conscious personality, experience shows that there are certain features which offer the most obstinate resistance to moral control and prove almost impossible to influence.' (1976: 146) It is in this arena of the Shadow where Jung and theology once again intersect; Jung writes: 'In other words, it is quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognise the relative evil of his nature, but it is a rare and shattering experience for him to gaze into the face of absolute evil.' (1976: 148) Not only does Jung ask the individual to stare into the face of his or her own evil, he asks the individual to embrace this part of themselves as a natural element which is in direct opposition to the Christian doctrine of evil as the construct of Satan which must, at all costs to the 'salvation' of the individual, be avoided.

1.2.1.4 Union

Integral to Jung's theories and models is the concept of Western binary dualisms and a necessary union of psychological opposites. Metaphysical dualism, as first introduced by the ancient pre-Socratic Greek thinkers, is a field of enquiry which

centres upon an oppositional pairing of matter and spirit.⁹ Based on a system of two opposing forces, binary dualism has led to thousands of years of gender-bias and has become ingrained into our Western psyches. In her 1998 text, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, Grace Jantzen discusses a division that has existed in Western civilization from the beginning—the separation of masculine and feminine resulting from binary dualisms. Jantzen refers to this schism as: ‘[...] the pernicious effects of the sequence of binary dualisms on which much of the thought of the West has been constructed.’ (Jantzen, 1998: 266) Another key element that will be explored in the following chapters, Jung spoke at great length about the necessary unions of binary dualisms for one’s psychological health and well-being. He writes:

Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the *union of opposites through the middle path*, that most fundamental item of inward experience, which could respectably be set against the Chinese concept of Tao. It is at once the most individual fact and the most universal, the most legitimate fulfilment of the meaning of the individual’s life. (Jung, 1982: 94, emphasis in the original)

Jung places great psychological importance on these unions of opposites beginning with the union of conscious and unconscious mind (the first step on his Path of Individuation), the union of Light (as moral character often guided by the Anima who Jung conceives as the ‘angel of light’ (Jung, 1968: 29) and Shadow (one’s personal evil), the union of Anima and Animus (Feminine and Masculine), union of Eros (Intuition) and Logos (Logic), union of Mortal and Divine (Jung, 1968: 29), and, as exemplified in the citation above, the union of Western thinking (man separate from God) and Eastern thinking (man one with God).

1.2.1.5 Mythology

Mythology is also instrumental to Jungian and post-Jungian theories. In this case, mythology does not refer to ‘myth’ as a fabrication of the truth but ‘myth’ as story holding great power and potential. According to Jung:

⁹Thinkers and philosophers such as Anaximander (610–c. 647 BCE), Heraclitus (c. 540–c. 480 BCE), Empedocles (c. 490–c. 430 BCE), Anaxagoras (c. 500–c. 428 BCE), Pythagoras (c. 580–c. 500 BCE), and Plato (c. 428–348 or 347 BCE) were all working under the assumption of a system featuring two basic non-reducible substances, typically matter (or body) and spirit (or soul).

Mythology is a dramatization of a series of images that formulate the life of the archetypes. The statement of every religion, of many poets, and so on, are statements about the inner mythological process, which is a necessity because man is not complete if he is not conscious of that aspect of things. (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 348)

Like many of the theories of Jung, his construct of myth is important to one's psychological well-being and wholeness (Individuation). What is essential to note here, however, is that 'myth,' in this context, refers to a powerful story rather than a constructed falsehood. Each of the authors in this study speak about the power of myth as an aid and 'way of knowing' their archetypal experiences with Goddess: Downing begins by exploring mythic patterns while Bolen introduces the post-Jungian Monomyth; Kidd builds on the Monomyth and adds a feminine guiding myth whereas Starbird speaks of the power of myth to transform theology; Currott deals with myth differently than the others, often utilising 'myth' interchangeably between Jung's guiding myth and myth as a falsehood; and speaks at length in her memoir of breaking long-held falsehoods and myths. All of these uses of Jung's mythological process will be explored in the following chapters.

1.2.1.6 The Difficulties of Psychodynamic Theory across Cultures

Jung's theories are decidedly Western in creation, application, and boundary. To be more specific, there are difficulties when taking psychodynamic theory outside of Abrahamic Western cultures because the internal schism that Jung identified as prevalent in the West (see below) is *not* present in many of the non-monotheistic indigenous or Eastern cultures that dramatically influenced Jung and this theories. According to historian Bettany Hughes, Goddess is a part of the daily world and ritual in many cultures in to the East. (Hughes, 2012) This is evident in Ancient Eastern thought, philosophy, and faith traditions as there is a long history of balance between what are socio-culturally known as 'feminine' and 'masculine' traditions. This is apparent in the philosophies, practices and imagery of Taoism which features as its main symbol the harmonious balance of 'yin' (feminine) energy and 'yang' (masculine) energy.¹⁰ Union is especially prevalent and celebrated annually in the various Hindu faith traditions which feature a Divine Mother as Creatrix and Destroyer (Durga) alongside a hierarchy of male gods with Shiva reigning supreme. Jung spent several years studying Eastern philosophies

¹⁰ First referenced in the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes* by Lao Tzu c. 700 BCE.

(influenced in large part by his colleague and mistress Toni Wolff), and understood the trouble with the psyche in the West was this internal schism between the Christian dualisms and the resulting psychological imbalance of his Western patients. Jung writes:

The development of Western philosophy during the last two centuries has succeeded in isolating the mind in its own sphere and in severing it from its primordial oneness with the universe. Man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and eidolon of the cosmos, and his “anima” is no longer the consubstantial *scintilla*, or spark of the *Anima Mundi*, the World Soul. (1976: 481, italics in the original)

It is important to note that Jung’s understanding of the concept of ‘soul’ and theology’s understanding of ‘soul’ are different. Jung writes: ‘[...] we are not concerned here with a philosophical, much less a religious, concept of the soul, but with the psychological recognition of the existence of a semiconscious psychic complex, having partial autonomy of function.’ (1982: 79) Jung’s use of terminology such as *Anima Mundi*, or speaking of the cosmos from a psychological perspective has brought Jung much criticism for his unscientific and ‘mystical’ psychology. (Noll, 1994) Jung displays little patience with this particular criticism; in a 1955 interview Jung states: ‘Everyone who says I am a Mystic is just an idiot. He doesn’t understand the first word of psychology.’ (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 333) The lack of critical engagement on Jung’s part could certainly be a detriment to academic acceptance of Jung’s theories and models.

It is important to have a basic understanding of Jung’s theories of the Collective Unconscious, Archetypes, the Shadow, Union, and the significant role mythology plays in one’s psychological health and well-being because these theories, and post-Jungian revisions of these theories to be examined in a following section, permeate the five memoirs used as source material for this investigation. These authors speak of Jung and use his (and other post-Jungian) terminology throughout their memoirs; moreover, each author uses a Jungian or post-Jungian ‘way of knowing’ to understand, put into context, and embrace the personal experiences and conversion to a Goddess-centred faith tradition. Therefore, the psychodynamics (the unconscious, psychological forces that contribute to an individual’s particular beliefs and/or behaviour) of Jungian and post-Jungian theory are important components of the methodology of this enquiry. This understanding of depth psychology and psychodynamics is coupled with a

theological ‘way of knowing’ that incorporates psychodynamics and depth theology.

1.2.2 Depth Theology

A leading Jewish theologian and philosopher in the Twentieth Century, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) wrestled with ultimate questions and matters of religious belief and experience. Heschel is a Polish-born ‘descendant of two important Hasidic dynasties’ (Seltzer, 1980: 1) who immigrated to the United States following the atrocities of the Second World War. While the majority of Heschel’s theological writings are recognized, his pioneering *Depth Theology* contained within *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (2010 [1959]) is an oft-forgotten treatise on the psychodynamics of religious belief and experience. The theories and methods developed by Heschel in this text in particular are crucial to the methodology required to analyse the source material. Like Jung, Heschel struggled with the constraining and oppressive nature of religion and the institutions that seem self-indulgent rather than all-encompassing. Most of all, Heschel grappled with the nature and power of individual human experience of God. For both Heschel and Jung, religious experience was a fundamental human impulse. This impulse sat outside organised religion and its institutions; Heschel writes:

Religion has often suffered from the tendency to become an end in itself, to seclude the holy, to become parochial, self-indulgent, self-seeking; as if the task were not to ennoble human nature, but to enhance the power and beauty of its institutions or to enlarge the body of doctrines. It has often done more to canonize prejudices than to wrestle for truth; to petrify the sacred than to sanctify the secular. Yet the task of religion is to be a challenge to the stabilization of values. (Heschel, 2010 [1959]: 115)

In his assessment of organised religion Heschel states: ‘The trouble is that religion has become “religion” - institution, dogma, ritual. It is no longer an event. Its acceptance involves neither risk nor strain.’ (Heschel, 2010 [1959]: 3) It is this concept of religious experience as an ‘event’ that aligns Heschel with Jungian theory. Once familiar with Jungian theory, one can see the influences of depth psychology on Heschel’s construct of depth theology; he writes:

There is another component, however, which may be regarded as the vital ingredient, and yet because of its imponderable nature it often

escapes the eye of the observer. *It is that which goes on within the person: the innerness of religion.* Vague and often indescribable, it is the heart of religious existence. Ritual and myth, dogma and deed remain externals unless there is *a response from within the person*, a moment of identification and penetration to make them internals. (Heschel, 2010 [1959]: 116, emphasis is mine to highlight shared ideas between Jung and depth theology)

Heschel sought to challenge the way traditional theologians and religious praxis focused more on the institution than the individual. He believed this was a detrimental theoretical error to religious life and praxis; Heschel writes:

Theology has often suffered from a preoccupation with the dogma, the content of believing. The act of believing; the questions, What happens within the person to bring about faith? What does it mean to believe? - all this is the concern of a special type of inquiry which may be called "depth theology." (2010 [1959]: 117)

Heschel describes depth theology as '[...] the act of believing, its purpose being to explore the depth of faith, the substratum out of which belief arises.' (Heschel, 2010 [1959]: 117-18) He goes on to describe a depth theology that echoes the theories of Jung when he writes:

Depth theology must guide us in experiencing our own selves as well as the world in the light of the teaching we receive, in translating a thought into prayer, a doctrine into a personal response, to perceive a mystery as a challenge, a problem as a call addressed to our innermost selves. (2010 [1959]: 122)

Moreover, Heschel uses unorthodox terms in speaking about religious experience and depth theology; he utilises such words as 'evokes,' 'hopes,' 'responding,' 'appreciation,' (Heschel, 2010 [1959]: 118) and writes that '[...] depth theology deals with moments.' (2010 [1959]: 118) He goes on to draw analogies between depth theology and 'music' saying it is 'is in the hearts' of the individual. (2010 [1959]: 119) Heschel also echoes Jung's interest in interconnectivity when he writes: 'Theologies divide us; depth theology unites us.' (2010 [1959]: 119)

A review of Heschel's major writings reveals a number of Jungian ideas or influences. Focusing on the potential of the Numinous Self (an idea very similar to Jung's Individuation), and perhaps understanding the power of symbol, imagery, and archetypes, Heschel spoke of a personal religion outside any organized dogma

or creed. Robert M Seltzer comments on how Heschel's writing and theology are distinctive:

Heschel's literary style is unique among modern Jewish religious authors. Remarkable juxtapositions of the concrete and the abstract, suggestive similes and metaphors, striking aphorisms and extended images, concepts from classical and existentialist philosophy, are all used to evoke the numinous quality of the divine and the capacity for human self-transcendence. Heschel's aim is to *shock modern man out of his complacency and awaken him to the spiritual dimension fading from the contemporary consciousness*. (Seltzer, 1980: 1-2, emphasis is mine)

This description is remarkably similar to Jung; in fact, Heschel's and Jung's careers overlapped by over two decades; although Heschel distances himself from Jungian analytical psychology when he writes: 'To define religion primarily as a quest for personal satisfaction, as the satisfaction of a human need, is to make of it a refined sort of magic.' (2010 [1959]: 8) It seems, while Heschel is familiar with depth psychology and the theories of Carl Jung, he also is critical because Jung's models are based in analytical psychology and not directly connected to any Abrahamic faith tradition. Therefore, without the construct of religious belief, Heschel sees the psychological pursuit of the Numinous a definitely non-religious, and perhaps self-indulgent act. There is, however, a decidedly Jungian influence evident in Heschel's informed thinking; Seltzer, citing Heschel himself, describes a level of individual thought that very much resembles Jung's models of the Collective Unconscious and the archetypes but from a transcendent, theological perspective:

In Heschel's view, the basic intuition of reality takes place on a "preconceptual" level; a disparity always remains between what we encounter and how we can express our encounter in words: [...] "In our religious situation we do not comprehend the transcendent; we are present at it, we witness it. Whatever we know is inadequate; whatever we say is an understatement [...] Concepts, words must not become screens; they must be regarded as windows." (Seltzer, 1980: 2, citing Heschel)

These 'windows' (reminiscent of Jung's archetypes) reveal Heschel's 'preconceptual level' (reminiscent of the Collective Unconscious) which offers a means of reflection both of and on God. It was the individual's attempt to live a life of religiosity (akin to Jung's Individuation process) that Heschel sought to

understand. Therefore, in a study that is examining five individuals who have substantially altered their lives in order to seek out a life lived in religiosity with Goddess, the question that is integral to this study is the same as the one posed by Heschel. What is it that happens within the core of an individual emotionally, intuitionally and physically (for Jung this is psychodynamic) when they have an ineffable experience which compels them to pursue a religious life?

It is possible that Heschel utilised Jungian depth theory because Jung envisioned the whole Self as being the centre of the psyche with the ego subservient to the Self. Heschel echoes this construct when he writes: 'Depth theology warns us against intellectual self-righteousness, against self-certainty and smugness.' (2010 [1959]: 119) In other words, Heschel's depth theology seeks to shift the focus of the individual towards a whole being who has control of ego and subordinates its will to the religious Self—a theory that mirrors Jung's theory on the Self and ego.

In essence, *Depth Theology* is a psychodynamic reflection on the conscious and unconscious factors affecting religious behaviour—theology from the depths of the unconscious. Heschel incorporates elements of both William James and Jung's depth models and theories including James' inner religious authority, mystical and intuitive 'ways of knowing,' and the ultimate goal of 'Divine' Union. Although Heschel's depth theology has been vastly overlooked and ignored by contemporary theologians and theologists, it is an exemplary psychodynamic path that can be easily revised for theological psychodynamic enquiry.

The question remains: Why is Heschel (and Jung) for the most part, ignored by theologians, whilst central to some emerging theologies within the Western Goddess Movement? The answer may lie in both their criticisms and experience-based theories. Both Jung and Heschel challenge the status quo and speak of personal empowerment—a concept that is dangerous to institutions that rely on boundaries and compliance. Heschel writes: 'Theology speaks for the people; depth theology speaks for the individual. Theology strives for communication, for universality; depth theology strives for insight, for uniqueness.' (2010 [1959]: 119) Jung and Heschel each exist, in their respective fields, in the liminal fringes of their communities; they are radicals who are attempting to reform the traditions that they inhabit. Heschel understands that his theories are challenging; he writes:

‘We stay away from depth theology because its themes are not easily captured in words, because we are afraid of vagueness.’ (2010 [1959]: 119) However, these vague and ephemeral themes are precisely the territory of Jung’s analytical psychology. Together these psychodynamic ‘ways of knowing’ religious experience inform and shape my methodology. Both models need feminist revision to be of use in the development of the methodology for this enquiry. Jung is revised by post-Jungian feminists, and these necessary revisions will be examined in the following section. I only revise Heschel by removing his depth theology from the constraints of Abrahamic beliefs and applying it *theologically* towards the beliefs extolled in the memoirs at the heart of this study. By combining these two methodologies and applying those to a theological enquiry a new methodology may be construed: depth theology. However, the potentials this multidisciplinary methodology may hold for future academic enquiry will have to remain a subject matter for another investigation.

1.3 Jung’s Legacy

Over the decades of Jung’s career as the founder of analytical psychology, he posited a number of theories and models—the extent of which can be found in his massive *Collected Works*. Not all of Jung’s theories and models appear to be relevant or useful to the Western Goddess Movement, and only Jung’s primary theories on the Collective Unconscious, Archetypes, the Shadow, Union (as defined above) and his Path of Individuation are cited by the authors in this study. However the two Jungian models that seem to permeate the Western Goddess Movement, and certainly the memoirs in this study, are Jung’s Individuation and the post-Jungian transformation of Jung’s Anima and *Anima Mundi* archetypes. As the two salient features in the memoirs in this study they each require further examination; therefore, the Path of Individuation will be defined from Jung’s perspective, followed by an analysis of the transformation of Jung’s Anima archetype and various revisions found of post-Jungian thought.

1.3.1 Individuation

Individuation, as a psychological imperative, is the crux of Jung’s analytical psychology; he writes: ‘I use the term “individuation” to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological “in-dividual,” that is, a separate, indivisible unity or “whole.”’ (Jung, 1968: 275) According to Jung, this

psychological wholeness is actuated through a conflict between the conscious and unconscious minds; Jung writes:

Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too—as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an “individual.” / This, roughly, is what I mean by the individuation process. As the name shows, it is a process or course of development arising out of the conflict between the two fundamental psychic facts. (1968: 288)

Therefore *Individuation* is a process, based on opposing binaries, of attaining a harmonious balance or union between two psychic components (beginning with the union of conscious and unconscious and followed by a host of oppositional unions that will be examined further in the following chapters) into one cohesive and psychically-stable whole Self. This totality of Self, or psychological wholeness through union, was the aim of Jung’s psychotherapy. Individuation is an extremely difficult psychological process of long-term deconstruction that requires special (Jungian and post-Jungian) knowledge or trained assistance to navigate successfully (avoiding such potential complications as substantial psychological breakdown or neuroses). (Jung, 1968: 350) In the following chapters, I will examine five rebirth memoirs written by authors who all include Jungian and post-Jungian theory in order to tell their stories. Through these individual and diverse tales, it will become evident how intertwined Jungian and post-Jungian theory are with the thoughts and beliefs of the various faith traditions contained in the Western Goddess Movement. According to Jung’s theories, the first two memoirs will exemplify how to successfully navigate Jung’s Individuation with little psychological damage; the remaining memoirs, however, will reveal what happens to one who is either unlearned or refuses Jung’s Individuation.

In addition to having some special knowledge of Jungian and post-Jungian theory, it is also essential, according to Jung, to possess a ‘religious attitude.’ (Jung, 2001: 68) For Jung, it is more important to have religious faith rather than a belief in religious dogma. So in order to effectively navigate Jung’s psycho-religious Individuation, one needs to be equipped with both a basic understanding of Jung’s

theories as well as possess a religious attitude—which includes some belief in a Divine Source or Creator. Jung believes that a religious attitude and frame of mind are integral to Individuation; he writes: ‘With us, religious thought still keeps alive the archaic state of mind, even though our time is bereft of gods.’ (2001: 149)

It is also important to note that Individuation is understood as an inherent unconscious psychological drive for wholeness fuelled by the autonomy of the archetypes that will press themselves into consciousness despite any attempts at repression. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 294) The central element for Jung is that Individuation ‘[...] aims at a living co-operation [...]’ (Jung, 1976: 123) The living co-operation will be exemplified through the concepts of ‘being in relation to’, union, and the web of interconnectivity in the following memoir analyses. As the centrepiece to Jung’s analytical psychology, he asserts that Individuation stands above all other of humanity’s achievements in value and importance; he writes:

The great events of world history are, at bottom, profoundly unimportant. In the last analysis the essential thing is the life of the individual. This alone makes history; here alone do the great transformations first take place, and the whole future, the whole history of the world, ultimately spring as a giant summation from these hidden sources in individuals. In our most private and most subjective lives we are not only the passive witnesses of our age, and its sufferers, but also its makers. We make our own epoch. (Jung, 1970: 151)

Therefore, according to Jung, Individuation is as important to the individual as it is to the Western world. As Jung understood Individuation, one of the positive psychological outcomes would be to discover one’s reason for being (her or his affirmation of destiny). This acknowledgement of one’s true path is an important element in Jung’s process of Individuation and a required step before one can proceed further. However, the term Individuation is also used by Jung to describe the transformed *Self* after successful union and integration of opposing psychic forces. In Jung’s analytical model one can only attain true ‘Selfhood’ through Individuation because, for Jung, the Self is also an archetype. (Jung, 1976: 142) Confusion ensues because for Jung the term *Individuation* is used not only to indicate the process but also the psychological destination of wholeness. Having Individuation as the title for both the process and the end-goal can be confusing to readers unfamiliar with Jung’s theories.

To avoid confusion, I have opted to incorporate a term used by Jung (1995: 328) and widely used by post-Jungians, *Path of Individuation*, to differentiate *the process* from the fully Individuated Self, but also to acknowledge the Eastern-influenced religious aspects of Jung's theories and models. Especially with Jung's model of Individuation, the influences of Eastern traditions such as Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are evident. Jung perceived Individuation as the ultimate psychological state that each human being should strive for in order to be *psychologically healthy* and internally unified as an individual; according to Jung one who walks Jung's Path seeks self-enlightenment. Nonetheless Jung's focus on one's psychological health does not detract from the striking similarities between Jung's Individuation and the Buddhist Eightfold Path. Damien Keown, a Reader in Buddhism at Goldsmiths College, University of London writes: 'The Eightfold Path is thus a path of self-transformation: an intellectual, emotional, and moral restructuring in which a person is reoriented from selfish, limited objectives towards a horizon of possibilities and opportunities for fulfilment.' (1996: 56) This description of the Buddhist Path resembles Jung's Path of self-transformation on many levels including that both focus on replacing the ego as the centre of the Self and subordinating it to the full realised Self. Based on the similarities of the Buddhist 'Path' in Jung's theory of Individuation, the fact that all five authors in this study offer their rebirth memoirs as Paths for others to follow, combined with the assertion (an examination of which follows in chapter 2) that Jung's analytical psychology is arguably a religion, (Dourley, 2006; Noll, 1994; Wehr, 1987) the use of the term *Path of Individuation* appears highly applicable to describe what post-Jungian theologian John P Dourley deems a 'religious event.' (Dourley, 2006: 43)

It is interesting to note that out of all of Jung's theories that continue to permeate both contemporary post-Jungian analytical psychology and the Western Goddess Movement, Jung's Path of Individuation, other than being more appropriately named as a Path and being reshaped for women, has endured relatively unchanged as a theory. As will be evident in the following chapters, post-Jungians have expanded the writing on the various components and shifts of consciousness that permeate Individuation as a psychological event, but Jung's original model remains, essentially, intact. This is, perhaps, due to the fact that this particular model of Jung's is not a gendered construct as are his other theories and models; however, Jung's construct of Individuation is limited by the gender essentialist

nature of its author. The necessary feminist rephrasing would be completed by Jung's student, M Esther Harding, who created a Jungian Path of Individuation for women, and that model, as will be seen in the following chapters, will be accessible through the lens of five different analytic and religious foundations demonstrating the fluid nature of Jung's model of Individuation and its continuing importance and relevance as an accessible Path to Selfhood and Goddess in the Western Goddess Movement.

1.3.2 Jung's Anima

In its initial inception the Anima, as a Jungian archetype, is essentialist and gender-locked as the contrasexual feminine principle of man which Jung defines as 'an archetype that is found in men [...]' (Jung, 1976: 151) Jung further defines the Anima as '[...] a natural archetype that satisfactorily sums up all the statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind, of the history of language and religion.' (1968: 27) However, Jung firmly believed that only men possessed an Anima archetype (a gender essentialist concept that will be revised by several women who follow Jung). Jung wrote at great length about the archetypes of the Collective Unconscious but gave 'special reference to the Anima concept'. (Jung, 1968: 54) Jung wrote:

With the archetype of the anima we enter the realm of the gods, or rather, the realm that metaphysics has reserved for itself. Everything the anima touches becomes numinous—unconditional, dangerous, taboo, magical. She is the serpent in the paradise of the harmless man with good resolutions and still better intentions. (1968: 28)

While Jung aligns the Anima with the 'realm of the gods', he also images her as the snake in the Garden of Eden who tempted Eve to challenge God with a subtle critique of Christianity evident in much of Jung's writing. What is important to take away, however, is that Jung envisions the Anima as the purveyor of self-knowledge. Jung writes: '[...] for the anima can appear also as an angel of light, a psychopomp who points the way to the highest meaning [...]' (1968: 29) Jung further characterises the Anima in an Alpha/Omega pairing with his model of the Shadow that signifies not only both of these archetypes' importance to one's growth as in individual (Individuation) but also their importance as the beginning and end of one's Path:

If the encounter with the shadow is the “apprentice-piece” of the individual’s development [Individuation], then that with the anima is the “master-piece.” The relation with the anima is again a test of courage, an ordeal by fire for the spiritual and moral forces of man. (Jung, 1968: 29)

In essence, what Jung is saying is that in his model of analytical psychology the growth of an individual begins with an encounter with the Shadow and ends with a ‘relation with the anima’ (often described by post-Jungian feminists such as Downing, Bolen, and Perera as attaining Union with Goddess). This effectively outlines Jung’s Path of Individuation which shall be examined further in the following chapters, and as Jung’s himself states, the Anima is ‘numinous’, ‘dangerous’, ‘unconditional’, and ‘magical’. (Jung, 1968: 28) It is therefore not surprising that Jung has deified the Anima and refers to her as ‘[...] the latent primordial image of the goddess, i.e., the archetypal soul-image.’ (Jung, 1982: 10) Thus, Jung began with an archetype that was the essence of femininity within men, imbued her with divinity and referred to her as ‘goddess.’ This is not uncommon in Jung’s models as he believed ‘[...] the idea of a deity is not an intellectual idea, it is an archetypal idea.’ (McGuire and Hull 1977: 346) However, in his writings, it is the Anima archetype as Goddess that takes centre stage of Jung’s theories and models.

Jung makes special note of the ‘timelessness’ of the Collective Unconscious; he writes: ‘The anima and the animus live in a world quite different from the world outside—where the pulse of time beats infinitely slowly, where the birth and deaths of individuals count for little.’ (Jung, 1968: 287) What Jung means, in an extension of Platonic thought, (Jung, 1968: 4) is that the Collective Unconscious and the archetypes who inhabit it are all not bound by the constructs of linear time. If the Collective Unconscious can move outside of time then it is not constrained to our linear concepts of the past, present, and future. By extension, if the archetypes inhabit the timeless Collective Unconscious, then they, too, are timeless. In essence, this timelessness construct makes the archetypes, and most importantly, the Anima eternal. As timeless, eternal, *and* autonomous, the Anima has the power to emerge from the Collective Unconscious into an individual’s conscious mind in any form or dress; Jung writes: ‘The anima is conservative and clings in the most exasperating fashion to the ways of earlier humanity. She likes to appear in historic dress, with a predilection for Greece and Egypt.’ (1968: 28)

Downing and Bolen, both trained Jungians and the first two authors examined in this study, present the Anima as Goddesses from the Ancient Greek pantheon. Their use of the Greek Goddesses offers a validity to Jung's theories about the Anima's (Goddess') predilection to cling to earlier visions and forms of humanity. Jung however, does state that the Anima's form can vary by culture or individual and has a tendency to change over historical periods as well; Jung writes: 'To the men of antiquity the anima appears as a goddess or a witch, while for medieval man the goddess was replaced by the Queen of Heaven and Mother Church.' (1968: 29) So, as an autonomous and eternal archetype, Jung has imbued the Anima with tremendous psychological and spiritual power.

1.3.3 *Anima Mundi*

Anima's final transformation would be the most important to the Western Goddess Movement. In 'The Difference Between Eastern and Western Thinking' (CW, Vol 11, para 759-787, 1939), Jung calls the Anima the '[...] spark of the *Anima Mundi*, the World Soul.' (Jung, 1976: 481) Not a Jungian designed concept, the *Anima Mundi* is a vital force or principle which is conceived of as permeating the world. With the Anima already established as a numinous Goddess by Jung, (Jung, 1968: 28), the Anima (Goddess) is now aligned with the *Anima Mundi*. Both Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* would be further revised and *amplified* (or the projection the Anima and *Anima Mundi* archetypes onto existing religious or spiritual pantheons) by several influential and popular post-Jungians and become pivotal archetypes in the Western Goddess Movement.

While Jung's writings on the Anima were inspirational to his students and patients, they were problematic for many women who followed. There is no denying that Jung's original theories and models were sexist, gender-essentialist, and limiting. His writings are from the 'male' perspective and include only masculine pronouns which may be problematic to those who don't identify as male. He posits that women's psyches are less developed than men's (1968) and makes a number of detrimental statements about the analytical ability of women—especially prevalent in 'Aspects of the Feminine' (published posthumously as a collection of articles and extracts in 1982). However, this essentialist and gender-restricting bias eventually brought about feminist revision of Jung's theories beginning with his student Dr M Esther Harding in 1935. Post-Jungian revision could be considered

a tremendous positive outcome of his original gender-essentialist theories especially considering that these feminist modifications and following amplifications would be critical to adherents in the Western Goddess Movement. Feminist revisions of Jungian thought, particularly the role of the Anima in Individuation, were necessary in order to contribute further to the development of the Western Goddess Movement.

1.3.4 Revising Jung: Constructing Goddess¹¹

In the post-Jungian years, there would be a number of individuals who would revise or amplify Jung's theories with a feminist twist. Susan Rowland's *Jung: A Feminist Revision* (2002) is integral into my understanding of the varieties of post-Jungian revisions. Not all post-Jungian revision would be useful and integrated by the Western Goddess Movement. The first major revision of Jung's Anima would occur in 1935 when Esther Harding published *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern*. Post-Jungian Susan Rowland cites Harding as a 'key author' in the Amplification of Jung's Eros and 'Feminine Principle' (Anima). (Rowland, 2002: 56) Harding both embraced and revised Jung. Rowland writes: 'Amplifying Eros as 'the feminine principle' enables her to cover a far greater and more powerful range of qualities than those envisaged by her mentor.' (Rowland, 2002: 56)

In *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern*, which creates the first women's post-Jungian analytical psychology written specifically for women by a woman, Harding continues Jung's essentialist dualities with the Anima/Animus, but revised Jung by writing specifically to women and extolling the power of the female psyche; Harding writes: 'The neglect of the inner or subject aspect of life has led, particularly for women, to a certain falsification of her living values.' (Harding, 1971: 9) She presents an openly feminist model for the women who have recently been granted the right to vote and the introduction to Congress of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923. Harding writes: 'Our civilisation has been patriarchal for so long, the masculine element predominating, that our conception of what feminine is, in itself, is likely to be prejudiced.' (1971: 30) Harding calls for women to find a way to connect with Jung's Anima as Goddess and offers a rich and varied

¹¹ While a number of post-Jungians contributed to the revisions of and continuation of Jung's theories and models into present day, this section will cite specific individuals who I recognise as key contributors to the transformation of Jung's Anima to Goddess and Jung's *Anima Mundi* to the Great Mother worshiped in the Western Goddess Movement. It is in no way an inclusive or exhaustive list of contributors writing during this time period.

cultural and anthropological history of numerous societies who worshipped Goddess in the embodiment of the Moon. Harding not only revises Jung's essentialist theory by expanding the need to women, but she is also the first to amplify Anima to cultural and historical Goddesses providing her readers with a host of concrete manifestations of Jung's intangible Anima. Harding's work would serve as a source of inspiration for those who followed and demonstrate the potential in Jungian amplification; Erich Neumann would find great value in this feminist revision of Jung.

Erich Neumann, who studied with both Freud and Jung found himself 'Jung's anointed intellectual heir.' (Paglia, 2006: 3) Although Neumann's first recognised work would be what Paglia deems his 'first magnum opus' (Paglia, 2006: 4) in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1949) which included a foreword written by Jung, he is best known and certainly lauded in the Western Goddess Movement and by some feminist and post-Jungian feminists for his contribution *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (1955). Beautifully illustrated with 74 figures and 185 plates, Neumann amplified (projected) Jung's *Anima Mundi* archetype to that of Creatrix in *The Great Mother* offering the reader a vast array of images of Jung's *Anima Mundi* as Magna Mater. Post-Jungian and popular mythologist Joseph Campbell, a colleague of Neumann's, would follow Neumann's amplification of Jung's *Anima Mundi* and speak at great length about the Great Mother. (Campbell, 1949, 1986, 1988, 2001, and 2013) Christine Downing and EC Whitmont, both theorists in the emerging Western Goddess Movement, follow suit and continue the amplification of Jung's Anima and his Anima Mundi (Great Mother) to Ancient pantheons. (Downing, 1981; Whitmont, 1982) All five of the authors in this study amplify Jung's Anima (Goddess) and his *Anima Mundi* (Great Mother) in their memoirs thus continuing the post-Jungian amplification of Goddess and the Great Mother indicating both their prominence and relevance to adherents in the Western Goddess Movement. These post-Jungian revisions and amplifications of Jung's original theories and models will be examined in greater detail in the following chapters. However, revision of Jung was not limited to the world of analytical psychology or mythology. Theologians would also engage with post-Jungian theory on the Anima as Goddess.

In 1971 Ann Belford Ulanov, the Christiane Brooks Johnson Memorial Professor of Psychiatry and Religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and a

Jungian psychoanalyst, published *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*. Rowland cites Ulanov as a 'key author' in the extension and revision of the anima/animus. (Rowland, 2002: 52) Feminist critics have chastised Ulanov for continuing Jung's conception of the roles of anima and animus without critique (Rowland, 2002; Goldenberg, 1976); however, Ulanov did insist that 'the anima is not to be equated literally with real women.' Ulanov, however, did not become openly critical of Jung's sexist language until 1994. (Rowland, 2002) This was followed in a work co-authored with her husband Barry Ulanov in 1975, *Religion and the Unconscious*, and *Receiving Woman: Studies in the Psychology and Theology of the Feminine* in 1981 as a mere sample of the nineteen publications in which Ulanov brings Jung and his Anima into direct conversation with theological enquiry through the field of psychology of religion. Writing alongside other post-Jungians such as David L Miller (*The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods & Goddesses*, 1974) and John P Dourley (*C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich: The Psyche as Sacrament*, 1981) Ulanov worked to shift Jung's Anima (as Goddess) into to scholarly and theological discourse.

Not all post-Jungians would follow down Jung's experiential-based path however. In 1973 post-Jungian Archetypal Theorists James Hillman published a significant article entitled simply 'Anima' quickly followed by 'Anima II' in 1974. A decade later, Hillman introduced his own psychology, obviously influenced by his training with Jung, in *Archetypal Psychology* (1983). Hillman presents a school of post-Jungian thought based on the concept of psyche (or Anima) as a *non-religious*, psychological soul. This differentiates Hillman from Jung's Anima as *numinous centre* of the Collective Unconscious. Hillman distinguishes his theories from other post-Jungians within the field of archetypal theory because Hillman's Archetypal Psychology favours archetypal *analysis* over archetypal experience which permeates Jung's theories and some post-Jungian revisions; Archetypal Psychology centres upon the '[...] recognition of an archetype is a *valuing* process.' (Lauter and Rupprecht, 1985: 10, italics in the original) Valuing perspective over substance, Hillman would move away from the *archetypal experience* that is the centre of Jung's theories and models in favour of the *archetypal analysis* and value making his theories useless to post-Jungians who favoured archetypal experience as demonstrated in the source material. Other post-Jungians, however, would

make revisions that focus on the archetypal experiences exemplified in the five memoirs and analysed in the following chapters.

In 1976 Naomi R Goldenberg published an essay entitled 'A Feminist Critique of Jung'. In this essay, Goldenberg is openly critical of Jung's sexist language and models and calls for feminist scholars to 'confront the sexism of Jung's theories' which have been ignored by his followers. (Goldenberg, 1976: 444) Goldenberg writes: 'Beyond the overt sexism in Jung's concept of the feminine, a feminist critique must examine the inequity of the anima-animus model of the psyche, which is never challenged by any of his immediate circle of followers.' (1976: 445-46) Maggy Anthony, who studied and authored *Jung's Circle of Women* (1999) agrees with Goldenberg's assessment but also comments that 'It was no accident that he chose a woman to accompany him into the depths of his own unconscious [...] for him women and the unconscious were synonymous.' (Anthony, 1999: 103). A theory, however, can be inferred from Anthony's statement: the initial circle of women surrounding and collaborating with Jung (such as Toni Wolff, Marie-Louise von Franz, M Esther Harding, and Jolanda Jacobi) were part of his Individuation process, representing Jung's Anima archetype, and therefore unable to see the models and theories objectively. As ones so intricately connected both to Jung's own Individuation and to the development of the central models and theories he puts forth in his analytical psychology, perhaps Jung's circle of women were unable to see beyond their own contributions to the process itself as theory. It would be Harding who would revise Jung the most, but she never directly confronts his gender essentialism or sexism. Only the following generation was able to engage with Jung's theories critically: perhaps the reason for a lack of criticism from the first generation of Jungian women lies in their participation in Jung's development process whereas the second generation held an objective critical distance from Jung's theories and models.

Goldenberg wasn't only calling for a critical examination of Jung's sexist language and models, she also recommends fundamental changes be made to Jung's original gender-biased constructs; she states: 'I would argue that it makes far more sense to postulate a similar psychic force for *both sexes*.' (Goldenberg, 1976: 447, emphasis is mine) Goldenberg suggests that the Anima-Animus archetypes be removed from biological gender and the fundamental restrictions these forms of gender essentialism contain. Goldenberg's call for a deconstruction of gender

from Jung's theories and models would lead to important changes in post-Jungian theory that would be instrumental to the feminist adherents in the Western Goddess Movement. Rowland cites Goldenberg alongside Demaris S Wehr as a 'key author' in *Feminist Theorist* examining Jung from other disciplines. (Rowland, 2002: 84) She states that Goldenberg, while influenced by Hillman, differs from him in that she insists on the archetypal image 'as a vehicle of *cultural* expression.' (Rowland, 2002: 84, emphasis in the original)

Goldenberg is critical at a time where change is prevalent on political, cultural, and academic fronts. During this historic period the Equal Rights Amendment is passed by the US Congress in 1971 quickly followed by Title IX of the Education Amendments which bans sexual discrimination in the schools; *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 establishes a woman's right to safe and legal abortion; and a host of publications by feminist thinkers exemplify the drastic political and social upheaval occurring parallel to a new shift in feminist religious thought, the inclusion of women to the American Academy of Religion, and a new emerging concept of the post-Jungian Goddess. The Western Goddess Movement evolves at the peak of the second wave of feminism in the United States and the writings and revisions seem to follow Goldenberg in droves. As expanded upon in much greater detail in Appendix A: 'Timeline of Events and Publications in the Western Goddess Movement—1840-2013' the preponderance of significant literature demonstrates how the writings of the second wave of feminism aided in the expansion and amplification of Jung's *Anima* (Goddess) and *Anima Mundi* (Great Goddess or Magna Mater) and how those models are carried forward into contemporary times. The importance of the historical and cultural setting for the development of the Western Goddess Movement is reflected in the following chapters.

Further feminist transformation of Jung's *Anima* would be explored by a number of scholars in the 1980's. Now openly critical of Jung's gender essentialism, some of these feminist revisions would build on Jung's perception of the *Anima Mundi* as the world's salvation from the failure of patriarchy and logos-centred thinking in a movement Rowland calls 'Goddess Feminism'. 'Goddess Feminism' will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3; what is significant to note at this time is that 'Goddess Feminism' is a direct descendent of Jung. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* Jung writes: 'It is from the depths of our own psychic life that new

spiritual forms will arise; they will be expressions of psychic forces which may help to subdue the boundless lust for prey of Aryan man.’ (Jung, 2001: 221)

Goddess Feminism, as a reformation of Jung, could not have come about without making all the critiques and changes recommended by Goldenberg the decade before:

Feminist scholars must examine the very idea of archetype in Jungian thought if sexism is ever to be confronted at its base. Indeed, if feminists do not change the assumptions of archetype or redefine the concept, there are only two options: either (1) to accept the patriarchal ideas of the feminine as ultimate and unchanging and work within those or (2) to indulge in a rival search to find female archetypes, ones which can support feminist conclusions. (Goldenberg, 1976: 447-48)

Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen rises to Goldenberg’s critique in 1984 with her publication *Goddesses in Everywoman* and removes the anima/animus from bodily gender and gender essentialism. She presents anima/animus as elements of Goddesses for women, removing gender binaries as well as the inherent opposition in Jung’s original anima/animus construct. In the foreword to *Goddesses in Everywoman* Gloria Steinem, a renowned and vocal feminist, writes: ‘The author’s sensitive analysis of archetypes takes them out of their patriarchal framework of simple exploits and gives them back to us as larger-than-life but believable, real women.’ (Bolen, 2003 [1984]: xii)

A number of significant writers contributed to this transformation of Jungian Anima to post-Jungian Goddess including Christine Downing’s rebirth memoir *The Goddess* published at the same time as Sylvia Brinton Perera’s *Descent to the Goddess* (1981). Rowland cites both Downing and Perera as ‘key authors’ in post-Jungian Goddess Feminism alongside EC Whitmont (*Return of the Goddess* in 1982) and Jean Shinoda Bolen’s *Goddesses in Everywoman* in 1984. (Rowland, 2002: 56-60) Through the projection (‘amplification’) of the Anima and the *Anima Mundi* onto existing cultural and mythological figures such as the Ancient Greek pantheon of gods and goddesses, these writers forever transform Jung’s Goddess and become an integral part of the dramatic growth of the Western Goddess Movement in the past few decades.

There was a perceptible shift in the 1980's whereby a vast majority of post-Jungians used Goddess in their titles to concretise the transition from Jung's Anima to a post-Jungian immanent/transcendent Goddess at the centre of various belief and worship in the Western Goddess Movement. Scholarship continues to posit Goddess and is exemplified in the works of Demaris S Wehr, *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes*, and Woolger & Woolger's *The Goddess Within: A Guide to the Eternal Myths That Shape Women's Lives*, both published in 1987, and Joseph Campbell publishes his interviews with Bill Moyers as *The Power of Myth* in 1988 which features the segment 'Gift of the Goddess'. These works, among other influential figures who were not post-Jungian in the early Western Goddess Movement such as Merlin Stone, Starhawk, Carol P Christ, Sallie McFague, and Nelle Morton would lay the fertile ground for women's stories of the post-Jungian Goddess. The 1980s also saw the birth of this post-Jungian movement's counterpart—Feminist Archetypal Theory.

1.3.5 Feminist Archetypal Theory

In 1985 Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht published the anthology *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought* which included contributions from Lauter and Rupprecht as well as Demaris Wehr, Annis V Pratt, and Sylvia Briton Perera. In the Introduction, Lauter and Rupprecht discuss why they revise Jung as feminists; they write: 'By associating men with thought, the cultural category with the higher value in the twentieth century in most Western societies, he helped to perpetuate the inequality of women.' (Lauter and Rupprecht, 1985: 5-6) Rowland, who categorises Lauter and Rupprecht along with other notable post-Jungians, offers this definition:

Feminist archetypal theory is a Jungian feminism devoted to uncovering the traces of women's unconscious in the arts and across cultural boundaries. It can be socially oriented in looking for cultural pressures and effects within the feminine psyche. Yet it can never be a materialist feminism, because it retains the core Jungian notion of the creative *otherness* of the unconscious. (Rowland, 2002: 86, italics in the original)

Rowland credits Lauter and Rupprecht with a dual inheritance from both Neumann and Hillman's Archetypal Psychology; Rowland writes: 'Both archetypal psychology and feminist archetypal theory reject the transcendent archetype for the immanent image. From this point differences start to emerge.' (2002: 85)

While Archetypal Psychologists and Feminist Archetypal Theorists are contributing to the ongoing discussion about the necessity of Jung's archetypes to psychological health—especially the importance of the Anima or Eros, they all vary from Jung and the post-Jungians in the Western Goddess Movement by one crucial feature—*they reject the transcendence of, and therefore the autonomy of the archetype*. This salient feature differentiates Feminist Archetypal Theory from Goddess Feminism and, by extension, the Western Goddess Movement. As the following chapters will demonstrate, in contrast to archetypal theory, the five memoirs at the centre of this study reveal an autonomous post-Jungian Goddess (Anima) and Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) who is both immanent and transcendent (in a Jungian understanding) of physical form. Jungian and post-Jungian theory based on *archetypal experience* is prevalent in the memoirs in this study and also prevalent within the Western Goddess Movement indicating that Hillman's revisions of Jung and Feminist Archetypal Theory, while highly successful and useful in a clinical setting, are not useful theories and models to either understand or examine the experiential archetypal Jungian and post-Jungian psychology as found in the memoirs. What Jung focuses on and is revealed in all five of the rebirth memoirs in this study is an *experiential* 'way of knowing' and understanding archetypes. Hillman and Feminist Archetypal Theory favour the *archetypal analysis* over the *archetypal experience* that was the centre of Jung's theories.

The endurance and resonance of Jungian and post-Jungian thought into contemporary times (nearly 100 years after Jung published his doctoral thesis and entered the psychological debate) is exemplified in the five memoirs at the centre of this study. Although a number of Jungian and post-Jungian theories are included in the memoirs such as Jung's theory on the archetypes (revised by post-Jungian feminists), his theory on the Collective Unconscious (which is based on Platonic thought), the Shadow, and his concept of Synchronicity (meaningfully related simultaneous events) are all discussed or mentioned in the memoirs. However, it would be Jung's theory on Individuation, aptly renamed the Path of Individuation, and the post-Jungian revisions and amplifications of Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* archetypes that would be the most prominent features in the authors' memoirs and in the wider Western Goddess Movement in general. This study will reveal that there is extensive literature within the Western Goddess Movement, as exemplified by the memoirs in this study, that offers readers a 'way of knowing'

aligned with Jung's Path of Individuation and centring around Jung's Anima as Goddess and *Anima Mundi* as Great Mother or Magna Mater. As the following chapters will illustrate, this literature builds on Jungian and post-Jungian theory and represents a variety of perspectives. The memoirs demonstrate the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the development of the Western Goddess Movement— and the significance of the Movement as part of Jung's legacy.

1.4 An Exploration of Gender and How it Relates to Jung and the Development of the Western Goddess Movement

The socio-cultural construct of gender as binary is both at the heart of Jung's original theories and is central to the post-Jungian revisions of Jung's theories to make them more applicable, useful, and relevant to adherents within the Western Goddess Movement. Post-Jungian feminist revisions have been taken even further into the gender debate by postmodernists, and the resulting revisions of Jung's theories place the binary of gender and its constructs centre stage. The following analysis will examine gender in Jung's original theories, Goldenberg's 1976 call to remove gender from Jungian theory, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, and criticisms that the Western Goddess Movement upholds the patriarchy. Further exploration of gender will examine how post-Jungians revised Jung's gender essentialist theories based on Goldenberg's 1976 criticism to remove the binary gender constructs completely from post-Jungian 'Goddess feminism' theory, examine the difficulties of feminist theory without binary gender constructs, introduce Harding's concept of the 'virgin,' and explain how 'amplification' (or projection) of Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* archetypes appears to be a central revision that is also necessary for the development of a non-gender restricted Goddess found within the memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement. These crucial revisions of Jung begin with the second wave of feminism in the United States and continue into contemporary times through the lens of postmodernism.

1.4.1 Gender in Jung

Based on the binary dualisms of heteronormative gender constructs, Jung's original theories separate women from the anima and men from the animus archetypes. Moreover, by Jung aligning his 'feminine' and 'masculine' constructs

exclusively with either the animus (for women) or anima (for men) he inherently limits the psychological growth potential of the individual regardless of gender alignment; Goldenberg writes in her 1976 essay 'A Feminist Critique of Jung':

This concept of archetype allows Jungians like Erich Neumann and Esther Harding to write studies on the "archetypal" nature of the feminine psyche which are based on their subjective selection of mythological material to document preordained conclusions. Feminist scholars must examine the very idea of archetype in Jungian thought if sexism is ever to be confronted at its base. Indeed, if feminists do not change the assumptions of archetype or redefine the concept, there are only two options: either (1) to accept the patriarchal ideas of the feminine as ultimate and unchanging and work within those or (2) to indulge in a rival search to find female archetypes, ones which can support feminist conclusions. (1976: 447-48)

Several post-Jungians appear to employ Goldenberg's second option and publish their search for female archetypes who can support feminist theories as rebirth memoirs; this is exemplified in this study through Christine Downing (1981) and Jean Shinoda Bolen (1994) both trained Jungian analysts who have actively participated in a post-Jungian 'Goddess Feminism' revision of Jung's theories. Jung's gendered restrictions, however, are problematic as they extend to all his psychological constructs including Logos (logic and reasoning and a 'masculine' trait) and Eros (intuition and empathy and a 'feminine' trait). By restricting these constructs to biological gender essentialist forms, Jung posits all women as illogical because they do not possess a Logos-centred 'way of knowing'; if, perchance, a woman does possess Logos, Jung considers this an 'regrettable accident' and believes it is the cause of 'misunderstandings' and 'annoying interpretations' within family situations. (Jung, 1976: 152) Goldenberg is justifiably critical of Jung when she writes: 'Once she moves into a Logos arena, she is not only at a great disadvantage but is behaving unnaturally as well.' (Goldenberg, 1976: 445) What is evident is that Jung's original theories and models were gender biased and sexist thereby limiting the potential psychological Individuation of all genders. Goldenberg is significant as the first to call for feminist gender revision of Jung, and a number of post-Jungians who follow build on her recommended changes and critiques.

1.4.2 The Difficulty of Gender Normativity in the Source Materials

With the second wave of feminism came an exploration of gender outside the binary construct which included examining the inherent difficulties that gender constructs and heteronormativity continue to play in perpetuating the masculine/feminine gender binaries as the socio-cultural norm. The gender normativity expressed by Jung is continued, in some part, by the authors in this study through their use of the heteronormative masculine/feminine partnership expressed through marriage. While this socio-cultural concept of marriage is discussed in four of the five memoirs, not one of the authors address the problem of utilising this heteronormative construct for readers who may not identify through this dualistic either/or lens. Despite the fact that the source material contains personal accounts rather than an academic analysis, most of the authors are critical of Jung's essentialist tendencies yet appear oblivious to their own perpetuation of this hetero socio-cultural norm. It is problematic because by placing the hetero masculine/feminine as the 'norm' anyone who identifies outside of that binary construct would be considered 'abnormal.' The further detriment to the potential reader, in the context of this study, is it could make the memoirs inaccessible to some readers in that if they do not align with the heteronormative bias included in the memoirs, they may not find a useful Path to follow. It must be noted, however, that the source materials for this study, while exemplary of the memoirs found within the Western Goddess Movement, were written prior to the gender studies explosion that happened at the turn of the twenty-first century and continues to-date. While these memoirs are certainly relevant to track the development of Jungian and post-Jungian theory within the Western Goddess Movement, they are less helpful when it comes to dealing with the problem of gender and the perpetuation of essentialist constructs in Jungian and post-Jungian theory.

1.4.3 Judith Butler and Gender Performativity

Feminist theorist and philosopher Judith Butler is a Freudian postmodernist who posits an alternate gender identity theory in a socio-cultural environment that upholds the heterosexual norm as valid and true. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) Butler examines the construct of gender identity and offers a commentary on the difficulty of the heteronormative assumption; she writes:

The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one. (1990: 9, italics in the original)

Removing gender from bodily sex, Butler maintains, according to Susan Rowland, that ‘bodily discourse is constitutive and non-foundational’ (Rowland, 2002: 142); for Butler, gender is ‘performative’. (Butler, 1990: 185) Butler challenges the assumptions of the categories of male and female and claims that gender is not something we are born with but a result of repeated performance indicating that she believes gender is an ongoing process: ‘In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organising gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality.’ (Butler, 1990: 185-86) Through her restructuring of gender as performative, Butler is also destabilising the socio-culturally and politically-gendered heteronormative body. Butler argues against the cultural assumption that the heteronormative is the original construct and any deviation from this ‘norm’ is then a perversion of the original. Moving beyond the confines of binary dualism in gender, Butler sees possibilities for the advancement of a plurality of genders:

If sex does not limit gender, then perhaps there are genders, ways of culturally interpreting the sexed body, that are in no way restricted by the apparent duality of sex. Consider the further consequence that if gender is something that one becomes—but can never be—then gender itself is a kind of becoming or activity, and that gender ought not to be conceived as a noun or a substantial thing or a static cultural marker, but rather as an incessant and repeated action of some sort. (Butler, 1990: 152)

Butler’s theories are useful when analysing the gender difficulty with Jung’s original theories. If, as Butler suggests, gender identity is independent of bodily sex, then the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ binaries extolled in Jung’s original theories *can be removed* from the sexed body and dealt with as a stand-alone construct of personal evolution. The removal of gender identities from bodily gender will be an important revision made by some post-Jungians who agree with

Butler's assessment, but first, we must see if there is any common ground to be found dialectically between feminist postmodernism and Carl Jung.

1.4.3.1 Butler and Jung

Susan Rowland acknowledges that postmodern feminist Butler and gender essentialist Jung might find common ground; she writes: 'Where Jung reveals feminist value is that, in his work as a whole and on alchemy in particular, there is a recognition of the limitations of heterosexual opposition. What is cast out, what is structured as an abject body, must be reconfigured *within*.' (Rowland, 2002: 145, italics in the original) To understand gender identity as a psychological or external process rather than a bodily construct is potentially fertile territory between postmodernism and Jungian theory and offers an opportunity to critically examine the difficulties of gender in Jung's original theories. Rowland writes:

We could apply Butler's ideas to Jung and suggest that Jungian psychology is yet another gendering discourse that relies upon the 'other' that it, itself, generates. Jungian theory *produces* the unknowable unconscious that it relies upon as its "ground" so that it may shore up the gender oppositions that maintain its bias towards heterosexuality. (2002: 143, italics in the original)

If Jung's theories are reliant on his essentialist gender binary construct and the use of gender discourse as relying on the 'other' then how can his theories offer anything of value to post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung? Should his theories not be completely dismissed in favour of some feminist-friendly alternative? While there certainly are problems and challenges that must be addressed in Jung's original theories (and many will continue to be addressed in the following chapters), it seems evident through the memoirs that Jung's theories hold something of value for the women who are utilising them in contemporary times. How are these women reshaping Jung's gendered discourses about the other, in ways that differ from Freudian approaches (such as Butler's or Goldenberg's)? Susan Rowland agrees that Jung holds value for feminist revision and theory:

True, Jung does try to emphasize oppositions in the psychic unions of individuation. He does employ gender, abjecting the feminine in order to do so. / Nevertheless, unlike the psychoanalytic [Freudian] tradition that Butler draws upon, Jungian subjectivity is not predicated upon a "lack" (castration anxiety) in its relation with the other. Rather, the Jungian psyche is structured upon multiple, goal-directed unions. (Rowland, 2002: 143-44)

Rowland makes a crucial point; for Freudian feminists, their starting position is the need to address the supposed lack of a phallus which is part of Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Whereas Jungian theory, while requiring revision to remove the gender essentialism and sexism, starts from a point of union—of possibility—of potential. There remains difficulty inherent in Jung's model of union which constructs an 'other' with which to unite. However, it may be an advantage to Goddess Feminists that the first union in the Individuation process is with the Shadow, rather than with a contrasexual other. Perhaps this is a large part of the draw of Jungian theory to some feminist theorists and adherents within the Western Goddess Movement. Post-Jungian feminist Demaris S Wehr also appreciates the core value of Jung's theories to feminist theory:

The primary appeal of Jung's psychology to women, it seems to me—based partly on my own experience—is that it is a “meaning-making” psychology. From within the Jungian framework, dreams, fairy tales, myths, and other forms of folk-lore contain wisdom and direction for our lives. Meaning is also found in dialogue with one's “inner figures,” who present themselves in dreams. Jung's psychology can open up new worlds [...]. For Jung, the unconscious was the source of creativity hitherto unexpressed. Analytical psychology offers a balance to an overly rational, materialistic world and can shed light on the darkness of a soul lacking meaning. It can be the path to a person's spiritual awakening. (Wehr, 1987: 6)

Wehr summarises what is evidenced in the memoirs—despite the fact that there are difficulties with Jung's original theories, there is an inherent value in his construct of analytical psychology and the workings of the psyche in a continuous drive toward union and wholeness that appears to be an integral component of the memoirs and various sects within the Western Goddess Movement. Each of the authors in this study utilises Jung, or post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung's theories (often based on Goldberg, 1976) as an accessible and relevant Path for their individual awakenings to a form of Goddess-centred faith tradition.

1.5 Post-Jungians and Gender Revision

There have been a number of revisions to Jung's theories by post-Jungian feminists that are not considered postmodern but have still made a significant contribution to the development of post-Jungian theory. As mentioned previously and will be exemplified in the following chapters Christine Downing and Jean Shinoda Bolen are both trained Jungians who have made significant revisions and contributions

to Jung's theories and offer a post-Jungian feminist 'way of knowing.' Susan Rowland examined the various post-Jungian feminist movements and situates both Downing and Bolen as significant writers of Goddess Feminism revisions of Jung; Rowland writes:

An already existing body of Jungian narratives of gender can be found in the proliferating stories of goddess feminism [...]. These texts do not define themselves as postmodern. On the contrary, they amplify Jungian concepts to suggest a grand narrative purporting to "explain" culture, gender, and religion. Despite this, a postmodern Jungian feminism could "recycle" these works as exercises in speculative fiction and performance. Goddess feminism performs narratives of the feminine in that it allows readers (and analysts and analysands) to *experience* a new story of being. It is possible to experience these stories at a profound psychological level [...]. (2002: 150, italics in the original)

The texts of which Rowland speaks are exemplified by the five rebirth memoirs that serve as source material for this investigation. It is interesting to note Rowland's use of the term 'performance' in describing these narratives is indicative of the gender performativity of Butler. Is there perhaps more common ground between Butler and post-Jungian theory in the performativity of psychological transformation? What these authors do, however, is continue to perpetuate the confines of bodily gender inherently problematic in Jungian theory. Nevertheless, as Rowland mentions, a postmodern lens can be used to analyse these memoirs as stories of being and becoming. Rowland explains why Jungian theory is still relevant and applicable for feminist revision because: 'For a Jungian, a female body is as capable as a male body of becoming a powerful symbol. This is because, although the body contributes to meaning, it does not govern it.' (Rowland, 2002: 112)

There is, however, an important and useful element to the archetypes that most gender theorists miss when criticising the gender essentialism found in Jung's theories. For Jung, while he described the archetypes in gendered terms and constructs, the archetypes and the Collective Unconscious are both, in Jung's original theories, androgynous. (Jung, 1982) Rowland writes: 'Before accusing Jung simply of sexist essentialism, we need to remember that unconscious archetypes are all androgynous and plural.' (2002: 40) Moreover, through Harding's removal of Jung's Anima (Eros or the 'feminine principle') from the

constraints of the male psyche, the Anima as archetype is thus available and necessary to the psychological health and well-being of women as well as men. This important first step would be echoed by all of the authors in this study, but what is also present are multiple understandings of gender revision available in post-Jungian theories. Downing, Bolen, and Kidd all speak of the androgynous nature of the archetypes but favour a 'feminine' form of Anima over other gender possibilities. This is because, according to Rowland; '[...] gender becomes the principle means by which oppositional thinking is expressed in Jungian ideas.' (Rowland, 2002: 139) Oppositional thinking or binary dualism is at the heart of Jungian analytical psychology as the psyche unconsciously strives toward Individuation and wholeness (Jung, 1968: 275); Wehr writes: '[...] every archetypal image consists of two poles—a "negative" and a "positive." Tension between the oppositions in the psyche is central to its functioning.' (1987: 44) However, gender does not have to be part of the construct of oppositional psychic pairs moving towards unity.

1.5.1 Two Critical Revisions: Removing and Reinterpreting Gender

There appear to be two indispensable revisions to Jungian theory that are employed and integrated by the authors in this study in relation to gender: (1) the first revision is to remove gender completely from all of Jung's constructs; (2) the second revision is to posit gender as fluid and not reliant on bodily sex. Both of these revisions will be examined further.

Removing gender from Jung's constructs means removing the essentialist nature of the Anima/Animus archetypes and Eros/Logos as gendered 'ways of knowing.' This allows these psychological constructs to be available to everyone regardless of gender identification. Rowland perceives this revision as a way to 'evade the reductive nature of Jung's identification of sex and gender [...].' (Rowland, 2002: 55) Rowland cites a number of individuals as key authors in this post-Jungian revision including Harding, Neumann, Ulanov, and Whitmont. (2002: 54-60) Through the process of essentialist gender removal, the Anima is transformed from a man's contrasexual component to Anima as archetype of Compassion and Connection (capable of birth, death, creation and destruction) whose Eros 'way of knowing' is then transformed from a gendered female trait to a source of intuitional and empathetic 'ways of knowing' not confined to any bodily gender.

Conversely, Animus is removed as a woman's contrasexual component to Animus as archetype of Warrior and Willpower (capable of great strength and perseverance) whose Logos 'way of knowing' is then transformed from a gendered male trait to a source of logical and pragmatic 'way of knowing' not confined to any bodily gender and accessible to all. These ungendered constructs are found in all of the memoirs in this study. Each author employs this necessary revision of Jung in order to dialogue about the psychological imperative that requires a union of these binary oppositional archetypes now removed from gender, so much so that this particular post-Jungian feminist revision of Jung will be well exemplified in the following chapters including a variety of applications of this revision. It is important to note that the term 'feminine' is used throughout, however, this too has, in post-Jungian revision, been removed from gender essentialism. Rowland writes: 'The term "feminine" could be a floating signifier, without secure, complete, or mastering definition. It is then up to culture and political transformations to create new, changing meanings for the feminine in an ever-evolving representative culture.' (Rowland, 2002: 149) It is this revised post-Jungian construct of 'feminine' now removed from bodily gender essentialism that is utilised throughout this study and found in all but one of the memoirs. This revision is lacking in one of the memoirs (Starbird's *Goddess in the Gospels*) because Starbird does not utilise any feminist revisions of Jung and will be examined further in chapter 5.

The second major revision appears to be a direct outcome from the androgynous nature of Jung's archetypes and collective unconscious. If the Anima and Animus have been removed from bodily gender and represent an archetypal psychological union that is integral to one's psychological health and well-being, then the socio-cultural gender constructs of 'feminine' and 'masculine' are destabilised and challenged. If one individual, regardless of gender identity, can incorporate these psychic 'masculine' and 'feminine' archetypal unions, then that individual possesses a notion of gender that is an unconventional alternative to the Western binary either/or notion of gender. The notion of gender as not an absolute bodily construct is another area where Butler and Jungian theory meet; Butler writes:

If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity. (1990: 186)

However, despite post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung's theories that remove his theories and constructs from their initial gender essentialism, this is not a postmodern revision of Jung and there is an important difference between Butler's theories and some post-Jungian revisions when it comes to an understanding of gender. For Butler, gender only exists in performance and is a fabrication (Butler, 1990: 186); however, some post-Jungians revise the heteronormative duality in gender based on the androgynous nature of the Collective Unconscious and archetypes to posit a 'gender fluid' construct. Rowland writes: 'Body cannot simply equal psychological gender if the psyche is itself gender fluid.' (2002: 40) Consequently, for both Butler and some post-Jungians; 'Gender *has* to be a process.' (Rowland, 2002: 40, emphasis in the original) For Butler that process is dependent upon performativity, and without this process, gender wouldn't exist; Butler writes:

Because there is neither an "essence" that gender expresses or externalises nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. (1990: 190)

Butler's postmodern feminist theories are useful in understanding the gender revisions being conducted by a number of post-Jungians and also how gender can be perceived irrespective of biological body making her theories useful as a critical lens. Jung's gendered archetypes are similarly destabilized by Goddess feminists who use performances of union rather than parody in order to problematize essentialist notions of gender.

1.5.2 The Difficulty of Gender for Feminism and Religious Enquiry

There are political implications for the deconstruction of gender; political action, especially geared towards feminist revisions, historically required a stable identity of 'women' to work with as subjects of transformation. If gender's association with bodily essentialism is disrupted, how then can political changes be effected towards a 'gender' that, according to Butler, doesn't exist ontologically? Butler writes: '[...] it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.' (1990: 4-5) Is it possible that the disruption of gender is only promising in theoretical situations such as scholarly analysis while not considered a plausible revision in

political scenarios where a stable construct of 'women' is required to advance political agendas? Moreover, is it possible for a feminist movement to actively include all individuals who self-identify as female without some form of gender essentialist platform? These questions are important to consider, but the political implications of problematizing gender are not the primary issue in this study although political movement is intricately connected to the advancement of both feminism and the various faith traditions that belong to the Western Goddess Movement. Perhaps this is an indication that Jungian theory as well as post-Jungian theory, as a psychological path towards unity and well-being, can disrupt gender essentialism as a useful and relevant Path for others to follow while the advancement of political agendas is, and must be, tied to some stable construct of women in order to advance true socio-cultural change. In which case, post-Jungian theory might not be suitable for the advancement of political agendas, but highly suitable for a revised construct of the psyche and the wholeness of self that extolls a feminist agenda.

Naomi Goldenberg has been critical of this form of post-Jungian revision. Goldenberg has always seen Jung's theories as a form of religion, and she is critical of Goddess Feminists such as Downing and Bolen for upholding patriarchal values. In a lecture delivered at the University of Stirling in 2012, Goldenberg was speaking on the topic of women in religion. She takes issue with this post-Jungian revision because what they have created (a Goddess-centred form of worship) is now being 'reduced to a religion'. (Goldenberg, 2012) The trouble for Goldenberg is that what was originally posited as a 'wild' alternative to existing patriarchal faith traditions, this movement has lost its wild nature by offering 'another of the same'—because the construct of religion 'champions male dominance.' (Goldenberg, 2012) Goldenberg calls to move beyond religion as a concept. I do understand Goldenberg's critique, and it is valid; however, there might be alternative approaches to this difficulty. In her third plenary address at the 2012 Sacred Practices in Everyday Life Conference, Linda Woodhead suggests that we 'bring power dynamics to the fore in religion' and reconstruct the way theologians interpret 'religion.' (Woodhead, 2012) Not in favour of discarding 'religion' as a category completely as Goldenberg suggests, Woodhead states that current research evidence indicates there are two types of religions: (1) 'Tactical religion attempts to re-sacralise and locate the sacred' and focuses on the 'personal inner

space’; whereas ‘Strategic religion seeks to control’. (Woodhead, 2012) Woodhead argues that the ‘balance is shifting towards tactical traditions’ in the United Kingdom. (Woodhead, 2012) American Robert Orsi presented at the first plenary at the same conference as Woodhead, and he concurs with her assessment at the growth of ‘tactical’ religions in the West—including America. (Orsi, 2012) I would tend to agree with Woodhead and Orsi and see the potential of reconstructing the way we understand religion in a plural nature rather than discarding the category forever as far more beneficial for theological and theological enquiry. Using Woodhead’s constructs, I would argue that the post-Jungian ‘religion’ being offered in these memoirs¹² is ‘Tactical’ and is attempting to locate the sacred in Jung’s Collective Unconscious, Anima and *Anima Mundi*; it most certainly focuses on what Woodhead calls ‘personal inner space.’ (Woodhead, 2012) That being said, adherents appear to be making their own choices, and ‘spiritual but not religious’ affiliation is rising.¹³

1.5.3 Christ, Downing, and the 1971 American Academy of Religion

Gender had one other significant contribution to make to the development of the Western Goddess Movement. Carol P Christ recounts this moment in a 2011 blog entitled ‘Forty Years and Counting: Women and Religion in the Academy’ (Christ, 2011), and I summarise, with Christ’s permission, the main events herein: In this article Christ details how she proposed to form a feminist caucus in the field of religion. Based on the consensus of her colleagues and peers, Christ requested space on the American Academy of Religion (AAR) programme for the conference in Atlanta later that year. To her surprise she was provided with a list of all the female AAR members—which at most was 30-40 women in total. Christ invited them all including, amongst others, Christine Downing, Mary Daly, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Elaine Pagels, Nelle Morton, and Sallie McFague to attend the meetings in Atlanta. As a result of this first meeting at the AAR, Christine Downing was nominated and then elected as the first female president of the AAR. Mary Daly became the first woman to chair the Women and Religion working group. They also voted through a Task Force in the AAR on the status of women in theology and religious studies. Downing would be the first to chair this Task Force.

¹² I presume what appears in the memoirs is a form of post-Jungian religion as will be examined further in the following chapters.

¹³ Pew Research Centre 2012 accessed at: <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise-religion/> last accessed 23 January 2016.

Later, Fiorenza and Christ became the first co-chairs of the Women's Caucus for a joint meeting of the AAR and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL). This moment in history encapsulates an important positive impact of the second-wave of feminism in the US to the fields of theology and religious studies—the substantial development of feminist theologies and theologues in the 1970s and beyond. This feminist shift in gendered studies would not only offer an area of unexplored expansion for female theologians, it also offered the various faith traditions within the Western Goddess Movement much-needed credibility, academic validation, and serious momentum.

As evidenced by the above examinations, gender, Jung, and post-Jungian theory are intricately and sometimes problematically connected. The gender essentialist and sexist theories of Jung were called into question in 1976 by post-Jungian feminist Naomi Goldenberg, and the inherent difficulty of gender normativity in the memoirs was also examined. An interesting discourse between postmodern feminist Judith Butler and Jungian and post-Jungian theory was also developed to further explore the difficulties of gender essentialism in Jung's theories. The second generation of post-Jungians that includes Downing and Bolen revise Jung's theories based on Goldenberg's 1976 critique and offer two solutions of the difficulty of gender: one removes bodily gender essentialism from Jung's theories completely; the other posits gender as psychologically fluid. This was followed by an examination of how feminism as a political mandate is impossible without a stable gender construct. A brief analysis of Goldenberg's 2012 criticism that post-Jungian Goddess Feminism offers merely a furtherance of patriarchal religions followed with Woodhead (2012) contributing alternative constructs of religion as 'tactical' and 'strategic'. These necessary revisions exhibit how feminism has had a tremendous influence on Jungian and post-Jungian theory, and how numerous forms of gender revision were required in order for Jungian and post-Jungian theory to be relevant and useful enough for Western women to have a significant impact on the development of the Western Goddess Movement; further analysis will follow in the following chapters.

As we move toward the critical analysis of the five rebirth memoirs, it is important to remember that the burgeoning Western Goddess Movement did not originate in 1981 with the publication of Christine Downing's memoir, *The Goddess*, nor did it begin with the second wave of feminism in the West (1949). I believe this

Movement is a product of timing: key socio-cultural and political transitions in the *first wave* of feminism in the United States were as important as the introduction of Jungian theory—they were happening alongside each other. A substantial number of cultural and historical events in the early twentieth century helped to shape and facilitate the Western Goddess Movement. Alongside the first wave of the Women's Rights Movement (1840-1924) William James introduced three key elements of religious experience in 1902 that would be embraced by Jung and the Western Goddess Movement: (1) inner religious authority, (2) mystical and intuitive (Eros) 'ways of knowing', and (3) the concept of Divine Union. Fourteen years later, Carl Jung's 1916 publication of *Psychology of the Unconscious* introduced his theories of Individuation, the Collective Unconscious, archetypes, and incorporated the three elements of James' theory that he found useful. In 1935, M Esther Harding would be the first to revise Jung's theories and models from a woman's perspective - offering women a unique 'way of knowing' created by a woman. These events were taking place in conjunction with the historical passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution which granted women the right to vote (1920) and, by extension, the right to self-determination, and the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Congress in 1924. The collective contributions of James, Jung, and Harding prior to the start of the second-wave of feminism indicates that this movement can trace its genesis to the first wave of feminism. Later contributions by Erich Neumann, Carol P Christ and Christine Downing, EC Whitmont, and Jean Shinoda Bolen, which will be examined throughout this study, indicates that in the development of Jungian and post-Jungian theory a number of key events and individuals contributed to the fertile women-conscious terrain in which the Western Goddess Movement would emerge, evolve, and take hold.

1.6 In the Following Chapters

Chapter 2, *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine* by Christine Downing. As a foremother to feminist theology, thealogy, and the Western Goddess Movement, Christine Downing's memoir and her engagement with both Jung and Harding will be examined at length in this chapter—as well as addressing some of the major criticism of Jung and post-Jungian thought that are applicable to all of the memoirs in this study. This chapter shall reveal how Downing constructed her memoir based on Jung's Path of Individuation by examining

several Jungian concepts including the Archetype, Shadow, Jung's affirmation of destiny, the post-Jungian and feminist union of Anima/Animus or Eros/Logos, and Harding's concept of the 'Virgin'. Downing is the first to publish, and her memoir would be significantly influential to those who follow.

Chapter 3, *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage* by Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD. The analysis in this chapter shall include not only the content of the memoir using the critical analyses established in the introduction, but also Bolen's substantial contributions to the Western Goddess Movement, the advancement of her concept of 'Goddess Consciousness' in the West, and her amplification (projection) of Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* through the Ancient Greek pantheon. This chapter will reveal how Bolen builds upon Jungian theory and includes post-Jungian critique and revision and is the first to offer her readers a bridge from psychological theory to religious beliefs and praxis by including ritual in her memoir.

Chapter 4, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine* by Sue Monk Kidd. This chapter will demonstrate how Sue Monk Kidd discovered and utilised Jungian and post-Jungian theories and models to create a 'way of knowing' Goddess specific to Christian women who are in what Kidd deems as a 'deep sleep' (denial of the patriarchal dominance within the Church). Kidd introduces herself as a 'Reluctant Pilgrim' and through Kidd, we see the shift from rebirth memoir as a shared personal story to a memoir specifically written to incite dialogue, criticism and followers. It is the first memoir to include a study guide—offering the reader a more thorough 'way of knowing' Goddess as a post-Christian.

Chapter 5, *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine* by Margaret Starbird. This chapter will examine how Margaret Starbird utilises her 1998 memoir, *The Goddess in the Gospels*, to further her theories posited in *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* (1993). However, the analysis will also reveal how Starbird amplifies (projects) Jung's original gender essentialist Anima archetype as the essence of what Starbird understands as the 'Feminine Divine' onto Christian myth in the figure of Mary Magdalene as the Bride of Christ while examining the critiques and controversies surrounding Starbird's research and theories as it investigates the continuing thread of ideas from Jung into

contemporary Christianity. Starbird, it will be revealed, will discover Jung in perhaps the least likely place of all—the Church.

Chapter 6, *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess* by Phyllis Curott. This chapter shall examine Phyllis Curott's memoir, *Book of Shadows*, and its main intention to break the socio-cultural stereotype and change the 'world's prejudice' against Curott's faith tradition—Wicca. (Curott 1998, 55) Curott, like the authors before her, also utilises and cites both Jungian and post-Jungian theory; however Curott is distinct in this study as she fluidly blends Jungian and post-Jungian theory with modern-day Wicca and quantum physics. *Book of Shadows* also exemplifies the extent in which Jungian and post-Jungian ideas and beliefs have woven their way into contemporary faith practices in the West, including the Wiccan tradition. By utilising and incorporating both Jungian and post-Jungian theory, Curott is also validating their significant and ongoing contributions to the Western Goddess Movement.

Chapter 7, *Drawing Conclusions*. The final chapter shall assess why Jungian and post-Jungian theory is still relevant and significant to the authors in this study and the Western Goddess Movement. It will synthesise how Jung and post-Jungian theory is used in the memoirs including a brief study of their unified presentation of Jung's *Anima Mundi* and the difficulty in being a non-Jungian 'Reluctant Pilgrim'. The significant contributions of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the Western Goddess Movement are summarised.

Chapter 2

The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine

Christine Downing

1981

*It is my experience that the myths we enter most deeply
are not the ones that we choose out of some book of myths.
Rather, in some profound way, these myths choose us.¹⁴*

2.1 In Summation

In the previous chapter the research question, methodology, and source material were outlined; a basic understanding of Jung's analytical psychology followed where Jung's major legacies were examined; it concluded with an exploration of gender and how gender revision was critical to post-Jungian theory and the Western Goddess Movement. As a foremother to feminist theology, thealogy, and the Western Goddess Movement, Christine Downing's memoir and her engagement with both Jung and Harding will be examined at length in this chapter—as well as addressing some of the major criticism of Jung and post-Jungian thought that are applicable to all of the memoirs in this study. This chapter shall reveal how Downing constructed her memoir based on Jung's Path of Individuation by examining several Jungian concepts including the Archetype, Shadow, Jung's affirmation of destiny, the post-Jungian and feminist union of Anima/Animus or Eros/Logos, and Harding's concept of the 'Virgin'. Downing is the first to publish, and her memoir would be significantly influential to those who follow.

2.1.1 Christine Downing, PhD (1931-)

The first author in this study, Christine Downing, began as a student of theology. After attaining a PhD in Theology and Culture from Drew University (1966), Downing held two consecutive Postdoctoral Research Fellowships: 1967 at Yale in Comparative Literature; and 1968 at the University of Tübingen where she served

¹⁴ Downing C (2007 [1981]), 27.

with the Theological Faculty. In 1979, Downing's academic interests shifted from theology towards psychology, so she returned to university and, in 1982, completed both a Master's degree in Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy, and a Certificate in Gestalt Therapy. Downing's later studies were greatly influenced by the Depth Psychology models of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis and his contemporary CG Jung's Analytical Psychology. After which, Downing's teaching, research, and publication not only included theology and religious studies but also depth psychology. To this day, Downing continues her academic career combining the disciplines of theology and religious studies and psychology as Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies, San Diego State University and Professor of Mythological Studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute, a university dedicated to Depth Psychology.

2.1.2 *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine* (1981)

The first memoir to be examined, *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*, is distinctive in many ways. For the purposes of this summary, the focus shall be on two important features of the memoir: structure and psychology. First, the organisation of Downing's memoir is not linear (containing a beginning, middle and end) as would be typically expected with a memoir chronicling a specific period in a person's life. Downing's memoir, rather, is a collection of experiences, mixed with psychological interpretation revealed through her interaction with seven Ancient Greek Goddesses (Persephone, Ariadne, Hera, Athene, Gaia, Artemis, and Aphrodite)—each having their own chapters. Downing writes: 'These chapters interweave childhood memories, dreams from many different periods, and a complex history of identifications.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 1)¹⁵ *The Goddess*' structure differs from traditional literary expectations because Downing's journey is not linear—although it is progressive; it is a recollection of a constantly-evolving psychological expedition. Downing writes: 'I speak of the goddesses in the order in which I experienced them speaking to me.' (ibid: 248) This provides the second distinctive feature of Downing's memoir. As a psychological expedition *The Goddess* offers readers what Jungians would refer to

¹⁵ Although dreams are also an important part of Jung's analytical psychology and are included in the memoirs in this study, the analysis of Downing's dreams is not included in this summary to focus on Downing's memoir as a Path of Individuation. Due to the size constraints of this thesis, dreams will not be included as a subject of enquiry in this analysis.

as an ‘individuation autobiography’ or memoir. (Rowland, 2002: 63) Jung’s concept of the process of Individuation, or complex ‘self-realisation’, (Jung, 1976: 122) was discussed in the previous chapter. For Jungians and post-Jungians like Downing, *Individuation* means attaining psychic wholeness because, for Jung, it is ‘the central concept of my psychology’. (Jung, 1995: 235) *The Goddess*, therefore, cannot be examined without also briefly considering Jung’s concept of Individuation and how Downing utilises this framework to construct her memoir.

2.1.2.1 The Path of Individuation

Examined as part of Jung’s legacy in the previous chapter, the *Path of Individuation* represents Jung’s model of the autonomous drive to be a ‘whole’ person—unified in mind, body, and spirit/soul. While not a linear Path, Jung’s model of Individuation contains a number of crucial steps, shifts, or conscious integrations that must be achieved in order to progress to the final goal or ‘masterpiece’ of Individuation which is union or ‘relation with’ Anima (Goddess). (Jung, 1968: 29) Downing’s memoir, *The Goddess*, utilises three crucial Jungian steps along the Path of Individuation as constructs for her memoirs; they are: confronting and embracing one’s personal Shadow, recognising and pursuing one’s Affirmation of Destiny, and embracing the psychological and spiritual Union of opposites inside one’s psyche. These three objectives, expressed by Downing through her engagement with various Greek goddess archetypes—the amplified Anima and *Anima Mundi*--do not express a chronological order; rather, as this Path is a long-term psychological process, these three objectives overlap, interconnect, and progress only when the individual is mentally ready to work towards another step along the Path. However, Jung notes that the Shadow is often the first obstacle encountered once the unconscious mind makes itself known. (Jung, 1976: 145) Although Downing does not outwardly structure her memoir in relation to these three dominant Jungian theories, they are evident through a close reading, and Downing speaks with extensive knowledge about these components in relation to the various goddess archetypes easily lending the memoir to an examination through the Path of Individuation. Therefore the summary of *The Goddess* will be in relation to Downing’s three dominant objectives beginning with the Shadow.

2.1.2.2 The Realm of the Shadow – Persephone and Hera

In order to attain *Individuation* and wholeness it is imperative in Jungian analytical psychology that one engage with the Shadow archetype. (Jung, 1976) Engaging

with the Shadow often leads to a form of psychological deconstruction. In *Aion*, Jung writes:

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. (1976: 144)

If this first step is met with considerable psychological resistance, then why would one start the Path of Individuation with the Shadow? Post-Jungian Demaris S Wehr writes:

[Jung] felt that in the course of individuation a person usually encounters the shadow before other archetypal images because it primarily comprises factors in the personal unconscious rather than the collective unconscious, although it has elements of both. The shadow is therefore closer to consciousness and easier to come to know. (1987: 59)

It may be the closest archetype to consciousness, but dealing with the Shadow challenges the foundations of the individual's psyche. The Shadow encompasses the dark side of humanity—thoughts and actions which are considered theologically, socially, or culturally inferior. The Shadow holds our human frailties and shortcomings such as greed or jealousy. In Western society the Shadow is understood as the primal 'animal' and negative side of the human species. In *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung comments on how the Shadow contains psychic realities the individual needs to be able to understand and embrace (instead of fear and repress) within themselves. (Jung, 1968) As a Jungian, Downing understands the importance of integrating the Shadow and confronts her personal Shadow through her interactions with the Goddesses Persephone and Hera as she embarks on her Path of Individuation.

'Persephone in Hades'¹⁶

The first Goddess in Downing's life was the Ancient Greek Persephone. "“Always” as far back as I can remember I have been Persephone.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 33) Downing writes: ‘This was a goddess to whom I had felt close since I was a

¹⁶ When discussing the individual goddesses, I utilise Downing's descriptive chapter titles for ease in cross-textual reference.

very young child when my mother introduced me, born on the vernal equinox, to the Greek goddess of spring.’ (ibid: 27) Despite knowing and relating to Persephone all her life, Downing had continuously identified only with Persephone as the Maiden archetype—young, innocent Persephone who brings forth purity, fertility, and potential alongside her mother Demeter. This is Persephone *before* her abduction and forced marriage by Hades. Downing describes the tragic consequences of the Maiden’s capture: ‘[...] she reaches out and is taken, the lover is deeply familiar *and* a stranger, she is still the person she was (Demeter’s daughter) *and* so changed that she will never be the same again. (ibid: 43, emphasis in the original)

Once abducted, Persephone’s life and sense of identity becomes *convolutedly interconnected* with her mother, Demeter, and her husband, Hades.¹⁷ In Jungian terms, Persephone is a ‘dependent’ Goddess—defined by and *dependent upon* her relationship to others. This means that Persephone finds her sense of Self not ‘individually’ but in relation to ‘others’ (in this case her mother and husband). In Jungian psychology, confronting, accepting and ultimately incorporating one’s Shadow leads to compassion and understanding of the ‘Other’ as a separate entity outside of the Self. This understanding of the ‘Other’ includes accepting the unconscious nature of the personal Shadows of Others, and it is an important integration both in analytical psychology and for Downing as seeing the ‘Other’ takes one outside of one’s Self and away from an ego-centred life. Jungian EC Whitmont writes; ‘Caring for and respecting others in their true otherness is an indispensable first step of individuation.’ (1982: 201)

Hades’ action would force the creation of a new Persephone archetype—an alternate dark Goddess: Persephone as Shadow. Through her daughter/wife dichotomy, Persephone represents Life (the Maiden) when living above in the mortal realm with her mother Demeter and Death (Shadow) by living below in the Underworld with Hades. With each return to the Underworld, Persephone embarks on a dark transformation not only as the wife of Hades but also, in and of herself, as the Queen of the Underworld—fully embracing her own chthonic aspect; Downing writes: ‘[...] the goddess of the underworld is still a deep mystery to me.

¹⁷ For more information see: **Spretnak C** (1989) The Myth of Demeter and Persephone. In: Plaskow J and Christ CP (eds) *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 72-76.

I am pulled to the underworld and return. She remains. / The goddess who rules in Hades represents the mystery of the unknown, its fearfulness and its unforgivingness.’ (2007 [1981]: 50) In this case, death is the ‘mystery of the unknown,’ for death is unforgiving and claims everyone. For Downing, her encounter with the Shadow also demands her acceptance and understanding of the psychological death necessary to help facilitate this transformation.

In an excerpt from her own life, Downing relates how connecting with the Persephone Shadow archetype brought her face-to-face with her own psychological death; she writes:

A few years ago, I participated in a visionary experience in which I felt myself pulled to my own dissolution. I felt myself being pulled toward death or to a state that was indistinguishably death or madness and I felt very powerfully my fear of that—and particularly my fear of my fear. I discovered that night how afraid I was (and have always been) of being anxious, fearful, weak, helpless. But somehow I let myself fear and I let myself go mad and I let myself die—because I realized that this dying that I felt happening to me was a kind of unending fall into nothingness, nothingness, nothingness. (2007 [1981]: 47)

Being pulled to the Underworld, the realm of the chthonic Persephone, invoked feelings of anxiety, fear, weakness, and helplessness in Downing—natural human responses that are often socio-culturally seen as weak and denigrated as undesirable effeminate traits.¹⁸ However, fear, weakness, and helplessness were the Shadows that Downing had to face. Her Path of Individuation would require that Downing consciously accept these fears and weaknesses alongside the unconscious reactions they manifest as accepted partial aspects of her Self as a greater whole. Persephone’s lesson was that without weakness and fear one cannot truly know strength and courage. What remained was Downing’s fear of the ‘unending fall into nothingness’ which represents the black void of the unknown. The only way to know death is to encounter death. Therefore, encountering the Shadow archetype as Persephone means learning that death, the great unknown, remains unknown, and that, too, is part of the balance. For, while Downing had gained valuable knowledge in her journey into the Underworld with Persephone, she also learned that ‘the mystery of the unknown’ needs to be

¹⁸ For more see: **Muna J** (2014) *Women and False Choice: The Truth about Sexism: How to Fight Sexism in the Workplace*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press.

embraced as well. By facing the Shadow personified in the Persephone archetype, Downing is facing her own conscious and unconscious fears. Through working with the Shadow archetype, Downing is able to understand not only that she holds fear, weakness, and helplessness, but also that she must overcome these base human urges if she is to become whole. For Downing, this would also include understanding where these fears came from. In the initial phase of psychological transition and growth, Downing would question her understanding of power, gender, and the positive role that fear can play in one's psychological development.

'Coming to Terms with Hera'

While Persephone is a Shadow archetype when imprisoned in the Underworld, Hera is a Shadow archetype constricted by marriage. Of all the Goddesses in the Ancient Greek Pantheon, Hera is the one perceived as the epitome of submission and self-disempowerment. Downing writes: 'For Hera the relation to husband takes precedence over all other relationships. At least on Olympus [...] Hera was not the Great Mother but rather the spouse.' (2007 [1981]: 76) She goes on to write: 'Hera's absolute commitment and fidelity is at the very heart of her self-image.' (ibid: 77) In other words, Hera represents an archetype that many women do not necessarily want to face or emulate—Hera is the woman who unquestioningly submits to the authority of man; Downing writes:

Hera represents that moment of transition between matriarchy and patriarchy when both mother-right and father-right are honoured. This is a moment the myths never catch [...] because all that is ever visible is the move from one exclusive claim to the other, in the myths Hera is represented as the *goddess who has capitulated*. (ibid: 92, emphasis is mine)

Hera is often described as an immortal possessed with the worst of mortal failures such as petty spite and insecurities: 'Hera's gynophobia like her jealousy is part of what makes her unattractive to women and makes us reluctant to recognize her role in our lives.' (ibid: 83) For it is Hera's Shadow nature that has garnered her a negative reputation. Determined to find a way to bond with Hera, Downing writes how she struggled: 'The Hera of Olympus does not like women—or being a woman—at all. She is singularly without any positive relation to other females [...].' (ibid: 83) During her early marriage to Zeus, Hera was isolated from other women, in part, because of her deep fear and shame of Zeus' adulterous

tendencies—her fear of Zeus’ personal Shadow. Downing is unable to find a connection to this negative and self-defeating aspect of Hera, but she doesn’t elaborate as to a cause or reason. This may mean that Downing, herself, has not had to deal with infidelity and/or jealousy in a marriage, so she struggles to relate to this part of Hera’s nature. This struggle, however, is temporary.

Downing re-connects with Hera once she leaves Zeus. Unable to endure the shame and rage over his infidelities any longer, Hera leaves Mt Olympus and returns to her home. During this time, Hera continued her isolation. Downing surmises: ‘Perhaps Hera had only really discovered her essential aloneness within the relationship, and could only learn what genuine relationship might be in solitude.’ (ibid: 95) Hera eventually returns to Zeus, but she has changed—transformed into a less dependent woman. Downing writes: ‘On the other side of patriarchal marriage, the longing for a fully mutual and sustained primary relationship persists.’ (ibid: 95) Downing finds strength in Hera’s return to Zeus because instead of returning subservient, Hera returns seeking a fulfilling relationship—she returns to the relationship but now the terms are hers. The Hera who capitulated has transformed into one more aware of her own emotional and psychological needs. Downing writes: ‘What Hera means is the strength not to pretend that some lesser gift is the fulfilment nor to deny the longing.’ (ibid: 95) Consequently, Hera’s ancient story offers a useful commentary on gendered and social expectations of fidelity in heteronormative marital relationships in contemporary times and the problematic assumption of gendered roles—men are typically considered to be unable to quell their own human desires or exhibit self-control (and by extension not responsible for their own actions) while women are typically expected to be understanding and forgiving of men’s actions. Through Hera, Downing has discovered a way of challenging the social gendered expectations of fidelity and the expected gendered response in marital relationships. Hera did not return to Zeus because she forgave him; Hera returned to Zeus to fulfil her own needs—a longing for a ‘fully mutual and sustained primary relationship.’

In the end, coming to terms with Hera as Shadow proved to be more psychologically fulfilling than Downing had anticipated. Through Hera, Downing learned that the Goddess who capitulated transformed through self-imposed marital separation and solitude into the Goddess who longs for a fulfilling relationship. Moreover, Hera offered Downing something of great significance both

to Downing's own Path of Individuation and to her memoir, *The Goddess*: '[...] a way of naming experience more true to its complexity and depth than could have been possible in less symbolic language.' (ibid: 71)

Travelling through the realm of the Shadow with Persephone and Hera forced Downing to examine her personal Shadow—her own fears of weakness, helplessness, and death (Persephone) alongside her fears of dependence, capitulating, and submitting her will to others (Hera). Downing's encounter with both Persephone and Hera as archetypal wives also allowed her to engage with the difficulties of inflicted patriarchal power and gender limitations by finding unique ways to withdraw from these methods of oppressive masculine authority. For Hera and Persephone, this time removed from the marital relationship was the chrysalis period of their psychological and physical transformations symbolised through a form of psychological death and rebirth, allowing both Persephone and Hera to return to the realities of social and personal expectations with their now redefined roles as married women. Through Downing's engagement with the Persephone and Hera archetypes, Downing also came to understand the importance of the Shadow in herself and in Others. She has been able to break through the Western socio-cultural barrier of death as feared and reviled to a place where psychological and physical death have their rightful place alongside psychological and physical life. As Jung proposed in *Aion*, one can attain psychological enlightenment and important self-knowledge through the Shadow. (Jung, 1982) Now equipped with a better understanding of her own personal Shadow, and conscious of the personal Shadows of others, Downing could explore the affirmation of her destiny through the Goddess archetypes of Aphrodite and Ariadne.

2.1.2.3 The Affirmation of Destiny – Aphrodite and Ariadne

For Jung, Individuation is an autonomous process that changes the centre of the psyche. As Wehr explains: 'The self [...] governs the whole process of individuation. Gradually the self displaces the ego as the centre of consciousness.' (Wehr, 1987: 54) In other words, once the Shadow has been thoroughly engaged and embraced, the individual has shifted from self-absorbed ego-centred psyche to a Self who, while having an ego, has the strength and ability to see and empathise with the 'Other'. This shift in centre does not come without struggle, sacrifice, or risk. Breaking beyond safe psychological boundaries and being open

to making mistakes are an important part of the Individuation process. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung writes:

[...] when one follows the path of individuation, when one lives one's own life, one must take mistakes into the bargain; life would not be complete without them. There is no guarantee—not for a single moment—that we will not fall into error or stumble into deadly peril. We may think there is a sure road. But that would be the road of death. Then nothing happens any longer—at any rate, not the right things. Anyone who takes the sure road is as good as dead. (1995: 328)

Jung does not mean that one dies a physical death, but that failing to follow one's true Path of Individuation can lead to psychological stagnation and inability to grow as an individual which can lead to psychological breakdown (or psychological death that Downing mentioned previously) and/or various neuroses. Jung only came to these conclusions after he himself suffered a life-threatening illness and faced the Shadow of death. (Jung, 1995)

Despite the risks, and thereby possibly implying that the ends justify the potentially psychologically hazardous means, Jung goes on to speak about the importance discovering one's affirmation of destiny plays in one's Individuation; he writes:

It was only after the illness that I understood how important it is to affirm one's own destiny. In this way we forge an ego that does not break down when incomprehensible things happen; an ego that endures, that endures the truth, and that is capable of coping with the world and with fate. Then, to experience defeat is also to experience victory. Nothing is disturbed, neither inwardly nor outwardly, for one's own continuity has withstood the current of life and of time. (1995: 328-29)

In other words, the affirmation of one's own destiny provides the continuity of Self in relation to others necessary to endure struggle and Shadow. The ego does not break down because the Self is aware of the larger goal—a fully realised and whole individual. The ability to be an enduring Self, even when faced with what Jung calls 'incomprehensible things,' is an important part of Individuation. Wehr offers a post-Jungian interpretation seeing a mutually beneficial shift at the centre of one's consciousness. Wehr proposes 'a double movement during individuation—both a claiming of the unconscious as oneself and a becoming distinct and separate from it, so that one is not at its mercy.' (Wehr, 1987: 50) This shift, possible only through the affirmation of one's destiny, brings with it a

tremendous self-validating power. Downing explores these important elements through her relationship to Aphrodite and Ariadne.

‘And Now You, Aphrodite...’

Aphrodite is perhaps the best-known and most recognisable of the Ancient Greek Goddesses. Unfortunately, the Aphrodite that is imaged in contemporary Western society has been culturally reduced from her dynamic creative qualities to an earth-bound Goddess of erotic passion and sexuality with fidelity to none but herself. Downing argues: ‘You are not only the beloved but also the loving one. You are object and subject, the enchantress who is herself enchanted.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 200) Over the millennia, however, Aphrodite’s archetype has been strategically disempowered. At first Aphrodite was pulled from celestial heights to terra firma; and then, she was bound, in body and form, to ‘romantic’ love, beauty and desire. Downing writes:

[...] in the Hellenistic period you became little more than the divinity of love and desire, a personification of human beauty, a goddess of the courtesan world. Thus reduced in scope, you cannot be brought fully into consciousness until all the repressed aspects are acknowledged. (ibid: 194)

Downing remembers a different Aphrodite; she writes ‘I knew you as creatrix, a life force, the source of all reproductive energy in the universe.’ (ibid: 190) In Aphrodite’s role as creatrix the idea of ‘love’ is not erotic or ecstatic and passionate love, but the *love of self*. ‘[...] what distinguishes love in your realm is its celebration as a self-validating cosmic power.’ (ibid: 199) Self-validating power has been taken away from Aphrodite without her consent. Reduced in power and potential, Aphrodite was perceived as a sexualised goddess who defined herself ‘in relation to’ the men in her life. As a result, Aphrodite was stripped of her independent ‘virginal’ nature. Her title of ‘virgin’ has nothing to do with her sexual vigour or life; a ‘virgin’ is a woman who is centred in herself and not defined, and thus limited, by those around her. (Harding, 1971) In her original archetypal form, *Aphrodite was unobtainable*. Downing writes: ‘You are *Aphrodite Automata*, spontaneously giving—and yet unpossessable.’ (2007 [1981]: 193)

In a way, the disempowering of Aphrodite is comparable to the ‘fall’ of women in the Christian tradition taking this archetype all the way back to Augustine of

Hippo's concept of Eve as temptress to Adam and thus responsible for the human creation of 'Original Sin' through her disobedience to God. Stripped down to her bare 'primal' and Shadow nature (an uncontrollable lust-based drive) Aphrodite, like women in the West, has been reduced and minimalized making her now dependent on others—robbing her of Harding's 'virginal' nature. Downing engages with Aphrodite not to blindly accept this stripped-down version of the archetype, but to *reclaim* Aphrodite's stolen virginal and creative nature. She writes: 'My sense is that you are often seen as representing the pull toward dissolution because you imply a reconciliation of what are usually seen as contradictions or mutually exclusive choices.' (ibid: 203) Aphrodite does not have to choose between serving her Self or serving Others as she can, and does, inhabit both worlds; Downing writes: 'You represent not so much the dangers of destructive immersion but their transcendence.' (ibid: 203) In other words, Aphrodite does not relinquish her Self when she is in relation to others; she transcends the boundaries of relationship constraint empowering her Self and others.

Therefore Downing encounters an Aphrodite archetype whom she argues is the original: a strong 'virginal' creatrix who is both immortal and mortal, and self-empowered whilst empowering others. Downing writes: 'Aphrodite [...] leads us toward a new appreciation of consciousness and to a new mode of consciousness [...].' (ibid: 204) She goes on to explain: 'Aphroditic consciousness is consciousness in your realm, the realm of relationship and feeling.' (ibid: 205) Through Aphrodite Downing is extolling the virtues of Eros-based knowledge—relation and intuition—which are instrumental in Jung's Path of Individuation. Because Logos-based knowledge has been lauded and revered for so long in the West, there remains a subconscious negative response to qualities like empathy and sentimentality, but these are the mandatory lessons Downing's 'original' Aphrodite archetype brings. Downing writes:

What is distinctive about you is that you lead us to feel most ourselves when led by our feelings [...] and when intimately and emotionally involved with others. / In your realm, feeling is recognized as inherently valid—as a cosmic and awesome force. (ibid: 207)

Aphrodite teaches Downing that being led by one's feelings, often derided in the West as another negative feminine trait, *is* the source of personal and self-validating power. As examined in the previous chapter, this call for women to

claim their self-validating power was first made in the West by M Esther Harding in 1935 in *Woman's Mysteries* and has since been echoed by a number of feminists who followed her and all but one of the authors in this study.¹⁹ Downing's encounter with her 'original' archetype of Aphrodite teaches Downing about the importance of allowing oneself to be led by their feelings (Eros-based knowledge) towards self-validating power and the affirmation of destiny. By envisioning the Aphrodite archetype as Creatrix, Downing draws upon her own Creatrix powers to affirm her destiny of a strong, independent woman who is self-validated and self-empowered.

'Ariadne – Mistress of the Labyrinth'

In her third chapter, Downing turns her attention to Ariadne, 'Mistress of the Labyrinth,' immortal wife of the wine-god Dionysus. Best known for 'Ariadne's thread' which literally refers to a method used to find one's way through a maze or labyrinth and metaphorically signifies the ability to follow threads of logic to multiple and various conclusions of thought, Ariadne is another complex Goddess. While this is the second Goddess that Downing has known since her youth, Ariadne had been an inactive mythic pattern in her cognisant psyche.

Though Ariadne had once been a conscious presence in my life, for a long while, perhaps twenty years, that relationship had been dormant. Only recently have I become aware of my slowly dawning, almost invisibly dawning, appreciation of the full significance of this goddess. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 51)

At this point, Downing feels the need to clarify the idea of living with multiple mythic patterns and images. In Jungian psychology, living numerous myths is a healthy, natural process. She writes: 'Living more than one myth does not mean that one is schizophrenic; rather it is what keeps mythic identification from stultification or inflation.' (ibid: 53) In other words, numerous mythic patterns function, in part, by working together—often reinforcing lessons from other mythic patterns. In Jung's Path of Individuation, multiple mythic patterns, or archetypes, can manifest themselves in one's consciousness at a single time—and certainly they interact and intertwine as one progresses along the Path. Numerous mythic

¹⁹ Margaret Starbird did not engage with either second-wave feminist ideas or post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung in her rebirth memoir *Goddess in the Gospels*. Interestingly, Starbird is the only author in this study who did not include feminism in her rebirth memoir. Starbird's lack of feminist commentary will be examined further in chapter 5.

patterns also work to ensure that one mythic pattern cannot rise up and dominate the psyche.

Downing, however, did not identify herself with Ariadne despite encountering numerous mythological references to Ariadne being a 'Persephone figure'. For Downing, her mythic journey with Ariadne was initiated by an external stimulus when an 'other' psychologically 'projected' Ariadne onto Downing: '[...] a dear friend told me years ago that I was his Ariadne.' (ibid: 53). Downing writes:

Return[ing] to this myth meant exploring the pertinence of another's view of who I am. In ways which we may not at first fully understand but should not ignore, what another sees in us that may be invisible to ourselves can be a clue to who we really are. (ibid: 53)

On the surface, Downing finds in Ariadne the powers of creation and destruction, life and death. Looking beneath that, as a Jungian, Downing recognises Ariadne as much more:

In the beginning there is Ariadne, a goddess complete in herself, androgynous and self-perpetuating, creating out of her own being with no need of another. [...] As one of the ancient mother-goddesses, Ariadne is more than just a vegetal goddess [...] She is connected not just to animation, to natural life, but to anima, to the soul. (ibid: 63)

Looking deeper into the myth of Ariadne, Downing learns:

Theseus's abandonment of Ariadne is the necessary prelude to her relationship with Dionysus. If Ariadne helps Theseus, then Ariadne must be left behind. That may sound a little odd at first hearing, but it is absolutely essential to the understanding of this myth. [...] Because [...] the story suggests that anima dependence must be overcome. (ibid: 56)

This is a significant lesson. Jung first defined the Anima as man's contrasexual nature. For Jung, this led to an inherent gender essentialism in his model—men needed to connect with their inner feminine (the Anima) while women needed to connect with their inner masculine (the Animus). While much post-Jungian and feminist debate has ensued over the essentialist nature (including Goldenberg and Rowland), and will be explored in further detail in the following section, what is important to note here is that Ariadne invites Downing to both recognise and break free from her 'anima dependence.' What, exactly, does that mean? In its essence and as Jung envisioned her, the Anima comprises all the traits and characteristics

(such as empathy, compassion, and intuition) that are generally considered as feminine. However, as the myths of Persephone and Hera show, dependence merely on the Anima traits, means that one usually finds one's Self dependent upon others emotionally and psychologically. They exist 'in relation to' Others - and without the Others, they have little meaning—exemplified by the reduction and disempowering of Aphrodite. Breaking free from Anima dependence would involve also incorporating Animus traits in a harmonious balance within the psyche—offering the Individuating Self the ability to be both intuitive (Eros) *and* logical (Logos): emotional, yet strong; compassionate, yet deadly when necessary. But it also means breaking free from the socio-cultural construct of what the Anima should be—the embodiment of femininity. Breaking free from Anima dependence means the birth of the 'virgin' Self—a Self that is validated and empowered, a Self that is not dependent but independent. Downing's use of the term 'virgin', however, could be considered a radical reclamation in the power and authorship of words—especially considering its publication at the tail end of the second-wave of feminism in the US. Following Harding (1935), Downing uses the term 'virgin' to signify *independence*. By redefining 'virgin' from the sexual value of young women to the psychological, emotional, and physical independent right of all women, Harding, Downing, Bolen, and others that follow are attempting to reclaim the term 'virgin' from the holds of patriarchal condemnation. In an effort to provide an archetype of woman's independence, Downing portrays an Ariadne archetype who embodies this new conception of 'virgin'. As will be seen in the following chapters, Harding's idiosyncratic use of the word 'virgin' as independent would be integral to the advancement of the Western Goddess Movement.

Downing explains that whilst Ariadne is married to Dionysus, she also exemplifies his 'ideal woman.' Downing writes: 'Dionysus is the lover of women who have their *centre in themselves*, who are not defined by their relationship with literal men.' (ibid: 61, emphasis is mine) So it is not her relation with Dionysus that defines Ariadne, but her relation to her Self. 'For the hidden Ariadne means woman in relation to her own powers, not as defined by relationship with others. She is woman unafraid of her own sensuality or of her own capacity for ecstasy.' (ibid: 62) Ariadne is a 'virgin goddess,' and she teaches Downing to break free from Anima dependence and centre herself within her now-independent Self. Downing

began her journey with Persephone and Hera, both of whom were dependent upon and defined by others but who each learned how to break free from those confines whilst remaining in their respective relationships. Aphrodite and Ariadne follow to exemplify how a woman can be self-validating and self-empowering even in the confines of a relationship. In Jungian theory, this level of self-empowering independence can only be achieved by the woman incorporating both Anima and Animus traits—Jung's Path of Individuation. The Anima and Animus will be discussed further in a following section.

Through Aphrodite and Ariadne, Downing learns some very valuable lessons about self-validating empowerment. These Goddess archetypes bring forth the notion of an individual ('virginal') woman—one who does not allow her Self to be defined by others, but rather cohabits as an individual alongside the Other without sacrificing any of her characteristics or talents and without succumbing to the socio-cultural standards of what a woman 'should be.' However, Self-validating power isn't the only important component, for without the affirmation of destiny, the power and strength gathered has no focus. Downing wrote about discovering her own 'affirmation of destiny' in 1996 while reflecting on her memoir, *The Goddess*:

Though not published until I was fifty, until after I'd published two other books, I think of *The Goddess* as my first "real" book, the one through which I found my subject, my voice, my readers. For many of those readers, as for me, it is still the most powerful. (ibid: 247)

Now carrying the knowledge gathered from her interaction with the Shadow (Persephone and Hera) and strengthened by a self-validating power (Aphrodite and Ariadne), Downing is ready to embark on the Path of Union.

2.1.2.4 Union – Athene and Artemis

In order for there to be union, there must first be division. Jung traces this schism to the Western introduction of scientific thought; he believed the turn to scientific, verifiable rational observations and discourse as methods of answering ultimate questions disconnected us from something foundational and imperative—union with the natural world around us and union within our Selves. According to Jung; [...] humanity, as never before, is split into two apparently irreconcilable halves.' (Jung, 1999: 106) Reconciliation is gained through yet another borrowed

concept—the way of the middle path—a Union of Eastern and Western; Jung writes:

Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the union of opposites through the middle path, that most fundamental item of inward experience, which could respectably be set against the Chinese concept of Tao. It is at once the most individual fact and the most universal, the most legitimate fulfilment of the meaning of the individual's life. (Jung, 1982: 94)

Due to Jung's perceived difficulties for the Western psyche to grasp and embrace the concept of oppositional union, Jung believes this transformation of Self is best achieved in incremental states. Early in the process this would include the Union of the opposites found in the pairing of Anima/Animus or Eros/Logos. Discussed in relation to and then removed from gender in the previous chapter, the Anima/Animus or Eros/Logos Union is paramount. This union will be discussed in further detail in a following section. What is important to note here, however, is that this union is, according to Wehr, 'central' to the Individuation process. (Wehr, 1987: 94) Traveling along the Path of Individuation provides a number of opportunities for the individual to integrate traditionally opposing binary constructs that, as discussed in the previous chapter, have been removed from gender essentialism by a number of post-Jungians. Union is now offered as post-Jungian *ungendered* psychological pairings—this begins with the union of the Shadow and the individual continues through the union of the Anima and the Animus within the individual's psyche, the union of one's conscious and unconscious minds, and ends with the individual's union with the Divine. (Jung, 1968: 29) Each of these steps alters the individual's consciousness and allows for the next alteration to be possible. Without taking these required steps psychologically, one cannot attain true Individuation, for it is wholeness through the union of dualisms that is the central tenet to Jung's Path of Individuation.

Furthermore, these archetypes can *instruct the conscious psyche* on the process of unification as, 'by definition, archetypal images contain, and at times transcend or unite, opposites.' (Wehr, 1987: 55) Keeping in mind that the Jungian concept of the whole Self is, in his model, an archetype, the Self is the transcendent, but not in the sense of the word as used in Christian theology. Jung states: 'The psychological "transcendent function" arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents.' (Jung, 1976: 273) From a Jungian

perspective, 'The self is the one archetypal image that specifically transcends oppositions, uniting them all.' (Wehr, 1987: 55) The Self then unites or transcends all perceived opposition during Individuation; it will unite Shadow with light, Anima with Animus, and unconscious with consciousness.

What is perhaps the most theologically significant part of Jung's model of Union, and is noted by Roman Catholic Priest and Jungian Analyst John P. Dourley, is that Jung extends 'to every human the prerogative of the *homoousia*, the unity of two natures, divine and human, in one person.' (Dourley, 2006: 47, citing Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, p. 61) In 'Jung and the Recall of the Gods' Dourley writes:

Jung affirms that everyone is gifted with a conscious and an unconscious nature and that bringing them together in one person is both the work of a lifetime and the only serious meaning of redemption available to empirical humanity. In this integrative view *human maturation and deification coincide*. (2006: 47, emphasis is mine)

If Union is the joining of unconscious and conscious, Shadow and light, Eros and Logos, *and* the mortal with the Divine, it is, in this manner, a 'holy' act. William James wrote: '[...] union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end.' (James, 2002 [1902]: 529) Therefore, one could easily argue that Jung's Path of Individuation is, in fact, a 'religious' path. According to Susan Rowland:

Jung believed that the first part of life required the building-up of ego strengths. In the second half of life the ego needs to develop an ever-deeper relationship with the mythical, numinous forces of the unconscious in order to make it a journey of meaning and value. (Rowland, 2002: 30-31)

In effect, Jung saw the second half of life as the religious portion of one's life, whereby the affirmation of one's own destiny had a psycho-religious purpose. From a theological perspective, Jung envisioned this union of opposites as a means of connecting with and embracing the immanent Divine. This coming together was a spiritual and psychological process, one that would forever change the psyche of the individual concerned. Downing would encounter these psychological unions through the Goddess archetypes of Athena and Artemis.

‘Dear Grey Eyes: a Revaluation of Pallas Athene’²⁰

‘[...] my father inspired me to imagine myself as Athene.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 81) As a result, alongside her relationship with Persephone, Downing had a simultaneous relationship with Athene, the Ancient Greek Goddess of Wisdom born of her father Zeus; she writes:

Athene is a goddess I once loved—entirely and innocently as perhaps one can love only in adolescence. She was all I wanted to be and I gave my soul to her—self-confident and courageous, clear-eyed and strong, intelligent and accomplished, judicious and fair. [...] Her dedication to the world of art and culture, of clear thought and realized accomplishment, were important testimony to me of how a woman might order her life. (ibid: 100)

Athene provided Downing a clear and steady role model during her formative years, but, later in life, Downing struggled to identify with the transformative nature of Athene. At this point, Downing was learning from Athene how to progress on her own Path of Individuation. This progress, however, would only come through a psychological deconstruction; Downing writes:

To open myself to Athene’s illumination means, I see, revisioning my whole life through her: an overwhelming and awesome task [...]. What belongs and what is extraneous, what is important and what is trivial, how the different parts relate—all this is to be understood anew. [...] To do this is more frightening than I would have imagined, for it means looking at the hitherto least explored aspects of my life: the negative side of my love for my father, the ever-repeated tendency to divert energy from my own creative work into relationships, the still present temptation to understand my assertiveness and intellectual acumen as masculine attributes. (ibid: 103-04)

Athene challenges the binary gender essentialism ever-present in Western culture. As discussed in the Introduction, Eros/Logos and Anima/Animus began as gendered essentialist constructs. Eros, or intuitive (Self) knowledge, is usually understood as ‘feminine’ whilst Logos, usually connected with the ‘masculine’, is centred on knowledge and rational intelligence. The problem with Jung’s contrasexual model is that the ‘masculine’ Logos is devoid of Eros, and, conversely, the ‘feminine’ Eros is without Logos. Consequently, *women are expected to be Eros-centred* and are not expected to be intellectually capable of exhibiting Logos-centred traits such as thinking rationally, logically, or linearly. Athene is therefore exceptional

²⁰ Also known as Athena.

to a Jungian framework and exemplifies feminist post-Jungian revisions. Downing writes: '[...] Athene is an anima figure who may help us get past seeing anima primarily in contrasexual terms.' (ibid: 105) Downing may construct her memoir through Jungian theory, but she, similar to feminist post-Jungians like Bolen, Rowland, and Goldenberg, is unwilling to accept Jung's sexist and gender-essentialist limitations. Post-Jungians like Downing exemplify how they envision the union of Eros and Logos within women. In essence, Downing's use of the Athene archetype as a post-Jungian construct indicates feminist eagerness to undermine the gender binaries and essentialist assumptions in Jung's original theories. By utilising Harding's revisions of Jung, Downing's memoir offers a Jungian archetype that breaks Jung's gender restricted models and offers women their own Path of Individuation constructed by women for women.

The choice to use Athene to embody this revision of Jungian theory is rather specific when you consider the underlying commentary on patriarchal values and restraints. Athene's creation story is unique: Zeus, Athene's father, swallowed Metis, Athene's mother, whilst she was pregnant with Athene. Athene is singularly exceptional as the only Goddess born from her father. Because she is born of her father, and symbolically from the centre of Logos—his head, Athene is considered by many second-wave feminists including Mary Daly, Kate Millet, and Carol P Christ to be the Goddess who 'betrayed her sex' (Christ, 1997: 64) and is ruled by Logos (her rational mind).²¹ In favouring Logos, Athene is thought to have repressed or even outright rejected her Eros or supposedly 'feminine' nature. Downing writes: 'Athene [...] represents just this: the repression of the feminine [Eros] and the undoing of the repression as a soul task. Really to understand Athene demands a courageous examination of our own participation in misogynous self-denial.' (2007 [1981]: 110) Athene challenges Downing to look not only at her own relation to Eros and Logos, but to evaluate that relation and discover what Anima traits Downing might be suppressing or denying.

Athene is a strong 'virgin' goddess who seeks, being 'in relation to' creativity. Downing writes: 'Athene is not a virgin in order to be alone but in order to be with others without entanglement. She represents a "being with" that fosters mutual creativity that is based on soul and spirit rather than on instinct and passion. (ibid:

²¹ For more information see: Deacy S (2008) *Athena*. London & New York: Routledge.

119) As such, Athene's presence as a mythic pattern, demands Downing examine her relations; she writes: 'Kindly but unflinchingly she demands that I review how in my life I have balanced my loyalties to mother and father, women and men, to the so-called feminine and the so-called masculine aspects of myself.' (ibid: 100) Athene brings questions of whether or not you are living your life 'authentically' beyond the rigid limitations of implied socio-cultural gender boundaries.

Through her interaction with Athene, Downing learns that Athene contains within her female frame a symbiotic Union of Logos and Eros. According to Jung's model of Individuation, Athene is therefore whole. Moreover, Athene does not hide her differences, she revels in them. Athene is controversial with feminists in varying fields due to the fact that she was born from her father Zeus. She has been criticised, most notably by radical feminist Mary Daly, as a symbol of patriarchy and the feminine submission to patriarchy.²² I disagree with Daly and believe that by dismissing Athene as a traitor to women is to miss her most valuable quality. Daly appears to be behaving in the exact gender essentialist way of which she is critical. While denigrating gender essentialism in her radical feminist writings, Daly's analysis of Athene embodies the same gender essentialist and dismissive attitude exhibited by the patriarchy which Daly vehemently opposes.²³ Daly appears to be projecting a socio-cultural and patriarchal gender binary onto Athene—thereby limiting that which Athene could potentially become. By discarding Athene due to the influence of the patriarchal father Zeus, Daly, and those feminists who concur, have neglected the potential that a liminal figure can possess in terms of moving beyond gender expectations and performance towards a more holistic and human understanding. Downing and I both understand that Athene is the Union of Logos and Eros in feminine form and a valuable archetypal image for many women. Despite her controversy as a 'traitor to women', Athene emerges as the gender-bending amalgamation of Logos and Eros. A unique goddess archetype, Athene offers a critical lesson—the integration of all concepts previously considered in opposition through the Western schism. (Jantzen, 1998) Instead of adhering to gender binary preconceptions and performances (Butler,

²² For further reading see: **Daly M** (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

²³ For further reading see: **Daly M** (1984) *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*. (London: The Women's Press; (1973) *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. London: The Women's Press; and (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. London: The Women's Press.

1990)²⁴ Athene moves beyond the dual nature of gender and creates an alternative archetype—one that is gender fluid. Athene *can* hold the union of gender constructs (especially as expressed in the dualistic pairing of Anima and Animus), and the union of conscious and unconscious mind within a form known as female. Athene teaches Downing the importance of this union of Logos and Eros. Beyond that—Athene enables Downing to understand that an entirely new form of gender is possible and holds great potential to move beyond the gender schisms and confines of the heteronormative ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ constructs.

‘Artemis: *The Goddess Who Comes from Afar*’

Like Athene, Artemis the Huntress is a ‘Virgin’ Goddess; Downing writes: ‘Artemis is the Lady of the Wild Things [...]. Artemis represents the mystic, primitive identity of hunter and hunted.’ (2007 [1981]: 164) Downing goes on to explain: ‘Artemis is herself the wilderness, the wild and untamed, and not simply its mistress. / She is uncivilized nature [...]. (ibid: 165)

As another Goddess that Downing has known since her youth; ‘[...] Artemis has always been strangely “the other” [...]’ for Downing. (ibid: 157) In this case, Downing is referring to Artemis as ‘independent’ or ‘apart’ from the ‘norm’. Artemis is well-known for consciously separating herself from the socio-political rules of the city-state (Greek Polis) and living a life apart from the civilised world. Downing writes: ‘Artemis embodies a profound denial of the world of patriarchy, the world where some persons have power over others, the world of dominance and submission, where one can be hunter *or* hunted.’ (ibid: 176) As Athene was known and criticised for integrating herself into the patriarchy of Ancient Greece, Artemis intentionally removed herself from patriarchal society. As one who exists in denial of Western socio-political rules, Artemis lives a removed, solitary life in the wilderness. Often portrayed as antisocial and asexual, Artemis is ruled more by Logos than by Eros. Downing writes: ‘She has always been there—as the strange one, as remote, mysterious, unapproachable, and nevertheless there [...].’ (ibid: 159) Downing’s encounter with the Artemis archetype is crucial as it demonstrates several of the psychological shifts occurring within Downing. Most importantly, Artemis, as the mysterious Other, represents Downing’s unconscious and thus

²⁴ For further reading see: **Butler J** (1990) *Gender Trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. NY & London: Routledge.

unknowable mind, but Artemis also represents the conscious efforts to remove oneself from the patriarchal society. Through the Artemis archetype, Downing is expressing her own desire to leave behind the restrictive and gender essentialist patriarchal society in favour of a less conventional, Goddess-centred, women-empowering world found in the Western Goddess Movement.

There is an aspect of Artemis that Downing struggles with however—that is her perceived detachment from Eros. Downing writes: ‘There is nothing spiritual or sentimental or even sensual in Artemis’ response to the wild things in whose company she lives. [...] Artemis’ imagination is concrete and specific [...].’ (ibid: 167) This comment is indicative of the socio-cultural expectations that are, perhaps, unconscious in Downing. She criticises Artemis for being too dependent on Logos while having an unrealistic expectation that because Artemis is a woman she should be Eros-centred. Like Athene, Artemis is Logos in feminine form and is reinforcing an important, and repeating, lesson in the art of Union—especially for women: Logos and Eros cannot function properly without the other. ‘Artemis seems to beckon me from the future, to call me toward who I am now to become.’ (ibid: 157)

Downing’s travel through Union (exemplified here through the Union of Eros and Logos) has reintroduced her to two strong, and often controversial female archetypal images: Athene and Artemis. Whilst Artemis embodies the Union of Eros and Logos, she also embodies the Union of human and Nature. Her sister Athene, however, is the opposite, and whilst also embodying Eros and Logos, Athene also embodies the Union of human and State (a political body or nation). Between the two of them, there is a lesson about a necessary balance between Nature and State perhaps directly resulting from a Union of Eros and Logos. Downing’s encounter and inclusion of the goddess archetypes of Athene and Artemis, and her interpretation therein, drastically revises the original concepts envisioned by Jung. Like the post-Jungian feminists who engage with the concept of gender in Jung, Downing offers archetypal images that directly oppose traditional ‘gendered’ expectations as an alternative to the gender essentialism found in Jung. Downing is adapting and revising Jung’s theories to suit her own model of Individuation. It is these post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung that have had such a dramatic impact on the Western Goddess Movement. While there may be instances of Downing’s revisions that other post-Jungians may take issue

with, it is imperative to note that there are multiple revisions of Jung occurring throughout the post-Jungian world—and each revisionist alters Jung's original theories based on their own understanding of Jung's models. Needless to say, this creates a variety of post-Jungian theories that contemporary writers are applying and positing. This multiplicity of post-Jungian thought is exemplified in the five memoirs at the centre of this study. What is most important for Downing to convey, however, is the shift in consciousness that happens through interaction with Jung's archetypes. Through these archetypal images Downing encounters the Shadow, the Anima and Animus, Eros and Logos, and eventually she encounters her own Self—now altered in consciousness. The integral shift in consciousness comes from removing the ego as the centre of consciousness and replacing it with the Individuated Self. (Wehr, 1987: 54) This shift of centre from ego to Self is the ultimate and necessary by-product of Jung's Path of Individuation.

Back to the Path

Jung's Path of Individuation contains the necessary steps of confronting and embracing the Shadow, identifying and pursuing one's Affirmation of Destiny, and embracing a Union of dualisms within one's psyche, and Downing's memoir *The Goddess* is an Individuation memoir. Through Downing's recollection, the reader learns about Downing's encounters with seven different Greek goddess archetypes, and what lessons they bring to Downing's personal journey. Through her interactions with Persephone and Hera, Downing faced and ultimately embraced her own personal Shadow as well as recognising the Shadows of others. Through Aphrodite and Ariadne, Downing learned about self-validating power attainable through a 'virginal' consciousness of independence and self-worth. Downing also recognised her own Affirmation of Destiny in her significant place within the Western Goddess Movement. Athene and Artemis bring Downing lessons on Union and, perhaps most importantly, the Union of Eros and Logos which is paramount to the Path of Individuation. Once this Union is accomplished, other Unions are possible—culminating with the Union of Self and the Divine. (Jung, 1968: 29) While other authors in this study are much more specific about the time and moment their Union with Goddess was realised and/or sealed, Downing, as the psychologist she is, takes a more thematic approach and comments: 'She awakens in me as nothing else does a trust in my own capacity to grow, to feel wonder, to experience metamorphosis.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 9) In its essence,

Downing's own self-metamorphosis and the potentiality of metamorphosis in others is truly what *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine* is all about.

2.2 Critical Review

2.2.1 Who is the intended audience? Are they reached?

Downing admits she wrote *The Goddess* for herself. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 248) This is a central and often therapeutic aspect of writing. As Ginette Paris notes: 'The first beneficiary of an elaborate, stylish, rich version of my life's story is myself [...].' (Paris, 2007: 38) The reflection process is critical to writing one's memoir because the process alters both the story and its teller. Religious scholar Lisa Stenmark explains:

Narratives allow us to reflect on and describe our experiences, so that reflection and perception become a part of experience. As we continue to reflect on our experience, our stories pass through consciousness a number of times [...] as the meaning evolves and deepens when the story is told and retold. (Stenmark, 2006: 39-40)

Reflection not only deepens the story and the author but also can provide a source of catharsis as well. However, writing for oneself is only half of the process; Downing's story needs an audience. Sue Monk Kidd plainly states in her memoir: 'The truth is, in order to heal we need to tell our stories and have them witnessed.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 172) Through the personal reflections encapsulated in the five rebirth memoirs, readers 'witness' what Christ refers to as 'the depth of women's souls.' (Christ, 1995 [1980]: 1) For Downing, the reader serves as witness to her story. This is another element Bolen will also utilise in her own memoir. However, considering the historical context in which this book was published and the contributions Downing made to the feminist movement in theology and religious studies, it must also be assumed that, although she may have written *The Goddess* for herself, Downing published her memoir to reach a wide audience of Western women.

Downing's multi-disciplinary background implies a varied academic audience including her students. Her writing style is easily accessible to those with training in depth psychology as well as to those without. Downing found her audience mainly in those women searching for a revitalisation of their 'empty and sterile'

lives. (Harding, 1971: 7) This implied, however, that her audience was educated and had access to the various texts. Moreover, this suggests one has leisure time to read and pursue personal and intellectual interests. While at the time of original publication (1981), Downing had not considered these assumptions, she did reflect on them years later. In *Women's Mysteries* (1992) she writes:

Nevertheless, I think now [...] what I wrote seemed ethnocentric and elitist. I have since come to understand more fully how easily the theorising of articulate, academic, privileged women like myself may become the “default position” which presents the perspectives of other women as variations on, modifications of, or additions to ours, and how easily and unconsciously we may put forward a presumptively normative vision analogous to the masculine one we so forcefully critique. (Downing, 1992: 18)

There is certainly an undeniable elitist trend in this literary genre. The authors in this study are all knowledgeable, predominantly Caucasian Western women who enjoy influential, albeit nonconformist, professional or academic careers. Through their professions, these women enjoy a level of fame and celebrity. Many of them have public relations personnel who carefully craft the author's public persona; all but Downing have their own internet domain. However, as Noll points out, this trend of upper class women having a significant impact on changing theology is not new. He writes:

Interestingly, a similar sociological dynamic may have been instrumental in the rise of the Christ cult in the polytheistic Roman Empire, for both the pagan apologist Celsus and the Christian apologist Origen of the third century CE specifically cite the leading role of women of the upper classes in the development of Christianity. Such intelligent, wealthy women were also instrumental in the development of the social organisations surrounding the cults of the saints [...]. (Noll, 1994: 59)

Perhaps Noll raises a valid point. There is evidence (Barna, 2011; CARA, 2008; Gray, 2001) to suggest women may lead the way for others in religious or spiritual identification, participation, and conversion. The August 2011 publication from the Barna Research Group, which conducts an annual State of the American Church report, observed findings on gender differences are central and complex.²⁵ The

²⁵ 'The data from which the trends are drawn is based on the annual OmniPoll™ survey conducted by the **Barna Group** each January of 1,000 or more adults. The 1991 survey included 1,005 adults randomly selected from across the United States. The comparable 2011 survey included 1,621 randomly chosen adults. Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organisation under the umbrella of

findings state: ‘No population group among the sixty segments examined has gone through more spiritual changes in the past two decades than women.’ (Barna, 2011: 1) The majority of this movement, Barna labelled as ‘negative’. As the Barna Group is interested in facilitating the growth of Christian ministries, they would label any movement away from organised religion as a ‘negative’ move. When they evaluated their own polling data, Barna drew the following conclusion: ‘[...] women have been more radically redefining their faith than men in the past two decades.’ (Gray, 2011: 2) Is this perhaps because more women than men over the past few decades have been examining their own individual selves which includes examining their faith? There is evidence to support this in the memoirs of Downing, Bolen, Kidd, Starbird, and Curott. The audience for *The Goddess* spans over two generations and includes second-wave as well as third-wave feminists alongside those who are only just discovering the feminist movement (such as Kidd or Starbird). The initial audience may have been socially elite, but the ideas contained within Downing’s memoir have spread to other social groups, and, as evidenced by the continued publication of *The Goddess*, Downing’s audience continues to grow.

2.2.2 What are the intentions of the work? What did it achieve?

There are four main intentions within *The Goddess*; Downing aims to 1) revive ancient feminine mysteries, 2) inform and inspire, 3) offer a way to be ‘in relation’ to another, and 4) share personal experiences with Goddess. Each of these intentions will be examined below.

2.2.2.1 *The Goddess* Revives Ancient Feminine Mysteries through Jung

The first intent of this work is to help revive what Downing refers to as Ancient Feminine Mysteries through a Jungian understanding. Downing writes in *Women’s Mysteries*:

In the ancient world women were ritually initiated by other women into womanhood through participation in women’s mysteries. *Almost everything I’ve written in the last fifteen years [1977-1992] represents an attempt to revive and reanimate such mysteries—to honour the*

the Issachar Companies. It conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries. / Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analysing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours since 1984.’ (Barna 2011, 3)

mysteriousness of women not only to men but to women and to reconnect us to those sacred myths and rituals of initiation through which women of the ancient world were taught who they were. (Downing, 1992: 15, emphasis is mine)

There is an inherent difficulty with Downing's intent to reanimate lost ancient mysteries as there is very little hard evidence to substantiate a claim of a historical link between various known women's mystery rites. While claims to a historical legacy of Goddess worship permeate the Western Goddess Movement, there is insufficient supporting evidence provided that hasn't already been tainted by the 1921 Murray Thesis. A highly-reputable British archaeologist and scholar, Murray asserted her theory that medieval and early modern Witches were practicing a continued, ancient Pagan religion—one Murray ultimately historically links back to Palaeolithic times as one surviving faith tradition. (Hutton, 1999) Proven false decades after its academic acceptance and distribution, the Murray Thesis, and its author Margaret Murray will be examined in greater detail in a section on the 'Old Religion' in chapter 6. It is possible, however, that the Murray Thesis influenced the theories of Carl Jung considering both his early interest in the occult (Noll, 1994) and the fact that his professional career was just beginning when Murray first published *The Witch Cult of Western Europe* in 1921. There is, however, a difference between claiming a historical legacy to some matriarchal religion that existed for millennia and Jung's claim of a pool primordial knowledge of the autonomous archetypes awaiting at the centre of the Collective Unconscious mind. (Jung, 1938: 41) Jung constructed his theory of the Collective Unconscious based on Plato's Absolute Forms of pre-existing knowledge (Jung, 1995); therefore, as a trained Jungian, for Downing, this connection to ancient knowledge is *psychologically primordial* instead of historical. There is a psychological attraction in aligning oneself with a faith tradition that has a historical legacy: it offers one a sense of security and validity not necessarily ascribed to contemporary 'neo' faith traditions. Various sects within the Western Goddess Movement who make scientifically unverifiable historical claims are no different than a host of faith traditions including Christianity. However post-Jungians, like Downing and Bolen, understand that Jungian theory has developed into a modern tradition drawing from Jung's theory of a collective pool of primordial knowledge contained within the Collective Unconscious psyche. Difficulty will arise later in the study when one author attempts to claim both a

historical legacy *and* a psychological one; this convergence of claims shall be examined alongside the Murray Thesis in chapter 6.

Did *The Goddess* achieve Downing's intention to help revive Ancient Feminine Mysteries? Perhaps; although it may be impossible to separate out the achievements of Downing's memoir in contrast to the accomplishments and influence of Downing the woman. Downing has made substantial contributions to the advancement of Jungian and post-Jungian feminist theory in the Western Goddess Movement as well as being a central figure in feminist development of theology, thealogy, and religious studies. The salient point in assessing the achievements of Downing's memoir rests on, in large part, on its publication history—*The Goddess* remains in constant publication thirty-five years after its first printing. Her memoir's potential impact is exemplified in reports of Downing's vast experience with her readers over the decades,²⁶ through the genre of rebirth memoir authors that follow in Downing's footsteps, to the current religious census information that verifies an increase in Goddess-centred faith traditions in the West. (Berger et al., 2003; US Census Bureau, 2012; Office for National Statistics, 2012 & 2004)

However, there is another controversial element to the revival of Ancient Feminine Mysteries through Jung, but this has far more to do with Jung as an individual and links to his own cultural history. Richard Noll traced Jung's ideas back to his highly controversial Germanic and Aryan roots. Noll fears that a revival of Jungian theory will include a revival of racist 'Aryan' traditions contained within the culture in which he was raised; Noll writes:

Following the wide dissemination of Jung's writings in English translation by the 1960s, Jung's obvious fascination with mythology, parapsychological phenomena, the *I Ching*, astrology, alchemy, and mystical and religious experience of all kinds made him a source of inspiration and affirmation for the neopagan religious movements that began to proliferate in Europe and North America during that period—a true Renaissance of the Asconan ideals. (Noll, 1994: 294)

Noll goes on to echo a concern of some theologians and feminist theologians in connection with the use Jung. Noll writes: 'Perhaps the most ironic—and

²⁶ See Downing's 1996 Afterword to the Continuum Edition.

potentially the most disturbing—link between Jungism and Neopaganism is the prominent inspirational role Jung's writings play in the revival of "Germanic Religion" or Norse paganism in contemporary continental Europe, England, and North America.' (Noll, 1994: 295) There are stark differences between Germanic and Norse forms of Paganism—although sometimes they do overlap. Germanic traditions are based on the notion of a dominant Aryan race. This led Hitler to his Shadow and millions to their deaths; the belief of a dominant race continues to thrive in Neo-Nazi movements. Norse Paganism, most often referred to as Asatru, or Heathenism, is based on the Norse mythology centring on Yggdrasil (the World-tree) and the All-Father, Odin, as head of the Norse pantheon. (Mountfort, 2003) Both traditions informed Jung in his youth and are androcentric. There is a collection of strong and fiercely independent goddesses in the Norse pantheon; they do, however, submit to the will of the All-Father, and many Goddess adherents find Asatru patriarchal and difficult to embrace. The Neo-Nazi Germanic traditions have no place in the Western Goddess Movement. Noll concludes the same: 'Despite the similarities between the philosophies of other neopagan movements, including a deep foundation in Jungian thought, the pagan movement in the United States has generally shunned the neo-Germanic movement for its persistent connection with neo-Nazism.' (Noll, 1994: 296) Therefore, while continued Western interest in Jung has, perhaps, been partly responsible for a renaissance of the neo-Germanic and Norse faith traditions, Noll's fear of a neo-Nazi connection between Jung and the Western Goddess Movement is unfounded.

Despite the various controversies, *The Goddess* appears to be achieving its central intention to help revive the problematically-titled Ancient Feminine Mysteries with readers, but Downing's memoir also opened up itself, and the movement that followed, to criticism regarding the use of Jungian theories (which shall be discussed in greater detail in a following section).

2.2.2.2 Informs and Inspires

The second intention of *The Goddess* is to inform its readers about the psychological need for female images (archetypes) of divinity and to inspire women to undertake their own mythic journey to Goddess. Downing speaks about the limitations of psychology in understanding Goddess: 'The goddesses also seem to find ways of reminding us that they are indeed numinous forces, never reducible

to our attempts at psychological interpretation.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 2) Despite their intangible nature, Downing believes we need them nonetheless. Downing writes: ‘We need images and myths through which we can see who we are and what we might become.’ (ibid: 2) Downing speaks about attending to these mythic patterns in her 1992 *Women’s Mysteries*; she writes:

The aim in attending to these images is to awaken us to a sense of our unrealized latent possibilities, to save us from our sense of isolation and meaninglessness, from loneliness, confusion, and joylessness. The purpose is to open up our lives to renewal and reshaping. (Downing, 1992: 52)

The way to attend to these images and awaken our sense of ‘unrealized latent possibilities’ is by following the methods used and described by Downing in her rebirth memoir *The Goddess*. Downing was intent on creating a post-Jungian path for others to follow. By sharing her own experiences in the context of Jung’s Path of Individuation Downing has inspired thousands of women to follow in her post-Jungian Path and seek being ‘in relation to’ Goddess. In the Afterword to the 1996 Continuum Edition of *The Goddess*, Downing writes: ‘I wanted what I had learned of and from the goddesses to be helpful to others. It matters to know that has been so.’ (2007 [1981]: 250) In this ambition, Downing has been successful. She writes: ‘I soon discovered that my search was not mine alone, that in recent years many women have rediscovered how much we need the goddess in a culture that tears us from woman, from women, and from ourselves.’ (ibid: 4)

While Downing is writing to both inform and inspire others, she is considerate of the fact that she and others who have made similar calls for experiencing and sharing women’s stories owe a debt to Harding. Downing writes:

Harding and [much later] de Castillejo initiated a process in which many others [Christ, Plaskow, Downing, et cetera] now participate whereby women seek to nourish one another by sharing images and stories discovered through their researches in “herstory” and through attention to their dreams and other numinous experience. The search for Her leads us to ourselves, to the women we know and love, the women we learn from and learn with, and to the ancient pre-patriarchal traditions about the sacred power and varied shapes of feminine energy [...]. (2007 [1981]: 5)

Downing seeks to inspire others to follow on her path; she also invites others to share their personal journeys of self-discovery to Goddess.

2.2.2.3 Being 'In Relation'

In Relation to an 'Ancient Source'

The third intention of this memoir is establishing new relationships. These relations can be understood as connecting the individual with a psychological 'Ancient Source' of Goddess power; connecting the individual to her (or his) deeper Self; and connecting the individual to others in a Goddess-centred community. Downing writes: 'I sensed that the pull to Her was a pull to an ancient source.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 4) Esther Harding believes this 'Ancient Source' centres on the Moon. She writes:

The moon, first as an influence of fertility and later as a deity, has been considered throughout the ages to be in a peculiar relation to women. It is source and origin of their power to bear children, the goddess who keeps watch over them and all matters that primarily concern them. These beliefs are very widespread. (Harding, 1971: 20)

Harding goes on to talk about how women historically pursued being 'in relation to' Goddess. She writes:

In the image of the Mother Goddess—ancient and powerful—women of olden times found the reflection of their own deepest feminine nature. Through the faithful performance of the ritual prescribed in her service those faraway women gained a relation to this very Eros. (Harding, 1971: 241)

Downing and Harding both carry Jung's belief that there is an individual psychological need for engaging with archetypal images in one's life. Downing writes: 'We long for images which name as authentically feminine courage, creativity, loyalty, and self-confidence, resilience and steadfastness, capacity for clear insight, inclination for solitude, and the intensity of passion.' (2007 [1981]: 5) There is, however, a difficulty with the inherent sexism and essentialism of Jung's models and theories that require revision from women. These revisions vary in scope as demonstrated in the previous chapter. For example, Harding and Downing comprehend Jung's Great Mother Goddess (*Anima Mundi*) Archetype quite differently. Harding, as a first generation Jungian, follows Jung's script that the Feminine Divine is exclusively immanent—a perspective that has raised appropriate criticism from Wehr, Michael Palmer, and Martin Buber. Downing, as a post-Jungian understands that individual experience is essential, and being 'in relation to' a projected image is not enough. She explains in her memoir: 'I do

not mean that the goddesses are “nothing but” projections of human psychology (as Harding on occasion seems to suggest) for I believe them to represent transhuman forces [...].’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 19) For Jung, everything, including the Divine, is experienced through the psyche and is therefore internal and immanent, but Jung, however, does claim in a 1959 interview to ‘know’ God implying his belief in an external deity. (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 428). Harding advocates examining these transhuman sources by following one’s Eros-based intuition and feeling. She writes:

The sensible attitude would seem to be neither to credit nor to discredit the wisdom of the ancients but instead to examine these myths with an open mind. If they do not appeal to us directly they will convey no truth to us and we may as well waste no further time upon them. But if they do speak to us, their strange non-rational logic will carry its own conviction and no rational proof of their truth will be necessary. (Harding, 1971: 38)

Jung understood the inner significance of myth calling it ‘[...] an important psychological truth [...].’ (Jung, 1976: 476) Pre-eminent mythologist Joseph Campbell, a student of Jung’s, devoted his life and career to myth. Campbell writes: ‘Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life.’ (1988: 5) Karen Armstrong believe that myths can transform us: ‘If it works [...] it forces us to change our minds and hearts, gives us new hope, and compels us to live more fully.’ (Armstrong, 2005: 10) Jung’s models and theories encourage one to live their myths.²⁷ Downing, as a student of Jung, would use the mythology of the Ancient Greek pantheon to reveal Jung’s ‘important psychological truth’. (Jung, 1976: 476) Through her use of mythology as part of the construct of her memoir, Downing offers encounters with archetypes that are fluid in their shape and resist traditional interpretations and social or gender expectations. Downing builds upon Harding’s use of Jungian archetypes by presenting a revised Athene and Artemis as potentialities of a new way of being human—such as a Logos-based woman or finding the middle path between outright rejection of civilisation and all of its trappings and the contemporary need for some modern, civilised conveniences.

²⁷For more see: **Campbell J** and **Muses C** (eds) (1991) *In All Her Names: Explorations of the Feminine in Divinity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco; Campbell J (1949) *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*. New York: MJF Books; (1986) *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*. New York: Harper and Row; (2001) *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor*. Kennedy E (ed). Novato, CA: New World Library; (2013) *Goddesses: Mysteries of the Feminine Divine*. Rossi S (ed). Novato, CA: New World Library; and **Campbell J** and **Moyers B** (1988) *The Power of Myth*. Flowers BS (ed). New York: Anchor Books.

Perhaps more importantly, through mythology Jung's archetypes offer an alternative relationship between human and Divine—an opportunity for Union. Jung's construct of Divine Union has been revised by post-Jungians like Harding and Downing to avoid the restrictive patriarchal narratives assumed in Western society—whereby the human being is powerless to an often judgemental, wrath-filled Father God. Instead, Jung's Path of Individuation leads one to a Divine Union—being 'in relation to' the Numinous (however the individual images the Divine) in an empowering, self-affirming, and transformative way. (Jung, 1968: 29)

In Relation to Self

The relation to 'Self' is the psychological portion of the psycho-religious equation under consideration in Downing's memoir. For Jung, the *Self* is also an archetype. In *Aion*, Jung writes: 'I have suggested calling the total personality which, though present, cannot be fully known, the *self*. The ego is, by definition, subordinate to the self and is related to it like a part to the whole.' (Jung, 1976: 142, italics in the original)²⁸ As an archetype, one who reaches Selfhood has attained psychic totality and wholeness. Jung quite often referred to this state as the *mysterium coniunctionis*²⁹ (an alchemical term used by Jung to define a union of opposites). The birth and development of the psychological Self is the core of Jungian analytical psychology. His life-long and life-altering journey to Self, the Path of Individuation, is an internal psychological journey through the Shadow and the Collective Unconscious—at which the Anima as 'numinous' archetype is the autonomous centre. *The Goddess*, and the other four memoirs under consideration in this study, reveal a personal and unique relation to Goddess and how that relationship came into being through Jungian and post-Jungian theory.

It is validly argued by Goldenberg, Rowland, and Christ that there are substantial difficulties with the Western Goddess Movement's use of Jungian ideas whilst ignoring the more controversial aspects of his work. Goldenberg argues that Jungian analytical psychology is the wrong approach. In her 1990 *Returning Words to Flesh*, Goldenberg contends that '[...] object relations theory. [...]a] highly influential offshoot of earlier Freudian theory developed in Britain out of the work

²⁸ See: Jung CG (1935) *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Collected Works, Volume 9.

²⁹ See: Jung CG (1963) *Mysterium Coniunctionis: an inquiry into the separation and synthesis of psychic opposites in Alchemy* 2nd Ed. Hull RFC (Trans). Bollingen Series XX, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

of analysts such as Melanie Klein, WRD Fairbairn, DW Winnicott, and Michael Balint' is the most relevant psychoanalytic theory to feminist theology. (Goldenberg, 1990: 192) Goldenberg perceives several parallels between Object Relations theory and the Western Goddess Movement. 'In general,' Goldenberg writes, 'object relations theory focuses more on the human being in relationship to others.' (Goldenberg, 1990: 192) The concept of being 'in relation to' was certainly a focus in Downing's memoir. Goldenberg also points out that, 'Object relations theory's intense interest in the deep past is, in broad terms, quite similar to that of the contemporary Goddess religions.' (Goldenberg, 1990: 193) It would seem, then, that there is potential in using object relations theory to analyse some adherents of the Western Goddess Movement. However, despite the validity of Goldenberg's argument, there are several reasons that object relations theory would be inappropriate as a methodology for this particular analysis. (1) The five authors in this study (Downing, Bolen, Kidd, Starbird, and Curott) each a prominent member of the Western Goddess Movement though from differing traditions, cite Jung in their memoirs as accessible and relevant for their own personal transformations and recommend Jungian and post-Jungian Path to their readers. (2) The archetypes as autonomous and fluid in their gender and construct combined with the 'power of myth' (Campbell, 1988) offer a vast sea of potential archetypal images. (3) Jung's Path of Individuation, as revised and amplified by the post-Jungian women who followed him, offers a Path to the Divine that is self-empowering, self-affirming and transformative.

Rowland argues that '[...] Jungian psychology contains a gender politics in a drive to displace the feminine into the position of 'other' (anima) to the masculine psyche.' (Rowland, 2002: 19) Rowland is correct about Jung's original models, however, post-Jungian feminists have significantly revised and addressed this issue. The evolution of post-Jungian gender politics is examined in this analysis, and the memoirs portray how Jung's original gender essentialist and sexist models and theories continue to evolve—and even remove themselves from gender completely. The trouble is, however, that Jung's original prejudices are being perpetuated by those unfamiliar with the recent revisions of Jung. (Starbird is a prime example.) Carol P Christ takes issue with the work of Jung, Neumann, Campbell, and Graves for distorting '[...] the history of the Goddess through the imposition of theories that see the Goddess as symbolic of the unconscious

feminine.’ (Christ, 1997: 87-88) Christ goes on to say: ‘Women, as representatives of the unconscious feminine, cannot be expected to play anything but supportive and animating roles in the male project of culture.’ (Christ, 1997: 88) Christ makes a valid point; Jung’s original construct of the Anima as ‘unconscious feminine’ was essentialist, gendered, and biased. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Jung’s gender-restricted Anima has been transformed by a variety of post-Jungians into gender-fluid or ungendered Goddess who while often engaged in feminine archetypal form is not limited to this gender construct. The work done by Jungian feminist and post-Jungians such as Harding, Rowland, Lauter, Schneider, Downing, and Jean Shinoda Bolen, have made great strides in revising Jung and resituating aspects of his models in a contemporary (often feminist) gender politics. In fact, the memoirs demonstrate a number of revisions to Jung’s theories. The post-Jungian revision and expansion of Jung’s theories and models by women such as Wehr, Rowland, and Downing resist Christ’s ‘male project of culture’ by envisioning women *and* men as representatives of a union of Eros and Logos. These necessary revisions to Jung’s original theories are the link between the authors (and all the women and men who follow in their path) and the life-altering numinous experiences expressed in the memoirs.

Specific criticism about Jung’s theories and models shall be addressed in a following section; at this point it is important to note that Demaris S Wehr, despite her vocal criticism of Jung and his limited gendered theories, admits: ‘[...] some women have come to lead more fulfilling lives as a result of the application of Jung’s theories.’ (Wehr, 1987: 122) These women have learned to live life ‘in relation to’ their own Self as an individual through Goddess.

Being In Relation with Others

The concept of being ‘in relation to’ is examined on several levels. Primary is the relation being formed between the author and Goddess. Downing, contrary to the other four authors in this study, has been living ‘in relation to’ Goddess her entire life. Secondary to this, for Downing (as with all the authors in this study) being ‘in relation to’ others affects the relationships in her daily life. She writes:

In a sense, I may take the goddesses for granted more than some others do. I may also respond to them less “religiously” in our everyday sense of the word. My *religio* consists not of worship at an altar but simply of trying to attend to their presence as it is evident in my dreams, as it

shapes how I relate to both men and women, to parents and siblings, husband and children, lovers and friends, as it informs my sense of self and of feminine possibility. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 19)

For some women, such as Phyllis Curott (who will be examined in chapter 6), another layer of being ‘in relation to’ means literally meeting a new group of like-minded others who would become her new Goddess family. However, there is a fourth layer of relation to consider—the collective. Downing writes: ‘Attending to the archetypal images creates a new bond between our personal lives and the collective experience of humankind.’ (Downing, 1992: 52) In essence, being ‘in relation to’ Goddess and Others connects the individual to the wider human community.

2.2.2.4 Share Personal Experiences with Goddess

As with all five of the memoirs in this study, one of the main intentions of *The Goddess* (1981) is to share Downing’s personal experiences with Goddess. As a rebirth memoir, *The Goddess* is a valuable source for theological enquiry in which one woman, Christine Downing, is the subject of her own religious experience. There are, however, some significant difficulties (applicable to all five memoirs) that must be taken into consideration.

As a text written specifically to guide others, one must examine, or at least question how applicable Downing’s path might be to others/readers. There is a potentially significant barrier for others/readers in that it assumes a level of understanding about the analytical psychology of Carl Jung. For those not familiar with Jung, and exemplified by the three last memoirs in this study, the individual is left to their own volition to enquire further. This can be augmented by the individual going into analysis with a Jungian or post-Jungian therapist during their personal quest (as exemplified and examined further with Sue Monk Kidd). Having a trained post-Jungian guide in analysis would allow the individual to examine their experiences from a Jungian perspective in a safe, contained environment without undertaking years of academic training.

Another potential stumbling block for readers may be in the use of goddesses from the Ancient Greek pantheon. Historically, Ancient Greece was not a civilisation that either empowered or favoured women. In fact, women had no legal rights

and were treated only slightly better than slaves.³⁰ These historical factors may make the Ancient Greek pantheon of goddesses difficult, if not impossible, for readers to access and connect with.

The format of the text itself poses an additional potential challenge. Post-experience personal accounts are subjective and can be considered unreliable, presumably unverifiable due to their intuitive and internal source, and seen as 'fictive'. The five rebirth memoirs being examined in this study are a form of 'fictive' literature. Fictive is a term used to indicate the author's selective use of events and experiences, perhaps with embellishment and omission, to tell traditionally non-fictional stories of personal pilgrimage, transformation, or revelation. As such, this genre of literature holds inherent limitations such as criticisms of fictionalisation, embellishment, and revision to events and recollections contained within the memoirs. These are critiques that cannot be ignored, nor be argued away. The weight of the memoir's reliability rests with the author; the choice to accept or deny these accounts is made by the readers. To the criticism that these rebirth memoirs might be an unempirical source of theological reflection, I credit Carol P Christ. It was Christ's 1979 call for women to document their experiences which led to the creation of new genres of women's literature about women's contemporary religious experience. Christ was integral in establishing an innovative first-hand source for theological and theological reflection.³¹

2.2.3 How does the text function?

As with the other memoirs in this study, *The Goddess* functions on several levels: 1) it functions as a path or rite of initiation for readers; 2) it validates the importance of women's quest; 3) it provides a wealth of information as a source of theological polydoxy; 4) and it functions as a gateway to Goddess through what Susan Rowland refers to as post-Jungian amplification.³² *The Goddess* offers more than the story of Downing's relation to the Ancient Greek goddesses; it offers a path to follow. Earlier, Downing admitted that her academic career has focused

³⁰ See: Pomeroy SB (1995) *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books.

³¹ See: Sands K (1994): 124-5.

³² See: Rowland S (2002).

on reclaiming Goddess into Western consciousness. In this regard Downing has been quite fruitful. She writes:

The search for *Her* which has animated so many women in recent years has thus led to discovering goddesses as the most revered divinities in the earliest religious traditions of humankind and to uncovering their vital importance even in cultures from which there were officially excluded. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 16)

2.2.3.1 Rite of Initiation / Personal Religion

Rites of initiation often mark significant transitions in life. Harding spoke about the need for psychological (if not literal) rites of initiation for women as early as 1935. For the reader, utilising *The Goddess* as a path of initiation means using the mythology to lead the way. The hope, then, as expressed in 1935 by Harding, is to broaden one's vision; Harding writes:

Each human being is so blind and can only see that which is before his eyes, but the wisdom of the ages, represented in myths and religious symbols, has without doubt a larger vision, a longer range, than that of any individual. (Harding, 1971: xv)

This function of *The Goddess* is not without psychological or theological criticism. The major criticism however, is applicable not only to *The Goddess* but to the Western Goddess Movement's amplification of Jung's models in general. Therefore, this critique of a Jungian religion will be addressed here in this initial chapter but is applicable to all of the memoirs in this study, and may be referred to in sections or chapters that follow.

Richard Noll has been critical of Jung as a prophet of his own religion. In *The Jung Cult*, Noll writes: 'Now the prophet of a new age, Jung promised a direct experience of God.' (Noll, 1994: 240) Noll continues:

Jung offers the promise of truly becoming an individual after becoming a god, or rather, after learning to directly experience the god within. This is a process of self-sacrifice and struggle during which one must give up one's former image of god [...]. (Noll, 1994: 257)

Jung stands accused of creating a personal religion in analytical psychology. This assessment is not altogether wrong. In his memoir, as in interviews, Jung does not deny his personal tumultuous relationship with organised religion. Jung explains in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1995) how his upbringing in a Christ-centred

home (his father was a pastor in the local church) served to first alienate Jung from organised religion. However, Jung's denial of the Church and organised religions in general does not imply that Jung does not believe in a Divine Creator/Creatrix, appreciate the importance of faith and belief, nor value the human soul. On the contrary, Jung speaks at length about the need for a personal relationship with the Numinous, and most especially the immanent Goddess. The boundaries between theology and psychology, however, are inherently blurred. Dourley explains:

Jung's theoretical understanding of religion makes of the analytic process a religious event. It recalls the Gods to their psychic origin and encourages unmediated conversation with them within the containment of the psyche [...] to be valued for a number of reasons. The internalization of divinity curtails enmity between religious communities bonded by external Gods. More than this, Jung's total myth contends that divinity can become conscious only in humanity. (Dourley, 2006: 43)

Dourley makes a very important theological point that is worth further consideration. By stating that Jung's divinity is 'conscious only in humanity' is, by extension, to say that God can only be experienced within the confines of the human psyche which is *psychologically* verifiable by the individual rather than the Abrahamic doctrine of a creator God which is *theologically* substantiated yet requires a leap of faith. It is this proposition that puts Jungian theory at odds with the Church, but not necessarily with all theologians. However, seeing as any image of the Numinous is merely a projection of the human attempt to describe the ineffable (McFague, 1982), analytical psychology offers a safe location for one to contemplate the various images of the Numinous outside the confines of traditional theology. If imaging is the only means humanity has to connect with and relate to the Numinous; then the human psyche is responsible for creating and maintaining conscious paradigmatic constructs of the Numinous. According to Jung, archetypes of the Numinous emanate from the Collective Unconscious, which, in and of itself, contains the Numinous at its centre. The Numinous creates and brings to consciousness representational archetypes of its own choosing. In other words, the Jungian Divine decides how it wants to be imaged in humanity.

Demaris Wehr agrees with Dourley and Noll; Wehr states: 'Jung's psychology [...] actually is a religion.' (Wehr, 1987: 79) Wehr also writes:

Besides being a religion, Jung's psychology is in some ways a theology and ontology. Since this is so, it can be addressed appropriately by feminist theologians, who, like Jung, explore the realm of images and symbols. Also like Jung, they cross the boundaries between the disciplines of religion and psychology [...]. (1987: xi)

It is precisely this blurred boundary between theology and psychology that makes Jung's theories and models so accessible to theologians and especially fruitful territory for theological analyses. Melissa Raphael inhabits this fertile and relatively neglected space of theological contemplation. She is keenly aware of the significance of Jung to those in the Western Goddess Movement. Being cited by many within the Movement itself, Jung has become a 'way of knowing' and achieving a personal relationship with the Numinous outside of the Church.

Jung's criticism of doctrinaire religion and its alienation of the subject's own mythopoeia and ritual capacities; his sympathy with heretics, and his attempt to create religious experience that would answer the needs of those who could not remain in the religions they were born to, have all served religious feminism well. Psychotherapy has strongly influenced the feminist spirituality movement and visionary material is properly included in its academic texts—both radical and reformist. (Raphael, 1996: 12, fn 4)

Christian feminist theologian Beverly Clack is sympathetic with the Western Goddess Movement but warns us to be sceptical, yet open-minded: 'While we should be wary of the Goddess of self-help, we should not believe that the Goddess can only be an image that appeals to middle-class women with an interest in psychotherapy.' (Clack, 1999: 23) Clack speaks wisely; one needs to proceed with caution. While it may have started as an elitist trend for well-educated middle-class women, the Western Goddess Movement appears to have filtered out of this social boundary and is now found in everyday praxis from adherents of all levels of social strata—especially university-educated women. (Berger et al., 2003) I recognise that Jung's analytical psychology could be considered a religion—particularly in the ways it was amplified and revised by Harding and the authors in this study. Jung once said; 'People sometimes call me a religious leader. I am not that. I have no message, no mission; I attempt only to understand.' (McGuire and Hull 1977: 98) Perhaps Jungian psychology does offer an alternative path outside 'traditional religion'. It is precisely this aspect of Jung's work that makes the intersection of analytical psychology and theology so rich and intriguing to

study. The women in this study, either in defiance of the criticisms,³³ or unaware of the controversy Jung has created in both the psychological and religious studies disciplines,³⁴ are using Jungian-based models to find their own relation to Goddess and sharing 'ways of knowing' for others to follow.

2.2.3.2 Validates Women's Search for Meaning / Essentialism

The second valuable function of *The Goddess* (and the entire genre) is that Downing's memoir validates the importance of women's search for meaning. Downing explains how she understands this to be a gendered search; she writes:

I soon discovered that my search was not mine alone, that in recent years many woman have rediscovered how much we need the goddess in a culture that tears us from woman, from women, and from ourselves. To be fed only male images of the divine is to be badly malnourished. We are starved for images which recognise the sacredness of the feminine and the complexity, richness, and nurturing power of female energy. We hunger for images of human creativity and love inspired by the capacity of female bodies to give birth and nourish, for images of how humankind participates in the natural world suggested by reflection on the correspondences between menstrual rhythms and the moon's waxing and waning. (2007 [1981]: 4-5)

Using the pronoun 'we' in such statements as 'we are', 'we need' or 'we hunger,' Downing appears to be speaking for all women as a collective gender. There is an inherent difficulty with Downing's assertion that *all women* crave these things. Whilst an extensive discussion about gender was undertaken in the previous chapter, this section shall expand upon the contemporary debate over gender essentialism and the potential for reaching beyond heteronormative gender constructs without decimating an entire political movement.

The inherent difficulty for most feminist analysts, as perceived by Alison Stone, is that there are actually four different kinds of essentialism, and these different types are often confused or ignored. Stone cites Cressida Heyes with the following classifications:

(1) metaphysical essentialism, the belief in real essences (of the sexes) which exist independently of social construction; (2) biological essentialism, the belief in real essences which are biological in character; (3) linguistic essentialism, the belief that the term "woman"

³³ Downing, Bolen, and Kidd.

³⁴ Starbird and Curott.

has a fixed and invariant meaning; and (4) methodological essentialism, which encompasses approaches to studying women's (or men's) lives which presuppose the applicability of gender as a general category of social analysis. (Stone, 2004: 3-4)

Through Heyes' classifications, it is clear what the debates are and how they apply to the memoirs and the study at hand. **Metaphysical essentialism**, or the belief in the *essence* of gender, is a point of conflict in Jungian analytical psychology through Jung's model of the Anima, the Collective Unconscious, and Eros which are all based on Jung's notion of the 'Feminine Principle.'³⁵ This metaphysical essentialism has been revised by a number of post-Jungian feminists including Rowland (2002); Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht (1985); Ginette Paris (2007); Melissa Raphael (1996); James Baumlin, Tita French Baumlin, and George Jensen (2004). Each of these theorists makes valid attempts at breaking the metaphysical essentialism deeply ingrained in Jung's original models. The difficulty lies with Jung's original theories. The crux of Jung's analytical psychology is the union of dualisms. Jung worked in binaries, and his Path of Individuation centres upon the union of these oppositional pairs (such as consciousness and unconsciousness, Anima and Animus, Eros and Logos, the Shadow and the Self, etc.) Despite feminist revisions to Jung's original and essentialist theories, the sticking point remains: how can one remove gender from the equation in the union of binary opposites based upon socio and cultural gender norms? Jung's original theories are useful in his own deconstruction. Jung posits archetypes that are fluid both in gender and appearance—as a result, Jung's archetypes are not concretely gendered. (Jung, 1968) The psychological traits at the heart of Jung's theories do not have to be confined to gender essentialism, metaphysical essentialism, or biological essentialism. Downing undermined these gender roles by offering the Athene archetype as an image that defies and destabilises heteronormative gendered roles and expectations. Therefore, Metaphysical essentialism can be unhelpful and even problematic in some parts of the Western Goddess Movement. Removing the essence of gender completely may offer a non-gender essentialist 'way of knowing.' I find Carol Winters' 2006 proposition of removing Anima/Animus, Eros/Logos, and the Collective Unconscious from gender completely the least complicated to agree with. Winters' work builds upon that of previous post-Jungian feminists such as

³⁵ See: **Ulanov** A (1971) *The Feminine Principle in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press; **Winters** C (2006) *The Feminine Principle: An Evolving Idea*. In: *Quest* 94.5.

Goldenberg, Downing, and Bolen. Instead of gender driven constructs such as 'feminine' and 'masculine' for the dualistic pairings in Anima/Animus and Eros/Logos, Winters refers to them as 'Life Principles.' By removing the gendered 'essential nature' of these constructs and replacing them with universal terms such as 'Life' they are applicable and accessible to everyone. Through this change in terminology and understanding, the difficulty with metaphysical essentialism can be avoided.

Biological essentialism is a form of essentialism critiqued in much feminist writing. It is based on the notion that because a person possesses the physical gendered body, they also contain the same gendered essence. This would mean that a woman's body contains the essence of the 'Feminine Principle' whereas a man's body contains the essence of the 'Masculine Principle.' As a result, there is a socio-cultural expectation that specific gendered bodies will behave and conform to the gendered essence within. Confusion is created when terms overlap. Stone comments on how this has been problematic; she writes: '[...] feminist thinkers often use "essentialism" and "biological essentialism" as interchangeable terms (apparently precluding the possibility that essential characteristics of women could also be cultural).' (Stone, 2004: 5) The 1990s saw a growth in feminist theories of embodiment. Stone cites Judith Butler, Moira Gatens, and Elizabeth Grosz who argued: '[...] our bodies are first and foremost the bodies that we live, phenomenologically, and the way we live our bodies is culturally informed and constrained at every point.' (Stone, 2004: 7) I agree with Stone's criticism '[...] one cannot appeal to any unity amongst female bodies to fix the definition of women, since the meaning of bodies will vary indefinitely according to their socio-cultural location.' (Stone, 2004: 7) The notion of biological essentialism is further challenged by the LGBT and androgynous communities which contain individuals who may inhabit one gendered body with an alternatively gendered Self or essence.

Biological essentialism then led to an anti-essentialism movement. This however, proved to be problematic for socio-political reasons. If one cannot offer a way for all 'women' to be unified through body or essence, how can they progress politically or socially as a group? This is a challenge that Stone addresses in her essay. Revised and retitled from its original publication in the anthology *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Assessment* (2004) Stone takes the '[...] an anti-

essentialist, genealogical, perspective [...].’ (Stone, 2004: 3) In her essay, Stone argues for a new theory, based in part on Butler’s contribution in *Gender Trouble* with the creation of a feminist genealogy. (Stone, 2004: 2) Stone is critical of Butler’s focus on ‘[...] the concept “woman” rather than the history of women themselves.’ (Stone, 2004: 16) However, Stone builds on Butler’s concept to offer a genealogy of women; she writes:

[...] feminists could fruitfully reconceive women as a particular type of non-unified group: a group that exists in virtue of having a genealogy. The concept of genealogy, as I understand it, provides a way to reject essentialism (and so to deny that women have any necessary or common characteristics) while preserving the idea that women form a distinctive social group. (2004: 2)

Stone goes on to write:

Any such “genealogical” analysis of women must start by recognising that concepts of femininity change radically over time, and that these changing concepts affect women’s social position and lived experience. In particular, a genealogical analysis of women is premised on the view - articulated in Judith Butler’s work - that women only become women, or acquire femininity, by taking up existing interpretations and concepts of femininity. (2004: 18)

While I agree that Stone has taken a decided step forward in addressing the biological essential issue for feminist debate, it, too, is essentialist. In Stone’s model is there room for one who identifies as being a ‘woman’ and included in women’s collective history who may not possess a feminine gendered body? Butler addresses this in *Gender Trouble*: ‘[...] gender ought not to be conceived as a noun or a substantial thing or a static cultural marker, but rather as an incessant and repeated action of some sort.’ (Butler, 1990: 152) For Butler, gender is *performed* through repeated action regardless of bodily gender; however, this relies on some form of essential gendered behaviour embodied in or depicted by the performer.

Linguistic essentialism is far more difficult to deal with, but it, too, is applicable. Language is problematic for a number of reasons; however, in this case, one must resign oneself to the fact that in the West the socio-cultural terms ‘woman’ and ‘man’ have fixed meanings, constrictions, and implications. I believe that this essentialism, too, must be challenged and revised. Overcoming the difficulties of metaphysical and biological essentialism offers new terminology that can

overcome linguistic essentialism in some important and positive ways. Neologisms such as Cisgender (a person who identifies with their physical gender), Gender Fluid, Intergender, Gender Variant, or Genderqueer (outside of the binary) are expanding the way we conceive of gender in the West.³⁶ New gender neutral pronouns are being coined and utilised in the Western academe, social movements, and in general population. Although the West is not really advancing a ground-breaking shift in language and gender; a host of languages with gender neutral pronouns exists around the globe including Finnish, Japanese, and Farsi. For the time being, this study assumes the linguistic essentialism inherent in the memoirs and in this study. That being said, it must be clarified and extended that in use of the terms 'woman' and 'women' in this study this writer assumes inclusion of all those who self-identify as 'feminine' regardless of bodily gender.

Methodological essentialism is exemplified in this study of women's experience. This analysis, in some ways, presupposes a general category of 'women' for a theological and psychological enquiry even though it attempts to leap beyond gendered binary constructs toward a more holistic non-gendered possibility. As mentioned previously, this is a gendered study that is centred upon women creating a post-Jungian Path of Individuation for women. However, this study does not presuppose a *biological* essentialism regarding any gendered expectations from the authors or the Goddess archetypal images encountered throughout this study; however, it does centre upon the writings of five women, the creation of a Path of Individuation for women by women, Goddess, and the analysis of a female academic. For the sake of analysis, it presupposes a general category of 'women' *essential* to the methodology utilised in this critique, however, as mentioned above, this writer assumes the inclusion of all those individuals who self-identify as 'women.'

2.2.3.3 Source of Theological Polydoxy / Obliteration of the Transcendent

The third function of *The Goddess* (and the entire genre) is to reveal a bountiful theological polydoxy.³⁷ According to rabbi, philosopher, and theologian Alvin J.

³⁶ For more information see the University of Wisconsin-Madison's nine page 'Trans, Genderqueer, and Queer Terms Glossary' accessible at: http://lgbt.wisc.edu/documents/Trans_and_queer_glossary.pdf

³⁷ For more see: **Reines** AJ (1987) *Polydoxy: Explorations in a Philosophy of Religion*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books; **Keller** C and **Schneider** LS (eds) (2011) *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation*. London: Routledge.

Reines, 'polydoxy' is best defined in relation to its opposite: orthodoxy. Reines writes:

Obedience is fundamental to the character of the orthodox religion. [...] In the polydoxy religion, freedom of the individual religionist is ultimate. It is the freedom of the individual to choose among beliefs and practices that is established by the polydoxy community [...]. Polydox religionists have the right granted them by their community to accept belief only if it accords with their views of reality; to practice morality according to their individual consciences; and to only follow such ritual as is found meaningful. [...] Every member of the polydoxy community pledges to affirm the religious freedom of all other members in return for their pledges to affirm his [or her] own. (Reines, 1972)

Essentially, Reines is defining a belief system maintained by a community of like-minded individuals that is supportive and dynamic, fluid and open to change. Originally conceived with respect to the Judaic tradition, Reines' polydox principle, as an alternative to orthodoxy, has since been applied to Christianity as well. This liberal way of plural thinking centring upon an individual's freedom to choose can be observed both in various Pagan and Goddess-centred faith traditions as well as being integral to Jungians and post-Jungians. Ginette Paris writes: 'Depth psychology allies with paganism when affirming the polytheistic nature of the psyche, pointing out that God has never had final victory over Satan.' (Paris, 2007: 70) Using these memoirs as Christ had intended, as a source of religious and theological reflection and analysis through close comparative reading, collective theological principles emerge.³⁸ What is revealed in all of the memoirs in this study is a theology put forward *by women about being human*.³⁹ *The Goddess* and the rebirth memoirs that follow all echo important questions posed by Beverly Clack: '[...] what if we were to reject the dualistic thinking underpinning traditional ideas of spirituality? What if an understanding of God/ess were to begin with an acceptance of the unity of the human individual?' (Clack, 1995: 112)

The authors consider these inherent controversies within the Western Goddess Movement as they each carefully position themselves in relation to existing terminology. They all speak of religious syncretism and the personal religious

³⁸ '[...] Christ, in a unique way, has made women's mystical experience and aesthetic sensibilities the stuff of religious reflection.' **Sands**, 1994: 115.

³⁹ **Downing**, 1992: 64.

authority originally voiced by James. Noll finds this particularly offensive: 'Through Jung's influence on New Age spirituality, many indeed believe it is an inalienable human right to personally choose the image of one's own god (or gods).' (Noll, 1994: 37) I, on the other hand, find it restrictive and offensive to infer that it *is not* an individual's 'inalienable right to personally choose the image of one's god.' This is yet another source of conflict with Christianity. Wehr warns: '[...] Jung's psychology does pose a threat to traditional Christianity.' (Wehr, 1987: 25) This is an impossible criticism to refute as the evidence in the memoirs indicates that Jung and Harding have substantially influenced what Peter Berger refers to as an 'inductive faith [...] a religious process of thought that begins with the facts of human experience [...].' (Berger, 1969: 57)

Obliteration of the Transcendent

In Jung's view, God as archetype is created by and exists within the realm of the psyche and has no transcendent nature external of Self. Jung writes:

It would be a regrettable mistake if anybody should understand my observations to be a kind of proof of the existence of God. They prove only the existence of an archetypal image of the Deity, which to my mind is the most we can assert psychologically about God. (1938: 73)

Michael Palmer, Demaris Wehr, and theologian Martin Buber all recognise and comment on this theological quandary in similar ways. Palmer cites Buber when he writes: '[...] the critical questions are: Is God to be regarded solely as part of the human psyche or as distinct from it? Does God exist as an ontological reality or only as a psychological reality?' (Palmer, 1997: 172) While Wehr is critical of Jung's obliteration of the transcendent nature of the Divine:

For Buber, if Jung's "God" is nothing but an archetype in the collective unconscious, then Jung has obliterated a fundamental aspect of God, his Otherness. While Buber's God is both transcendent and immanent, to lose the one for the other is to lose God. (Wehr, 1987: 78-9)

The 'otherness' of Goddess is a theological sticking point and a subject of much debate between feminist theologians and post-Jungians. Jung eliminated the transcendent nature of God when he embraced his perceived wholly-immanent 'Feminine Divine.' (Jung, 1938) Perhaps this was an unconscious reaction to his relationship with organised religion as a child. (Jung, 1995) The transcendent nature of the Divine is a foundational belief for a number of faith traditions, but

the construct of ‘transcendence’ that has found its way into the Western Goddess Movement may not align with the ‘transcendence’ found in Christian doctrine. What is portrayed in the five memoirs in this study is not the restrictive, non-transcendent God posed by Jung that is present in the memoirs, it is the *amplified Jungian Goddess (Anima)* that is the shared basis of understanding. Although Jung argues that everything is experienced through the psyche—including God—post-Jungians have offered experiencing Goddess through the embodiment of others. Bolen writes about a transformational experience with a patient (Bolen, 1994: 72-74) and Curott is transfixed as Goddess embodies a High Priestess during a Drawing Down the Moon ritual (Curott, 1998: 189-196). In both instances, Bolen and Curott experienced Goddess in the body of an ‘Other’—transcendent of one’s Self but not transcendent of this physical world. (This will be discussed further following and in chapter 3.) Jung may have obliterated the ‘transcendence’ of God in his analytical theories, but in his personal life, Jung acknowledges that he doesn’t merely believe in God, he *knows* God. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 428) Post-Jungian feminists who follow Jung and revised his theories now offer a Goddess who is both immanent (emanating from the centre of Jung’s Collective Unconscious) and also ‘transcendent’ of the physical self and embodied in both Nature and Others.

2.2.4 What are the significant strengths of this work?

There are three significant strengths of *The Goddess*: 1) Harding’s influence; 2) the memoir’s publication history; and, 3) the three levels of experience Downing brings to her memoir. Each of these strengths will be examined in more detail.

2.2.4.1 Harding’s Influence

The first strength of Downing’s memoir *The Goddess*, is also the foremost strength of the movement that follows—continuing the ideas of Jung’s student Dr M Esther Harding (1888-1971). Deeply influenced by the theories and writings of Harding, Downing usefully incorporates several of Harding’s revisions or amplifications of Jung into her memoir *The Goddess*. Harding was the first Western woman to offer an analytical psychology for women by women. Downing would take this legacy of Harding’s and create a memoir that offers a Path of Individuation designed by a woman for women. The authors in this study who publish after Downing, follow Harding and Downing’s lead in offering a woman’s way to know Goddess—for women and by women. Downing also utilises a number of Harding’s own concepts such as the ‘Virgin’ as a self-Independent woman rather than one who is sexually

chaste; or Harding's amplification of Jung's Anima as Goddess which permeates her 1935 *Woman's Mysteries*. Carol Christ commented on using Harding's text, *Woman's Mysteries* in her early feminist theology courses. (Christ, 2014a) It would be fair to say that Harding's *Woman's Mysteries* had been read by most, if not all, of the founding mothers of feminist theology, thealogy and in the Western Goddess Movement. Downing comments on the tremendous influence Harding had on her life, theories and work:

In a book written almost fifty years ago, Esther Harding [...] presents the goddesses not as objects of worship but as figures through whom we might discover the various forms of the archetypal feminine—that is, of the eternal and therefore divine aspects of the feminine. She called her book *Woman's Mysteries* [...]. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 5)

In Downing's use of Harding in her memoir (and also in her extensive body of work), she is corroborating the legitimacy of Harding's revisions of Jung. Downing positions herself in a burgeoning post-Jungian tradition that is sympathetic to feminist revisions of Jung's original theories. Downing not only echoes Harding, but all of the other writers in this genre, when she writes: 'We need the goddess and we need the goddesses.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 5) In *The Goddess*, Downing offers resourceful and practical revisions and extensions of Harding's theories; she incorporates Harding both into her Path of Individuation and her 'way of knowing'; and she continues to acknowledge Harding's contributions to the Western Goddess Movement.

2.2.4.2 Publication: Timing, History and Continuity

The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine Divine is the first book to be published in this genre of Western women's 'Rebirth Memoirs'. Released in 1981 as a hardcover illustrated version by Crossroad New York, a significant strength of this rebirth memoir is the timing of its publication.⁴⁰ As discussed in the Introduction, when Downing published her memoir *The Goddess* the second wave of feminism was in full bloom in the West—a wave in which Downing was an active participant. The timing coincides with the advancement of feminist theology and thealogy significantly influenced by the work and advocacy of a group of second-wave feminist scholars gathered by Carol P Christ. Within this initial group of

⁴⁰ Data on all the memoirs in this study was gathered through the US Library of Congress Online Catalogue, author's CV or biographies, and correspondence from publishers.

foremothers, Downing played a substantial role in the second-wave feminist movement in theology and religious studies in the United States.

Three years later, in 1984, Crossroad released a trade paperback version with a subsequent reprinting in 1989. In 1996, Continuum took over and published *The Goddess* in paperback with a new Afterword. They also facilitated the memoir's Spanish translation and publication in 1999. The version being used for this study was published by Downing's third publisher Author's Choice Press, re-released in 2007 in paperback including the 1996 Continuum Afterword. This release was now available in the USA and Canada; thus expanding Downing's global reach. Thirty-four years after its initial publication, *The Goddess* remains in print and continues to sell in exceptional numbers. The timing of the publication of *The Goddess* was essential to its initial success and rode high on the following wave of women-centred consciousness; Downing's memoir encapsulated the spirit of the second-wave of feminism in the US. The continued popularity of Downing's memoir thirty-five years after its first printing attests to the importance of *The Goddess* within the Western Goddess Movement. Downing would influence generations of readers, and her influences on the other authors in this study shall be examined in the following chapters.

2.2.4.3 Three Levels of Experience

1. A lifetime of being 'in relation to' the Olympian Pantheon

Christine Downing has been familiar with the Greek Pantheon her entire life. She recalls in her memoir being surrounded by myth:

The gods and goddesses of ancient Greece were recognised presences in my childhood home. My mother was (and is) a storyteller; the stories she knew and loved best were the household tales of the German peasantry as collected by the brothers Grimm and the myths of the Greeks. My father, like Freud, was a scientist educated in a classically oriented *Gymnasium* where he learned the love of Greek literature and philosophy, which he communicated to me. My parents in no way thought of themselves as pagans or polytheists; there was nothing self-consciously reverential in their respect for the Olympian divinities. What they communicated to me was an understanding very like that expressed by Walter Otto: "This religion is so natural that holiness seems to have no place in it." (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 17, citing Otto's *The Homeric Gods*)

Downing's relation to the gods and goddesses shifts as she evolves into her charge as sacred storyteller with the publication of her rebirth memoir *The Goddess*. She writes: 'I [...] need to take on the role of keeper of the symbols, a role which I may have begun to discharge through this book on the goddesses.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 240) For Downing, living in relation to the Olympic pantheon was an integral part of her life.

The fundamental question to ask at this point is how a woman from the United States appropriates the Ancient Greek pantheon as a viable path to Individuation? This is an intriguing conundrum considering the author is American. As a colonising nation, the USA nearly decimated the existing indigenous traditions. In contemporary times, it is considered insensitive and politically incorrect to use (or appropriate) any of the prevailing indigenous belief systems such as found in the various First Nations tribes, the Inuit in Alaska, or the Hawaiians. As a country founded upon Protestant ideals which cannot connect with pre-existing faith traditions, and has no truly American faith tradition of its own, where do Americans turn for alternatives? They are forced to search outside the confines of the USA. A number of ancient pantheons exist outside of the US including the Ancient Greek, Egyptian, Celts, and Norse pantheons. All four are enjoying a contemporary revival in both interest and practice.⁴¹ This exemplifies the problem facing many Americans when it comes to faith options. Either they accept the faith of their founding fathers (Protestantism) or they appropriate from elsewhere. In this case, Downing took what was handed down to her by her parents - the Ancient Greek pantheon.

Downing's lifetime relation to the Ancient Greek gods and goddesses combined with her extensive theological and psychological background gives her a distinct voice of authority as the first to relay her personal story. Downing's memoir is influential to a number of scholars and writers who follow. Jean Shinoda Bolen, as will be examined in the next chapter, is not only familiar with Downing's work but Harding's as well, she builds upon them both and transforms the Path of Individuation into something new.

⁴¹ This is exemplified specifically to the Norse traditions in the new Asatru temples currently under construction in both Denmark and Iceland.

2. Narrating the Mythical Path – A Memoir Structured by Experience

Downing's mythic relation to Goddess and the experiences of her life are unique to her. As a post-Jungian, Downing understood the importance of 'experience' on this path of rebirth. She writes in the 1996 Afterword for the Continuum publication: 'I speak of the goddesses in the order in which I experienced them speaking to me.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 248) As one whose academic and professional influence spans the disciplines of theology and religious studies, women's studies, mythology, and psychology, Downing's entire body of work carries with it tremendous authority. Jungian Feminist Susan Rowland lists Downing amongst one of six 'key authors' in what Rowland terms as the 'Goddess Feminism' movement. (Rowland, 2002) This, in turn, gives *The Goddess*, as a rebirth memoir, pride of place. Downing's self-proclaimed 'individuation autobiography' (Rowland, 2002: 63) speaks to a diverse audience with a psychological and theological authority that establishes her as a foremother to the genre and the ever-expanding Western Goddess Movement.

3. From the Individual to the Collective - Shared Experiences

I have come to believe that each of these goddesses relates to the whole of our lives [...] and the only whole life I have any access to is necessarily my own. It has also been important to me to take into account other women's experiences of these goddesses, especially as such experiences have been given shape in contemporary [...writing]. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 7)

Following her 1981 publication, a number of women confided to her the similarities between Downing's story and their own. In many ways, these individual journeys share similar ideas, images, beliefs, rituals and myths. Harding commented on the psychological importance of the apparent shared commonality of images, rituals, beliefs, and myths in *Woman's Mysteries*: 'The fact that equivalent myths and rituals are strikingly similar, even as to detail, in the cultures of widely separated peoples, indicates that they represent general psychological themes which are true of humanity no matter where.' (Harding, 1971: 14) Although limited geographically to Western authors, these similarities will be evident in each of the memoirs in this study.

2.2.5 What theories underlie the work? Do they affect its validity?

The theories that underlie *The Goddess* are firmly entrenched in revisions and amplifications of Jungian analytical psychology. The author's use of Jungian and

post-Jungian terms and concepts has been a major point of criticism for this growing genre. Usually condemned by feminist theologians (such as Carol P Christ or Naomi Goldenberg) who find Jung misogynistic and androcentric, I agree with Susan Rowland who states that Jung's ideas have often been ignored by feminists, much to the detriment of the feminist movement. (Rowland, 2002) This is inclusive of feminist theology as well. The use of Jungian and post-Jungian theory is problematic for many scholars—especially for more traditional Christian theologians. In this section, I will examine three significant components of Jung's analytical psychology that are at the centre of the Western Goddess Movement: 1) using Jung as a path to Goddess; 2) Harding's creation of Jungian Feminism; and 3) the creation of Goddess Feminism through amplification of Jung and Harding. (Rowland, 2002) All three components are highly controversial yet intricately connected to the current Western Goddess Movement.

2.2.5.1 Jung as Path to Goddess

Post-Jungians, such as Demaris S Wehr, understand that Jung offers individuals a path often claimed by the Church. Wehr concedes: 'Using Jung's own suggestive language, we would have to conclude that Jungian analysis is a pathway to God.' (Wehr, 1987: 90) Ginette Paris agrees: 'Sometimes it is almost irresistible to consider depth psychology as a new form of spiritual asceticism, a redemptive quest.' (Paris, 2007: 55) As discussed in an earlier section, Jungian and post-Jungian theory has accurately been accused of being a personal religion.⁴² The religious nature of Jungian and post-Jungian theory is what makes this growing movement such a powerful influence on today's theology and religious studies and worthy of further analyses. Richard Noll, who wrote the critical work *The Jung Cult*, introduces a number of historical and theological critiques of Jung's analytical psychology from a religious perspective.

Cult of Redemption

Noll begins by confronting Jung on the issue of 'redemption.' Noll writes:

[...] it is arguable that Jung set out to design a cult of redemption or renewal in the period beginning as early as 1912. This was a mystery cult that promised the initiate revitalisation through contact with the

⁴² See Noll, 1994: 189.

pagan, pre-Christian layer of the unconscious mind. By doing so, one would have a direct experience of God [...]. (1994: 141)

Noll conceives of belief as a binary ‘either/or’ situation: *either* one is a Christian *or* one is a ‘pagan’ Jungian. He writes: ‘Those who wish renewal and rebirth through the new agent of cultural and personal transformation—psychoanalysis—are called upon to abandon all their cherished illusions in order that something deeper, fairer, and more embracing may arise within them.’ (1994: 200) Although this is not necessarily the experience being shared in the rebirth memoirs; instead, what is revealed is a fluid, plural and polydoxical way of knowing Goddess that can, and does, include Christian ‘ways of knowing.’ Moreover, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, Bolen and Starbird would both offer their readers a post-Jungian or Jungian ‘way of knowing’ that is in union with their Christian beliefs.

Thevathasan is critical of Jung’s appropriation of absolution. He writes: ‘Logically enough, the Jungian who goes to Confession would wish to accept himself as he is and to integrate the good and evil aspects of his personality. Acceptance replaces absolution.’ (Thevathasan, 1998: 4) This is a valid point of contention. Jung advocates an individual embracing their Shadow or ‘dark’ nature; this is the part of the self that the Church considers ‘sinful’ requiring rejection and suppression. As evidenced in the memoirs, this is an important process for all five of the authors in this study—embracing their Shadow is part of their spiritual awakening. Noll goes on to echo Carl Jung’s own words when he concludes: ‘Psychoanalysis became the new salvation of the world, with Jung as the prophet who understood the religious nature of such a movement. *Religion, after all, could only be replaced by religion.*’ (Noll, 1994: 202, emphasis is mine and paraphrases Jung)

Vessel of Creation

Noll’s next criticism of Jung is that through analytical psychology, and by extension Jungian Feminism, Goddess Feminism, and the Western Goddess Movement, the individual becomes the ‘vessel of creation.’ (Noll, 1994: 214) He is not alone in this assessment. Reverend Ed Hird, Past National Chair to the Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada, created a report in 1996 entitled ‘Carl Jung, Neo-Gnosticism, and the MBTI’. At debate was the use of Jungian typology in Ministries Leadership Training programmes. Rev Hird begins with his own

background when he writes: ‘While in theological school, I became aware of the strong influence of Dr Paul Tillich on many modern clergy. In recently reading *C.G. Jung & Paul Tillich* [Dourley (1981)], I came to realize that Tillich and Jung are “theological twins”.’ (Hird, 1998 [1996]: 6) In his report, Hird quotes Jung’s *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1995):

For those of us who wonder why some Anglicans are mistakenly calling themselves “co-creators with God”, the theological roots can again be traced back to Jung: “...man is indispensable for the completion of creation; that, in fact, he himself is the 2nd creator of the world, who alone has given to the world its objective existence...” (63). (Hird, 1998 [1996]: 6)

This criticism however, may be based on a misunderstanding on the terms of *creation* and *creator* in the Jungian sense. It is true that through analytical psychology one becomes a ‘vessel of creation.’ However, what is being created is the individual—the psychological Self. Jung in no way advocates a human ability to create universal existence. As for Hird’s objection to Jung’s reference to man (and woman) as ‘indispensable for the completion of creation’ and as ‘2nd creator of the world,’ again, perhaps cross-disciplinary terminology is causing undue conflicts. For Jung, participating in ‘creation’ is the human ability to image and find union with the Creator/Creatrix. In other words, and in this context, Goddess creates the human world, and humans create Goddess. There is, however, something to consider: Perhaps Jung intentionally used theological terms (such as ‘creation,’ ‘creator,’ or ‘soul’) in describing his psychological processes to incite theologians to respond. Or perhaps he used them intentionally to draw a parallel between theology and analytical psychology—much like the work of Dourley when comparing and contrasting Jung with Paul Tillich (Dourley, 1981). Or perhaps, as I like to believe, Jung was offering an accessible doorway to his theories and models for any curious theologians or theologians who might stumble upon his Path.

Jung and the Church

It is vital to draw attention to the fact that Jungian ideas are intricately woven within contemporary progressive Christianity.⁴³ Hird points out: ‘So many current

⁴³ For more information see: **Dourley** JP (1981) *The Psyche as Sacrament: A Comparative Study of C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich*. Toronto: Inner City Books.

theological emphases in today's church can be traced directly back to Carl Jung.' (Hird, 1998 [1996]: 6) More significantly to the progression of the Church and for open-minded reformist and liberal theologians, is that interfaith and multifaith movements began with Jung; Hird writes:

In speaking of Buddhism and Christianity, Jung taught the now familiar inter-faith dialogue line, that "Both paths are right." Jung spoke of Jesus, Mani, Buddha, and Lao-Tse as "pillars of the spirit", saying "I could give none preference over the other." The English theologian Don Cupitt says that Jung pioneered the multi-faith approach now widespread in the Church. (1998 [1996]: 6)

Hird seems to be discussing the various ways that Jungian and post-Jungian theory have been integrated as significant and relevant constructs by various sects of Christianity. Indeed Jung's influence on the Charismatic sects of Protestantism and Christianity is evident (Dourley, 1981) However, Noll believes one makes an either/or choice between Jung and the Church; evidence from the source materials in this study refute Noll's claim. The memoirs indicate that instead of being limited by an either/or choice, the authors are opting for a third possibility—integration. Jung is intricately connected with the Church, and as will be seen in later chapters, some of the women in this study have combined their Christian beliefs and practices with post-Jungian ideas and lead fulfilling religious lives. Susan Rowland notes:

A believer in a transcendent religion such as Christianity can accept Jungian theory, but so also can the atheist. God or gods may or may not be deemed to function within the theory. This aspect of Jung's work demonstrates one reason for his potency in contemporary culture. He enables a rediscovery of religious authenticity without the need to subscribe to a traditional doctrine. (Rowland, 2002: 33)

Using Jung as a path to Goddess is controversial and has raised the emotional critique of both psychological and religious scholars. For the most part, Jung is criticised by Christian theologians (feminist and non-feminist alike), but it has become clear that not all Christians reject Jung or find themselves in conflict between Christianity and Jung. However, these arguments do complicate the validity of using Jung as a path to Goddess although they are largely ignored by those adherents in the Western Goddess Movement who incorporate Jungian or post-Jungian theories into their faith tradition.

2.2.5.2 Jungian Feminism and Harding's Amplification of Jung⁴⁴

The discussion for the last two sections is based in large part on the work of post-Jungian Susan Rowland, and the classifications being used (Jungian Feminism, Amplification, and Goddess Feminism) are drawn from Rowland's 2002 *Jung: A Feminist Revision*. For the purposes of this discussion, Rowland defines *Amplification* thus:

Amplification is a Jungian therapeutic technique in which a psychic image (such as from a dream) is *amplified* by linking it to a mythological motif. This serves to make the image appear less personal and so suggests something of the "otherness" of the unconscious. Consequently, amplification tends to downplay questions of the personal or cultural history of a person. (2002: 173)

Within the confines of this study, it is the psychic image of Jung's Anima or *Anima Mundi* that is being amplified as Goddess or Great Goddess (*Magna Mater*) and linked to a mythological motif. Downing draws on the Ancient Greek pantheon through the influence of both her mother and father, but other authors select from a wide range of cultural, historic, and ancient mythologies.

Jungian Feminism refers to the revision of Jung's original models and theories by Feminist thinkers. Rowland and Maggy Anthony both traced the history of these revisions of Jungian psychology. Jungian Feminist revision first began, for the most part, with Jung's first female patients who later trained with him as analysts. Anthony comments on how a number of women were first healed by and then trained in Jung's analytical psychology:

Women came from all over the world to see him, starting from before the First World War. They came from Austria, Germany, Israel, but most often, England and America. Their journey took on a mythical quality, almost like a religious pilgrimage. They came to be healed, and often something happened that made them stay and become healers in their turn. (Anthony, 1999: xiv)

The initial circle of women included, among others, both Jung's wife (Emma) and his colleague/mistress (Toni Wolff) and Marie-Louise von Franz and Esther Harding who would meet Jung at pivotal times early in their lives. While, in Zurich, Emma Jung and Wolff were revising the Anima/Animus from a woman's perspective and

⁴⁴ See: Rowland, 2002:54-70.

von Franz was working with Jung's concepts of myth and spiritual alchemy. Harding's revisions of Jung and her women's psychology and mythology would cross the Atlantic and take a very public feminist stance in the United States. Rowland notes that this circle of women analysts and writers created something new: 'Some of their works mark the start of traditional Jungian feminism.' (Rowland, 2002: 15) Harding is certainly one of those initial creators.

With the publication of *The Way of All Women* (1933) and *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern* (1935) Harding provided a unique feminist perspective to Jung's models and theories—a *model for women by a woman*. Harding is clearly one of the first Jungian Feminists. By amplifying Jung's concept of the immanent Divine Feminine, Harding had creating something quite exceptional. 'What is inspiring about the work is that it bestows upon women a metaphysical "home" quite outside the restrictions of Christian monotheism.' (Rowland, 2002: 49) Harding was not afraid to add her own thoughts and ideas to Jung's although she stopped short of criticising the sexism inherent in his theories; her revisions, however, placed her in a liminal location. Rowland writes:

Continuing Jung's gender dichotomy of Eros/Logos enabled her work to be acceptable to him [Jung]. Amplifying Eros as "the feminine principle" enables her to cover a far greater and more powerful range of qualities than those envisaged by her mentor [Jung]. (2002: 56)

Harding's feminist revisions and amplifications of Jung would sow the seeds of a 'Goddess Feminism' created by women in America that would become foundational tenets of various faith traditions included in the greater Western Goddess Movement. Rowland provides her perspective:

Here is the Jungian premise for what I would call 'goddess feminism', which is usually designed to empower the insecure female psyche. [...] This fascinating work amplifies Jung's identification of the female psyche with Eros, the function of relatedness, and with the signification of the moon in alchemy. *Woman's Mysteries* is a marvellous elaboration of moon goddesses as active authors of the feminine principle. (2002: 49)

Rowland goes on to remark: 'The originality of the book lies in the development of ambivalent, potent and dark aspects of the feminine.' (2002: 56) The Dark, or Shadow aspect of Goddess, is a point of heated debate within the Goddess community, feminist theologians, and theologians. Some Goddess Feminists, such

as Carol P Christ, refute the Dark Goddess as a projection of patriarchy. (Christ, 1997 and 2003) Others, embrace the Dark Goddess as part of a greater whole Divine Being. Ginette Paris makes a comment in her 2007 *Wisdom of the Psyche: Depth Psychology after Neuroscience* that strikingly echoes the authors in this study when she states: ‘I prefer to take my spiritual material from the cultural memory of the paganism of the Greeks, mainly because it is a mythology and not a religion, one that did not ask for belief in their gods.’⁶ (Paris, 2007: 65) Belief is key to religious experience. Just as Harding amplified Jung’s imminent Divine Feminine, Harding’s theories would be amplified by two post-Jungians (Downing and Bolen) who would help shape Goddess Feminism and the larger Western Goddess Movement.

2.2.5.3 Goddess Feminism – An Amplification of Harding and Jung

According to Susan Rowland’s sub classification (*Jung: A Feminist Revision*, 2002) both Christine Downing and Jean Shinoda Bolen are ‘key authors’ in the Goddess Feminism movement. Rowland defines *Goddess Feminism* thus: ‘This form of feminism derived from amplifying Jung’s idea that his Eros provided a feminine principle. Extending a notion of a metaphysical feminine principle allows for “feminine archetypes” to be treated as if they were goddess in the human mind.’ (Rowland, 2002: 176) Rowland continues to define the various forms of Goddess Feminism; she writes:

Some goddess feminists stick with the Jungian line that archetypes are a biological inheritance and do not posit exterior divinities. [(Downing)] Some feminists have left Jungian theory behind in make the leap into a return to paganism in order to find better and more empowered models for women. [(Curott)] A sophisticated strand to Jungian Goddess feminism looks to a myth of a great goddess as a way of not generating binary forms of gender. [(Bolen and Kidd)] (2002: 176)

Rowland is partially correct about citing both Downing and Bolen as ‘key authors’ in Goddess Feminism; however, I challenge her equality in classification because Bolen will take Amplification to a level beyond Downing. This will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

Jungian Goddess Feminism has worked its way into that liminal space between Goddess and the psyche by becoming part of the greater Western Goddess Movement. Rowland writes: ‘Rather than an objective theory, it is possible to see

“Jungian goddess feminism” as a kind of experiment in the imagination. Goddess feminism may offer fictions of the self for a postmodern era.’ (2002: 48) The next chapter will reveal how the Western Goddess Movement shifted from an experiment in imagination with *The Goddess* to an experiment in creating theology centring on praxis.

Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage

Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD

1994

*To be vulnerable and fallible,
to have a shadow and a soul,
to make our way through life determining
who we become by the choices we make,
is what we do here.*⁴⁵

3.1 In Summation

In the previous chapter an analysis of the first memoir exhibited how Downing constructed her memoir based on Jung's Path of Individuation examining several Jungian concepts including the Archetype, Shadow, Jung's affirmation of destiny, the post-Jungian and feminist union of Anima and Animus or Eros and Logos, and introduced Harding's concept of the 'Virgin'. An analysis of Bolen's memoir, *Crossing to Avalon*, shall include not only the content of the memoir using the critical analyses established in the introduction, but also the substantial contributions made by Bolen to the Western Goddess Movement, the advancement of her concept of 'Goddess Consciousness' in the West, and her amplification (projection) of Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* through the Ancient Greek pantheon. This chapter will reveal how Bolen builds upon the existing foundational depth theories and post-Jungian revisions (including theories and models from Jung through Downing) and offers her readers a bridge from psychological theory to religious beliefs and praxis.

3.1.1 Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD (1936 -)

There are many similarities between the first two authors in this study. A contemporary of Christine Downing, Dr Jean Shinoda Bolen is a well-educated, middle-class, Western woman who enjoys an influential, albeit nonconformist, academic career with global impact. Through a prolific publication history, Bolen has acquired a level of fame, celebrity, and authority on an international scale.

⁴⁵ Bolen, 1994: 272.

She is well-known as an author, educator, advocate for empowering women world-wide, a practicing Jungian analyst, and a leader in the movement towards the re-emergence of *Goddess Consciousness* in contemporary Western society. ('Goddess Consciousness' shall be defined and examined further in following sections.)

Whereas Downing trained first in theology and then psychology, Bolen's career began with psychiatry and, through Jung, moved into analytical psychology and progressed into theology. Bolen might disagree with my assertion that her writings are works of theological reflection, but her continued attempts to raise a global 'Goddess Consciousness' and her important contribution to post-Jungian Goddess praxis help corroborate my assertion. (This too shall be discussed in greater detail in a following section.)

Bolen has a distinguished publication history and has garnered substantial achievements during her notable career, including being awarded a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. Bolen, as her personal website boasts, is also '[...] a recipient of the Institute for Health and Healing's "Pioneers in Art, Science, and *the Soul of Healing Award*" [...].' Bolen's website also states:

She brings an emphasis on the quest for meaning and the *need for a spiritual dimension* in life to all aspects of her work, while also taking into account the powerful effects of archetypes within us and family and culture upon us.⁴⁶ (Emphasis is mine)

In *The Goddess*, Downing acknowledges her debt to M Esther Harding. While, as a Jungian Analyst and educator, Bolen is also familiar with Harding's work and recognises Harding in her memoir, Bolen's memoir acknowledges the influence of a powerful work of fiction: Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (hereinafter referred to as *Mists*). First published in 1982 (one year after Downing's memoir and four years *before* Bolen would embark on her pilgrimage), *Mists* introduced and connected readers to Goddess through a retelling of the Arthurian legends from women's perspective. The setting is the isle of Avalon located near Glastonbury but hidden behind the mists. Only one initiated and trained in the ways of the Priestesses of the Goddess can call the barge from the mists and cross into Avalon. *Mists* would become and remain a significant work of

⁴⁶ quoted from <http://www.jeanbolen.com/about.html>

fiction affecting countless women (and men) functioning as the impetus for a vast majority of new adherents of the Western Goddess Movement.⁴⁷

3.1.2 *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage (1994)*

Crossing to Avalon chronicles Bolen's May 1986 pilgrimage. In contrast to Downing, Bolen includes praxis—accounts of rituals and rites performed during her pilgrimage making *Crossing to Avalon* the definitive memoir that *crosses the boundary from Jungian feminist theory to religious (or spiritual) praxis* specifically offering a viable path for readers to follow.

Bolen, unlike Downing, was inexperienced with Goddess. Bolen grew up in Protestant traditions (specifically Presbyterian and, later, Episcopalian)—sects of Christianity that do not elevate or worship the Virgin Mary as the Holy Mother of God. For the first forty-nine years of her life, this religious foundation served her well and revealed to her both God's will and God's Divine Embrace. Then came a time of great upheaval, during which Bolen embarked upon a pilgrimage that would forever shift her religious beliefs from the monotheistic Protestant towards a syncretistic blending with 'Goddess Consciousness.' Bolen's understanding of 'Goddess Consciousness' will be examined in a following section.

The structure of *Crossing to Avalon* is quite different from *The Goddess*. Downing centres on one goddess per chapter, whereas Bolen's rebirth memoir is a mixture of personal experience and psychological reflection. Case in point: out of fifteen chapters, only seven expound upon Bolen's pilgrimage experiences. The other eight chapters reveal Grail Legends; Women's Mysteries (an obvious nod to Harding and Downing); Sister Pilgrims and the importance of others during pilgrimage; Avalon as a psychological 'Motherworld' and the considerable influence of Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (1982); midlife landscape; depression and despair; circumambulation, and return. Bolen writes: 'The journey I am describing moves between outer events and inner reflection, between myth and interpretation—confounding any insistence that the narrative have the directional clarity of a map. The recounting of this pilgrimage follows a circumambulatory course.' (Bolen, 1994: 193-94) This summary shall follow Bolen's circular path.

⁴⁷ For more see: 'Iolana P (2009) *Literature of the Sacred Feminine: Great Mother Archetypes and the Re-emergence of the Goddess in Western Traditions*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.

Before examining the important events of the memoir, however, it is essential to understand why there is a thirteen-year gap between Downing's *The Goddess* and Bolen's *Crossing to Avalon*.

3.1.2.1 Creating a Memoir

Eight years passed between Bolen's pilgrimage and the publication of *Crossing to Avalon*. Bolen speaks of the delay in her memoir: 'I wrote the first draft of this book between December 1986 and April 1987, and then put it away until the beginning of 1990, when I thought I was ready to work on it again. Life intervened.' (Bolen, 1994: 269) Bolen continues:

In January 1993, I opened the carton in which I was storing the first draft of *Crossing to Avalon* and my notes and thoughts about revising it from the abortive attempt in 1990, read through what I had written, and knew that it needed only some minor additions and deletions. [...] It wasn't that this manuscript needed six years of work before it was ready. *I needed time* to move through "the forest" phase of my life, see my two children become solid young adults, and overcome my reluctance to accept the "assignment" of telling my own story, which goes against the grain of my training in psychiatry and against my family tradition of privacy. (ibid: 270, emphasis is mine)

Bolen's encounters and revelations were, in and of themselves, deeply transformative and intimately private; however, they were only part of her journey—what remained was her 'assignment'. Mythologist Joseph Campbell discusses the various stages of the hero's mythic journey in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Campbell details not only the reluctant journey the hero must make but also the integral requirement of the pilgrim, upon their return, to then share his or her story with the world. This was a component that challenged Bolen's personal and professional boundaries, and she openly struggled to make the required transition from private experience to public acknowledgement thus completing her 'assignment'. *Crossing to Avalon* is, admittedly, Bolen's most intimate publication. In the 'New Introduction' to the tenth anniversary edition (2004), Bolen expresses her inner conflict in sharing such tremendously private moments:

I was not comfortable telling as much about myself as I did when I wrote this book and now years later, I still feel more exposed than my professional and private self would prefer; and yet this is the only way to tell a story that many women and some men will recognise. (2004: xiv)

Reflecting the long-term aspect of the Path of Individuation, Bolen's reluctance to publically share her personal story exemplifies the length of time it takes one's psyche to adapt to and integrate new forms of consciousness discussed in the previous chapter. Altering one's consciousness is not an overnight process, and for one who values their privacy as much as Bolen, it took eight years for her to take the final step of her journey—sharing her innermost private thoughts and moments on a global public platform.

3.1.2.2 State of Grace

Prior to embarking on her pilgrimage, Bolen had experienced personal tragedy including the end of her long-term marriage. At a crossroads, and struggling to find direction, Bolen situates her 1986 pilgrimage by reflecting back to a previous time in her life when she was a young adult, facing her first crossroads between high school and college. Whilst attending a Christian summer camp and pondering which direction to take in her life, Bolen walked in the woods for some time and stumbled upon an empty prayer chapel; she writes:

It was there that this undeserving, prideful, humbled eighteen-year-old had a profound mystical experience of God, the loving, forgiving father, a moment of grace that changed me forever. In that chapel in prayer, I realized that I could never repay God for what I had been given but that I could express my gratitude by helping others who were less fortunate. In this state of grace, I prayed, "Thy will, not mine, be done" and in the profound silence that followed, I became convinced that I was directed to become a doctor. (1994: 45)

Bolen was deeply transformed by this experience rooted firmly in her faith in the Christian tradition. She felt personally directed by the hand of God. Perhaps she shares this story, in part, to set a precedent prior to relating her similar experience with Goddess much later in life. Strengthened by her sense of purpose and affirmation of her destiny, Bolen began her medical studies and went on to specialise in psychiatry and Jungian analytical psychology. As her life's path turned towards marriage, Bolen had another divine experience.

Only one other time did I experience the vivid and ineffable presence of God in the accompanying sense of being a recipient of a grace in a Christian context, and that occurred in the midst of my marriage ceremony in an Episcopalian cathedral. [...] I felt I was participating in a powerful ritual that invoked the sacred. I had a sense of experiencing something beyond ordinary reality, something numinous—which is a characteristic of an archetypal experience. (ibid: 47)

This experience is most intriguing, for Bolen's deep and powerful reaction was initiated by the ritual of the ceremony. Instead of 'going through the motions' as many couples do focusing more on the Other than on the sacred ritual in which they partake, Bolen felt inextricably connected to God through the act of ritual. It is important to take note of this because what Bolen creates in *Crossing to Avalon* is the bridge from psychological theory to spiritual/religious praxis. It is through ritual that Bolen feels the sacred and the Divine, and it would be through ritual that she would meet and introduce others to Goddess. For Bolen, these were sacred experiences deeply rooted in Christian belief—moments she could contextualise, understand and describe—even if she utilised Jungian concepts alongside Christian terminology. Bolen's next experience with the Numinous, however, would be far different:

It happened in my office [...]. [...] I was weary and full of unexpressed grief. [...] No one supposed I needed any comforting, including me, until this woman who was my analysand sensed something and reached out with compassion to ask if I was all right. And when my eyes moistened with sudden tears, she broke out of role, got out of the patient's chair to come over to mine, and held me. At that moment, I felt that a much larger presence was there with the two of us. When this woman put her arms around me, I felt as if we were both being cradled in the arms of an invisible, divine presence. [...] It differed from the mystical experience I had had of God. Then, no other human presence was necessary, and prayer provided a sense of continuity and connection. Here, in contrast, the compassion and arms of a woman were the means through which a numinous maternal presence was felt. I felt deeply comforted, as if body and soul were held in the arms of female divinity that was larger than us both. It was a transpersonal experience as was my experience of God, but it had a physical component, "God" was transcendent—as if from above and of the spirit; "*Goddess*" came through a human woman in a moment of loving compassion and left me with an aching deep quiet place in my heart [...]. (ibid: 72-74, emphasis is mine)

In comparison to Bolen's previous encounters with the Divine, this moment of 'transpersonal experience' must have shaken the very foundations of Bolen's religious and self paradigms. Unlike before, Bolen was not in the sanctuary of the Church, nor was she embedded in a sacred ritual; she was in her clinical surroundings working as a psychiatrist. And while this encounter with her patient could be criticised for crossing professional boundaries, Bolen focuses on the transformational nature of the encounter. What Bolen regards as important in this moment is the recognition and compassion on the part of her client, and the Divine

embrace that Bolen felt through the experience. All of these elements embodied the Divine in a way Bolen had never experienced before, for in her previous encounters Bolen was faced with God, the Father; now, Bolen was encountering Goddess, the Mother—an archetype Bolen only knew clinically through Jungian analysis. In Bolen's retelling of this event, she details her first encounter with the embodied Divine which was gifted to her in a 'feminine' form.⁴⁸ This revelation of "Goddess" would shift Bolen's religious paradigm (and eventually her career) and set the psychological and spiritual framework for her pilgrimage.

3.1.2.3 An Invitation

Bolen's pilgrimage began with an unimagined offer, and so does her memoir; in the opening line, Bolen writes: 'I opened the bulky envelope that had come in the day's mail and found an invitation that would change my life. A total stranger was inviting me on a pilgrimage.' (1994: 1) As mentioned previously, the timing of this invitation was most fortuitous; Bolen's life was in the midst of a major transition; she writes: '[...] I was in a muddled, painful, and perplexing time of my life. I was forty-nine years old and [...] in the previous year I had separated from my husband after nineteen years of marriage [...].' (ibid: 3) Once again, Bolen was at a crossroads and in need of Divine intervention; it arrived in an unsolicited invitation. Seeing another Divine directive, Bolen accepts the invitation; Bolen writes: '[...] I had an inner conviction that I was following a soul path, even if I could not see where it was taking me.' (ibid: 3) Accepting the invitation was a brave choice for Bolen, and the pilgrimage would provide her a place for reflection—something much needed during times of personal turmoil.

3.1.2.4 Meeting the Dalai Lama

Elinore Detiger, the stranger who extended the invitation, had timed Bolen's journey to coordinate with the Dalai Lama's visit to The Netherlands. Bolen would begin by meeting someone who, perhaps in part because of her Japanese heritage, she considered to be a 'living legend and great spiritual leader'. (ibid: 11) During her meeting with the Dalai Lama, Bolen describes the moment she was introduced to him; she writes: '[...] he gazed directly into my eyes, smiled, shook my hand, said hello, and made chuckling, chortling sounds, very much like the noises made by a happy baby, which I had never heard a grown man make before.' (ibid: 13)

⁴⁸ For more see: Error! Main Document Only. **Raphael M Error! Main Document Only.** (1996) *Theology and Embodiment: The Post-Patriarchal Reconstruction of Female Sacrality*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

She writes several pages about the small group meeting and muses upon her feelings afterwards. Bolen hadn't noticed anything substantial until she reflected upon the moment of introduction and the Dalai Lama's singular response to Bolen. She notes he did not react this way upon being introduced to the others in the room, only her; Bolen writes:

As I thought about the significance of meeting the Dalai Lama, I was reminded again of the saying "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will come." In this case, when I was receptive to what he symbolized, the insight came. [...] In the previous decade, I had lost the spontaneity, wonder, and vulnerability that I once had as I had become increasingly responsible for more people. I needed to be in touch with the child within myself who could truly feel my own feelings and act upon them. (ibid: 15-16)

This moment becomes highly significant from a Jungian perspective, as this child-like wonder the Dalai Lama stirred within Bolen is a necessary first step in analytical psychology. Bolen's epiphany on the importance of child-like wonder echoes Downing, who wrote: 'The rediscovery of a child still alive in us, the recovery of the child's imaginal view of the world, may be regarded as the beginning of all *depth* psychology.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 221) The spontaneity, joy, imagination, and celebration that children embody is a necessary shift in consciousness required on Jung's Path of Individuation. For Bolen, it took meeting the Dalai Lama to remember where the pilgrimage truly began—within the confines of her own psyche and with child-like wonder.

3.1.2.5 Chartres Cathedral

Conscious of her need for spontaneity, wonder, and vulnerability, Bolen travelled to France; she writes: 'Of all the sacred sites [...] Chartres Cathedral was the one that I most looked forward to.' (Bolen, 1994: 22) Bolen had longed to tread the path of the renowned labyrinth within the Cathedral and sought it out. She walked the labyrinth, slowly and reflectively, but felt outside of the experience; she writes: '[...] I was strictly a sightseer, not a pilgrim.' (ibid: 26) Disappointed, Bolen looked for other spaces to explore including a reported Druidic well beneath the Cathedral. Bolen's enquiries confirm the presence of a well, and also a moment of Jungian 'synchronicity'—a perceived meaningful coincidence—as a group was gathering to make a guided descent, and Bolen was welcome to join them. Her observations of the traverse down beneath the Cathedral are clinical; she writes: 'It is an ancient Celtic well about thirty-three meters deep that was

once in a grotto.’ (ibid: 27) Her narration of the scene differs in tone and language from her recollection of how she felt upon ascending from the depths:

[...] something in me had changed. I was no longer the tourist; *I had become the pilgrim*. The descent into the grotto had affected me greatly, and almost as if in response, as I walked into the cathedral this second time, the organist began to play and the magnificent sound seemed to vibrate through the stones and through me. / I found that I was not taking things in primarily with my eyes and mind anymore. I was instead feeling my way, perceiving the energies in the cathedral *with my body*, responding to the place kinaesthetically.’ (ibid: 28, emphasis is mine)

The change in Bolen was not physical, although she certainly was having an *embodied* experience as a result; the alteration in Bolen was a psychological shift in consciousness—a symbolic, archetypal, and psychological death and rebirth. (Jung, 1968) By venturing down to the ancient well deep within the earthen belly of the great Cathedral, Bolen entered the symbolic womb. This particular earthen womb is characteristically understood as a grave that cradles death—beneath the earth in which life springs above and sinks its roots deep below for strength. However, the womb, unlike the grave, gives life, and emerging from the womb, Bolen is now reborn as pilgrim indicating a psychological acceptance of her new path. Bolen’s rebirth as pilgrim in the earthen womb of Chartres Cathedral would be one of many psychological shifts that Bolen experiences along her pilgrimage.

A pattern begins to emerge; an important lesson or encounter is acquired with each stop along Bolen’s pilgrimage. With the Dalai Lama, Bolen learned to embrace her inner child and, perhaps more importantly, allow herself to be vulnerable. Once Bolen is vulnerable, and thus open to the experience beneath Chartres Cathedral, she is able to integrate the affirmation of her immediate destiny as a pilgrim on her own Path of Individuation.

3.1.2.6 Glastonbury

Strengthened with her new child-like wonder and affirmation of her role as pilgrim, Bolen travelled to Glastonbury where another key encounter awaited. Bolen reflects that, for her, Glastonbury was ‘[...] more a mythological place than a geographical one.’ (ibid: 84) She writes:

[...] this was a destination that I myself had been drawn to by a dream that I had had many years earlier, a place that had captivated my imagination since reading *The Mists of Avalon*. In this novel, Glastonbury was the place where one crossed through the mists to Avalon, the last realm of the Goddess where women were priestesses, healers, and visionaries. (ibid: 84)

Through *Mists of Avalon*, Glastonbury is intricately connected with Arthurian myths and Grail legends. As a Jungian, Bolen would have been aware of the various myths that surround Glastonbury. In her mind, Glastonbury was a liminal space; she writes: '[...] it was like entering a dream landscape that was imbued with legends and stories, including the claim that this is a place where the veil is thinner.' (ibid: 88) Full of pre-conceived notions given to her through myth, legend, and the powerful fiction of Marion Zimmer-Bradley, Bolen held a certain expectation of this location to be liminal and provide her with some form of sacred geographical encounter similar to Chartres.

Bolen actively sought out this encounter. The next day she woke early and wandered alone to Glastonbury Tor; she writes: '[...] I made my way on these spirals up to the top, the experience felt puzzling and somehow wrong.' (ibid: 92) This is the second consecutive time Bolen would seek what she assumed would be a divine path only to discover it to be a feature that held, for her, no deeper meaning or connection. In further parallel to Chartres, Bolen was drawn to enter the Tor from underground. Despite searching the location and making enquiries in the village, this time she would be disappointed. Bolen learned that while legends exist about a chamber underneath the Tor, it is generally dismissed as mere speculation, and has yet to be archaeologically confirmed or disproven.

Failing to thus far find the lesson that Glastonbury held for her, Bolen agreed to participate in two rituals: one at the Chalice Well, and the other on the ruins of the High Altar in Glastonbury Abbey. To begin, Bolen would participate in a ritual of cleansing at the Chalice Well. Bolen describes washing her face, hands, and arms and drinking 'deeply' from the well. (ibid: 120) She explains the ritual's meaningful intentions:

With words and gestures, we were enacting a ritual of cleansing, purifying, and letting go—of negativity, of fear, of the past, of people, of expectations, of whatever stood in the way of our openness and receptivity to divinity, to love, healing, hope, vision, wisdom,

whatever. [...] we needed [...] to let go of emotional burdens and bonds, in order to heal our souls. (ibid: 120)

As the cleansing and healing of one's soul is a deeply personal and private encounter, and Bolen is apprehensive of sharing intimate details of her journey, Bolen reflects little on the moment. Perhaps her cursory discussion of the cleansing ritual at the Chalice Well is due to the fact that, in this particular ritual, Bolen didn't find her lesson or moment/encounter that would alter her consciousness. Or perhaps this is a moment that Bolen would like to keep, in part, to herself. The ritual that would follow, however, would lead to a moment that Bolen would recognise as profound.

The second ritual took place in the Glastonbury Abbey ruins. The women stood barefoot upon the grassy block where the High Altar once stood. Bolen describes very little of the aesthetics or the components of the ritual; instead, Bolen's recounting focuses on her internal response to the ritual; she writes:

I entered a deeply receptive state of consciousness [...]. I once again felt my Christian spirituality: Christ, Holy Spirit, God the Father were with me once more. And I felt the presence of a Mother God, the Goddess, as well. Standing on the High Altar, listening to a contemporary priestess, I could feel energy from Mother Earth coming up through my feet into my body, while the Spirit descended from above through my head. Both came together and met in my heart. It felt as if a large chalice, glowing with light, filled my entire chest. (ibid: 121-22)

Here in the countryside that Bolen expected to be a liminal location, she experienced a sacred internal meeting, recognition, and integration that is exemplified not only the Jungian union of Goddess (Anima) and God (Animus) but also the union of divine (theological) immanence and transcendence. While Bolen held an expectation for this location to provide some Divine intervention, and this could be explained as a self-fulfilling prophecy; Bolen could never have prophesised this embodied union of Mother and Father God. This unexpected union of Goddess and God helped to close a growing ache and schism deep within Bolen's heart and psyche. She writes:

This coming together of God and Goddess healed a split in me. Though I had for a long time begun my prayers with "Dear Mother-Father God," before this I'd not felt the two energies come together in me. If anything, the two aspects of the Deity seemed to be getting further and

further apart for me, as I experienced the sacredness of feminine divinity and grew increasingly informed and angry at what had happened to the Goddess historically and the consequences of this for women. God had become equated in my mind with oppressive patriarchal power, with the Inquisition and the burning times, with narrow-minded fundamentalists who were full of fear and hatred, with the jealous and vengeful god of the Old Testament. I had become distant, cut off from my own momentous experience of God's grace and loving presence. On the High Altar, when God and Goddess ineffably come together in me, I was reunited with the loving God I had "known." (ibid: 122)

In this space, sacred to God and Goddess alike, Bolen found herself, once again, the recipient of grace; this time it was through the Union of Goddess and God—allowing her to embrace both deities: Goddess and her Christian God. This is a crucial moment, both for Bolen and for the Western Goddess Movement. For decades, the majority of Goddess adherents focused solely on the Feminine Divine—often discarding any form of Divine Masculine as patriarchal and oppressive. There was a long-term effort on the part of many Neo-Pagans such as Starhawk (1979; 1999) and Z Budapest (1980) and feminist theologians such as Mary Daly (1973), Carol P. Christ (1979), and Sallie McFague (1982) to replace the Father God with a Mother Goddess. One would expect this trend to continue; however, the portion of the Goddess Movement that aligns with Jungian and post-Jungian thought present an alternative to this surreptitious discarding of the Masculine Divine offering instead a union of Goddess and God exemplified in Bolen's experience at the High Altar of Glastonbury Abbey. Bolen's encounter provides the opportunity not only for her to integrate the union of the Father God and Mother Goddess, joining both the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' within her singular frame, but also the union of the Christian and the Pagan (or Goddess-centred) traditions into a cohesive union of belief. As will be discussed in a following section, Bolen did not have to discard her existing belief system (Protestant Christianity) in order to incorporate a form of Goddess Spirituality, but could and did integrate the two belief systems together into a working cohesive whole.

3.1.2.7 Findhorn

Still overwhelmed by the experience at Glastonbury, and buoyed by child-like wonder and vulnerability, the affirmation of her personal destiny, and the divine union experienced through ritual, Bolen travelled from Glastonbury to the

Findhorn Community. Founded in the north of Scotland in the 1960s, Findhorn is considered sacred due to the community's 'conscious communication and cooperation between humans and Nature.' (ibid: 209) Although Findhorn held no personal transformations for Bolen, she did find the community hugely successful given the location and climate, describing it as 'an oasis in the desert'. (ibid: 211)

Bolen then travelled southwest to Iona stopping at Clava Cairns, Pluscarden Abbey, and Clunny Hill. Whilst Bolen found the Cairns and Clunny Hill captivating spaces, they did not afford Bolen any form of personal transformation such as she experienced at Glastonbury, Chartres or meeting the Dalai Lama. Pluscarden Abbey, however, would provide yet another moment of Divine presence.

3.1.2.8 Pluscarden Abbey

Bolen has a brief recounting of the 'peaceful setting' and 'imposing stone church' at the fully-functional Pluscarden Abbey. (ibid: 232) The Abbey holds a private Mary Chapel used only by the brothers in residence; it is inaccessible to visitors and pilgrims. Bolen finds herself captivated by the sacred space she cannot enter and may only view through a small window. (ibid: 232) Raised in the Protestant Christian tradition, Bolen admits: '[...] Mary is as foreign to me as the idea of worshipping a Goddess.' (ibid: 232) Yet, despite her unfamiliarity with the Virgin Mary, Bolen felt inexplicably drawn to the chapel's window; she writes:

The energy that I had felt [...] was more intense here than in any other place we'd been on this pilgrimage. [...] And now I felt bathed in a stream of energy from the Mary Chapel. It felt like molecules were moving in a current that rushed over me, swirled around me, and blessed me. (ibid: 232)

Again, Bolen has felt a Divine presence. This is now the fifth moment in which Bolen describes being in a 'State of Grace'—encountering the presence of or being touched by the Divine. Her first two encounters were in Christian settings (an empty prayer chapel in the woods and during her wedding at Grace Cathedral); her next encounter was in meeting the embodied Goddess in the clinical setting of her office. Once on the pilgrimage, Bolen was again in a State of Grace upon the High Altar at Glastonbury Abbey where Father God and Mother Goddess joined within her. Now, once again in a Christian setting (the Mary Chapel), Bolen feels as if she is in a State of Grace—the recipient of a Divine blessing. This time, however, Bolen isn't experiencing the Father God of her youth, but the Goddess

through Mary. Just as the encounter in Glastonbury brought together Bolen's long-held Christian and burgeoning Goddess beliefs into one cohesive whole in the union of *deities*, Bolen was now experiencing this union of *beliefs* as she felt the presence of Goddess whilst in a Christian setting. These encounters are shaping Bolen's understanding of Goddess; she writes: '[...] this experience at Pluscarden, and the historical awareness I'd gained on this pilgrimage [...] certainly made me think about the connection between the Goddess and the Virgin Mary.' (ibid: 232) Struggling to find a way to make sense of this experience and this merger, of often conceived as divergent beliefs, Bolen turns to story for guidance. Bolen recalls the end of *Mists* where Bradley describes the dissolution of Avalon. The last High Priestess leaves the deserted island behind, crosses through the mists, and finds herself at Glastonbury Abbey. Bolen quotes Bradley when she writes: '[...] the last priestess of the Goddess enters a Mary Chapel, where she realises for the first time that the Goddess will continue to be in the world even if Christianity triumphs.' (ibid: 232-33) In Bradley's underlying message of her novel—the continuation of Goddess despite the introduction of a new religion—Bolen finds the reassurance she sought: Mary and Goddess are but just two names for the 'Feminine' Divine force/energy/presence that Bolen keeps encountering. Bolen recognises that these are not different deities, but the same, with potential for different forms and names. This is an important shift in consciousness not only for Bolen, but for all those post-Jungians who follow Goddess-centred faith traditions, and it is a decidedly psycho-religious shift. As archetypes, there are no religious doctrinal boundaries to confine these figures. The Great Mother Goddess can be embodied as Kwon-Yin, Demeter, Gaia, Isis, or the Virgin Mary, among a host of others; the physical 'container' of Goddess varies from individual to individual. For a Jungian, and post-Jungian, the important step is to connect with this Divine Feminine energy/force/Creatrix. These theological unions of the Divine are perhaps not integral steps in Jung's Path of Individuation, but the theological and practical ramifications of a syncretistic blending of Christian and Goddess-centred belief allows Bolen, and others so inclined, to maintain the faith tradition of her youth and blend it with her new experiences and beliefs of Goddess.

3.1.2.9 Iona Respite and the Imagery of Union

The last stop along the pilgrimage was for respite on the isle of Iona providing time for quiet introspection and reflection. Here, in 'the cradle of Christianity'

Bolen would end her Goddess pilgrimage. (ibid: 235) As experienced before in the powerful union of deities at Glastonbury and the unexpected union of beliefs at Pluscarden Abbey, on Iona Bolen would encounter a syncretistic union in imagery blending the Christian Father God with the Mother Goddess; she writes:

[...] On Iona I found a symbol that united the Father and the Mother. On the abbey grounds, there is a tall Celtic cross at least nine hundred years old. A ring, which is a symbol of the Goddess, is incorporated into this cross; it encircles where the two arms of the cross intersect. Unlike Roman and Protestant Christianity, Celtic Christianity retained a belief in the sacredness of the physical world; instead of driving out the Goddess it incorporated her and kept faith with its pagan and mystical roots. (ibid: 236-37)

For Bolen, this intriguing and elaborate Celtic cross unites known symbols connected with Goddess and God depicting in one symbol the union that took place within Bolen's psyche and soul—the integration of deities with the merging of Father God and Mother Goddess at Glastonbury. (See Figure 3-1.⁴⁹) All of Bolen's recent psycho-religious encounters are encapsulated in symbolic imagery found during her pilgrimage. A momentous alteration of the unadorned Protestant cross Bolen grew up with, this ancient Celtic cross and its ornate unified imagery could offer Bolen, and many others, the possibility and ability to hold on to the Christian tradition in which she was raised whilst also embracing Goddess. Bolen's Divine encounters and her ultimate psychological and religious acceptance of this union of deities and beliefs required a number of shifts of consciousness on Bolen's part including making alterations in the way Bolen now experienced and imaged the Divine. The timing of this discovery was, again, most fortuitous, as Bolen discovered it at a moment when she needed it most. This ancient symbol held great power of Christian faith and tradition while surreptitiously granting Bolen a level of religious authority to 'allow' this unorthodox integration of Goddess into her belief system.



Figure 3-1
Celtic cross

⁴⁹ Photo altered by author. Original image available at: http://www.tripadvisor.co.kr/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g186581-i25223717-Isle_of_Iona_The_Hebrides_Scotland.html#25223716

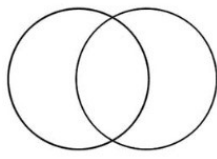


Figure 3-2
Vesica Piscis

This new symbol of a unified Divine was not the only new symbol that would represent the shifts in consciousness that took place within Bolen during her pilgrimage. But it wasn't until Bolen encountered the Celtic cross at Iona that she made the connection. At the beginning of her journey in the United Kingdom, Bolen participated in a cleansing ritual at the Chalice Well. The symbol on the door to the ancient well is known as the *Vesica Piscis*. Beautiful in its simplicity, the symbol is two partially-overlapping circles. (See Figure 3-2.) Bolen now understood the *Vesica Piscis* to reflect the interconnected encounters she experienced during her pilgrimage—a symbol of Goddess and God together—independent, yet overlapping in part. This symbol became so important to Bolen that it not only graces the cover of her memoir, but also prominently appears on the first page. It is a symbol that represents, for Bolen, numerous things on various levels: It symbolises the union of deities in Goddess and God that Bolen experienced at Glastonbury; it signifies the union of the Virgin Mary and the Goddess at Pluscarden Abbey; it depicts, in non-theological imagery, the union of beliefs with the integration of Goddess alongside a pre-existing Christian faith tradition. However, it also symbolises the psychological processes: it represents the integration of Bolen's newly-acquired Goddess consciousness with her pre-existing Christian consciousness; on some level, it also implies the union of psyche and faith—faith emanates from belief; and belief, according to Jung, is the produce of one's unconscious mind. (Jung, 2001: 122) Reminiscent of the Taoist yin/yang; as a symbol, the *Vesica Piscis* also represents the other various shifts and unions required along the Path of Individuation—such as the union of conscious and unconscious minds, the union of Anima (feminine) and Animus (masculine), and potentially destructive but nonetheless required individual union with one's personal Shadow. In all of these aspects the *Vesica Piscis* represents the union of the old and the new becoming, not one, but something previously independent, now joined; being together, this union holds much greater potential and possibility than either portion of the equation ever held independently.

As mentioned previously, Bolen's memoir is a mixture of a recounting of the events of her pilgrimage and her analytical assessment and elaboration. A Jungian-trained analyst, Bolen sets her memoir alongside Jung's Path of Individuation. In my summary of Bolen's memoir it was important to chart the significant events

which brought the crucial shifts in consciousness required for Bolen's Individuation. Through her experiences with the Dalai Lama, the Divine Union at Glastonbury, the State of Grace at Pluscarden Abbey, and finding these unions symbolised through the ancient Celtic Cross at Iona and the *Vesica Piscis* at the Chalice Well in Glastonbury have all been transformative encounters/discoveries in Bolen's pilgrimage that have significantly altered her way of thinking and seeing the world.

3.2 Critical Review

3.2.1 Who is the intended audience? Are they reached?

Crossing to Avalon has several specific audiences. First and foremost, Bolen's subtitle, *A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage* specifies her primary target audience as women of middle age. However, Bolen is an educator, and her books are used as college and university texts in gender studies, women's psychology, mythology, literature, spirituality, east-west philosophy, psychology and in some emerging theology courses, so Bolen's second audience is academic. It is interesting to note that the memoirs each have a different Library of Congress Catalogue classifications in the US, and the book jacket labelling, often used as shelving guides, also varies. Downing's is labelled as 'Psychology;' Bolen's is labelled as 'Psychology / Women's Studies;' Kidd's memoir is unclassified, leaving the shelving in libraries and bookstores open to the individual interpretation; Starbird's memoir is labelled as 'Women's Studies / Creation Spirituality; and while Curott's memoir mentions witchcraft, the book jacket is labelled as 'Spirituality.' One would not find these five rebirth memoirs shelved together. This lack of a proper classification for this genre of women's rebirth memoirs is also worthy of note.

Through Bolen's use of Jungian and post-Jungian models and beliefs, there is an unspecified intended third audience: Jungians and post-Jungians. For Jungians and post-Jungians, Bolen's memoir is an Individuation memoir—just as Downing's *The Goddess* was also an Individuation memoir. (Rowland, 2002: 63) *Crossing to Avalon*, as discussed in the summary, charts Bolen's path of shifts in her consciousness, the personal transformation through ritual, the naming of symbols, and completing her journey with her 'assigned' sharing of her tale. Individuation is a fundamental task of Jungian midlife, and Bolen speaks throughout her memoir

about the challenges that middle-age brings; she writes: 'Midlife is a time and a state of psyche.' (Bolen, 1994: 187) In other words, midlife is a psychological process and not necessarily dependent upon chronological age. One merely has to attain the state of mind of 'midlife'; this may happen before one chronologically reaches the average middle age, during the designated 'midlife' period, long afterwards, or in some instances, not at all. This mind-set is a crucial shift in consciousness in the Path of Individuation and will be examined further in the following chapter. Bolen notes the key discovery that sets the veritable 'midlife crisis' into play: a discovered difference between perception and reality. Bolen writes that this is a time when there may be a discrepancy between 'what we *have* and what we *wanted* or expected of life, ourselves or others.' (ibid, 188, emphasis is mine) Often a time of 'crisis', midlife can also be a period of potential and change; Bolen writes:

Jungian analyst and author Murray Stein describes midlife transitions as periods of liminality, which I think aptly describes those times in our lives when we are in an "in between" zone, a stage in which we are neither who we used to be, nor who we are becoming. [...] At such times, we are often thin-skinned and vulnerable, which accompanies being psychologically receptive and open to new growth. (1994: 8)

Bolen's discussion of midlife draws from psychology and mythology as she designates her fourth audience; she writes: 'The wounded Fisher King sitting in the midst of the wasteland is a metaphor for midlife depression for men and women who become caught up in acquiring position and power.' (ibid: 181) This particular audience includes both men *and* women in midlife. This statement also echoes Harding's assertion that women face a psychological conflict between cultural expectations (submission) and personal desires and motivations (power). (Harding, 1971) Bolen asserts that what is sacrificed for power is the very component that needs to be reclaimed; she writes:

What I did, men routinely do. They sacrifice the anima (the feminine, softer, vulnerable, and emotional aspects of themselves) [...] in order to be successful in the world, in order to become kings. When being productive and taking care of business is what matters, work occupies mind and time. The daily grind takes its gradual toll, and once spontaneity and emotionality are stifled, the child and maiden archetypes in us are gone, consigned to the underworld. If we lose and do not develop soul connections with people or lose touch with soul-renewing places or activities, we will gradually find that we are inhabiting our own wasteland. (1994: 191)

Therefore, Bolen is writing directly to those who are in a similar situation as herself—women and men of midlife mind-set: questing for power, unsatisfied, and seeking something substantially more fulfilling. Bolen also includes those who have not yet become conscious of the factors affecting their behaviour - those individuals cognitively unaware of the demands of their psyche yet compelled to act anyway. Bolen echoes Harding when she writes: ‘Both pilgrim and questing knight leave behind their usual lives and go in search of something that they are missing, not necessarily knowing what that is.’ (ibid: 33) Bolen also echoes herself from the beginning of the memoir, when, at receiving the invitation, Bolen comments that she knows not where this perceived ‘soul path’ leads, but is compelled to follow it. (ibid: 3)

There is, however, a particularly essentialist, exclusionary nature to Bolen’s work in that it specifically targets women (one of its primary objectives); while written for an audience of women, Bolen comments on occasion that men are an important part of what Bolen labels as emerging ‘Goddess Consciousness’. This concept will be examined further in a following section. The important point is that *Crossing to Avalon* is not necessarily a memoir that is easily accessible to all readers. This was evident in Kirkus Reviews’ article prior to the 1994 release of *Crossing to Avalon*. Kirkus, a long-standing reputable US book review magazine panned Bolen’s memoir. With regards to potential reading audience, the critique states: ‘Although the trip chronicled was undoubtedly meaningful for the author and will appeal to New Age seekers, it will leave others cold.’ (Kirkus Reviews, 1994) Harsh criticism indeed, but this memoir, while addressed to a wide-ranging audience, is not written for everyone. This critique, however, raises some very important questions about audience. Should authors try to write their experiences so that they are accessible to every possible group? Or should authors focus on the lived experience to which they can authoritatively speak? Considering the difficulty in writing a personal story that is accessible to every possible group of readers (if that is even possible), the latter option, focusing on the lived experience, would be the most suitable format for a memoir. If it is therefore practically unmanageable to write to every possible group, can a reader outside the intended group gather any valuable experience by witnessing the author’s story? Perhaps this is possible, and the ‘Reader as Witness’ will be examined in further detail in a forthcoming section. Bolen appears to write from her authority of her lived

experience and her gathered knowledge which does, in some ways, limit the accessibility for some readers to her memoir. For example, Bolen's chapter on 'Women's Mysteries' (an obvious homage to M Esther Harding) discusses the eternal connection Bolen feels with all mothers. She writes: 'Pregnancy is then the barge that takes a woman through the mists to Avalon and the realm of the Goddess.' (Bolen, 1994: 57) While a beautiful sentiment, this statement is exclusionary to any individual who cannot or will not have children - women as well as men. How then shall this excluded group cross over to Avalon? Bolen addresses the excluded group in her discussions on midlife.

Crossing to Avalon contains essentialist and exclusive elements—limiting the audience primarily to women, often specifically mothers, for whom Bolen cannot speak but can affect through her memoir. Nevertheless, sales and continuing publication evidence⁵⁰ alongside significant reader response Bolen received during public appearances indicates she has succeeded in reaching her target audience—namely women in midlife similar to Bolen. Publication growth is also indicated: Bolen's memoir was translated into both Dutch and Spanish (in 1995 and 2000 respectively), and the 10th anniversary was celebrated in 2004 with a special edition indicating that Bolen's audience has widened over the past two decades.

3.2.2 What are the intentions of the work? What did they achieve?

Throughout her memoir, Bolen's principal objectives are revealed. Based on a close reading, Bolen has two explicit intentions with *Crossing to Avalon*: 1) to help shape women's story and 2) to help raise awareness of and participation in what Bolen deems as 'Goddess Consciousness'. Both of these purposes shall be examined in further detail.

3.2.2.1 Shaping Women's Story – Need and Affect

Crossing to Avalon is one of the first rebirth memoirs after Downing that attempts to voice and shape women's story. Despite Bolen's discomfort at sharing personal information, she was well-aware of gender-specific socio-cultural (and post-Jungian) necessity to share her account; she writes: 'Who does the telling, shapes

⁵⁰ This information may not be comprehensive. Publication and sales information was obtained from a variety of sources and cross-checked to aid verification. These sources include: US Library of Congress, British Library, COPRA, HarperCollins Publishing (now known as HarperOne), and available editions currently listed on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk as of May 2012.

the story.’ (Bolen, 1994: 37) In a world where the male psyche has been the norm and the female psyche has been seen as deficient from this standard (male) this alternative perspective of the female psyche as legitimate and not deficient is crucial to the advancement of women. (Gilligan, 1982) As it was with Harding back in 1935, the key factor is *women writing about women*. If women tell the story, then they shape the narrative and decide what should be emphasised and what should be discarded. They also broaden forms of knowledge by adding intuitive and embodied Eros ways of knowing combined with the analytic Logos-based thought processes. In Bolen’s memoir, this is imperative as, for her, Goddess is experienced embodied through other women and intuitively through her own body.

There is a strong correlation between the concept of female ‘embodiment’—of, or pertaining to, the biological female body—and Goddess-centred faith traditions. Melissa Raphael, author of *Theology and Embodiment: The Post-Patriarchal Reconstruction of Female Sacrality* (1996) writes: ‘Conceptualizing the divine as “female” allows a direct relation between divine generativity and its manifestations in women—a relation which has systemic political effects.’ (Raphael, 1996: 9) By embodying the Eternal Divine in the biological form of a woman, it significantly alters the socio-cultural assumption of women. Women currently hold the derided and scorned position in the West as embodying ‘sin’ and temptation, and women’s bodies and their natural functions are shunned and hidden in shame. By imaging the Divine as ‘feminine’ the ‘female’ body holds the potential to then be elevated in a sacred manner—seen as something to be worshipped and revered—where women’s bodies and their natural rhythms and cycles are honoured and respected. This shift in consciousness about the sacrality of the ‘feminine’ body, as Raphael notes, carries with it radical potential for ‘systemic political effects’, which, for her, are gendered; she writes: ‘For me, the “return” of the Goddess marks a vision of the decline of “masculine” modernity and its desacralisation of “female” materiality. In this, the Goddess is perhaps more a symbol of hope than of celebration.’ (Raphael, 1996: 14)

Another key factor in shaping women’s story is the psychological *need to share* such stories: ‘The need to share what we experience, to be listened to, to have what is going on *inside* of us matter to the other [...] is the cry of one soul yearning to meet another.’ (Bolen, 1994: 108, emphasis in the original) This passage would

later be quoted by Sue Monk Kidd in her rebirth memoir—connecting the two memoirs, and indicating Kidd’s familiarity with Bolen’s body of work. For Bolen, the ‘other’ with which she shares her experiences are her readers. (The concept of ‘Reader as Witness’ shall be explored further in a following section.) Human beings have a fundamental need to share in a safe and contained environment; Bolen writes:

We all share a need to be totally honest, to be able to speak to another human being who accepts us as we are, and believes in us, about what we have done and what was done to us, about what we hope for, think about, fear, and feel. (1994: 110)

Crossing to Avalon was written not only to shape women’s story but also to affect others on a deep and personal level. Through both academic and public appearances, Bolen has had the opportunity to come into regular contact with her readers and has frequently been told how her memoir was transformational and inspired them to undertake a pilgrimage of their own. Some readers have followed Bolen’s literal footsteps visiting all the same places mentioned in the memoir. (Bolen, 2004) Through this feedback, she has gleaned how revealing her own journey has affected the lives of others; Bolen writes:

We can be affected by a story as much as we can be by a dream, if its symbols and events have a certain mystery and power for us that in turn evoke our own memories and thoughts. We can be struck by the story’s message, or have a flash of insight that illuminates something we had not seen before, much in the same way that a major dream affects us. When a story holds meaning for a people and a time as did the Grail legend [and in 1982 with *Mists*] it becomes a myth for the age; and unless and until there is an official version, there will be embellishments, deletions, and additions, for the story is a living vehicle for the psyche of the teller and the listener [reader]. (1994: 127)

If the story, in this case *Crossing to Avalon*, affects the reader to the extent that they, too, embark on a pilgrimage of their own (as will also be discussed in a following section) then that story has become much more than just a work of literature: ‘A story that truly sustains us on a soul-chosen path rings deeply true and is a source of inspiration, hope, and meaning.’ (Bolen, 1994: 268) For Bolen both the Grail legends and *Mists* served as her sources of inspiration and hope, and, combined with Jungian psychology, provided a sense of meaning. *Crossing to*

Avalon is, for Bolen's many readers, their source of inspiration, hope, and meaning just as Bolen had intended.

3.2.2.2 Goddess Consciousness and Paradigmatic Shift

The second intention of *Crossing to Avalon* is to help raise awareness of and participation in what Bolen deems as 'Goddess Consciousness.' Bolen's pre-existing beliefs and moments of Grace combined with the experiences and encounters that Bolen had during her pilgrimage, alongside her Jungian training and practice, set the foundations for Bolen's model. Bolen's integration of Goddess into her pre-existing Christian doctrine requires a psychological justification and explanation that can sit alongside her faith tradition without threatening her ultimate beliefs. By utilising Goddess as archetype, and keeping "Her" based in the psychological realm, Bolen can internally integrate her new beliefs with her old beliefs. *Goddess Consciousness* is Bolen's way of speaking of the shift in consciousness that includes the 'Feminine' Divine—the interconnectivity, compassion, and Eros-based knowledge which Bolen (based on Jung) believes has been neglected, scorned and repressed in Western culture. Bolen's Goddess Consciousness also includes feminist political agendas (which will be elaborated on in a following section) and ecological political agendas such as becoming conscious of our responsibility to Mother Earth. This elevated form of consciousness for Bolen is Goddess-centred, and she thus deems it Goddess Consciousness. Bolen does this intentionally to set herself apart from any Goddess-centred faith traditions including popular contemporary forms of Paganism and Neo-Paganism. She is first and foremost a Jungian—for Bolen, Goddess is an archetype. Bolen draws, however, from multiple sources when it comes to invoking Goddess; here she first echoes Merlin Stone and then Esther Harding:

Somewhere in our souls, women remember a time when divinity was called Goddess and Mother. When we become initiates into women's mysteries we then come to know that we are the carriers of a holy chalice that the Grail comes through us. (Bolen, 1994: 81)

Following Harding and Downing, Bolen intends to help craft substantial and life-affirming feminine-based archetypal mysteries for Western *women's* lives. Based in large part on her Christian upbringing and combined with her Jungian training, Bolen comprehends the Grail and Goddess as one in the same—both archetypes of the same missing element in the Western world—compassion, Eros-based

knowledge, and 'feminine' ways of knowing. According to Bolen, the original working title of her memoir was 'The Grail Is the Goddess' (Bolen, 2004: xi)⁵¹ The task for Bolen then, is to open other women and men up to her understanding of Goddess Consciousness; Bolen writes:

We must remember how and when each of us has had an experience of the Goddess, and felt healed and made whole by her. These are holy, sacred, timeless moments, and as numinous as they may have been, without words they are difficult to retrieve. But when someone else speaks of a similar experience, it can evoke the memory and bring back the feelings, which restore the experience. Only if we speak from personal experience does this happen. This is why we need words for women's mysteries, which, like everything else that is of women, seems to require that one woman at a time birth what she knows. *We serve as midwives to each other's consciousness.* (ibid: 79-80, emphasis is mine)

For Bolen, as for Downing, Harding and Jung, the repressed Eros-centred Feminine Principle must be reclaimed in order to heal the wounds created by a Logos-centred patriarchy. For Harding, Downing and Bolen, this can only be accomplished *for* women *by* women. They all believe this reclamation can be realised through individual acts of shared story. The hope is that if enough people tell their story the Western paradigm can shift from the purely androcentric to *include* Goddess consciousness; Bolen writes:

If the Goddess is to return to the world as the Grail that will heal the patriarchy, if the Goddess is to come into human consciousness as an awareness of the sacred feminine in her myriad expressions, if the Goddess is to emerge in time, she will do so because women and men tell what they know. (ibid: 272)

Bolen calls on women and men to add their individual energies to the collective common goal—a paradigmatic shift in consciousness: 'By sharing the stories of our personal journeys and telling of our encounters and what we learn of the Grail,

51 For more on the Grail as Goddess see: **Baigent M, Leigh R and Lincoln H** (1982) *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. New York: Delacorte Press; London: Jonathan Cape); **Brown D** (2003) *The Da Vinci Code*. New York: Doubleday; **Harding ME** (1971) *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern*. Boston: Shambhala Publications; **Starbird M** (1993) *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail*. Rochester, VT: Bear and Company; **Torjesen KJ** (1993) *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco; **Whitmont EC** (1982) *Return of the Goddess*. New York: Crossroads Publishing; **Woolger JB and Woolger RJ** (1989) *The Goddess Within: A Guide to the Eternal Myths That Shape Women's Lives*. New York: Fawcett Columbine. Some of these texts are highly controversial and under heavy criticism from contemporary theologians. However, they (and other available texts) provide a unique perspective of the Goddess as Grail concept as part of Bolen's Goddess Consciousness movement and the possible implications for the future of Christianity.

we each might contribute to the possibility of returning that missing Grail to the world. This is my premise.’ (ibid: 5-6) Bolen stresses her intent near the end of her memoir when she writes, emphatically: *‘To bring about a paradigm shift in the culture that will change assumptions and attitudes, a critical number of us have to tell the stories of our personal revelations and transformations.’* (ibid: 272, emphasis in the original)

In this case, there is substantial evidence to indicate that Bolen is achieving her intention on a global scale. After her pilgrimage, Bolen’s writing shifted from archetypal theory towards manifesting global Goddess Consciousness. In Bolen’s early career she focused on archetypes for women and men; by 1999 Bolen would publish the pioneering *The Millionth Circle: How to Change Ourselves and The World* calling on women world-wide to form affirming circles of feminine consciousness in an attempt to help bring about this paradigmatic shift. This monograph resulted in the creation of the Millionth Circle Initiative, a global not-for-profit enterprise to help organise women from all cultures and countries, and connect them with others. The Initiative describes itself: ‘The Millionth Circle is a grass-roots, international volunteer organization of women who believe that circles are the means through which world consciousness will change.’⁵² It is not surprising that Elinore Detiger is one of twenty-one Circle Convenors of the Initiative. Their intention statement reads as follows:

Circles encourage connection and cooperation among their members and inspire compassionate solutions to individual, community and world problems. We believe that circles support each member to find her or his own voice and to live more courageously, and intend:

- to seed and nurture circles, wherever possible, in order to cultivate equality, sustainable livelihoods, preservation of the earth and peace for all.
- to bring the circle process into United Nations accredited non-governmental organizations and the 5th UN World Conference on Women.
- to connect circles so they may know themselves as a part of a larger movement *to shift consciousness in the world.*⁵³ (Emphasis is mine)

⁵² http://www.millionthcircle.org/About/who_we_are.html

⁵³ Intention Statement of The Millionth Circle Initiative available at: <http://www.millionthcircle.org/About/intentions.html>

Bolen followed the founding of the Millionth Circle Initiative with her 2005 publication *Urgent Message from Mother: Gather the Women, Save the World*, and continues to keep the Millionth Circle Initiative going with her 2013 *Moving Toward the Millionth Circle: Energizing the Global Woman's Movement*. Bolen's focus on raising Goddess Consciousness on a global scale, that began with *Crossing to Avalon* and has blossomed into a global network of women (and men) empowering themselves and others, and is achieving an incredible response and impact. Having previously addressed the UN on matters relating to women on a global scale, Bolen is one of the voices publically advocating for a United Nations sponsored 5th World Conference on Women to be held in 2015.⁵⁴

3.2.3 How does the text function?

Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage functions in three substantial ways. Principally, as mentioned at the opening of the chapter, Bolen's memoir crosses the divide between depth psychology and religious or spiritual praxis by detailing the rites and rituals she participated in on her pilgrimage. This bridge has enormous theological implications. Second, Bolen's memoir intentionally functions as a 'Contextual Map' for others to follow providing both a physical and psycho-religious path to follow. Bolen publishes in the hope her memoir will serve as a catalyst for others. Thirdly, Bolen's memoir functions as establishing the reader as 'Witness' thus including the reader as an integral component of Bolen's pilgrimage.

3.2.3.1 A Bridge between Theory and Praxis

There is a marked difference between Downing's *The Goddess* and Bolen's *Crossing to Avalon*. While Downing focuses on her relationship with various Goddess archetypal images, Bolen includes details of rituals and activities that assisted her in the necessary transformative shifts in consciousness during her 1986 pilgrimage. This inclusion is substantial because Bolen makes a conscious shift from Goddess as archetypal theory to experiencing Goddess through ritual praxis. Expanding Jung's original theories from the confines of the psyche, for Bolen ritual is a way of encountering something that is outside the psyche, understanding ritual and Goddess in an expanded way that differs from Jung's thought. Through the inclusion of ritual, Bolen moved Jung's Goddess from the internal world of the

⁵⁴ For more information see: <http://5wcw.org/>

psyche to the external world where interaction with an 'Other' is key to transformative encounters.

In 1935 M Esther Harding wrote: 'Perhaps if more attention were directed to reinstating the goddess in the individual life, through psychological experiences, the modern equivalent to the initiations of the moon goddess, a way out of this impasse might open before us.' (Harding, 1971: xv) Harding's impasse is the same one Bolen discussed in her memoir: 'We live in an age of executives and scientists, and our leaders are chosen from those ranks. Little attention is paid to the achievement of an inner development in the emotional realm.' (Harding, 1971: xiii) But what Harding is offering in 1935 is strictly an internal psychological activity, and Downing continued to focus on the inner journey in her memoir, *The Goddess*. Bolen, however, departs from Jung and instead becomes a part of a post-Jungian revolutionary transition shifting from an exclusive focus on one's internal depth experiences of Goddess to the external, embodied (Eros-centred) Numinous (religious or spiritual) experiences voiced by the current generation of writers. Susan Rowland attempts to classify the various traditions of post-Jungians working with Goddess or the Jungian 'Feminine Principle'. In *Jung: A Feminist Revision*, Rowland notes one group she deems as 'Goddess Feminist' (a group in which she includes both Downing and Bolen); Rowland writes: 'Jungian feminists of this creed are not advocating literal goddess worship. Their divine beings live in the human imagination in the unconscious. A transcendent existence of goddess actually 'out there' is not considered.' (Rowland, 2002: 61) I have to disagree with Rowland placing Bolen in this category. While Harding and Downing were not advocating literal goddess worship, Bolen appears to decidedly move into the world of praxis. For Downing and Harding these were psychological processes of the conscious and unconscious mind; for Bolen this has become something else—something more. Bolen mixes the internal depth processes of Individuation with intentional interactions in the external world with others in a ritualistic setting taking Jung's analytical psychology firmly into the territory of religious/spiritual praxis. Bolen moves Goddess from the internal world of the psyche and firmly places Her in the physical landscape of the earth as internal and external. From that moment onward, *Crossing to Avalon* became theologically significant.

Why, then, is praxis, and particularly ritual, such an important component? Jung was an advocate of ritual; in fact, it was a necessarily element for the required

shifts in consciousness that Individuation would bring; he wrote: ‘Ceremonial, ritual, initiation rites and ascetic practices, in all their forms and variations, interest me profoundly as so many techniques for bringing about a proper relation to these forces.’ (Jung, 2001: 122) Harding, too, spoke of the psychological importance of myth and ritual gathered through her research: ‘The fact that equivalent myths and rituals are strikingly similar, even as to detail, in the cultures of widely separated peoples, indicates that they represent general psychological themes which are true of humanity no matter where.’ (Harding, 1971: 14) These ‘themes’ in Harding’s research includes the veneration of the moon in various historical periods and cultures. Her research contained detailed analyses of various rituals and rites of initiation connect to moon worship. She, like Jung, concluded that these myths and rituals were necessary psychological components that allow the individual access to and understanding of the archetypal deity (in this case Goddess). In other words, through ritual one becomes closer to the archetype, mirroring the theological belief that ritual and participation in the rites of faith bring one closer to God. While Downing may have practised some form of personal rituals, she did not include this information in her memoir; Bolen would be the first to incorporate the external acts and praxis of faith alongside her post-Jungian understanding of analytical psychology and its Feminine Principle (Goddess). This would allow her memoir to serve as a contextual map for others to follow in her footsteps.

3.2.3.2 A Contextual Map

Crossing to Avalon is much more than merely a geographical map of Bolen’s pilgrimage through the Netherlands, France, England, and Scotland for others to follow; Bolen’s memoir functions in a contextual way by providing the reader with potential meaning for these numinous experiences. More importantly, however, Bolen provides key descriptive terminology necessary to put experiences and encounters into context. This context begins with women finding the words to express their ineffable experiences. Bolen writes:

You might think it odd that I am *writing* about something that can only be known through personal experience. But what if women have been venturing unknowingly into sacred territory and *been without words* for the experience? Then what was felt deeply and never articulated, shared, or put into context fades from awareness. Without words or names for an experience, memory is hampered [...]. (1994: 51, emphasis in the original)

Having the words to express what previously could not be expressed is central for women's story. Bolen, like Bradley and *Mists*, seems to tap into something that resonates with many women readers; perhaps connecting with what Annis Pratt refers to as a 'forgotten code or buried script' lost to women in the Western age of patriarchy. (Pratt, 1985: 95) Connecting women to this 'buried script' is crucial; Bolen writes: '[...] only when we have words that fit what we know deeply is it possible to contemplate the meaning of an experience.' (Bolen, 1994: 52) Bolen goes on to say:

And when there was a sacred dimension to that now-recollected experience, which is true of women's mysteries, a woman may recall that what she did not have words for had to do with the divinity within her, or the Goddess that is expressed through her, and the power or awe that she unaccountably felt in touch with in the moment. (ibid: 55)

As evidenced in Bolen's telling of her embodied experience of Goddess in her office prior to her pilgrimage, Bolen found herself, despite her extensive education, unable to put this experience into context; Bolen had no words. Without a viable 'way of knowing' she could not name her experience; without words and context, she could never reflect on and understand the experience. Through providing 'ways of knowing' for herself to be able to reflect on these numinous experiences, Bolen provides a Goddess-friendly, psycho-religious structure that may be accessible to others as well. In fact, Bolen hopes that her memoir will serve as a catalyst; she writes: 'I hope that my story will remind you of or *waken you* to your own soul journey and the revelatory moments and deep truths that are your own particular glimpse of the Grail or experience of the Goddess.' (ibid: 273, emphasis is mine) Bolen's rebirth memoir ends with the image of the *Vesica Piscis* from the Chalice Well in Glastonbury and the parting greeting: 'Love to you on *your* journey.' (ibid: 273, emphasis in the original) Bolen's intention of serving as a catalyst for others while providing not only a geographical map but also a psycho-religious descriptive terminology are essential functions of *Crossing to Avalon*.

3.2.3.3 Reader as 'Witness'

For Bolen, her readers serve as the witnesses to her story. As mentioned earlier, there is a psychological need to share our story with an 'other.' Bolen writes:

It is no small matter to be a witness to another person's life story. By listening with compassion, we validate each other's lives, make suffering meaningful, and help the process of forgiving and healing to take place. And our acceptance may make it possible for a person who feels outside the human community to gain a sense of belonging once more. (1994: 111)

Witnesses help us to feel connected to our experiences and our lives. The sense of validation a witness can bring is vital to one's psychological health and well-being. In a time of great technology, when individuals feel more disconnected than ever from human contact and compassion, witnesses serve an imperative function; Bolen writes:

When the light in anyone flickers and an immense and hopeless darkness looms threateningly close, it is her soul, not her physical body that is like Tinkerbell [at the mercy of belief]. It is at these times that someone else's love and belief in us can really help, when a story can make a difference. (ibid: 265)

By using the reader as Witness, Bolen is also including the reader as an integral component of Bolen's pilgrimage. Bolen accomplishes this through the use of various literary techniques such as directly addressing the reader with provocative questions (as exemplified in her recollection of her meeting with the Dalai Lama). This technique draws the reader in and invests the reader in the outcome of the narrative. In other words, Bolen takes the reader along with her through both her physical pilgrimage and the psycho-religious reflection that offers Bolen (and others) a context of understanding.

Bolen's memoir ends with an acknowledgement section, but should the reader continue through to the very end of the memoir, the reader is validated and directly addressed in Bolen's parting words (which are an alteration of the Hindu greeting *Namasté*, the Divine in me recognises the Divine in you). Bolen writes: 'If you have taken the words in my book to heart and felt what I have described, let us have this greeting as we pass: "The Goddess in me beholds the Goddess in thee." *Namaste*. (ibid: 278) There is no greater validation than being seen by another.

3.2.4 What are the significant strengths of this work?

Crossing to Avalon is an enduring and affective rebirth memoir that has three significant strengths: The first strength is also the memoir's main function; Bolen

leaps beyond the boundaries of analytical psychology and creates a bridge from psychological theory to religious praxis. The second strength is connecting Bolen's memoir to the globally popular *The Mists of Avalon*, and finally, the third strength of *Crossing to Avalon* is the creative way Bolen incorporates Goddess, as 'Consciousness,' into her pre-existing Christian heritage and beliefs.

3.2.4.1 A Bridge between Theory and Praxis

The primary strength of Bolen's memoir is also its main function. In *Crossing to Avalon*, Bolen moves beyond the confines of psychology that bound Jung, Harding, and in some part, Downing exclusively to the psyche, and offers a much-needed bridge from analytical theory to religious praxis through the inclusion of ritual in her memoir. As examined in greater detail in a previous section, the inclusion of praxis is an important turning point for the Western Goddess Movement. While Downing limited her experiences of Goddess to Jungian archetypes, Bolen crossed the boundary from psychology into religion by offering a pilgrimage and Goddess-centred rituals for her readers to follow. And follow they did. Bolen comments on her memoir's tremendous effect in the *10th Anniversary Edition*; she writes that a vast number of women contacted her to say: '[...] they followed in my literal pilgrimage footsteps and retraced my itinerary.' (Bolen, 2004: xiii)

Let us consider, for a moment, Noll and Wehr's proposition that Jungian Analytical Psychology is a religion. Jung once asserted, 'People sometimes call me a religious leader. I am not that. I have no message, no mission; I attempt only to understand.' (McGuire and Hull 1977: 98). Bolen, however, uses her memoir not only as a vehicle of understanding her encounters and experiences but also as a forum for her message and mission—the raising of Goddess Consciousness in the West. This sets Bolen apart as one of the first architects of the rites and rituals of post-Jungian neo-religion: Goddess-centred Spirituality. Bolen reiterates Jung's original assertion that ritual and praxis are a means through which one can connect with the Divine. The ways that Bolen departs from Jung's theories to achieve this *Goddess religion* will be explored below as they are the fundamental theories that underlie Bolen's memoir.

3.2.4.2 Connection to *The Mists of Avalon*

The second strength is connecting Bolen's memoir to the globally popular *The Mists of Avalon* (*Mists*). Marion Zimmer Bradley's 1984 novel, *Mists*, is a central

part not only in Bolen's personal reflections and analytical enquiry included in her memoir, but also in a specific site of pilgrimage relating to Bradley's novel: Glastonbury, the gateway to Avalon where the Goddess reigned supreme and women served as Priestesses. It is perhaps no accident that the emotional and transformational rituals recalled in Bolen's memoir (mirroring 'ancient rites' described in Zimmer-Bradley's fantastic world of Avalon) are guided by a local Priestess and take place in Glastonbury (specifically the Divine Union which occurred at the Abbey ruins).

Countless women (and men) have been deeply affected by Bradley's 1984 novel. Bolen is no exception. As mentioned in the previous section about her pilgrimage to Glastonbury, Bolen's expectations and perspective of Glastonbury had largely been informed through reading and being deeply affected by *Mists*. This is also true for the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Bradley's readers. Bolen went on the pilgrimage most of Bradley's readers could only dream of, and she revealed, through her memoir, the life-altering effects of standing on this sacred ground—the birth of Bolen's Goddess Consciousness. For Bolen, *Mists* had been a central story that helped to contextualise and define Bolen's experiences of Goddess. Because *Mists* played such a fundamental role in her memoir, it also means that Bradley's devoted readers would also likely be avid readers and followers of Bolen's memoir—the most passionate fans devouring anything remotely connected with *Mists* or Avalon. Bolen's publishers capitalised on this hope in naming Bolen's memoir *Crossing to Avalon* and linking it directly to Zimmer-Bradley's fantastic world. This link would connect Bolen's memoir, and Bolen, to an already iconic work in the Goddess community and to the wider Western Goddess Movement community itself. The result would be an increased interest in Bolen's work and a significant gain in Bolen's popularity amongst adherents in the Western Goddess Movement.

3.2.4.3 Divine Union: Goddess and God

The third strength of *Crossing to Avalon*, and certainly the most theologically intriguing, is the creative way Bolen incorporates Goddess, as 'Consciousness,' into her pre-existing Christian heritage and beliefs; this integration is a direct result of Bolen's encounter of the Divine Union of Mother Goddess and Father God at Glastonbury. But first, let us examine this concept of 'Divine Union' through Bolen's understanding.

William James introduced the psycho-religious concept of Union with God in 1902. James explained his understanding of Union during his Gifford Lectures through Augustine's *Confessions*--emphasising Augustine's internal and thus psychological drive to feel united with God to atone for his sins. Jung, familiar with James as one of the forefathers of depth psychology and perhaps even in attendance at these lectures, would take James' concept of 'a Union instigated by an inherent psychological drive to merge with God', and make it the goal of his Path of Individuation which sought to integrate and meld with Jung's neglected Eros-centred Feminine Principle (Anima)—a 'spontaneous product of the unconscious'. (Campbell, 1976: 151) Bolen, however, would elevate this concept of *Divine Union* to add another layer of meaning by seamlessly pairing Goddess with God. This was accomplished through the transformative religious experience Bolen had standing upon the High Altar ruins at Glastonbury Abbey. These moments were detailed, in depth, in a previous section. What is more significant from a theological perspective, however, is the way that Bolen allows her belief system to accommodate a new deity; she accomplishes this through a union of psychological models (integrating Goddess as archetypal 'consciousness') with her theological understanding of God. Unlike others in this study who turn away from their pre-existing faith traditions such as Kidd and Starbird, Bolen finds a way to accommodate both Goddess and God in her psychological, religious and spiritual life. Theologically, this Union of Goddess and Father God becomes an integral part of the Western Goddess Movement, even in praxis. This documents an important shift from the original seemingly collective aim of the Goddess or New Age Movement of the 1960s and 1970s when women's elevation was foremost, and anything patriarchal was seen as an affront.⁵⁵ This is *not* the replacement of a Father God with a Mother God, this is a Union of two Divine Beings independent and yet whole in partnership.

A wonderful example of Goddess/God Union can be found in Edinburgh, Scotland, where, for over twenty-five years, the Beltane Fire Society has celebrated the Divine Union of the May Queen (Goddess in Maiden form) and the Green Man (an iconic God representing new growth and potential) at Beltane (May Day) on Calton

⁵⁵ Jung is also linked with the birth of the New Age movement in the 1960's (Paglia, 2006: 8) and the explosive growth in Charismatic Christianity that followed in the United States. (Dourley, 1981; Noll, 1994) What has previously been referred to as 'New Age' are practices and beliefs now included in the wider Western Goddess Movement.

Hill. Due to its overwhelming popularity, the society extended its celebration of Union at Samhuinn (Hallowe'en) introducing audience members to the Cailleach, the Crone aspect of the Goddess, and the battle between the Summer King (the aged Green Man of Beltane) and the cold and dark Winter King. These public rituals, whilst surrounded by crowds that some years exceed 15,000, are a method of sharing the story of the Goddess through ritual and praxis with a wide general audience.⁵⁶ Like Bolen's memoir, these enactments show how Goddess and God in Union are a significant part of the praxis for many adherents in the Western Goddess Movement. There are certainly exceptions to this rule as this is one of the ideologies that many in the movement either embrace or reject. But as mentioned previously, in this poly and plural setting, many beliefs are encouraged and embraced.

Serious criticisms were raised in the previous chapter about Jung and his theories. Noll, Thevathasan, and others have been critical of Jung and his followers as an identifiable enemy of the Church—often arguing that Christians must make an either/or choice between faith and psychology. Thevathasan argues: 'In sum the teachings of Jung are wholly at variance with the Church. There is little scope for dialogue and none for a Christian-Jungian synthesis.' (Thevathasan, 1998: 5) However, Bolen's memoir serves as proof that Jungian ideas *can* successfully be synthesised with Christian beliefs. Despite criticisms that Jung's teachings are at variance with those of the Church, Bolen's memoir serves as proof that this variance is not a serious impediment to anyone who desires such dialogue or synthesis. Neither theological orthodoxy nor adherence to strict Jungian categories can be of much interest to those whose spiritual experience takes them beyond the realm of gatekeepers such as Thevathasan. The women who wrote these memoirs might be accused of misinterpreting Jung at times, but their influence and popularity demonstrate that their readers and followers are seeking something that orthodoxy has not given them - perhaps because it cannot offer them what they need. This is important. For many Christian women, Bolen is now providing an example and path to follow that enhances an existing Christian belief-system with the integration of Goddess Consciousness as 'Eros-based knowledge and perspective' without walking away from her existing faith, culture, or family. Obviously alterations were made to accommodate this new integration as Bolen

⁵⁶ I have been an active member of the Beltane Fire Society since 2009.

had to shift the way she imaged and perceived the nature of God to include this Eros-based knowledge and perspective. Sue Monk Kidd and Margaret Starbird, two other Christian authors in this study, would struggle with their own Divine Union, each ultimately coming to different solutions. Bolen's syncretistic blending of Goddess Consciousness and her Christian Father God is a significant theological strength of her memoir.

3.2.5 What theories underlie the work? Do they affect its validity?

The theories that underlie *Crossing to Avalon* are all feminist 'amplifications' of Jung's original models.⁵⁷ What, then, is an 'amplification'? Susan Rowland defines *Amplification* in her Glossary; she writes:

Amplification is a Jungian therapeutic technique in which a psychic image [...] is amplified by linking it to a mythological motif. This serves to make the image appear less personal and so suggests something of the "otherness" of the unconscious. Consequently, amplification tends to downplay questions of the personal or cultural history of a person.' (2002: 173)

In other words, Rowland writes: '[...] the metaphysical feminine principle is mapped onto pre-Christian mythologies in order to seek out non-patriarchal narratives and ways of thinking.' (Rowland, 2002: 61) Amplification, then, is an attempt to make the image (in this case, Goddess) larger and more powerful, markedly more intense, whilst disconnecting Goddess from the dubious history that has been attached to her by feminists eager to compile a 'Herstory'. Marija Gimbutas (1974, 1982) and Cynthia Eller (1993) exemplify feminists who posit a 'matriarchal herstory' of Goddess. However, these theories appear to have been affected by the academically-contentious Murray Thesis (1921) as Gimbutas writes: 'The persistence of the Goddess worship for more than 20,000 years, from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic and beyond is shown [...]' (Gimbutas, 1982: 9) As Rowland suggests, post-Jungian amplification of Jung's archetypes also suggests an 'otherness' to the archetype central to the unconscious—the Eros-based feminine principle or Goddess. As we shall see, there is extensive amplification amongst post-Jungian feminists (and post-feminists), particularly those involved in the Western Goddess Movement. Amplification is also used in therapeutic

⁵⁷ The critiques on using original Jungian analytical psychology were assessed, at length, in previous chapters and apply to all five memoirs.

settings by post-Jungians as will be demonstrated in Sue Monk Kidd's memoir discussed in chapter 4. There are, however, additional post-Jungian changes being made with a variety of emphases from archetypal to alchemical.

Susan Rowland has been particularly useful in helping to situate the feminist variations in post-Jungian thought. Her 2002 *Jung: A Feminist Revision* has been instrumental not only in positioning the different reworkings of Jung, but also in understanding the connections between the key individuals in the birth of the Western Goddess Movement. Rowland writes: 'three methods are employed in the working outwards from Jung's writings to more comprehensive works on gender and the feminine: these are *extension*, *revision*, and *amplification*.' (2002: 48-49, emphasis is mine) *Extension*, as the name implies, includes those post-Jungians who are extending or expanding upon one of Jung's original theories or models—such as the archetypal work being done by Andrew Samuels or Rupprecht and Lauter. *Revision* is apparent in the gender deconstruction and revision of Jung's Anima and Animus as biological gender essentialist concepts exemplified by Wehr and Rowland. *Amplification*, as defined above, is the placing of the archetype within a structured mythological system to strengthen and empower the archetype exemplified by the authors and memoirs in this study. According to Rowland's classifications, the theories that underlie Bolen's work are all amplifications of Jung's ideas. Through Rowland, I am able to identify three areas of post-Jungian amplification in Bolen's memoir, and I offer a fourth based on my own analysis. The theories that lie beneath *Crossing to Avalon* are: 1) *Jungian Feminism*, 2) *Goddess Feminism*, 3) the Great Mother *Monomyth*, and 4) *Goddess Praxis*.

3.2.5.1 Amplification – *Jungian Feminism*

The first step in revising Jung was the formation of *Jungian Feminism*. Rowland cites M Esther Harding, Erich Neumann, and E.C. Whitmont as key individuals in this first major departure from the gender-essentialist Jung. Considering the historical timeline, Harding would be the first Jungian Feminist—influencing all those who followed her work. Rowland explains: 'Traditional Jungian feminism [...] seeks a stable conception of gender and the feminine from Jung's own attempts at a comprehensive theory of psyche and of culture.' (2002: 47) Rowland continues:

A remarkable amplification of Jung's feminine within the numinous (in archetypes) is the rejection of masculine-dominated monotheistic culture in favour of a "return" to the divine as a great mother. "She" infuses and makes sacred the natural world. She is the divine within or immanent in the world, not apart and transcendent of it. Here Jungian feminism becomes a most ambitious feminist myth of history, culture, religion, aesthetics and psyche. (2002: 47-48)

According to Rowland, 'What drives these Jungian theorists as feminist is the perception that the feminine principle has been disastrously suppressed in culture and in the individual psyches by centuries of patriarchal thinking.' (2002: 55) Driven by their need to reinsert the feminine principle into Western thought, Jungian feminists: '[...] write and practice at both a sociocultural and an individual therapeutic level to heal the world of its wounded, angry feminine.' (Rowland, 2002: 55) In this initial phase of Jungian revision and amplification, Harding, Neumann, and Whitmont would each make important psychological contributions to the birth of Jungian Feminism. This work would be accomplished by the generation previous to the authors in this study. Each contributor helped to form the foundations of what would expand into major portions of the current Western Goddess Movement. It is essential, then, to briefly examine each of the contributions made in the creation of Jungian Feminism.

M Esther Harding (1888-1971)

The work of Harding would bring a momentous turning point in the analytical theories of Carl Jung; Rowland writes:

Harding's moon goddesses of the feminine principle have inspired a generation of Jungian feminists because they are virginal in the sense of standing alone, not dependent upon any male. Such "Jungian virgins" can be sexual and procreative. Their independence rests in a self-sufficiency generated by contact with the numinous unconscious. (2002: 56)

There was considerable discussion in the review of Downing's memoir about the concept of 'virgin' goddesses. This is a crucial point in the first break from Jung as it establishes that women can and do function independently of others (in this particular case—men). Self-empowerment and personal authority are themes repeated in all five of the rebirth memoirs in this study. Downing, Bolen, Kidd, and Curott would perpetuate many of Harding's theories in the memoirs examined in this study.

Harding was a central figure in the establishment of the first Analytical Psychology Club in New York in 1936, and in founding the [Jungian] Institute in New York. The creation of which would bring Jungian analytical psychology to the United States and it would quickly spread along the East Coast. Although Harding would focus on Jung's binary forms of Union and his psychological need to reclaim the Anima from the Collective Unconscious, her contributions to the birth of the Western Goddess Movement included, but are not limited to five major points: 1) Harding establishes that male and female psyches are *fundamentally different* and require a gendered approach. She introduces Women's psychology in 1935. 2) Harding's seminal work, *Woman's Mysteries*, introduced the Goddess through various cultural, historical and mythological constructs—the first attempt at amplification of Jung's theories. Harding's work would later be picked up by Joseph Campbell (another Jungian) who would spend his entire career examining the psychological *Power of Myth* and introduce the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) *Monomyth* to later Jungian theory. 3) Harding was interdisciplinary. She combined psychology with religious studies, history, archaeology and mythology. This interdisciplinary methodology would become the emphasis not only of Downing and Bolen's writing, but also in their academic careers - each blending psychology with religion and theology. 4) Harding was the first to suggest that women embark on a personal, interior journey to Goddess. This call would be reiterated by feminist theologian Carol P. Christ in 1979.⁵⁸ Downing would be the first known author to answer that call. 5) Finally, and perhaps the most important contribution for the Western Goddess Movement, Harding brings Jung's psychology to the US and works diligently to help spread his ideas in America. Although critical of Jung, Noll acknowledges Harding's contribution to the growth of Jungian Theory in the US: 'Harding transplanted the Jungian mysteries to a new country and became the *mater magna* [Great Mother] of American Jungism.' (Noll, 1994: 280-81)

Erich Neumann (1905-1960)

Neumann, a second-generation Jungian publishing in 1955, uses much the same material as Harding. Neumann, however, is a historian of culture and makes three major contributions to the further progression of Jungian Feminism. 1) Neumann begins by proposing a grand narrative of stages of development in human

⁵⁸ Christ CP (1979) Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience. In: Christ CP and Plaskow J (eds) *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. San Francisco: Harper and Row: 228-245.

consciousness in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954). These three stages include: a) the Uroboric stage which is close to unconscious non-differentiation, b) the Matriarchal stage in which the rise of the Matriarchal religions of the Great Mother occurred, and c) Patriarchal monotheism which centres on Logos-oriented thinking. Neumann's introduction of a 'Matriarchal age' would be incorporated by academic and practitioner alike. 2) Neumann's next contribution is his 1955 publication *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Neumann builds upon Harding's suggestive monomyth in *Woman's Mysteries* to present various constructs of the Great Mother. However, 3) Neumann constricts his feminine principle to the Matriarchal phase of human history. In doing so, Neumann also commits a significant blunder. Rowland writes:

Women are doomed to a "more unconscious" type of mental functioning. Hence, for Neumann, the confusion of the feminine with matriarchy places women back into prehistory, with men further advanced in the cultural valuable qualities of thinking and reason. (2002: 57)

This is critical for two reasons: Neumann is perpetuating the binary dualisms of gender problematic in Jung's original theories, discarding women's psyche to the past, and elevating men's psyche as 'further advanced.' Obviously, this will need (and receive) further feminist revision, but it also highlighted a problem that until then had not been seriously considered. Where were all the women in religious history? Neumann's concept may have been detrimental to the relation of women's psyche, but it also created a new area for research—women's contribution to religious history. This topic has been pursued by women such as Karen Torjesen (1993) Rosemary Radford Reuther (2005), and historian Bettany Hughes (2012) and continues to be a source of enquiry and reflection in various academic disciplines.⁵⁹

E.C. Whitmont (1912-1998)

Third-generation Jungian E.C. Whitmont would write extensively on what he considered the 'symbolic quest' (1979). Building on Jung, Harding, and Neumann, Whitmont's greatest contribution to the Western Goddess Movement and to Bolen,

⁵⁹ For more see: **Hughes** B (2012) *Divine Women*; **Reuther** RR (2005) *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History*; **Torjesen** KJ (1993) *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*.

personally, would be his 1982 publication *Return of the Goddess*. Whitmont amends Neumann's three stages of human consciousness by adding a fourth stage: Union of Matriarchal and Patriarchal (Eros and Logos). In a move Neumann was unable (or unwilling) to take, Whitmont separates modes of thinking (Eros and Logos) from bodily gender as many of his contemporary Jungian Feminists have done to further Jung's theories. Whitmont also makes a unique theological contribution, one that would affect Bolen deeply, when he reclaims Jung's rejected Feminine Divine in the margins of Christianity through the Grail legends. As discussed above, Bolen is deeply affected by this mythology and uses the Grail legends to frame her own understanding of her experiences of the Numinous. But Whitmont does not focus only on Christian stories in his amplifications, he also integrates various Pagan mythologies. Rowland names Whitmont as the 'progenitor of Jungian Goddess Feminism,' the precursor to the Western Goddess Movement. (2002: 60) Rowland goes on to say:

E.C. Whitmont's development of Neumann's three stages of human consciousness into an urgent call for a fourth stage is nothing less than a demand for human consciousness to integrate the feminine as divinity immanent within nature. The sacred is no longer to be confined to a father-god transcendent of the material or natural world. With the "return of the goddess", the name of Whitmont's 1982 book, humanity rediscovers nature as holy: it embraces the human realm within its numinous fecundity. (2002: 65)

Significant revision of Jung has moved from Harding's creation of a women's psychology to more diverse forms of Jungian Feminism. Neumann and Whitmont, notably both male, independently build on the work of Harding and helped to introduce Goddess Feminism in the West. The contributions of male Jungians such as Neumann, Whitmont, and also Joseph Campbell would serve to draw numerous men into the Western Goddess Movement. This would come about through a natural offspring of Jungian Feminism—an evolution to what Rowland calls *Goddess Feminism*.

3.2.5.2 Amplification: *Goddess Feminism*, in pursuit of goddesses

Whilst Rowland identifies both Christine Downing and Jean Shinoda Bolen as 'Key Individuals' in *Goddess Feminism*, she also connects Harding to this amplification of Jung; Rowland writes:

Here is the Jungian premise for what I would call ‘goddess feminism’, which is usually designed to empower the insecure female psyche. An early and classic example of goddess feminism is *Woman’s Mysteries* by M Esther Harding. This fascinating work amplifies Jung’s identification of the female psyche with Eros, the function of relatedness, and with the signification of the moon in alchemy. *Woman’s Mysteries* is a marvellous elaboration of moon goddesses as active authors of the feminine principle. (2002: 49)

This amplification goes beyond what Jung could conceive; Rowland writes: ‘Jungian goddess feminists reject the unifying energy posited in the self-archetype and latch onto its plurality, including that of gender [...].’ (2002: 61) This plurality includes interacting with multiple gender-bending Goddesses. Jungian Goddess Feminism shifts from being an individual, introspective journey to affecting change on a cultural level—‘[...] to revolutionise the understanding of the psyche, and of human culture and history.’ (Rowland, 2002: 68)

Jungian Goddess Feminism is not without difficulty however, and the point of contention echoes back to the division between Jungian analytical psychology and the Church. Rowland elaborates:

Explicitly or implicitly, writers and activists have to decide whether to revise Christian core assumptions or the reject them utterly and look for new models. This does not only apply to those feminists who have religious beliefs or who take spirituality seriously. Rather, the framework of Christian assumptions in contemporary culture also affects urgent political issues such as the right to abortion. / The key issue is whether Christianity (and/or other monotheistic systems) is entirely patriarchal or whether it has just become manifestly so in its collaboration with capitalist culture. Can Christianity be feminist or must it be replaced? (2002: 60)

As will be detailed in following chapters, Sue Monk Kidd and Margaret Starbird, both Christians, will struggle openly with this issue. Each woman will come to very different conclusions. Although the schism between Jung and Christianity is not the only point of conflict; Rowland writes:

Goddess feminism is not fashionable in today’s capitalist, materialist, non-religious culture. It is additionally unacceptable to feminist theories stemming from Freudian psychoanalysis [...]. [...]Can such legends of goddesses be *at all relevant* to the social and material conditions today?’ (2002: 62, emphasis is mine)

Both Downing and Bolen attempt to make Goddess seriously relevant to current social and material conditions; this will be further amplified by Bolen in *Goddess Praxis*. Rowland writes at length about the contributions both Downing and Bolen bring to the evolution of Jungian theories from women's perspective. It is important to include this information here as Christine Downing, as a peer of Bolen, had a tremendous effect on Bolen's understanding of the Jungian Goddess. Downing and Bolen would both contribute to the foundations of Goddess Feminism, and by extension, to the theoretical foundations of Bolen's memoir, *Crossing to Avalon*.

Christine Downing (1931 -)

Rowland both summarises and looks critically at Downing's contribution through her memoir, *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*:

[...] Downing shows the potential of pagan narratives to produce more plural and active forms of feminine imagery than Jung's apparently more static images. / Although Downing admits that some of these goddesses are available archetypally to men, she is close to an essentialist position of linking feminine divine forms mainly with the female psyche. (Rowland, 2002: 63)

Following Harding's exemplary use and explanation of Moon Goddesses from various cultures around the world, Downing continues this plurality, and in fact strongly advocates an individual work with multiple archetypes (Goddesses) at one time. This plural approach to Goddess is not only echoed by Bolen, but also by the other three authors in this study and vast numbers of adherents within the Western Goddess Movement. This is yet another idea posed by Harding that has continued to thrive through the amplification of Harding's revision of Jung.

Jean Shinoda Bolen (1936 -)

Rowland uses another instrumental work of Bolen's in the citing her contributions: *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives* (1984). Rowland cites it as 'a popularising classic of Jungian goddess feminism [...where...] the goddesses are a collection of archetypal images and potentialities.' (Rowland, 2002: 63) Thus further expanding this plural concept established by Harding and emphasised by Downing. Bolen, however, would go on to make far more significant contributions. Rowland notes that Goddess Feminism is 'not advocating literal goddess worship.' (Rowland, 2002: 61) But Bolen would amplify *Goddess Feminism*

into *Goddess Praxis*. This would be achieved, in part, through the amplification of the myth of the Great Goddess. Rowland writes:

Jungian goddess feminism regards mythological narratives of goddesses as the only satisfactory means of expression and empowerment for the long subordinated female psyche. Goddess feminism can be expanded and formalised into a comprehensive myth of the human culture, psyche and technology in the myth of the great goddess. (2002: 69-70)

That expansion and amplification is the creation of the Great Mother Monomyth.

3.2.5.3 Amplification: the *Monomyth* of the Great Mother - *Monotheaism*

Monomyth is a term used by pre-eminent mythologist Joseph Campbell in his 1949 *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell is another integral Jungian figure in the Western Goddess Movement, and it is through the amplification of the Great Mother Monomyth that Campbell is connected to this research and the wider Western Goddess Movement.⁶⁰ Campbell looked at myth from a much broader perspective. Campbell noticed repeating patterns—significant religious quest myths were all retelling essentially the same story with different protagonists. In theological terms, Campbell compares the quests of the Buddha, Jesus and Mohammad as sharing a similar grand myth—or *monomyth*. A Great Mother Monomyth gathers all the cultural and religious deities known as Mother or Creatrix goddesses together—understanding them to all be variations of a singular Great Mother (*Magna Mater* an amplification of Jung's *Anima Mundi*). This monomyth would be central to the plurality of the Western Goddess Movement and is echoed in the five rebirth memoirs.

Rowland specifies only one 'key individual' of the Great Mother Monomyth: E.C. Whitmont; however, it is an oversight to disregard Joseph Campbell in the advancement of the Great Mother Monomyth.⁶¹ Moreover all five authors in this

⁶⁰ Campbell's monomyth and amplification of Jungian archetypal theory were central to my research prior to this study which examine works of fiction in which the Great Mother was portrayed as a character in the story. This Masters-level research was later published in 2009 as *Literature of the Sacred Feminine: Great Mother Archetypes and the Re-emergence of the Goddess in Western Traditions*. VDM Verlag.

⁶¹ For more see: **Campbell J** and **Muses C** (eds) (1991) *In All Her Names: Explorations of the Feminine in Divinity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco); **Campbell J** (1949) *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*. New York: MJF Books; (2001) *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor*. Kennedy E (ed). (Novato, CA: New World Library; and **Campbell J** and **Moyers B** (1988) *The Power of Myth*. Flowers BS (ed). (New York: Anchor Books.

study can now be added as 'key individuals', as they each contribute to its endurance.

Rowland summarises the underlying objective of the Great Mother Monomyth from both Whitmont's and many feminists' perspective: 'Today's society needs the goddess to "return" because patriarchal, atheistic, planet-exploiting attitudes are, to Whitmont, directly linked to masculine monotheism.' (Rowland, 2002: 66) For Rowland, Whitmont epitomises the schism found between psychology and the Church.

Unlike Jung, Whitmont believes that Christianity (and the other great monotheisms) cannot be reformed to release its suppressed "other." Whether that other be darkness, death, the body or the feminine, masculine monotheism will not cease to split the human psyche. Monotheisms are neurotic, one-sided structures devoted to transcendent and triumphant powers over nature. (Rowland, 2002: 66)

However, by advocating for the replacement of the Patriarchal (Christian) God with the Matriarchal (Plural) Goddess, Whitmont is actually advocating for the replacement of masculine monotheism with a Goddess *monotheism*. Rowland writes:

[...] the aim of this branch of Jungian feminism is the healing not of individuals, but of the cosmos. The sacred is not a *stage* in consciousness; it is a *structure* in consciousness. The model for subjectivity here is of the web of life, connecting human, to nature, to the divine, conscious to unconscious, feminine to masculine in the psyche. The sacred is part of nature and human beings are part of that dance. (2002: 67, emphasis in the original)

All five authors in this study introduce the Great Mother Monomyth in some form or another. Downing centres on her archetypal nature:

[...] like any primordial archetype, the Great Mother provokes profound ambivalence: her cruelty is no less salient than her benevolence. The nurturing goddess is also the devouring one. In the world of the goddesses, creation-and-destruction and feast-and-famine were seen as two phases of the one ever-recurring inescapable pattern, not as irreconcilable opposites. Perhaps it is the greatest gift of the goddess to teach us that good and evil, life and death, are inextricably intertwined. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 12-13)

Similar to Downing, Phyllis Curott, another author in this study, also situates the Great Mother in pre-Christian terms:

Long before the people of the Middle East worshiped and battled over a male divinity, the people of Canaan paid reverence to a goddess called Queen of Heaven. The Goddess was the divine Creatrix, law giver, mother, warrior, healer, bestower of culture and agriculture. (Curott, 1998: 58)

In *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, Sue Monk Kidd's rebirth memoir, she writes about her discovery that the Great Mother: '[...] was known as the creator and sustainer of the universe who ruled over the rhythms and forces of nature. That she was all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful, bringing both birth and death light and dark.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 134) As will be examined in the next chapter, the discovery of the Great Mother Monomyth would eventually destroy Kidd's existing Christian paradigm.

Bolen emphasises the 'web of connectivity' found in the Great Mother; echoing a lesson she learned at Chartres: 'The Goddess makes the body and life sacred, and connects us to the divinity that permeates all matter; her symbolic organ is the womb.' (Bolen, 1994: 257) Kidd agrees; she writes: 'I know of nothing needed more in the world just now than an image of Divine presence that affirms the importance of relationship [...].' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 155)

The Great Mother Monomyth mentioned most often in the memoirs is Gaia. Three of the five authors name Gaia as the irreducible Great Mother; however each of them draws from different cultural or historical sources. Margaret Starbird connects Gaia as Great Mother in relation to humanity's historical timeline, drawing from: '[...] ancient Neolithic representations of the Earth as the Great Mother—the eternal “vessel” or “Grail”—bringing forth all that lives in endless, ongoing cycles of creative activity.' (Starbird, 1998: 52) Whereas Downing connects Gaia to Ancient Greece:

[...] there is in Greek mythology a “great” mother in the background—Gaia, grandmother to Demeter, Hera, and Hestia, great-grandmother to Athene and Artemis, [...]. Gaia is the mother of the beginning, the mother of infancy. She is the mother who is there before time [...]. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 135)

Bolen, on the other hand, presents a late-twentieth century, James Lovelock-inspired understanding of Gaia as living Mother Earth⁶²; she writes: ‘The Earth is the Great Mother Goddess: she births us and breaths us and feeds us and holds us to her body with gravity, and we return to her in death.’ (Bolen, 1994: 257) This interesting array of variations on the Great Mother Monomyth testifies to the plural understandings prevalent not only in the memoirs, but also in the Western Goddess Movement.

3.2.5.4 Amplification: *Goddess Praxis*

The three amplifications listed above were provided by Susan Rowland; I offer a further amplification: *Goddess Praxis*. The ‘key individual’ in this amplification is Jean Shinoda Bolen. As discussed above, Bolen moves *Goddess Feminism* from theory to *Goddess Praxis* by empowering and amplifying Goddess further through acts of ritual and worship. In other words, Bolen amplifies Harding and Jung’s Goddess from the purely psychological construct to the physical and mythological worlds. Through this further amplification of Jung’s original Anima, Bolen provides a bridge from analytical theory to religious praxis and places Goddess in the physical landscape for rites, rituals and worship. Bolen’s memoir provides a contextual map, source of meaning, words to express the ineffable, and a ‘way of knowing’ for readers to follow that mirrors Harding’s original work in many ways⁶³. Moreover, from a theological perspective Bolen manages to cross the schism and syncretistically combine Goddess with the Christian God in syncretistic Union. Bolen is not only a theorist, she is an activist as well. Through a global network of women, Bolen has worked tirelessly to raise *Goddess Consciousness* on a global scale through both her ongoing Millionth Circle Initiative and her work with the United Nations. Bolen makes the boundary crossing leap from analytical theory to theological praxis leaving the clinical domain of psychology and entering the experiential fields of theology, theology, and religious studies.

Through the first two memoirs in this study, one learns a great deal about Jung’s Path of individuation and analytical psychology and how his original theories have

⁶² For more information on James Lovelock’s *The Gaia Hypothesis*, the original paper can be found here: <http://www.jameslovelock.org/page34.html> and for the eco-consciousness created by Lovelock’s Hypothesis, see: <http://www.gaiatheory.org/>

⁶³ Very little research has been found regarding M Esther Harding, with the exception of the scholars included in this study. Further research into the connection between amplified Jungian theory and the current, and changing religious map of the West is certainly required. The further analysis of these connections would be a study in and of themselves.

been revised by women for women. Downing and Bolen both situate their personal recollections and analyses alongside Jung's (and their own) Individuation; Downing focuses on three major steps along the path—Shadow, Affirmation of Destiny, and the Union of Eros and Logo; Bolen combines theological experiences and enquiry alongside analytical psychological theories and models. In her memoir, Bolen's Individuation pilgrimage is offered as a pilgrimage of 'rebirth', and unlike Downing's memoir, Bolen's journey begins with her enrapt in a State of Grace. Bolen uses Jungian and post-Jungian threads to weave her memoir, and she relates additional, and in some ways, more complex, steps along the Path of Individuation. Bolen focuses on child-like wonder and being vulnerable; documents her psychological 'rebirth' as 'pilgrim' from the womb of Chartres; experiences various forms of Jungian Union including an embodied Union of deities, of beliefs, and of imagery. Bolen's memoir complements Downing's and builds upon it in several important ways. The underlying theories behind Bolen's memoir are vast, varied, and complex. A long history of depth contemplation is shown to be a contributing factor in Bolen's beliefs and assertions in *Crossing to Avalon*. Jungian Feminism, Goddess Feminism, the Monomyth and creation of a Monotheism combined with Bolen's bridge from analytical theory to religious or spiritual praxis were all necessary modifications of Jung's original theories and models to create an almost perfect Goddess storm in the West. The particular use of Jungian amplification—projecting an image on a various assortment of mythologies to empower the image—on Goddess archetypes has helped to create a post-Jungian religious/spiritual movement worthy of analysis and exemplifies how deeply entrenched Jung's theories and post-Jungian feminist revisions are in the Western Goddess Movement. It is also important to note the specific modifications and contributions of Harding, Downing, and Bolen, because two of the authors who follow (Kidd and Curott) would read *The Goddess* and *Crossing to Avalon*—in some places even citing Jung, Harding, Downing, or Bolen in their own memoirs. The impact Downing and Bolen's memoirs have had on the other authors in this study and on the adherents within the Western Goddess Movement is evident and crucial to the perpetuation of Jungian and post-Jungian theory. Downing and Bolen have now laid the groundwork for others to follow—and they do.

Of the authors who follow in this study, the next author, Sue Monk Kidd will continue Bolen's Goddess Consciousness, to some degree, while whole-heartedly embracing Goddess Praxis. The final author, Phyllis Curott, will take the amplification of *Goddess Praxis* even further. Bolen marks the end of the authors with Jungian training, but that does not mean the end of Jungian concepts being included in the remaining memoirs. The next author, Sue Monk Kidd, builds on the work of Bolen but struggles when it comes to Bolen's purported Union of Goddess with the Christian God.

Chapter 4

The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine

Sue Monk Kidd

1996

*The female soul is no small thing.
Neither is a woman's right
to define the sacred feminine
from a woman's perspective.⁶⁴*

4.1 In Summation

In Chapter 2, an analysis of the first memoir, *The Goddess*, exhibited how Downing wrote her memoir based on Jung's Path of Individuation detailing her experiences encountering several Jungian concepts including the Shadow, the affirmation of destiny, and the union of Anima and Animus or Eros and Logos. In Chapter 3, an analysis of Bolen's memoir, *Crossing to Avalon*, included examining not only the content of the memoir using the critical analyses established in the introduction, but also the substantial contributions made by Bolen to the Western Goddess Movement including the advancement of her concept of 'Goddess Consciousness' in the West and her significance in the post-Jungian Goddess Feminism movement that centred upon amplification of Jung's Anima as Goddess through the Ancient Greek pantheon. The first two authors in this study (Downing and Bolen) are trained Jungians who speak from a distinctly psychodynamic perspective. The next author, Sue Monk Kidd, would learn from and adapt the writings of Jung, Harding, Bolen, Christ, Downing, and others to create a rebirth memoir that offers a psychodynamic 'way of knowing' specifically for a Christian audience.

4.1.1 Sue Monk Kidd (1948 -)

As a best-selling author, Sue Monk Kidd's *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (1996), hereinafter referred to as *Dance*, sits amongst a list of highly-acclaimed

⁶⁴ Kidd (2007 [1996]): 1.

publications and awards.⁶⁵ Her rebirth memoir, however, was written early in Kidd's literary career. *Dance* was one last confessional to bring closure to the Christian contemplative writings of her early life.

Sue Monk Kidd had been firmly grounded in the Southern Baptist Church since her youth. In her memoir, Kidd describes her formative years as 'mainstream orthodox' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 14); she writes: 'the Southern Baptist Church had been the fabric of my religious existence since childhood. And if that wasn't enough, I was married to a Southern Baptist minister who was a religion teacher and chaplain on a Baptist college campus.' (ibid: 16) Living a church-centred life, Kidd focused her studies on theology including a number of orthodox writers; Kidd states:

I was influenced by Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich, who did, now and then, refer to "God our Mother," but this had never really sunk in. [...] I'd read many of the classics of Christian contemplative literature, the church fathers and the great mystics of the church. For years I'd studied Thomas Merton, John of the Cross, Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventure, Ignatius, Eckhart, Luther, Teilhard de Chardin, The Cloud of Unknowing, and others. (ibid: 14-15)

Kidd quickly gained a national reputation in the US as a 'Christian writer'. In her memoir she notes: 'I'd been a prolific contributor to an inspirational magazine with millions of readers. I'd written articles for religious journals and magazines, books about my contemplative spirituality. [...] I spoke at Christian conferences, in churches.' (ibid: 17) Kidd did not limit her worship to her Southern Baptist tradition. She frequently explored other sects of Christianity often crossing the boundaries and blurring the division between Protestant and Catholic praxis. Kidd writes: 'I often went to Catholic mass or Eucharist at the Episcopal Church, nourished by the symbol and power of this profound feeding ritual.' (ibid: 15) For Kidd, the Church was the centre of her life, and a vast majority of her time was spent either in devotion or in reflection. This church-centred life also meant that Kidd's identity was intricately connected to the orthodox Christian belief that a

⁶⁵ Included in Kidd's publications are: (1988) *God's Joyful Surprise*. Harper SanFrancisco; (1990) *When the Heart Waits*. Harper SanFrancisco; (1996) *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. Harper SanFrancisco; (2002) *The Secret Life of Bees*. Viking Books—a *New York Times* Bestseller for 2 ½ Years with 8 Million Copies Sold Worldwide; (2005) *The Mermaid Chair*. Viking a No. 1 *New York Times* Bestseller. *The Mermaid Chair* was made into a television film by Lifetime in 2006, but did not receive critical acclaim. *The Secret Life of Bees* film (2008), however, enjoyed critical acclaim, tremendous box-office success, won 11 film awards and had another 16 nominations. Information sourced from <http://suemonkkidd.com/> and <http://www.imdb.com>.

woman's place in the world was subordinate to men. These identities were the focus of her time and energy; she writes:

So much of it had been spent trying to live up to the stereotypical formula of what a woman should be—the Good Christian Woman, the Good Wife, the Good Mother, the Good Daughter—pursuing those things that have always been held out to women as ideals of femininity. (ibid: 13)

The eight years documented in *Dance* would dramatically shift Kidd's entire life including her marriage, career, and her world and faith paradigms. By finding and sharing her inner 'feminine voice' Kidd's life would change in ways she never could have imagined.

4.1.2 *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine* (1996)

Dance was first published in the United States in May 1996. Kidd's rebirth memoir is a post-Christian contemplation, a tale of one woman's struggle to find her voice and her place in a world she envisions as twisted by patriarchy and gender schisms. Fuelled by the un-named something she felt she was missing—a lost piece articulated by Harding—Kidd's search began with her Southern Baptist roots, follows her lateral conversion to the Episcopal Church; and, ultimately to a form of Goddess-centred Spirituality integral to the wider Western Goddess Movement.

Kidd organises her memoir into four stages of her 'quest'. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 140) In total, she offers an eight-year journey of 'Awakening,' 'Initiation,' 'Grounding,' and 'Empowerment.' Kidd's use of these four stages as the construct for her memoir appears to be influenced by and a revision of Carol P. Christ's four steps of the feminine spiritual quest (1980). Christ's four steps include: Nothingness, Awakening, Insight, and New Naming; Christ's theories underlie Kidd's memoir and her influence on Kidd will be examined in greater detail in a following section.⁶⁶ Kidd's 'Awakening' however, would not only include her awakening to Goddess, but also her awakening to the feminist movement. It was only in the middle of her secluded adult life that Kidd learned about such concepts as 'patriarchy' and

⁶⁶ For more see Christ CP (1995 [1980]) *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on a Spiritual Quest, Third Edition*. Boston: Beacon Press

‘feminism’, and Kidd’s memoir charts her transition from dutiful ‘daughter of the Church’ to awakened feminist.

One would think that with Kidd’s strong feminist and anti-patriarchal tendencies Kidd would distance herself from her husband who, as a conservative Southern Baptist Minister, represents all that Kidd comes to despise. However, this is not the case. In fact, Kidd is the only author in this study who actually takes her spouse along with her on her spiritual quest. This is no easy task, and there are numerous instances when Kidd reflects on the possibility that her marriage is irreparably broken. Kidd struggles with what she perceives as choice between either her growth as an individual (resulting in the end of her marriage) or staying within a marriage which she now understands as a patriarchal prison. Not satisfied with either option, Kidd makes a bold step in trying to share her journey with her husband, Sandy. In the following excerpt from the memoir, Kidd summarises her journey. I include a full accounting in Kidd’s own words, as opposed to my summary of the event, for several reasons: 1) this condensed account concisely and eloquently describes Kidd’s eight-year journey in a compact and concise way that a brief reader’s summary could never entail; 2) it exemplifies Jung’s union of Anima and Animus in the union of Kidd and her husband along this path—similar to Bolen’s *Vesica Piscis*—independent, yet overlapping, and together much more powerful than individually; 3) this excerpt, found at the end of Kidd’s memoir and entitled ‘The Story’ is a wonderful condensed version of her memoir that is especially for her readers. Kidd’s inclusion of ‘The Story’ will be discussed further in a following section; 4) and finally, this summary expresses Kidd’s integration of several of post-Jungian models and theories including the Anima as Goddess, rebirth, the affirmation of destiny, and the acceptance of personal religious authority:

“Well, let’s say there’s this woman, this Everywoman, and one night she has a dream about giving birth to herself.⁶⁷ She doesn’t realise it, of course, but she’s about to be pregnant with a new feminine life. And sure enough, she starts to get wake-up calls—an odd slip of the tongue, maybe, in which she hears herself putting the word *Father* before her own name. The next thing she knows, she’s uncovering the feminine wound—hers and the church’s and the whole world’s. She tries to run

⁶⁷ This is an obvious reference to Bolen, as one of Bolen’s most famous books is *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women’s Lives* (1983), a text, according to the notes in her memoir, Kidd has read and incorporated into her ‘way of knowing.’ In fact, Kidd cites Bolen in every section of her memoir.

away from the whole thing, but before she gets too far, she finds herself on a beach with dancing women, celebrating an experience of female soul she can't even comprehend but that down deep makes her long for the mysterious thing she's lost."

He looked at me. "And this woman decides to find it."

"Yes, but first she decides she has to look honestly at her female life. When she does, she starts to see what a good daughter to patriarchy she's been, how she's created her life by blueprints that aren't even her own. Then she looks at the church, her marriage, the whole culture, the way it *really* is, the way women have been devalued and excluded, how the feminine has been suppressed and left out, and she knows for the first time that the absence of the Divine Feminine has left a hole in her. She says, No more. She gets angry—no, make that furious. But she's real scared, too. She feels stuck, so lodged in 'the way it is' she can't imagine anything else. Until one day she goes into a drugstore and sees her daughter on her knees before men who are laughing at her subordinate posture, and something happens to this woman."

The car slowed a little as Sandy grew more absorbed in what I was saying. I realised he was hearing the unbroken tale of my journey, albeit the ultracondensed version, for the first time, and in a way I was, too.

"So the woman decides to go away and reassess, to follow her own wisdom, which is starting to trickle down to her. She decides to let her old life collapse at her feet, to risk everything."

"I bet her husband remembers that part real well," he said.

"Okay. So it's hard on them both. But it's worth it. Because in the end, they find a whole new marriage. Plus, the woman finds this circle of trees, this space of Sacred Feminine experience unlike anything she's ever known, and deep inside her something says, *home*. She learns to dance in that circle, to create rituals, to open herself to the unknown. She discovers a [Jungian] myth, or maybe it discovers her, and it tells her what she needs to know about rebirthing as a woman. She faces off with the patriarchal voices she's internalised, buries the patriarchy in a shoe box, and buries her old female self."

I paused. It was the oddest thing, the way the story was forming as I spoke, all the pieces—the trivial and the terrible—falling out of my mouth into this little pattern of meaning. It awed me as much as if a child had spilled a jigsaw puzzle on the floor and it had fallen into a picture. *This is my story*, I thought.

"Go on," said Sandy.

"Then she opens her arms to the Divine Feminine, discovering her in ancient places and traditional places, but mostly inside her own self. And she loves this presence with all her heart. Her consciousness starts expanding. She discovers she's not separate from anything—that earth,

body, and mother are all divine, and this knowing changes everything. She discovers there is a fire in her, a passionate struggle for women.

“She starts to heal, too. She moves deep into nature, into relationships with female friends, into herself. She comes upon a Matryoshka doll, and it teaches her to honour her feminine legacy. She goes to Crete and finds healing. She goes back to the monastery and dances around the altar and learns to forgive. And one night on the beach she sits with a sea turtle and is overwhelmed with love for her female self.

“All this causes her to give up the idea she’s powerless. She starts to feel her strength, her own authority as a woman. She dreams about buffalo, and even they help her reclaim her power. Then, of course, she finds out that she has to bear witness to all this, that she has to plant her heart out there in the world. She decides to be brave, to play her music on a whole different lyre. More than anything, she wants to be a one-in-herself [virgin] woman, to have her Sacred Feminine experience become a natural part of her life.

“And then one day she’s sitting in the car beside her husband, having just taken their daughter to college, thinking of all these things.”

[...]

I look back now and I am grateful. I recall that whenever I struggled, doubted, wondered if I could pull my thread into this fabric, someone or something would always appear—a friend, a stranger, a figure in a dream, a book, an experience, some shining part of nature—and remind me that this thing I was undertaking was holy to the core. I would learn again that it is alright for women to follow the wisdom in their souls, to name their truth, to embrace the Sacred Feminine, that there is undreamed voice, strength, and power in us. (ibid: 225-228, emphasis in the original)

Kidd’s rebirth memoir is different from Downing’s and Bolen’s in five significant ways. 1) Kidd is a reluctant pilgrim *and* a reluctant feminist who describes herself as being in a ‘Deep Sleep.’ Kidd’s unwillingness is a significant strength of this memoir and will be examined in further detail in a following section. 2) Kidd is very well-read including many key figures in Christianity and the Western Goddess Movement. Her extensive research is another strength of this memoir that shall be discussed in more detail in a following section. 3) Kidd continues the post-Jungian amplification of Anima as Goddess which she explored not only through extensive reading of post-Jungian feminists including Harding, Downing, Perera, and Bolen but also through her personal therapy with a Jungian analyst. Through post-Jungian analysis and scholarly revision, Kidd finds and shares a helpful ‘way of knowing’ Goddess both in theory and in praxis. Kidd’s use of the post-Jungian

Goddess, Goddess Feminism, and Goddess Consciousness will be examined in the underlying theories to the memoir. 4) *Dance* is the story of one woman's awakening, but it is not a singular journey, for Kidd takes her husband Sandy along with her. Unlike Bolen who had divorced before her pilgrimage had begun, Kidd keeps a focus on her marriage. Through her awakening, Sandy embarks on a parallel journey to his wife and shares many of her life-altering experiences including delving into analytical psychology and being present when Kidd first experienced Goddess at Avebury. As the memoir begins, Sandy is a 'Southern Baptist Minister who was a religion teacher and chaplain on a Baptist college campus.' (ibid, 16) Eight years later, Sandy trained as a Jungian analyst specialising in couples engaged in an 'awakening' experience. For Kidd, who was willing to risk the loss of her patriarchal marriage, this journey awoke both Kidd and her husband. Finally, 5) Kidd's first experience of Goddess isn't explained until the third part of her memoir (page 134). Moreover, this life-altering event happens in a moment of Jungian 'synchronicity' in union with her husband in the United Kingdom: during a drive, Sandy randomly suggests stopping at Avebury; Sue would depart from Avebury's stone circle transformed.

Underlying Kidd's reflection upon her awakening and transformation, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* includes an interesting blend of Christian theology and Jungian and post-Jungian psychology. Unlike Bolen who does not address the theological implications of her experiences with Goddess and her Christian God, Kidd spends a fair bit of her memoir reflecting on her existing Christian heritage and beliefs whilst trying to reconcile them with her experiences of Goddess. While Bolen finds Divine Union, Kidd finds separation and ultimately leaves the Church. Whereas Bolen incorporated 'Goddess-Consciousness' as a counterpart to her Christian faith, Kidd concludes that this new 'Consciousness' is not merely psychological, but theological as well.

4.2 Critical Review

4.2.1 Who is the intended audience? Are they reached?

All of the authors in this study agree that writing their rebirth memoir was, first and foremost, for their own soul. Kidd writes: 'We tell our stories for ourselves, of course.' Yet, Kidd continues: 'But there are also those thousand other women.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 2) For Kidd, the thousand other women are those who are

seeking the same path, either consciously or unconsciously, to Goddess—they are Kidd's target audience. Kidd also implies that for every woman who shares her rebirth pilgrimage, another thousand women embark on the same journey but never share their story in such a public forum.

4.2.1.1 Middle-age Women

Like Bolen, Kidd also addresses a middle-age audience. Echoing Jungian thought, Kidd maintains that mid-life is an integral phase of consciousness required for this Goddess-centred quest. Jung once said in a 1955 interview with Stephen Black that Individuation is a 'process that sets in with birth [...].' (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 256) However, the individual isn't psychologically ready for the tasks of Individuation until midlife. Jung writes:

We see that in this phase of life—between thirty-five and forty—a significant change in the human psyche is in preparation. At first it is not a conscious and striking change; it is rather a matter of indirect signs of a change which seems to take its rise from the unconscious. (2001: 107)

There are several factors that make this a significant time in one's life psychologically. For Jung, midlife was a time to shift one's focus from the external world of jobs, families, and obtaining goals to the internal world of one's self. Jung writes: 'For a young person it is almost a sin [...] to be too much occupied with himself [or herself]; but for the aging person it is a duty and necessity to give serious attention to himself [or herself].' (2001: 111) However, it is not only the ability to turn one's attention and gaze inward, but also the ability to be self-critical which was exemplified in Kidd's memoir. Jung writes: 'It is only when a human being has grown up that he [or she] can have doubts about himself [or herself] and be at variance with himself [or herself].' (2001: 102) It is this ability to be 'at variance' with oneself that is the crucial key in the required shift in consciousness. Kidd expands on this idea by adding that it is also vital that one is able to be 'at variance' with the socio-cultural and religious standards as well; she writes: '[...] women grow ripe for feminist spiritual conception. By then we've been around long enough to grow disenchanted with traditional female existence, with the religious experience women have been given to live out.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 11)

Midlife, then, is a phase in one's life where one starts to contemplate one's life, what is truly important in one's life, and looks inward towards the self. It could be said, in post-Jungian terms that the shift in consciousness that occurs in midlife is one from Logos thought towards Eros-centred thinking—from the external to the personal—from the processes of logic to the processes of introspection and reflection. In Jungian and most post-Jungian thought, the midlife phase is considered, fundamentally, a quest to find one's soul by integrating Logos and Eros into one cohesive whole Self. According to Clinical Psychologist Dr Brent Potter, Jung's vision of midlife provides *metanoia* (a transformative change of heart or spiritual/religious conversion) as an *archetype of midlife*.⁶⁸ (Potter, 2015) I would agree with Potter and add that the memoirs in this study all seem to pose the same understanding—midlife is generally the time one seeks out the Divine—either willingly or unwillingly. Jung writes: 'There are many women who only awake to social responsibility and to social consciousness after their fortieth year.' (2001: 110) Falling neatly into Jung's timeline of 35-40, Kidd mentions in her memoir that she was 38 years-old when her journey began. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 10) Therefore, midlife is an especially important phase where the resulting shift in consciousness brings about a dynamic relationship between the individual and Jung's Anima—now known as Goddess. As detailed in the introduction Jung's original Anima has been, to use Rowland's terminology, *revised* and *amplified* by a variety of feminist post-Jungians to the various embodiments of Goddess that are now prominent in the Western Goddess Movement.

Midlife, then, or at least the midlife mind-set, is a crucial requirement on Jung's Path of Individuation. The result of this midlife quest is a dynamic union of the individual to Goddess. Jung writes: '[...] woman—unconsciously as ever—sets about healing the inner wounds, and for this she needs, as her most important instrument, a psychic relationship.' (1982: 74) According to Jung, this psychic relationship is offered by the Anima archetype as it speaks to the individual from the unconscious mind. Esther Harding often recorded her conversations with Jung; she notes Jung commented in July 1922 that the Anima/Animus archetypes are interpreted by the individual as '[...] the voice of God within us; in any case we

⁶⁸ For more see: **Potter B** (2015) *Elements of Reparation: Truth, Faith, and Transformation in the works of Heidegger, Bion, and Beyond*. London: Karnac Books.

respond to it as if it were.’ (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 28) So is the Anima the voice of God/Goddess? Jung explains: ‘[...] we are not concerned here with a philosophical, much less a religious, concept of the soul, but with the psychological recognition of *the existence of a semiconscious psychic complex, having partial autonomy of function.*’ (Jung, 1982: 79, emphasis is mine) I emphasised the important portion of Jung’s statement, for the Anima is a ‘semiconscious psychic complex’ which Jung later states is fully autonomous and can act on the individual’s conscious mind at will ‘[...] like a seizure.’ (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 294) At the turn of the twentieth century, Jung spoke and wrote about being ‘seized’ by his Anima; the memoirs in this study, published at the end of that century, present memories and experiences of being ‘seized’ by Goddess—a an archetypal image selected and generated in the individual by Jung’s Anima.

This would lead to the obvious question: why are women finding Goddess in post-Jungian realms rather than within some form of organised religion? Jung comments on this conundrum:

In any other age it would have been the prevailing religion that showed her where her ultimate goal lay; but today religion leads back to the Middle Ages, back to that soul-destroying unrelatedness from which came all the fearful barbarities of war. Too much soul is reserved for God, too little for man. But God himself cannot flourish if man’s soul is starved. The feminine psyche responds to this hunger, for it is the function of Eros to unite what Logos has sundered. The woman of today is faced with a tremendous cultural task—perhaps it will be the dawn of a new era. (Jung, 1982: 74-5)

This new post-Jungian era would see the amplification of the Anima onto various mythological, cultural, or historical deities forever transforming her into Goddess and Her flourishing and worship in the Western Goddess Movement. What this means from a psychological standpoint is that Goddess (as Anima) is an integral component to one’s Individuation—and this shift in consciousness is a necessary part of one’s midlife; without union with Goddess, one would fail to progress further along one’s Path of Individuation—remaining less than one’s potential. This new era would also see an increase in publication as more women began to share their stories. Similar to the other authors in this study, Kidd speaks directly to those who have already begun their journey, and, like her, are seeking information and guidance:

You may be in the midst of your own transformation. You may already be exploring a Sacred Feminine dimension. You may be fully engaged in a struggle to exit patriarchy and come into your own as a woman, grappling with how your life is changed. In that case, this book is meant to offer you clarity and nurture. It is meant to be a companion to you. It should provide new markers, passages, insights, questions, motivations, inspirations, boldness, and meaning. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 3)

Kidd, however, is also aware that not everyone will want to hear her new message. Being a well-known Christian writer and speaker, Kidd had a built-in audience, but it also meant that she would face vocal resistance from her own supporters; Kidd writes:

Once when I spoke before a large audience on the feminine spiritual journey, a woman in the back stood up during the question session, raised her Bible, and cried out, “What you’re saying is an abomination!” / After having her say (and what a say it was!), she marched out, inviting others to follow. Fortunately, only one other woman went, but it was high drama, moments I watched in still-frame, half-believing. (2007 [1996]: 216-17)

Kidd patiently allowed this woman to voice her opinions uninterrupted. She did not engage in a public debate with her critic because Kidd recognised her critic as one who is still in what Kidd refers to as a ‘Deep Sleep.’ Kidd knows this because that is exactly where her own journey began, and her primary intended audience is women like herself and her public critic—the Daughters of Patriarchy.

4.2.1.2 Daughters of Patriarchy in a ‘Deep Sleep’

Recognising Daughterhood

Kidd conceives of herself and others in the West as sleeping, compliant Daughters of Patriarchy. Kidd’s self-image at the beginning of her memoir is in stark contrast to the independent ‘virgin’ proposed by Harding, Downing, and Bolen; she writes:

[...] *I am grown, with children of my own. But inside I am still a daughter.* A daughter is a woman who remains internally dependent, who does not shape her identity and direction as a woman, but tends to accept the identity and direction projected onto her. She tends to become the image of woman that the cultural father idealises. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 41-42, emphasis in the original)

Only through time and experience, does Kidd come to the same midlife crisis Bolen wrote about—the psychological dissonance caused by one’s realities not meeting

one's expectations. The first half of *Dance* is filled with various self-critiques of her role as Daughter and her anger and disgust at her own blindness and compliance in the patriarchal culture. Prior to this eight year transformation, Kidd considered herself to hold radical beliefs, especially when it came to mixing Catholic and Protestant praxis. However, she came to realise that she was not, perhaps, as 'radical' as she had originally thought; Kidd writes:

I understood that while I had gone through a lot of spiritual transformation and written about it, my change had not deviated much from what were considered safe, standard, accepted Christian tenets. I had never imagined any kind of internal reformation that would call into question the Orthodox Christian Woman, the Good Daughter to the Church, or the Monk who lived high in the spiritual tower of her head. (ibid: 17)

In other words, Kidd could not even imagine breaching the boundaries that had been set for her by her faith, culture, marriage, and conservative Southern tradition. Before her awakening in 1988, Kidd believed she was a self-determining, contemporary woman; she writes:

I had truly thought of myself as an independent woman. Certainly I was not outwardly submissive. I had my career, my own life, ideas, and plans. I behaved in seemingly independent ways, but inside I was still caught in daughterhood. I was deferring to the father at the centre, I operated out of a lot of assumptions and ideas, but I had no idea the extent to which my ideas were really the internalised notions of a culture that put men at the centre. (ibid: 19)

Only after her awakening did Kidd realise she was enacting the role of Patriarchal Daughter. It was important for Kidd that her memoir include her own self-criticism so that others could perhaps identify the Patriarchal Daughter in themselves. These Daughters, Kidd included, are unaware of their role as submissive Daughters because they are asleep to the reality around them.

The 'Deep Sleep'

Kidd not only defines her concept of the Patriarchal Daughter in her memoir, but also describes what she refers to as the 'Deep Sleep'—a sleep from which Kidd had only recently awaken; she writes:

A woman in Deep Sleep is one who goes about in an unconscious state. She seems unaware or unfazed by the truth of her own female life [...].

She has never acknowledged, much less confronted, sexism within the church, biblical interpretations, or Christian doctrine. Okay, so women have been largely missing from positions of church power, we've been silenced and relegated to positions of subordination by biblical interpretations and doctrine, and God has been represented to us as exclusively male. So what? The woman in Deep Sleep is oblivious to the psychological and spiritual impact this has had on her. (ibid: 18)

She goes on to say: 'She is the woman dependent on the masculine, whose life is composed of adaptable femininity. She is the woman severed from her own true instinct and creativity. She is the woman in collusion with patriarchy.' (ibid: 113) These are the women who need to be awakened; these are the women Kidd wants to reach—women no different from herself.

Kidd was so immersed in her own world that the changing Western culture had literally passed her by. Completely unaffected by the events taking place and the shifting cultural norms, Kidd writes:

As a woman I'd slept so soundly that wake-up calls had not really gotten through to me. Not the feminist movement, not the marginalisation of women in the church, not exclusive male language in scripture and liturgy. I had been upset and alarmed by the staggering assault on women through rape, spousal abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, and genital mutilation, but somehow this didn't initiate a full-blown awakening. (ibid: 22-23)

A 'full-blown' awakening, such as the one Kidd experienced in the drugstore with her daughter, inevitably led to life-altering changes. It is a process which requires one's participation. Kidd writes that, once awake, a woman must examine, 'her relationships, her religion, her career, and her inner life [...].' (ibid: 113) She must stop being 'the woman who never questioned any of it but blindly followed prevailing ideas and dictates.' (ibid: 113) Questioning the prevailing ideas and dictates would be central for Kidd, and the first two intentions of her memoir are to provide a cultural and feminist critique and to awaken those in the Patriarchal Deep Sleep.

4.2.2 What are the intentions of the work? What did they achieve?

Kidd has three main intentions with *Dance*: 1) to awaken other women - particularly Western Christian women; 2) to engage in and spark a feminist cultural, religious and self critique; and 3) to provide a Post-Jungian Guiding

Feminine Myth as a path to Goddess. Each of these three intentions will be examined in further detail.

4.2.2.1 Awaken Others

Kidd is specifically writing to Western Christian female audience. Utilising literary techniques such as addressing the reader and using the inclusive pronoun 'we' attempts to elevate Kidd's memoir from the story of one individual woman to a story about all women—by and for 'Everywoman'. She shares her own awakening in great detail in the hope she can connect, in some way, with her readers. Kidd begins by exploring her initial shift in her perception: 'Through my awakening, I'd grown increasingly aware of certain attitudes that existed in our culture, a culture long-dominated by men.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 9) As one who was oblivious to the Western feminist movement not only culturally, but also theologically and theologically, Kidd refers to and cites a vast number of Christian feminist theologians in her rebirth memoir including one of the leading foremothers of feminist theology and thealogy, Carol P Christ; she writes: '[...] Christ states that a woman's awakening begins with an "experience of nothingness." It comes as she experiences emptiness, self-negation, disillusionment, a deep-felt recognition of the limitation placed on women's lives, especially her own.' (ibid: 28, citing Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing*, 1980:13)

Kidd struggled with the idea of challenging a life-time of Church doctrine: 'Despite the growing disenchantment women experience in the early stages of awakening, the idea of existing beyond the patriarchal institution of faith, of withdrawing our external projection of God onto the church, is almost always unfathomable.' (ibid: 48) Kidd found herself at an impasse: 'I'd awakened enough to know that I couldn't go back to my old way of being a woman, but the fear of going forward was paralysing.' (ibid: 8) The tension was too much for Kidd to bear; she writes: 'I could not seem to banish my awakening, so I did the next best thing. I trivialized it.' (ibid: 33) During this time, Kidd returned to her role as dutiful wife and Daughter of the Church. But she could not stop the new consciousness from emerging. Despite her best efforts, Kidd was slowly and privately changing; she writes:

By now more than a year had passed [...] I went about my routine [...] and, through it all, keeping my awakening mostly secret. / Part of it

was because I was afraid of the response I might get. But secluding my experience during that early period was both cowardly *and* wise. Some things are too fragile, too vulnerable to bring into the public eye. (ibid: 59, emphasis in the original)

The more she woke, the more she began to question; Kidd writes: 'Throughout the previous two years, my awakening had shown me new truths about my religion, my life, and the lives of women.' (ibid: 83) Eventually, Kidd would awaken to Jung's Anima as Feminine Principle amplified in contemporary times as Goddess:

Little by little, I began to contact a feminine source within [...] a deep, ancient-feeling place inside me, a place I hadn't known existed. This surprised me because it made me realize that what I sought was not outside myself. It was within me, already there, waiting. Awakening was really the act of remembering myself, remembering this deep Feminine Source. (ibid: 75)

In *Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, Kidd intends to awaken others by sharing her own personal story, struggles, fears, and triumphs. She often speaks directly to the reader and uses 'we' in areas where she is addressing her female readers as an audience. Kidd utilises generalised and essentialist statements about women in an attempt to offer connections and parallels to her female readers. She selects moments in her memoir where she struggles, and offers women's struggles alongside her own; for example, when speaking about the fear of her own awakening, Kidd writes:

Women grow afraid at this moment because it means giving up a world where everything is neat and safe. [...] We yearn for something we've lost as women, but it's so unknown, so unbearably unknown. And then one day it all comes down to this: Can we trust ourselves, our inmost selves, our feminine wisdom? (ibid: 77)

Not only does Kidd connect her awakening and struggles to the struggles of all Western women, but she also makes a prominent point, at the very beginning of her memoir, to note that this is not just her awakening---but all women's. At issue is the long-forgotten, yet inalienable right for *all women* to awaken to their own spiritual needs; Kidd writes:

It was true: There had been other awakenings in my life, but no waking experience had been as passionate and life altering as this one, nor had there been another where I felt more was at stake. *The female soul is*

no small thing. Neither is a woman's right to define the sacred from a woman's perspective. (ibid: 1, emphasis is mine)

In the closing section of her memoir, again directed at her female readers and thusly entitled 'Empowerment', Kidd once again addresses the 'we' in women. It is interesting to note that this paragraph is followed by 'The Story' quoted in vast part in the summary of this memoir. 'The Story' of her union with her husband Sandy and Kidd's ultimate transformation is the lasting image Kidd leaves her readers with after she makes this general statement about the awakening and transformation of Western women:

We take our journeys and bring back the gifts. We find our hearts and we plant them. We do it as we voice our souls and find our authority, and we do it also in the quiet enactment of a natural spirituality. We do it for ourselves but also for our daughters, all the women, all the men, all creation. We do it out of love for the women we are becoming, out of love for the earth. We do it because we are the change the world is waiting for. (ibid: 225, emphasis in the original)

Dance may be Kidd's personal story, but she is portraying it, with a direct nod to Bolen, as an 'Everywoman' archetypal story continuously addressing the reader and speaking to all women as 'we.' Utilising these literary techniques potentially elevates Kidd's memoir from the story of one individual woman to a story about all women. In Kidd's opinion, again echoing Bolen, women are the change—women are the saviours—and women need to awaken to this vital idea.

4.2.2.2 Awakening to the Feminist Cultural, Religious and Self Critique

Half of *Dance* is dedicated to a feminist cultural, religious, and self-critique. Kidd takes the reader along as she literally discovers first and second-wave feminism in the West and the birth and continual expansion of feminist theology and thealogy. Kidd would not only critique the participation of the Church in the creation and perpetuation of patriarchy, but also her own role in its furtherance. She writes:

Forming a critique is essential to the birth and development of a spiritual feminist consciousness. Until a woman is willing to set aside her unquestioned loyalty and look critically at the tradition and the convention of her faith, her awakening will never fully emerge. The extent of her healing, autonomy, and power is related to the depth of the critique she is able to integrate into her life. (ibid: 59)

Questioning one's faith can be challenging. On a psychological level, it means examining and potentially dismantling one's understanding of the world and how it functions; on a theological level it requires scrutinising oneself and one's core beliefs. It is perilous territory. Kidd writes: 'Forming an honest feminist critique of our own faith tradition is not an easy thing to do. Betrayal of any kind is hard, but betrayal by one's religion is excruciating.' (ibid: 67) Kidd speaks frankly about her inner struggle with the Church and Church doctrine. Despite her initial rage, Kidd is not encouraging a mass exodus from the Church:

After the illusions are gone, after a woman wakes up, after she has become grounded in a new way and experienced healing and forgiveness, she continues on with her spiritual life, investing in church if she chooses it, but doing so with a world of difference. Now she can bring to it a whole new consciousness. She has a new heart, new vision, new soul, new voice, new knowing, and new grit. [...] Some women say you must stay in the institution and try to change it. Others say women cannot stay in without being co-opted, that we can change things best remaining outside it. I say each woman must do what her heart tells her. (ibid: 192)

The controversy between remaining within the Church and trying to bring about feminist reform including female ordination (most commonly known as reformists) and those who believe they can only affect real change in the Church from outside the institution (most commonly known as radicals) remains in feminist theology. Perhaps this is because there is very little Christian precedent, outside of the 'unorthodox' sects of Christian Mysticism. Kidd writes: 'this awakened self has been largely absent from the Christian tradition. In Christianity there is a deeply embedded separation between spirit and nature.' (ibid: 65)

Equally important to a feminist critique of the Church is for women to also examine their own responsibility in the furtherance of patriarchy. Kidd writes:

Women need to attack culture's oppression of women, for there truly is a godlike socialising power that induces women to "buy in" or collude, but we also need to confront our own part in accepting male dominance and take responsibility where appropriate. I knew I would have to come to grips with how I'd bought into patriarchy. I would have to look hard at my own daughterhood. (ibid: 42-43)

Indeed, Kidd dedicates a vast portion of *Dance* to examining her role as a Daughter of Patriarchy. For Kidd, awakening is meaningless if it does not include years of

cultural, religious and self critique. Only by understanding how one collaborates with patriarchy on a daily and often unconscious basis can self-defeating and self-limiting behaviours be changed.

4.2.2.3 Offers a Jungian ‘Way of Knowing’ for Women’s Spirituality

Contrary to Downing and Bolen who both were deeply entrenched in Jungian and post-Jungian psychology and had a ‘way of knowing’ for their archetypal experiences of Goddess, Kidd was forced to find her own way; she writes:

The problem was I didn’t have any un-teachers. I didn’t personally know anyone close at hand who’d gone through a feminist spiritual awakening. How did one do it? Did I dare step over the boundaries church and convention had drawn for women? (ibid: 33)

Anxious about challenging her long-held cultural and religious beliefs, Kidd began to research other women who had embarked on feminist spiritual awakenings, including Bolen, and found herself pulled toward Jungian analytical psychology. *Dance* provides more than a container, it provides a post-Jungian ‘way of knowing’ and guiding feminine myth.

Post-Jungian Guiding Feminine Myth

Kidd had not been trained in Jungian or post-Jungian theories, nor had she come across theologians, such as Paul Tillich, Anna Belford Ulanov, or David Tracy, who explore Christianity from a post-Jungian perspective; she discovered Jung in a much more personal way: ‘In September [...] I entered Jungian analysis with a woman analyst.’ (ibid: 107) For Kidd, this became a safe and contained environment in which to contemplate her new consciousness and the potential it might hold. Often, it was a source of inspiration that required further enquiry; Kidd writes: ‘Being in analysis is occasionally like sleuth work; not only did I spend time amplifying the personal meaning of dream images, but I also sometimes ended up in libraries researching their deeper, more archetypal meanings.’ (ibid: 107) Through both her analysis and research, Kidd familiarised herself with some of the fundamental models of analytical psychology; Kidd writes:

As Jung showed, our dreams sometimes spring from the collective unconscious, the place that holds collective human history. The images in my dreams were coming from a place inside me that predated patriarchy. With time I would see that the dreams were suggesting that

I needed to dig beneath the patriarchal layers within myself and find an earlier ground, a realm of feminine valuing. (ibid: 108)

Accepting Jung's model of the collective unconscious brings with it several implications. First, at the centre of Jung's collective unconscious is the Anima—the Sacred Feminine—that Jung believes has been nearly decimated in Western society. In Jung's model, as the autonomous centre of the collective unconscious, the Anima (Goddess), is divinity embodied in the individual—an understanding of the Numinous that is certainly not prominent in the various Christian traditions. Kidd echoes Jung's divine immanence when she writes: 'Patriarchy has majored in divine transcendence, which means separateness from the material universe—being above, beyond, or apart from it. Divine immanence, on the other hand, is divinity here, near and now, inherent in the material stuff of life.' (ibid: 160) Kidd echoes Jung, Harding, Downing, and Bolen when she writes:

Restoring the feminine symbol of Deity means that divinity will no longer be *only* heavenly, other, out there, up there, beyond time and space, beyond body and death. It will also be right here, right now, in me, in the earth, in this river and this rock, in excrement and roses alike. Divinity will be in the body, in the cycles of life and death, in the moment of decay and the moment of lovemaking. (ibid: 160, emphasis in the original)

Kidd was open to a 'way of knowing' that centred upon an embodied feminine deity after years of being in relation to a Sky Father who looked down in judgement and condemned her for being born a woman. Her memoir contains a section entitled 'A Guiding Feminine Myth' (pp 107-130) in which Kidd describes her time in Jungian analysis, the discovery of the myths of both Ariadne and the Minoan Snake Goddess (key Goddesses to both Downing and Bolen), a discussion about the importance of the 'Feminine Labyrinth' which echoes Bolen's experiences at Chartres Cathedral, and following Ariadne's thread—a lesson she had learned from Jungian mythologist Joseph Campbell, finally ending with a discussion on one's rebirth. Kidd's 'Guiding Feminine Myth' was not the myth of one Goddess archetype, such as Ariadne, it is the myth, or story, of the Jungian Anima, the archetype at the centre of Jung's collective unconscious amplified by post-Jungians into Goddess, and the psychological and theological importance of the imminent Goddess that Kidd is embracing; Kidd, however, includes this caveat:

Of course, not every woman needs to be in Jungian analysis to travel a feminine journey, but we all seem to need at least one refuge of Deep Being where we have the ongoing freedom to tell our truth safely and truly be heard, where we can find the support we need to follow our thread, where the epiphanies can come. (ibid: 176)

For Kidd, her place of refuge was Jungian analysis; Jungian and post-Jungian theory provided both the means and the guiding myth for her, and others, as a 'way of knowing,' finding, and connecting to Goddess. She writes: 'In the end, no matter where you are in the spectrum of women's spirituality. I invite you to weave new connections to your female soul [Anima]. For always, always, we are waking up and then waking up some more.' (ibid: 4)

She discusses the importance not only of women sharing their own stories, but also seeking out other women's stories to help situate one's own; Kidd writes:

Sometimes another woman's story becomes a mirror that shows me a self I haven't seen before. When I listen to her tell it, her experience quickens and clarifies my own. Her questions rouse mine. Her conflicts illumine my conflicts. Her resolutions call form my hope. Her strengths summon my strengths. All of this can happen even when our stories and our lives are very different. (ibid: 172-3)

However, Kidd is also consciously aware that, 'Each woman must create her own ways, but it can be helpful to discover the kinds of things other women do in order to heal, for they show us what is possible [...].' (ibid: 174) She goes on to say: 'The important thing is to find a process that works for you, that allows you to give yourself times of unconditional presence when you can attend to your soul with all the acceptance and attentiveness you can muster.' (ibid: 176) As for advice on beginning one's own path, Kidd writes: 'You create a path of your own by looking within yourself and listening to your soul, cultivating your own ways of experiencing the sacred, and then practicing it.' (ibid: 192)

Dance provides an active post-Jungian guiding myth (theory) that is centred upon experience (praxis), and here, too, Kidd echoes Jung. In *Psychology and Religion*, Jung speaks of religious experience and praxis; Jung perceives that most religious rituals are 'carried out for the sole purpose of producing at will the effect of the numinosum [God/Goddess] by certain devices of a magic nature, such as invocation, incantation, sacrifice, meditation, [...] and so forth.' (Jung, 1938: 4-5) Even though, for Jung, the union with Goddess was an internal and immanent

psychic transformation, he understood the psychotherapeutic need to have experiences in the external world. Jung was convinced that ‘in religious matters only experience counted.’ (Jung, 1995: 119). Following Bolen, Kidd combines theory with praxis—and offers readers a path based on *experience*. Drawing from Jung, Harding, Downing, and Bolen, *Dance* offers an emerging form of solitary Goddess worship now commonly found in the Western Goddess Movement.

4.2.2.4 Tenth Anniversary Reflections: The Impact of the Memoir

After examining three distinct intentions of *Dance*: 1) Awakening Others; 2) Awakening to the Feminist Cultural, Religious and Self Critique; and 3) Offering a Jungian ‘way of knowing’ for Women’s Spirituality; it is imperative to consider whether or not Kidd’s rebirth memoir achieved any or all of these aims.

I am working with a 2007 reprint of the *10th Anniversary Edition* (2006) published with additional material including an interview with the author and something unique for a rebirth memoir—a study guide. Whilst some works of literature come with study guides to aid with literary analysis, this is a study guide for those on a feminist spiritual journey. It queries such things as: ‘What was your childhood church or culture of faith like? How did it become part of your internal geography?’ (ibid: 249) Or: ‘How do you respond to the word *Goddess*? Does it create anxiety in you? Why? Do you think it helps to break the lock that patriarchy has on divine imagery?’ (ibid: 251) In total, the study guide includes eighteen provocative sets of questions for one’s self-critique and awakening. This is more than just a memoir, it is an instrument of discovery for one on the same path. In her Introduction, Kidd writes: ‘This book will walk you through the journey. [...] Above all, take what seems yours to take, and leave the rest.’ (ibid: 3)

As an afterword, this version contains ‘A Conversation with Sue Monk Kidd’ whereby an unnamed interviewer questions Kidd ten years after her memoir’s publication. Some of Kidd’s responses provide insight into what her memoir has achieved with her readers. The first question is: ‘What is it about *Dance* that agitates or creates a need and desire for change?’ Kidd replies, in part:

I believe what sparks passion is that the book is introducing readers to the lost history of the sacred feminine and to the jolting idea that God can be visualised in feminine ways. The first time you really get that,

it turns your world upside down. You rarely see a lukewarm reaction to it. (ibid: 240)

It was, and in some ways remains, a controversial memoir, especially amongst those in the Christian community who feel betrayed by Kidd's departure from the Church. There is also another more pragmatic achievement in which Kidd's memoir might play a part. When asked, 'Have you noticed changes over the years in the way traditional religious culture in general has responded to the sacred feminine?' Kidd replies:

When *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* came out, it seemed that much of the dialogue about the sacred feminine was more or less circumscribed to seminaries and places where feminist theology was discussed. It just hadn't reached the pew of the average American. But over the last decade, I've witnessed a substantial shift. Now we are seeing this escalating progress in which the feminine is sweeping into our imagery and conceptions of the divine. There is still a feminine wound within religion, but it is being slowly healed. There are more and more people waking up, redefining their theological concepts, and expressing their voices. When you really stop and take it in, what we are witnessing is an entire sea change in spiritual consciousness—the return of the feminine. (ibid: 241-42)

This is perhaps the most revealing of all the achievements of *Dance*. Kidd's memoir has made a life-altering impact on many of her readers, and certainly all five of the memoirs in this study are partially responsible for this perceptible shift in Western Goddess consciousness.

Dance is not without criticism especially from within the Christian tradition. After its initial publication in 1996, the Southern View Chapel, an independent Bible Church in Springfield Illinois electronically published a review of Kidd's memoir which states that *Dance* is '[...] the sad tale of a rebellious woman who has found a way to reject true Christianity, yet claim the high ground of spirituality by worshipping a false god who ultimately is nothing more than herself.' (SVC, 1996)⁶⁹ A later review by Linda Bieze written in 2000 for *Christian Feminism Today* and the Evangelical & Ecumenical Women's Caucus is also critical of Kidd's memoir. She writes:

⁶⁹ <http://www.svchapel.org/resources/book-reviews/4-christian-living/173-the-dance-of-the-dissident-daughter-by-sue-monk-kidd>

Much that Sue Monk Kidd writes about her journey from complicity as a “good daughter” of patriarchal Christianity to her rebirth as a daughter of the Feminine Divine resonates with me. [...] But often our paths also diverge. I think we are both headed in the same direction, towards the same goal, but some of the ways she traverses seem foreign to my experience as a Christian feminist. (Bieze, 2000: 1)

Bieze also views Kidd’s memoir as rejecting ‘[...] the authority of God’s Word in the Bible’ for a Jungian immanent divine. It is Kidd’s assimilation of Jungian and post-Jungian ideas and guiding myths that for Bieze, as a feminist Christian, is where their similar paths diverge. Bieze admits she is a reformist, and is unable to connect to Kidd’s radical ‘form of worship’ outside the Church. Kidd’s spiritual awakening and guide for others to follow is decidedly feminist, but it is fundamentally Jungian, and that makes it difficult to access for those within the more conservative sects of Christianity.

4.2.3 How does the text function?

Dance is different from *The Goddess* or *Crossing in Avalon* in that, unlike Downing or Bolen, Kidd is firmly established in the Christian tradition. Kidd is not only an active member of the Church, but also plays her part in the institution that praises patriarchy and subjugates women. That is, until her awakening. Through her self-directed research and unique Christian perspective, Kidd’s memoir functions in two important ways: Firstly, Kidd continues and adapts the theories of Jung, Harding, Downing, and Bolen introducing them to a distinctly (and perhaps new) Christian audience; secondly, as with all five of the rebirth memoirs in this study, and as with Jungian analytical psychology, *Dance* attempts to function as a stimulus for a culturally-paradigmatic shift towards Goddess-centred Consciousness.

4.2.3.1 Continuation and Adaptation of Jung

Considering that the second wave of feminism passed by Sue Monk Kidd unnoticed, it is certainly fair to assume that the New Age Spirituality movement burgeoning in the US in the mid-sixties—a movement which Carl Jung has always been considered the Father of—also went unnoticed. Kidd knew nothing of Jung or his theories until she took it upon herself to learn more.

Kidd's Portal to Jung

Kidd began her passage into analytical psychology by attending '[...] a Journey into Wholeness Conference [...] that explored the concepts of CG Jung.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 36) The significance of this exploration does not take place during the conference but after-hours when a group of women gather to embark on a full moon celebration at the beach. Curious, Kidd follows the 40-50 women and watches from the margins of the group. She writes: 'There was an awful lot of talk about the "Great Mother" (whoever she was) and being connected to the earth and to the moon (whatever that meant). I hugged my knees tight and didn't say a word.' (ibid: 36) She goes on to describe watching these women: 'Playing and dancing, casting fluid shadows on the beach, they looked half-real to me, like mermaids who'd swum ashore and found their legs. I sat dazed by the whole thing.' (ibid: 37) This was obviously a form of female celebration that Kidd had never experienced before, and the power inherent in this group of women was awe-inspiring; Kidd writes:

I don't think I'd ever felt so awkward, bewildered, or unsettled in my life, yet I was mesmerised. These women were embodying an experience of their femininity I knew nothing about. They seemed to truly love their womanhood. They didn't appear to doubt their thoughts and feelings as women. Instead they seemed naturally themselves, self-defined, self-connected. (ibid: 37)

Kidd only became conscious of her inability to be self-defined or self-connected to her own femininity by witnessing this experience in others. Conscious now of this flaw in her own self, Kidd longs to learn more.

Exploration and Adaptation

From this point, Kidd ventures further into Jung, discovering feminist post-Jungians such as Harding, Ulanov, Downing, Perera, and Bolen, amongst others, along the way. Many of the statements Kidd makes in *Dance* echo concepts or ideas voiced by Jung, Harding, Downing and/or Bolen often crediting or citing them directly. What is apparent is that Kidd has integrated Jungian analytical psychology and the post-Jungian (amplified) Goddess into her awakening, creating a new 'way of knowing' specific to her. For example, Kidd echoes the integral Jungian concept of psychic imbalance and wholeness; she also mirrors Jung's and post-Jungian criticisms of the Church when she writes:

What reasons were there for recovering her besides the mystery and love she ignited in the female heart? [...] First, I noted that the lack of divine female image supported an *imbalance in our consciousness that diminished our wholeness* as persons. [...] [...] as long as we have a divine Father who is able to create without a *divine Mother*, women's creative acts are viewed as superfluous or secondary. And as long as the *feminine is missing* in the Divine, men would continue to experience entitlement and women would be prey to self-doubt and disempowerment. It was that simple. [...]. The second thing I wrote down that day was that *exclusive male imagery of the Divine not only instilled an imbalance within human consciousness, it legitimized patriarchal power in the culture at large*. (ibid: 138-39, emphasis is mine to highlight Jungian concepts)

Kidd also adopts a model first introduced from a woman's perspective by Harding, (continued by Downing and Bolen)—the *Virgin*. This has nothing to do with one's sexual proclivity, but relates to the concept of the Virgin goddesses discussed at length in Chapter 2. A *Virgin*, in this sense, is an independent woman who has become psychologically whole. Kidd writes: 'I realised that a woman who finds wholeness does not *have* to have an external man in order to be complete. She can choose this, but she is not *dependent* on it for her wholeness.' (ibid: 129, emphasis in the original) Kidd goes on to speak about wholeness in ways that mirror Jung's discourse on Individuation: 'Being one-in-myself wasn't an aloof containment but a spiritual and psychological autonomy. It meant being whole and complete in myself and relating to others out of that soul-centeredness.' (ibid: 213) Kidd also uses more complex Jungian terminology; she writes: 'It evoked a *mysterium coniunctionis*, the unity of the divine symbol in which the Sacred Feminine and the Sacred Masculine began to come together in my life.' (ibid: 189) Kidd incorporates many Jungian concepts into her 'way of knowing' including Jung's concept of the Collective Unconscious; Kidd writes:

We carry something ancient inside us, an aspect of the psyche that Carl Jung called the collective unconscious. Containing river beds of collective experience, the collective unconscious is the place where pre-existing traces of ancestral experience are encoded. Thousands of years of feminine rejection reside there, and *it can rise up* to do a dark dance with our conscious beliefs. (ibid: 31, emphasis is mine)

By speaking of the feminine at the centre of the collective unconscious rising up to consciousness, Kidd is continuing the Jungian and post-Jungian Goddess Feminism that fundamentally believes in the autonomy of the archetypes, and through amplification and extension the autonomy of the post-Jungian Goddess

(in direct contrast to the post-Jungian Feminist Archetypal Theory or Archetypal Psychology). Another Jungian idea that Kidd adopts was first posited by Harding in *Woman's Mysteries*—the importance of initiation in a feminist spiritual journey. Echoing Jung's psychotherapeutic need for ritual in religious experience, Kidd exemplifies how an external ritual provides the opportunity for transformation through a shift in consciousness; Kidd writes:

Initiation is a rite of passage, a crossing over, a movement between two worlds. For women on a journey such as this one, initiation is the Great Transition. / Making this transition into Sacred Feminine experience can be beautiful and deeply moving, even cataclysmic in its effect on our lives. But it also means a time of ordeal, descent, darkness, and pain. [...] / If I had to reduce the meaning of initiation to just two words, they would be *death* and *rebirth*. (ibid: 88)

Continuing the Jungian and post-Jungian concept of psychological rebirth through Goddess-centred consciousness, *Dance* is the story of Kidd's spiritual and psychological death and rebirth that could easily be classified as an 'Individuation memoir' as much as a rebirth memoir. Kidd presents a post-Jungian Path of Individuation in a way that is accessible to many contemporary Western Christian women, and through her memoir many of Jung's theories and models are continued, amplified, and embraced, by her, and her primarily Christian audience.

4.2.3.2 Stimulus for a Paradigmatic Change towards Goddess Consciousness

Before examining *Dance's* function as a stimulus for a paradigmatic shift towards Goddess Consciousness, we must first assess the application of *Paradigmatic Change* theory to theology.

Paradigm Change in Theology

In the late 1980s Hans Küng and David Tracy organised an international ecumenical symposium at the University of Tübingen. It was attended by 70 Protestant and Catholic theologians, sociologists and philosophers including feminist theologians Anne E Carr and Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza; pluralist Leonard Swidler, and French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. The resulting publication, *Paradigm Change in Theology* (1989) examines various perspectives about whether or not the 1980's was witnessing a theological paradigmatic change. The timing of this symposium is important as it is in the midst of the burgeoning feminist, feminist theological and theological movements in the West. The focus of the ecumenical symposium

was to apply Thomas S Kuhn's concept of *paradigm* and *paradigm change* to theology.

Kuhn (1922-1996) was a physicist, historian of science, and perhaps best known as a philosopher of science. Kuhn's 1962 book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, introduces the idea of scientific paradigms and noticeable paradigmatic changes in the history of science—the result of major shifts in understanding e.g. the world is flat, the earth is the centre of the universe, our universe is the only universe. Each of these schools of thought were shifted to accommodate new science and new data. Applying his controversial scientific theories to theology, however, has not been without dispute. Küng writes: 'For it was to be expected that the concept of the paradigm would be controversial—among theologians, for whom it was largely new [...].' (Küng, 1989b: 440) He defines Kuhn's *paradigm*: "A paradigm is not a theory or a leading idea. It is an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community." (Küng, 1989a: 215, citing Kuhn, *Postscriptum*, 1969:175) The participants in the symposium were requested to apply Kuhn's paradigm change to theology thus:

Following Thomas S Kuhn, we may give the name of paradigm to these major, comprehensive models for understanding theology and the church—models built up in the wake of wide-scale upheavals, marking the turn of an era; and we may call *the replacement of an old interpretive pattern by a new paradigm candidate* "a paradigm change". (Küng, 1989a: 214, emphasis is mine)

More importantly Kuhn's paradigm theory is applied to theology in a 'differentiated way.' (Küng, 1989b: 441) The papers presented varied from those that examined topics from scientific theory to political dimensions of theology. There was, however, despite vast differences, a consensus on what Küng refers to as 'fundamental aspects' or boundaries of a theological paradigm: 1) 'The particular community (Kuhn) in which the theological paradigm change takes place is *the community of theologians* (scholars or non-scholars) theologians at university or in a basic community, professional writers or laity).' (Küng, 1989b: 443, emphasis in the original); 2) '*The paradigm of theology* is to be seen in the context of *the paradigm of the church*, and against the background of the paradigmatic transformation of *society in general*.' (ibid: 443, emphasis in the original); 3) '*The thinking subjects* of theology, and *the places* where theology is

[...] not necessarily a university. It can also be a basic community. And it can be pursued not only by [...] male academics but also by women and non-academics.’ (ibid: 443, emphasis in the original); 4) ‘*Theology* cannot simply take over a paradigm from *the natural sciences*, or abstract from science the raw material from which to construct a new theological paradigm (as Aquinas did) [...].’ (ibid: 443, emphasis in the original); and 5) ‘The philosophical discussion about the paradigm-change theory compels [Christian] theology for its part to clarify *the relationship between rationality and irrationality*, and to do so strictly in accordance with theological and non-theological factors.’ (ibid: 444, emphasis in the original) Küng also notes something that is significant to the application of paradigm change to theology and, certainly, theology (including the Western Goddess Movement): ‘[...] *several* theologies are possible within a single paradigm. (Küng, 1989a: 215, emphasis in the original)

In relation to the attempt to stimulate a paradigmatic change in theology, Küng writes:

What is at least certain is this: neither an individual theologian nor theology as a whole can simply *create* a paradigm. A paradigm grows up in an exceptional complex of varying social, political, ecclesial, and theological factors, and matures slowly. [...] it certainly includes not merely a gradual but also drastic changes [...]. (1989b: 442-43, emphasis in the original)

There are, however, a number of critical points that need to be addressed. For Kuhn a paradigm is a set of theories shared by a global scientific community and includes a mutual agreement on how to apply those theories. Considering it takes a mass majority to bring about a paradigmatic shift, emerging or liminal communities, such as the Western Goddess Movement, are unlikely to constitute a paradigm shift in Kuhn’s sense. Moreover, Küng was writing in 1989 and expressed his and others’ hope for the future transformation of Christianity. Decades later, Küng’s potential future did not transpire as he had envisioned. Even if ‘the old paradigm has broken down’ the continuing decline in Western Christianity holds little hope for Küng’s new ecumenical future.

A New Consciousness - A New Paradigm

Paradigm change is a continuing theme in *Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. For Jungians and post-Jungians, this psychologically-necessary paradigmatic shift will

happen on a global scale once the numbers of those individuals with Goddess-centred consciousness outnumber those who still cling to the dysfunctional Logos-centred way of thinking (Patriarchy).

For Kidd, her shift in consciousness begins with a move from the (old) Christian concept of separation between God, humanity, and nature to the (new) consciousness of connectivity that is emerging with the Western Goddess Movement. Whether it is called *Goddess Consciousness*, such as Bolen does, or *We-consciousness* as Kidd does, these two proposed forms of consciousness are one in the same, and this call for the integration of Goddess-centred consciousness has been traced throughout this study back to Jung and his theories of the Anima and the autonomous nature of the Collective Unconscious (1916). Kidd's shift exemplifies the shift in consciousness that Jung marked as instrumental in Individuation—union with the Anima—in the contemporary post-Jungian world a union with Goddess-centred consciousness. Kidd is only echoing the need for a shift towards interconnectivity held by Jung as a necessary psychological element for Western men and women. Kidd writes: 'We-consciousness is knowing and feeling oneself intimately connected with and part of everything that is, and coming to act and relate out of that awareness.' (2007 [1996]: 154) Heavily influenced by Bolen, Kidd cites Bolen in her discussion of this emerging Goddess-consciousness in the West:

“For the body to be considered holy once again, the Goddess (the female aspect of the deity) must return, for it is only through a Goddess consciousness that matter can be perceived as having a sacred dimension,” writes Jean Bolen. (ibid: 162, citing Bolen, *Crossing to Avalon*, 1994:39)

Similar to Bolen, Kidd also discusses perceivable shifts towards Goddess-centred consciousness outside of the emerging Goddess Movement. Consciousness in the various ecological movements and earth-based sciences have advanced significantly since 1973 when James Lovelock first introduced his Gaia Hypothesis stating fundamentally that the Earth is a single living and self-sustaining entity.⁷⁰ The name Gaia means ‘the earth, also personification of the Earth and original mother of all beings’⁷¹ named after the ancient Goddess Gaia. This radical

⁷⁰ For more see: <http://www.jameslovelock.org/page34.html>

⁷¹ "Gaia, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2015.

hypothesis altered the way many in the scientific community viewed the Earth and its naturally-occurring activities. It was also a useful hypothesis to those who supported many feminist agendas including the Western Goddess Movement where the Gaia Hypothesis is considered fundamentally true. The Western Goddess Movement was certainly impacted by the wide array of ecological Gaia-mindedness that was happening culturally parallel to the second-wave of the feminist movement in the US. This way of thinking in connectivity remains vital today; Kidd writes: 'This new feminine spiritual consciousness will help us recognise that humans, having special abilities, are responsible to the rest of the earth, not superior to it.' (ibid: 162)

Kidd perceives this shift in Western consciousness through her own participation in it; she writes: 'Today a lot of women are seeking feminine imagery of the Divine. More women than we can imagine have embarked on the quest, enough women to set in motion a whole shift in our religious paradigm.' (ibid: 99) For Kidd, and many others in the Western Goddess Movement, this new consciousness is not only theological, it is political, historical, ecological, and cultural as well. Kidd writes: 'We do it because we are the change the world is waiting for.' (ibid: 225, emphasis in the original)

Applying Küng's Aspects

If we pull the focus back from Kidd's memoir to include all five of the memoirs in this study, and extend further back to include the historicity of the Western Goddess Movement in general, would this century-old movement fit into the aspects of theological paradigmatic change as expressed by Küng and his colleagues? Küng writes: 'A paradigm grows up in an exceptional complex of varying social, political, ecclesial, and theological factors, and matures slowly. [...] it certainly includes not merely a gradual but also drastic changes [...]. (1989b: 442-43) As Kidd and Bolen have revealed in their memoirs (and in their bodies of work) this emerging consciousness *is* social, political and theological. It has matured over the past one hundred and thirteen years, and includes not only gradual but drastic changes in feminine-centred consciousness with the formation of feminist theology and thealogy and the recent ordination of women in the Church. Jung's influence is certainly present within Christianity in the growing sect of Charismatic (or Pentecostal) Christianity that, contrary to other sects of Christianity, continues to gather adherents. So change is apparent; however, the

social, political and theological elements may be features of a paradigmatic change, but they are not constitutive of paradigmatic change.

Four of the five of Kuhn's aspects could apply not only to the memoirs in this study but also to the wider Western Goddess Movement. The fifth aspect is directed specifically at Christianity and is not applicable to the subject of this study. Using Küng's aspects as a basis of analysis; the memoirs and wider Western Goddess Movement will be briefly examined in regards to currently effecting a paradigmatic change in consciousness.

Küng's first aspect—a community of theologians, scholars and laity—is applicable, however, as a liberal and liminal community, it cannot be argued that this population is in the majority in Western culture, so it fails, at this time, to meet Küng's first aspect. Küng's second aspect—'*The paradigm of theology* is to be seen in the context of *the paradigm of the church*, and against the background of the paradigmatic transformation of *society in general*.' (Küng, 1989b: 443, emphasis in the original) In many ways, the memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement meet this aspect. The emerging theology is understood and being analysed in the context of the Western Goddess Movement and against the background of the paradigmatic transformation of society through the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1970s. The memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement also satisfy Küng's third aspect of theological paradigmatic change: '*the places* where theology is [...] is not necessarily in a university. It can also be a basic community.' (Küng, 1989b: 443, emphasis in the original) An interesting facet of this research is the practical application—how women, and men, in the Western Goddess Movement are honouring and celebrating Goddess with individual and group rites and rituals. These gatherings are places where theology is being created by Goddess-centred practitioners, individuals and groups within the wider collective. Küng's fourth aspect is that '*Theology* cannot simply take over a paradigm from *the natural sciences*'. (Küng, 1989b: 443, emphasis in the original) The Western Goddess Movement evolves alongside the birth of the ecological movement following the publishing of Lovelock's Hypothesis in 1973. Although not a scientific absolute, it is a hypothesis that is followed by many in the natural sciences and links the post-Jungian and theological Goddess-consciousness to the natural sciences through fundamental belief. In this movement theology (through the post-Jungian Goddess) is working in tandem with

many in the natural sciences. And, interestingly growing numbers of those in the natural sciences are also adherents of this Goddess-centred movement. The 2003 Pagan census found that ‘Neo-Pagans on the whole have a higher education levels than the general American population’ with an estimated 77.3% of active adherents in the Western Goddess Movement obtaining some form of higher education.’ (Berger et al., 2003: 31-32)

Through the collaboration of the ecumenical symposium, Küng gathered a consensus on what would be deemed a theological paradigmatic change; based on these five aspects, these memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement in general can only, at this time, meet three of the five aspects and cannot therefore be considered to have impacted a paradigmatic change—as of yet. There may still be a paradigmatic shift in which Western ideas of the Divine shift towards images based on the ‘feminine’, but it is still too early to declare with certainty that a paradigmatic change is indeed happening. However, there are perceptible changes which could slowly bring about a paradigmatic change in theology towards thealogy and Goddess (or feminine-centred) Consciousness. Küng agrees that the emerging ‘female consciousness’ is part of this ongoing paradigmatic shift:

Women’s new awareness of their identity, equality and dignity has brought home to us, almost more than any other development in our century, the degree to which we are involved in a revolutionary shift from an old paradigm to a new one. For this new female consciousness, the old paradigm has broken down, even though it is still passed on in the textbooks of “classic” theology, church history and canon law.’ (Küng, 1989b: 447)

Although at this time, the memoirs in this study and the Western Goddess Movement in general fail to meet Küng’s criteria for a paradigmatic change, Kidd, Bolen, and many others, remain hopeful and optimistic that Malcolm Gladwell’s *Tipping Point* will be reached in the near future and the paradigmatic change will truly begin.⁷²

4.2.4 What are the significant strengths of this work?

There are three important strengths particular to *Dance* that connect Kidd to Bolen, Downing, Whitmont, Harding, Neumann, Jung, and the wider Western

⁷² For more see: Gladwell M (2000) *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Goddess Movement in general. These strengths are: 1) a continuation of the Great Mother Monomyth; 2) extensive feminist research; and 3) Kidd's position as a reluctant pilgrim. These strengths however, are not without their inherent challenges.

4.2.4.1 The Great Mother Monomyth

The Great Mother Monomyth was discussed at length in the previous chapter as Bolen builds upon this Jungian concept coined by Joseph Campbell in 1949. Most notable of the post-Jungians to write about this Monomyth was Erich Neumann who published *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* in 1955. Although Neumann's constricting and divisive concept of a Goddess-centred *monotheism* to replace the patriarchal Father-centred monotheism has been revised by more recent thinkers, Neumann's schism remains in the Western Goddess Movement and in the more radical parts of Christian feminist theology. There are those within the Western Goddess Movement who see all goddesses as aspects and personifications (or archetypes) of one supreme *Magna Mater* (Great Mother) - I believe this form of Goddess faith is certainly *monotheistic* in that it favours a single feminine creator. Conversely, there are those in the Movement, such as Carol P Christ, who believe in the *polytheism* of Goddess-centred Consciousness. However different in cosmogonical beliefs, the mono and the poly understandings of Goddess are both included in the plural Western Goddess Movement. The five authors in this study, however, as well as Jung and his followers, all advocate for the existence of a *Magna Mater*.

Although originally shocked to hear about a 'Great Mother Goddess', Kidd spends years discovering the many images that have been unearthed around the globe. She reads, among others, Maria Gimbutas, Merlin Stone, Neumann, Whitmont, and Marion Woodman—and through her own research, incorporates the Great Mother Monomyth into her own personal paradigm. Conceivably coming from a monotheistic tradition, the *monotheistic* Goddess was psychologically easier for Kidd to embrace, as a singular image of the Divine, over the polytheistic interpretations. It is important to note, that like Bolen and Downing before her, Kidd is not removing her Father God construct of the Divine and simply replacing it with a Matriarchal image. The Great Mother Goddess encompasses and includes either a 'masculine' counter identity (exemplified in the Hindu Kali Ma or the Celtic Morrigan) or has a male consort (exemplified by the Ancient Sumerian

Inanna and Tamuzi or the Egyptian Isis and Osiris). Perhaps, as Kidd was influenced by various Jungian and post-Jungian concepts, the conclusion of a Great Mother was inevitable. Possibly it was a combination of factors, including discussing the concept in her personal therapy sessions with her Jungian analyst that led to Kidd's shift in consciousness to psychologically accept the Great Mother Monomyth at face-value—including all the life-changing implications that this shift in consciousness brings, discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Kidd's inclusion of the Great Mother monomyth in her memoir, however, is significant because it perpetuates, as discussed in the Introduction, Jung's original understanding of *Anima Mundi* or *Magna Mater*. Kidd writes:

Perhaps one of the most important things I learned as I explored the ancient Goddess and retrieved this consciousness was that these Divine Feminine images reflected the *wholeness* of divinity. This was a new and explosive realisation—that the fullness of deity can rest in a single female form. (2007 [1996]: 145, emphasis in the original)

This is a significant psychological turning point for Kidd and one that took her years to prepare for. This shift in Kidd's understanding that one could alter the image of the Divine was instigated through Jungian and post-Jungian influences. Kidd perpetuates the post-Jungian Great Mother Monomyth and Monotheism throughout her memoir. In a conversation with her husband, Sandy, Kidd remarks:

[...] I told him some particular things I'd learned about her. That she was known as the creator and sustainer of the universe who ruled over the rhythms and forces of nature. That she was all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful, bringing both birth and death, light and dark. I explained that she was immanent, compassionate, ever-nourishing, associated with earth, fertility, and sexuality, but also a transcendent being who bestowed order, justice and truth. / "But weren't there a lot of Goddesses?" he asked. / "She certainly had lots of forms and names", I said [...]. (ibid: 134)

Perpetuating the Great Mother Monomyth, for Kidd, is a path to theological liberation. Unlike Bolen who integrated Goddess Consciousness into her pre-existing Protestant faith tradition and prays to Mother/Father God, Kidd eventually leaves the Church and forges a new spiritual Goddess-centred path for herself. This is conceivably due, in part, to the fact that Kidd was a theological writer before her awakening and Bolen is a trained Jungian analyst and post-Jungian theorist. Bolen would understand this shift in consciousness, as a Jungian,

as a purely psychological need; whereas, Kidd, reaching this conclusion with her theological background, would require a theological shift as well as the necessary psychological shift in consciousness. Kidd writes:

The symbol of Goddess gives us permission. She teaches us to embrace the holiness of every natural, ordinary, sensual, dying moment. Patriarchy may try to negate the body and flee earth with its constant heartbeat of death, but Goddess forces us back to embrace them, to take our human life in our arms and clasp it for the divine life it is—the nice sanitary, harmonious moments as well as the painful, dark, splintered ones. (ibid: 160-61)

Embracing both dark and light within Goddess is fundamental to Jungian and many post-Jungian understandings of Goddess. Embracing one's psychological *shadow* as well as embracing the dark chthonic aspects of Goddess are central. This is another construct where various members of the Western Goddess Movement differ. While post-Jungians readily accept both the dark and light natures of Goddess, Christ, among others, believes the dark and destructive aspects of Goddess have been created by patriarchy and applied to Goddess as a means of denigrating her.⁷³ Incorporating the Great Mother Monomyth into *Dance* perpetuates the concept of Wholeness through Union and attempts to heal the ancient schism between dark and light, male and female, good and evil, Divine and mortal, Divine and Nature. These are evidently central tenets for this emerging psychodynamic Goddess-centred faith tradition.

4.2.4.2 Extensive Feminist Research

As a writer and commentator, Kidd knew the importance of research; she was also driven by an innate longing for more information.

I wanted to know the ways Herself had been experienced by humans throughout history, to allow those images and symbols to sink in, resonate, enliven, evoke, fortify, and expand the deeps of my female life. So began a passionate work of recovery. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 142)

However, before Kidd could know the ways of Goddess, she first had to face *feminism*. Kidd wrote: 'Overall, I'd kept a discreet distance from it. In fact, if

⁷³ This derives from a conversation between myself and Carol P Christ whilst she was in Glasgow in 2009. During lunch, we explored both of our understandings of Goddess and realised what a wide spectrum of constructs are now available. It should be clarified, however, that Christ does not favour Jungian interpretations of Goddess. In the end, and out of mutual fondness and respect, we agreed to disagree—a concept found widely in the decidedly-plural Western Goddess Movement. Our conversation is used with Carol Christ's permission.

there had been a contest for Least Likely to Become a Feminist, I'd probably could have made the finals on image alone.' (ibid: 10) A reluctant feminist, Kidd was thrust into feminist consciousness that day in the market with her daughter. This moment would inevitably lead Kidd to the Western feminist movements. She explores the writings of Gloria Steinem, Simone de Beauvoir, Naomi Wolf, Elizabeth Dodson, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Kidd also delves deep into the feminist amplifications, revisions and extensions of analytical psychology. In addition to reading such notable figures as Harding, Campbell, Sylvia Brinton Perera, Marie Louise von Franz, Bolen, Marion Woodman, Karen Signell, and Carol Gilligan, among others, Kidd also attended Jungian conferences and conducted independent research at the Archives for Research in Archetypal Symbolism at the Jung Institute in San Francisco.

Kidd's investigation then moves into the realm of Feminist or Goddess Spirituality; she writes:

[...] I'd been reading for the last six months or so—the work of UCLA archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, who'd studied and written about the Goddess-worshipping, earth-centred cultures of prehistory, as well as other books I'd read by female scholars, anthropologists, art historians, and theologians who were recovering the rich history of Goddess, a history that had been lost or suppressed. (ibid: 134)

Her inclusive reading list from this multidisciplinary community embraces: Gimbutas, Nelle Morton, Daly, Christ, Riane Eisler, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Starhawk, Cynthia Eller, Elaine Pagels, Bolen, Woodman, and Stone. But her research doesn't stop there; as a Christian, Kidd also turns to the source of her Protestant faith—the Bible. She writes: 'I spent many evenings that fall recording numerous feminine references in the Bible [...].' (ibid: 146) Indeed, the Biblical excerpts in *Dance* are considerable, and are certainly a strength to her predominantly-Christian audience. Kidd cites from Deuteronomy (32:18, RSV); Luke (7:35); Proverbs (8:22-23); I Corinthians (1:23-24, 30, & 2:6-8); John (1:1-4); 1 Timothy (2:11-14); and Galatians (3:28).

Kidd names theologians such as Elizabeth A Johnson, Sallie McFague, Paul Tillich, Rosemary Radford-Reuther, Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, Anne E Carr, and Carter Heyward in helping her to define Goddess from a feminist theological perspective. Kidd mentions Proverbs 8:22-30 in her discussion of Sophia as Goddess of Wisdom;

she writes: 'Her importance is obvious. Theologian Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza has suggested that Wisdom is the God of Israel expressed in language and imagery of Goddess.' (ibid: 148). Kidd also mentions some more controversial theologians such as the ex-communicated Christian Mystic Matthew Fox, the Jungian Ann Bedford Ulanov, and the academically-banished Margaret Starbird. Kidd's exploration includes Gnostic teachings including Sophia as Wisdom (cf. Proverbs 8) and Logos and Eastern philosophies/traditions as well including Taoism, Zen Buddhism, and the Tibetan spiritual leader Rinpoche.

There are flaws in some of the material Kidd presents, however; her interpretation of 'El-Shaddai' as 'the many breasted one' is fundamentally an inaccurate translation of the original Hebrew. (ibid: 146) However, there have been attempts to argue that 'Shaddai' can refer to 'breasts' in other Ancient Near East cultic contexts, but these arguments have not gained much scholarly support. Although 'Shaddai' (almighty) is etymologically unrelated to 'shad' (breast) one might conclude that Kidd's interpretation of 'El Shaddai' as 'many breasted one' versus the Hebrew translation of 'God Almighty' may be based on a feminist reinterpretation of Shaddai gleaned through the resemblance of the two words as a paronomasia (a form of word play that suggests two or more meanings.)

Kidd's wide-ranging research and exploration did not go unnoticed. *Publisher's Weekly* reviewed *Dance* in 1996. The review opens with: 'The author's journey [...] makes a fascinating, well-researched and well-written story.' (Publisher's Weekly, 1996) The brief review also comments: '[...] her extensive knowledge of many subjects, including theology, mythology and the arts, made possible the copious references and cross-references that will prove *invaluable for readers who wish to follow her in this same search.*' (Publisher's Weekly, 1996, emphasis is mine)

4.2.4.3 A Reluctant Pilgrim

As a devout Christian, Kidd was a reluctant pilgrim on the path to Goddess. Unlike Downing and Bolen who were trained Jungians, Kidd had no previous experience with Goddess prior to being unexpectedly 'seized' by this powerful autonomous archetype—how could she, steeped in the Biblical tradition of the Southern Baptists? Her reluctance to walk the path set out before her makes Kidd unique amongst this group of authors and is a substantial strength of the memoir. It provides an exceptional view into the process of awakening one who is unwilling—

a process perhaps applicable and crucial to a vast majority of Kidd's readers. Kidd's reluctance invariably sprung from fear.

Fear

Fear is a powerful psychological force and, for Jungians, it is an anticipated psychological reaction to the cognitive dissonance the collective unconscious brings to consciousness. (Jung, 1976) From the beginning, Kidd was terrified; she writes: '[...] I was like a scared, belligerent child on the first day of school, holding onto anything I could to prevent being dragged to my destiny.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 122-23) Kidd admits she struggled the first time she read the word *Goddess*:

It's hard to describe the sort of anxiety the word created in me, as if the word itself were contraband. It seemed to violate a taboo so deep and ingrained, I felt stabs of irrational fear just reading about it, as if any minute witch burners from the sixteenth century might appear and carry me off. / An uneasy reaction to the word *Goddess* is common among women. Thousands of years of repression, hostility, and conditioning against a Divine Mother have made a deep impression on us. We've been conditioned to shrink back from the Sacred Feminine, to fear it, to think of it as sinful, even to revile it. (ibid: 72)

Echoing Bolen who calls for the 'return' of Goddess, Kidd's memoir differs from Downing and Bolen's in a very specific way. Kidd speaks at length in her memoir of the anxiety created by the cognitive dissonance between her long-held conservative Christian beliefs and the truth of the word 'Goddess'. Faced with a term that stood in direct opposition to everything Kidd had ever known, she was expectedly hesitant:

The fear of and resistance to feminine images goes deep. I knew that from my own experience with those feelings. I'd spoken to women who could not say the word Goddess without whispering, laughing nervously, or looking over their shoulders for the lightning bolt that a jealous Father-God was bound to aim at them for daring such a thing. I'd seen people stomp out of a worship service when prayers were said to Mother-Father God. The fear and resistance were evident, too, in those who refused to consider her at all. (ibid: 139)

As a result, the beginning of Kidd's own journey was filled with fear and anxiety caused by the psychological impact of her perceived variations of the Divine. This period of doubt and resistance would last for years, and Kidd struggled to reconcile her discovery with her existing faith tradition. Try as she might, she could no

longer deny the conscious influences she felt and perceived as Goddess, nor could she break from her long-held traditions; Kidd writes:

I wondered if I could survive outside the safe perimeters I knew so well. And I was not even thinking at that point about taking my leave from the entire church. [...] I was only thinking at that moment of going over to the Episcopal Church, which seemed to me to be a much larger fish tank. (ibid: 48)

Kidd takes the reader on a journey through her fear and ignorance of Goddess, which is not only a dramatic shift from the previous memoirs in this study, but also sets the tone for the non-Jungian authors who follow. There is a level of fear and anxiety present in Kidd's memoir that is not present in Downing and Bolen's because they have been educated in Jungian and post-Jungian thought. This means, psychologically, that Kidd's awakening would include a shocking and life-decimating crisis the post-Jungians did not have to face. Kidd's memoir, then, reveals many of the fears and anxieties that those with Christian foundations and no prior knowledge of Jung would assumedly face prior to their shift in consciousness (if any). Kidd writes:

I didn't have guidelines for what I was doing. I didn't really know if what I was attempting was possible. Was there really another story to be lived beside the one I was living? If so, no one had ever told it to me. / At times near-panic swept over me. What am I doing, what am I doing? I would ask. What will become of my marriage? My religion? Are there other images of the Divine that do not obliterate the feminine? Is there another container to hold my spiritual journey? If so, what is it? (ibid: 91)

These are all questions that, in time, Kidd would eventually have to face, contemplate, and answer. The journey and psychological processes would take years. However tempted, Kidd is not overcome with fear but emboldened by it. The vulnerable way in which Kidd speaks of and addresses her initial fears and reluctance is a distinguishing characteristic, and is, I believe, an inherent strength of her memoir and an invaluable source of understanding for other Christian women unfamiliar with Jung and the post-Jungian Goddess who will follow Kidd's path.

4.2.5 What theories underlie the work? Do they affect its validity?

There are two significant theories (or set of theories) that underlie *Dance*. The first set of theories include the various feminist amplifications and revisions of Jung's analytical psychology that Kidd incorporates into her 'way of knowing.' The second set of theories emanate from feminist theologian Carol P Christ, her feminist theology, her work through the Ariadne Institute, and her Four Stages of Women's Spiritual Quest.

4.2.5.1 Jung: Analytical Psychology as a Guiding Feminine Myth

As discussed in Section 4.2.3.1, Continuation and Adaptation of Jung, Sue Monk Kidd has incorporated numerous primary and amplified Jungian concepts into her 'way of knowing'. She conducted her own independent research, attended conferences, visited the Jungian Institute, and entered into Jungian analysis all in the attempt to work through and understand the new emerging consciousness she was experiencing. In fact, Kidd's incorporation of Jung permeates this chapter, so it seems unnecessary to further recount Kidd's use of Jung. Additionally, various criticisms on the use of Jung, not already mentioned in this chapter, can be found in chapters 1 and 2. It is important to note however, that Kidd discovers the post-Jungian Goddess on her own, and, eventually, follows where the path leads her. Of course her Jungian education did not end with Jung and continued with his students in Harding, Neumann, Downing, Whitmont, Bolen, Woodman, Campbell, Perera and others. References to and/or citations from all of these thinkers are present throughout *Dance*.

It is also essential to mention that these choices have not been without criticism and difficulty. As stated previously, many Christian feminists, while agreeing with Kidd on several points, are unable to relate to her entire journey because of her use of Jungian and post-Jungian models and constructs. There is a trend in feminist theology, that if one does work with psychology, the preferred school of thought is Freudian. Naomi Goldenberg is a perfect example. Originally trained in Jungian psychology, Goldenberg, as was examined in the introduction, was vocally critical of Jung in the 1970's but considered his theories and models a viable source of feminist critique and revision. Decades later, Goldenberg would switch from Jungian analytical psychology to the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud evident in her 1990 *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the*

Resurrection of the Body.⁷⁴ In this text, Goldenberg discusses the ‘cultural event’ that is the Western Goddess Movement and the potential that Object Relations Theory holds as a feminist critique. Kidd, however, does not cite Goldenberg at all in her memoir. She may be introduced to Goldenberg’s theories through the writings of others, but it is apparent that Kidd is, for the most part, unfamiliar with Goldenberg’s extensive body of work, vocal criticisms and revisions of Jung, and her key contributions to the Western Goddess Movement.

Kidd’s use of Jung may be a barrier to those unfamiliar with his analytical psychology or the feminist revisions and amplifications in the years following. Considering that many feminists prefer to work from a post-Freudian framework, Kidd’s use of Jung will certainly be problematic if not readily dismissed by some post-Freudians. The ongoing schism between Jung and Freud may also be a substantial barrier for some feminist readers of *Dance*. This aversion to Jungian and post-Jungian analytical psychology by feminists who prefer Freudian or post-Freudian psychoanalysis may be due to a number of reasons including fundamental differences in the psychological concepts and approach. Freud and Jung had very different perspectives on religion: Freud saw religion as the cause of neurosis; while Jung understood the lack of religion to cause neurosis. (Jung, 1959 and 1961) Moreover, at the centre of the Freudian individual is the ego; whereas, at the centre of the Jungian individual is the self. The ego is part of the self but not the centre. Fundamental differences aside, it is possible that feminists view Freud as more readily redeemable from sexism than Jung—although both thinkers are the products of their patriarchal society. I suspect, however, that multiple reasons lie behind the choice for most feminists to prefer a post-Freudian theory over a post-Jungian theory including the Freudian dismissal of Jung as non-scientific and the perception that Freud is more influential than Jung in the psychological world. Perhaps these barriers are broached more easily by the laity amongst her readers than by those formally trained in Christian theology, feminist theory, or psychology. It is, however, a barrier that some readers struggle with or cannot get past.

⁷⁴ Goldenberg strongly encouraged me to switch to Freudian methodology when we met in 2012 at her lecture at the University of Stirling.

4.2.5.2 Carol P Christ: Women's Spiritual Quest and Goddess Pilgrimage

As discussed previously, Kidd conducted extensive research during her eight-year spiritual transformation. She cites numerous scholars from a variety of academic disciplines. One scholar in particular, Carol P Christ, plays a more extensive part in Kidd's formation of her 'way of knowing' than the others. Although Christ has a substantial publishing history, only two of the three works that would have been available for Kidd to read prior to publishing *Dance* are cited. The first publication would be the ground-breaking work of feminist theology, the anthology *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* co-edited with Judith Plaskow (1979). In it, amongst a wealth of new feminist thinkers (most of whom were in attendance at that pivotal AAR conference in 1971), Christ offers an essay entitled 'Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience.' This essay would expand into her 1980 publication *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on a Spiritual Quest*.⁷⁵ Through the citations Kidd incorporates into her memoir and the concepts that she has adapted into her own 'way of knowing,' it is obvious Kidd has read both of these pivotal works of feminist theology.

Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on a Spiritual Quest

Diving Deep would be especially influential on Kidd as a *writer on a spiritual quest*. In this book, Christ divides Women's Spiritual Quest into four non-linear stages: Nothingness, Awakening, Insight, and New Naming. Kidd cites from or alludes to all four of these stages at some point in *Dance*. However, Kidd does not utilise Christ's four stages when it comes to navigating her own spiritual quest. Kidd adapts Christ's construct based on her own experiences, therapy, and research, and divides her rebirth memoir, and by extension the understanding of her quest, into four different parts that incorporate post-Jungian thought—something not included in Christ's work as she has a preference for Process Theology based on Process Philosophy most often credited to Whitehead (in the UK) and Hartshorne (in the US).⁷⁶ Therefore, Kidd learns from Christ and then revises Christ in order align with Kidd's own experiences, and this includes incorporating Jungian and post-Jungian thought. The stages as proposed by Kidd are as follows; the name in parentheses alongside Kidd's stage is the presiding

⁷⁵ Interestingly *Womanspirit Rising* also includes an essay from Christine Downing that would, two years later, become a chapter in her rebirth memoir *The Goddess*—a publication that Christ helped Downing to realise.

⁷⁶ For more on Christ's expansion of Process Theology see: **Christ CP** (2003) *She Who Changes: Re-Imagining the Divine in the World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

influence in the section and stage: Awakening (Christ), Initiation (Harding), Grounding (post-Jungian), and Empowerment (feminist and post-Jungian—echoing James). Each of the four parts has an over-riding influence which is noted parenthetically as Kidd combines Christ with Jung, Harding, Bolen, and Western feminism. Similar to Christ, Kidd's stages are non-linear although they do indicate a progression that, in total, Jungians and post-Jungians would describe as the stages in the Path of Individuation. Although, non-linear, Kidd does mention that she often revisited these stages, after significant shifts in her consciousness, to find new lessons and challenges, so for Kidd, as for Jung, this is a life-long process of growth and development. Perhaps the most important concept that Christ introduced in *Diving Deep* that Kidd included in her 'way of knowing' is the importance of naming. In a statement that echoes Christ, Kidd writes: 'To name is to define and shape reality.' (ibid: 38) Even though Kidd renamed her final stage from Christ's 'New Naming' to 'Empowerment', Kidd does speak at length about how women's ability to name their own experiences is both psychological and theologically empowering and necessary.

Goddess Pilgrimage to Crete with Carol P Christ – Ariadne Institute

Sue Monk Kidd not only read the works of Christ, she spent two weeks with Christ and thirteen other women on 'The Goddess Pilgrimage to Crete with Carol Christ' organised twice a year by the Ariadne Institute.⁷⁷ In the Acknowledgements for *Dance*, Kidd writes:

I also want to mention the fourteen women who were my companions during the pilgrimage through Crete: Carol Christ [et al. ...]. The impact they had on my life as we journeyed together urged me on, and ultimately their presence is part of this work. (ibid: xi)

Kidd writes about her time in Crete throughout her memoir, however it is more often contemplation and reflection about how her experiences affected her than about her actual experiences, with the exception of one or two particular rituals. These two weeks stand in stark contrast to another experience at the beginning of Kidd's journey where she writes about standing ashamedly away from a group of women dancing on the beach following a Jungian conference. At that time, Kidd was a bewildered observer; now Kidd would be an active and willing

⁷⁷ <http://www.goddessariadne.org/>

participant open to the experiences that await. Joining such a large group was a new experience for Kidd as she had often expressed her new spirituality through ritual in solitary practice, or perhaps in tandem with her close friend Betty (who was also on the path). In this passage, Kidd speaks about what it meant to participate, for the first time, in a ritual for Goddess with a group of women to whom she had become connected; she writes:

Standing in a circle around the lost altar stone, we brushed away the dust, then adorned it with our offerings, pouring wine, milk, and honey into its crevices. *By participating*, I seemed to be reclaiming more than that one altar. I was retrieving a consciousness that had been lost, one in which women had the right to define for ourselves what is sacred, one that connected me to my deepest self, other women, the earth, and the Sacred Feminine embodied within them all. (ibid: 143, emphasis is mine)

This passage perfectly exemplifies Jung's argument about the psychotherapeutic need for ritual in experience of the Divine. In this moment, this Rite of Initiation, Kidd actually perceives her shift in consciousness through her participation in an embodied ritual. As a direct result, Kidd has made the post-Jungian shift in consciousness to the amplified Goddess and is now not only aware of this Divine Consciousness Kidd calls 'Herself', but she is also now conscious of the Divine in others and her connection to them all. From a post-Jungian perspective, this moment was an ultimate turning point on Kidd's Path of Individuation. She goes on to write as she reflects about the time in Crete:

As I grounded myself in feminine spiritual experience that fall I was initiated into my body in a deeper way. *I came to know myself as an embodiment of Goddess*. This awareness, so crucial to women's development, has been shut away from us. (ibid: 161, emphasis is mine)

For Kidd this is a significant psychological and theological epiphany. She breaks with a lifetime of tradition and theology of a transcendent and judgemental Father God to open up to the concept of an imminent post-Jungian Goddess. Moreover, accepting this notion stands in direct contrast to most sects of Christianity that believe we are sinful by nature—not Divine at heart. It is also an empowering moment for Kidd as a woman. In her acceptance of a Divine Feminine image, she can then alter her own perception of 'feminine' as also holding Divine potential—as opposed to being responsible for the 'fall of humanity.' Kidd writes:

For me, Herself [Kidd's name for Goddess] was and is primarily an *inner* experience—not “out there,” not “back there,” but ultimately “in here.” I agree with Nelle Morton when she wrote: “When I speak of Goddess I am in no way referring to an entity “out there,” who appears miraculously as a fairy godmother and turns the pumpkin into a carriage. I am in no way referring to a Goddess “back there” as if I participate in resurrecting an ancient religion. In the sense that I am woman I see the Goddess in myself.” (ibid: 141, emphasis in the original, citing Morton, ‘The Goddess as Metaphoric Image’ in *Weaving the Visions*, 1989:116)

It is interesting to note that contrary to Bolen and Downing, Kidd does not amplify this post-Jungian Goddess onto any one established pantheon; instead she opts for the open imagery present in the name ‘Herself’ taking Jung’s *Anima Mundi* archetype all the way back to her original polymorphous and autonomous roots. Through a Rite of Initiation, Kidd observed the shift in her consciousness and became aware that she embodied Goddess. Through a ritual facilitated by Carol P Christ, Kidd found union with the post-Jungian Goddess. Although Kidd situates herself with the Western Goddess Movement as part of a post-Jungian thread of Goddess Consciousness and the Great Mother Monomyth, her position is not specifically in any one ‘camp’ or theory. In fact, Kidd quite aptly writes: ‘I chose to be a loving dissident.’ (ibid: 192)

Kidd might be the only author in this study to self-identify as a dissident, but surely all of the authors in this study, in their own ways, are dissidents. Following the threads of Harding, Downing, Bolen, and Christ Kidd blends psychology and thealogy in her ‘way of knowing.’ She offers a controversial and alternative perspective on Goddess that stems back to Jung’s *Anima Mundi*, the Great Mother. For the most part, Kidd is a radical who left Christianity, but the next author in the study, Margaret Starbird, is a reformist who will attempt to bring Goddess back into Christian myth and praxis. Following this path would come at a great cost for Starbird.

Chapter 5

The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine

Margaret Starbird

1998

*Everything I had once held as sacred
was proving to be flawed.⁷⁸*

5.1 In Summation

The previous chapter demonstrates how Sue Monk Kidd discovered and utilised Jungian and post-Jungian theories and models to create a ‘way of knowing’ Goddess specific to Christian women who are in what Kidd deems as a ‘deep sleep’ (denial of the patriarchal dominance within the Church). Kidd introduces herself as a ‘Reluctant Pilgrim’—something with which the two authors who follow, Margaret Starbird and Phyllis Curott, would both struggle. Through Kidd, we see the shift from rebirth memoir as a shared personal story to a memoir specifically written to incite dialogue, criticism and followers. It is the first memoir to include a study guide—offering the reader a more thorough ‘way of knowing’ Goddess as a post-Christian. Starbird, however, is a ‘reformist’ who attempts to incorporate Jung’s pre-Harding Anima as the Feminine Divine into Christian myth and praxis in the figure of Mary Magdalene as the Bride of Christ. This quest, however, would come with a great personal cost for Starbird. This chapter will examine not only Starbird’s memoir *The Goddess in the Gospels* and the critiques and controversies surrounding Starbird and her publications, but also the continuing thread of ideas from Jung into contemporary Christianity. Starbird, it will be revealed, will discover Jung in perhaps the least likely place of all—the Church.

5.1.1 Margaret Starbird (1942 -)

By far the most controversial author in this study, Margaret Starbird has been branded a heretic by the Roman Catholic Church, various theologians, and many

⁷⁸ Starbird, 1998: 89.

of her Christian friends and colleagues. Although it was not Starbird's 1998 rebirth memoir that caused such controversy, it was her previous publication *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* (hereinafter referred to as *Alabaster Jar*) in 1993—a book that will be examined in greater detail in a following section. Starbird writes:

I am well acquainted with the stigma of heresy. This charge occasionally confronts me because I believe that Jesus Christ was married, a conviction based on material I researched for my book *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar*. Some people were shocked when the book was published in 1993. Several of my staunchest Christian friends even wrote to me, expressing their dismay at what they considered my apostasy. (Starbird, 1998: 20)

A '[...] conservative and very orthodox daughter of the Roman Catholic Church [...]' (ibid: xi) Starbird's life centred on marriage, family, worship, prayer, duty, and contemplation. Although Starbird holds a Bachelor degree and a Master of Arts from the University of Maryland where she studied comparative literature, medieval studies and German, she does not consider herself an "expert" in theology—merely a self-proclaimed "kitchen-sink contemplative" [...]' (ibid: 72) Starbird pursued post-graduate research on a Fulbright Student Grant at the Christian Albrechts Universität in Kiel, Germany, but did not complete the degree. She also studied theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School, again without completing a degree. The inability to finish these degrees may be, in large part, due to her husband's military postings, and frequent relocations. Starbird's limited post-graduate studies are evident in her research methodology and her 'Selected Bibliography.' In fact, as will be examined in greater detail in a following section, Starbird is controversial academically for a number of fatal scholarly flaws including basing her theories on unsubstantiated or unverifiable sources, presenting an alternative account of Jesus as historical fact, failing to engage with any findings that refute her claims, nor engaging with the various scholars who are critical or question her underlying theories. All of these controversies and critiques will be addressed in following sections.

5.1.2 Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine (1998)

Starbird's story is told in two stages. The first portion (Chapters 1-3) of her memoir, *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine*, detail her May 1998 pilgrimage to various sites sacred to Mary Magdalene and the Black

Madonna in France where, according to Starbird, she '[...] personally encounters the feminine face of the Divine.' (ibid: 39) At this point, Starbird's memoir shifts its focus from her 1998 pilgrimage to recounting events from decades previous that led up to her initial shift in consciousness prior to writing *Alabaster Jar*. Chapter 4 takes the reader back to 1974 and introduces the Community Emmanuel—a group dedicated to praying for the healing of the Catholic Church. Chapter 5 centres on Emmanuel Community's prophecies and its connection to the eruption of Mount Saint Helens on 18 May 1980. Chapter 6 details back to 1983 and Starbird's discovery of the controversial book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Chapter 7 details the theories of Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln included in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and how Starbird uses these theories to advance her own thesis. Chapters 8 and 9 speak of Starbird's ensuing nervous breakdown (caused, according to Starbird, by the cognitive dissonance between her lifetime's religious instruction and the contrary theories in which she was immersing herself) and short-stay admission to a mental ward in December 1986. Chapter 10 takes place in 1988 with classes at Vanderbilt Divinity School and entails Starbird's theological research including her cursory examination of the ancient Greek *Gematria* (a secret coding system where letters have numeric value). Chapter 11 centres on the 1988 move to Seattle where Starbird began to write *Alabaster Jar*. Chapter 12, the final chapter, takes the reader up to 1992 just before the publication of *Alabaster Jar*. The memoir also includes a number of appendices, notes, and a Selected Bibliography. In short, *The Goddess in the Gospels* details the awakening of a Roman Catholic Daughter to what she perceives as the 'fatal flaw' in the Church; Starbird writes:

This story is stranger than fiction. It is the story of a surprising spiritual journey, the years I spent searching for the lost Grail of the European legends, and the final realisation that it was not an artefact I was searching for, but a woman, the lost bride of Jesus. (1998: xi)

There are a number of parallels between Kidd's *Dance* and Starbird's *The Goddess in the Gospels*: first, Starbird is an intensely reluctant pilgrim—deeply devout to her Christian faith tradition; second, it is a series of events that awakens Starbird; and third, Starbird also centres on her family and takes them rather unwillingly along on her quest.

Unlike Kidd, however, Starbird experienced her awakening in two distinct and separate phases; she writes: 'When I had written *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar*, I had understood the tragic flaw in Christianity, the denial of the sacred feminine, but I had not yet personally encountered the feminine face of the Divine.' (ibid: 39) Therefore Starbird's 1993 *Alabaster Jar* is only the first half of her awakening; *The Goddess in the Gospels* recounts both portions of these two distinct phases as recollections from decades past:

Years now have passed, and my experience of the feminine has become deeper and more profound than I ever thought possible. It has been a remarkable journey. In the chapters that follow, I want to retrace my footsteps to the early years of my faith journey, to tell of my quest to reclaim this other face of the Divine. For clearly it was she who led me to the mystery surrounding the Holy Grail and the Goddess in the Gospels. (ibid: 39)

Following in the post-Jungian footsteps of Whitmont and Bolen, Starbird's pilgrimage centres on the Holy Grail—the recovery of which, she believes, will heal the Church as written in the legends. She details in her memoir how her pilgrimage was originally and intriguingly inspired by Pope John Paul II's adoration of the Black Madonna from Czestochowa (his homeland in Poland); Starbird writes:

[...] it was the desecrated face of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa that launched my quest for the lost Grail. In researching the image of the Black Madonna and her ancient renderings in pagan myth and artefacts, I encountered the ancient lore of the Triple Goddess as well as the neglected and forgotten Bride and the cult and mythology of the Sacred Marriage. (ibid: 52)

By following her highest human authority, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, Starbird was led to Christianity's Pagan history and various anthropomorphisations of Goddess. Perhaps for Starbird, the 'holy' impetus for her quest combined with the adoration of Mary found in the Catholic Church lent a sense of validity and credibility that would allow her to accept concepts and ideas that stood in direct contrast to Catholic dogma. Contrary to Kidd, who initially found great difficulty in even speaking the word 'goddess', Starbird seemingly embraces her discoveries without question as the will of God. For Starbird, the missing Grail *is* Mary Magdalene as partner with Jesus Christ, and her memoir reads as much as a story of her own personal awakening and rebirth as it does an argument in defence of her earlier 1993 thesis contained in *Alabaster Jar*. She writes:

Every step of my pilgrimage in Provence confirmed my growing conviction that the Sacred Feminine incarnate in Mary Magdalene is a great gift for the Church, too long denied. And with each step, I became more convinced of the role I must play in the effort to restore the Goddess to Christianity. (ibid: 27)

Starbird's 'role' began with the publication of *Alabaster Jar*. The inspiration to write and eventually publish her memoir, *Goddess in the Gospels*, decades later came as a request from her supportive readers:

Friends of *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* have asked me to publish the story of my quest for the Sacred Marriage that was once at the very heart of Christianity, of how I stumbled upon the devastating flaw in the foundation of the Church—the scorned and repudiated feminine—and why, after so many years of being a conservative and very orthodox daughter of the Roman Catholic Church, I am singing a new song. (ibid: xi)

Starbird's 'new song' is based largely on shifting the history of Jesus Christ to include his bride Mary Magdalene. Unlike the other authors in this study who tell of their own personal struggles, epiphanies, and shifts in consciousness towards an Eros-based, Goddess-centred way of thinking, Starbird focuses heavily on convincing the reader to accept her 'fatal flaw' in the Catholic Church and the need for reformation. Echoing Kidd, Starbird makes a solitary journey and bases her new-found knowledge on the results of her own independent research; Starbird writes:

And so, following my intuition, I embarked on the solemn quest for the truth concerning the Holy Grail. I borrowed books from the library, making special requests through interlibrary loan and searching bibliographies for additional suggested reading. I was grateful for my academic background in literature and research tools it had provided. Often I studied until the early morning hours. (ibid: 77)

Starbird's research, however, is indeed not as extensive or thorough as Kidd's and is lacking a comprehensive academic or even critical voice. The 'Selected Bibliography' included in her memoir cites only a handful of scholars, limiting her reading to Riane Eisler, Samuel Kramer, Elaine Pagels, Merlin Stone, Barbara Walker, and Marina Warner. Led on by synchronistic events [a Jungian concept] and prophecies from within the Emmanuel Community, Starbird's memoir charts her discovery of this 'fatal flaw' and argues that without the return of Christ's Bride, Mary Magdalene, the Church will never heal its deepening wound. The

controversial theories that underlie Starbird's 'fatal flaw', and by extension, her memoir, shall be examined in greater detail in a following section.

Despite the ample criticism of Starbird and her thesis, *Goddess in the Gospels* is an important part of this study for several reasons. It is essential to note that I am not utilising Starbird as a theologian, rather, within the context of this study, as an author of a memoir that captures her own unique experiences of Goddess. She writes: '[...] I reflected on my orthodox Roman Catholic upbringing and on my unexpected awakening to the flawed doctrines of Christianity concerning the feminine. I reflected on my passionate quest for the meaning of the Grail and the Black Madonna [...].' (ibid: 14) (1) As a rebirth memoir, *Goddess in the Gospels* reveals Starbird's personal journey and experiences with Goddess. Although different from the preceding memoirs in a number of ways, each author describes spiritual journeys utilising Jungian or post-Jungian concepts—albeit in different ways and for different purposes: Bolen stays within Christianity; while Kidd finds herself in opposition to Christianity; Starbird seeks to reform Christianity. Yet despite these fundamental differences, these memoirs have all been influential for the developing Western Goddess Movement. This Movement is demonstrating that it is broad enough to include a variety of backgrounds and perspectives including Starbird's which makes it the fundamental reason for its inclusion. (2) Perhaps more theologically-significant in this particular memoir is that Starbird demonstrates that the Western Goddess Movement is *not outside* Christianity; it is taking place within Christianity as well. Indeed, it can be argued that the various feminine faces of Goddess that are present in this memoir—Wisdom/Sophia, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene and the Black Madonna—all Christian constructs of Goddess—are widely accepted and often venerated within the Western Goddess Movement, frequently alongside Pagan, Nature-based, or pre-Christian Goddesses. (3) *The Goddess in the Gospels* demonstrates how intricately connected Carl Jung is to the Catholic Church. Bolen and Kidd both grew up in Protestant families, but Starbird is Roman Catholic. After Starbird's awakening, she connects with *Charismatic Catholics*—a growing movement within Christianity which Noll attributes directly to Jung in his 1994 *The Jung Cult: The Origins of a Charismatic Movement*; Dourley (1981) and Hird (1998) confirm this observation. Starbird makes a close friend in her Emmanuel Community who introduces her to Jungian

models and theories.⁷⁹ Starbird's discovery and incorporation of Jung is another foundational element of this memoir that will be examined in more detail.

Starbird's memoir documents the internal and external struggle she faced including a mental breakdown after discovering the 'royal bloodline of Christ' theory posed by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln in their 1982 publication *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Although Starbird has left the Roman Catholic Church, she has not left Christianity. Starbird shifted laterally towards a more liberal form of Christianity she calls the Gnostic Church of Love (a faith tradition, she claims, which was once held by the now extinct Cathars in France) which centres upon the beliefs that God is immanent and part of all of creation. Each believer can "know God" through direct, personal experience. Churches were unnecessary as all ground is "sacred"—meaning God could be worshiped anywhere the adherent felt inspired or compelled without the hierarchical need for a priesthood or the confines of a physical church.

For the purposes of this study, however, Starbird's memoir is much more than merely the account of one individual's experiences and discoveries; it documents the fundamental impact the Western Goddess Movement continues to have *within* Christianity, and in this specific case, Charismatic Catholicism and the Emmanuel Community. (Noll, 1994) The underlying theories in Starbird's two-part awakening (including her earlier *Alabaster Jar*) are comprised into four main concepts: 1) prophecies and prayer work from the Emmanuel Community; 2) the ancient Hassidic art of *Gematria* (also known as Sacred Geometry or Biblical Numerology); 3) Biblical history mixed with the theory of a royal bloodline leading to the conclusion that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, and that Mary was in fact, pregnant when Jesus was crucified; and 4) the various components of Jungian analytic psychology that help to shape Starbird's research and beliefs. All of these underlying theories will be examined in greater detail in the following critical review of this memoir.

⁷⁹ For more information see: Noll R (1994) *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; (1997) *The Aryan Christ: The Secret Life of Carl Jung*. Random House; Hird Rev E (1998 [1996]) 'CARL JUNG, NEO-GNOSTICISM, & THE MBTI' A report by the Past National Chair to the Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada Nov 1996, Revised by author and posted by St. Simon's Anglican Church, North Vancouver, B.C. January 1998. Available at: http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/st_simons/arm03.htm

5.2 Critical Review

5.2.1 Who is the intended audience? Are they reached?

Unlike the three memoirs that precede it, *The Goddess in the Gospels* does not address any intentional or specific audience. It is therefore extremely difficult to assess whether or not the reader has been reached. Other than the following reference: ‘In an attempt to be understood by the general reader, I have written in the vernacular. [...] The message in these pages is for the people.’ (Starbird, 1998: xvi); no further address is made to or about the potential reader. Save for subject matter that is specific to Western Catholic women, and contrasting the other memoirs in this study, it does not appear that Starbird is speaking to those who might follow in her footsteps. She writes: ‘Woe to those who entertained any thought perceived to be at variance with the doctrines we had been so carefully taught, doctrines like that of “original sin” promulgated by the patriarchs of the power structure, “the guardians of the walls.”’ (ibid: 20) In fact, she does her best to frighten potential pilgrims away. Starbird speaks extensively about her own religious and psychological fears including attributing her brief mental breakdown and hospitalisation to part of her awakening. This point is exemplified when Starbird refers to her own awaking as a ‘personal holocaust.’ (ibid: 81) She writes:

Knowing the pain I had suffered in the breakdown of the patriarchal model in my own life, I was unwilling to cause others to question the “faith of our fathers.” I was not yet ready to be responsible for the awakening of anyone else. (ibid: 113)

Based on the pervasive fear element deeply interconnected to her memoir, Starbird was, perhaps, still not ready to be responsible for the awakening of others at the time of her memoir’s publication in 1998. Written at the behest of others, I believe Starbird does not mention a specific audience because she is still haunted by the distinct fear of awakening others and being responsible for that potentially life-shattering moment. Starbird may have shared her path to Goddess in *The Goddess in the Gospels*, but she isn’t creating a path for others to follow. She is, however, seeking to perpetuate what Starbird considers the ‘hidden’ version of the Christian story and strives for a shift in Western consciousness to reclaim the Jungian Anima as Goddess.

5.2.2 What are the intentions of the work? What did they achieve?

There are two clear intentions in *The Goddess in the Gospels*. Starbird's primary objective is to introduce what she has determined to be the 'hidden' version of the Christian story. Starbird's second aim is to spark a religious paradigmatic change in Western consciousness. These two intentions are intricately connected—one resulting from the other. Starbird writes: 'This new version of the story does not detract from the uniqueness of Jesus, but it does require a revision of the orthodox, traditional view.' (Starbird, 1998: 25)

5.2.2.1 Introduce a "Hidden" Version of the Christian Story

In many ways, *The Goddess in the Gospels* is an extension of, or a compendium to, Starbird's highly-controversial *Alabaster Jar*. The key focus of her 1998 memoir is not on the personal journey and transformation of Starbird as much as it is on this perceived lost history of Christ; Starbird writes:

I believe it was the intent of Jesus, from the beginning of his ministry, to restore the feminine principle to a place of honour in a milieu that had become unbalanced and distorted under Roman hegemony in favour of masculine values of law, order, judgement, and power. (ibid: 116)

She also writes: 'The story of the risen Christ has been told and retold, but the story of the Magdalene has been hidden. [...] It is time to restore her to her rightful place of honour at the side of Jesus.' (ibid: 34) In Starbird's call to replace 'the Magdalene' into the Christian story, she echoes the appeals of Kidd, Bolen and Downing—all the way back to Jung and the reclamation of his Anima—the imminent Feminine Divine when Starbird writes: 'In restoring Magdalene to her original place of honour, we will reclaim the long-devalued feminine at all levels in our individual hearts, our homes, our entire civilization.' (ibid: 28) After facing enormous criticism for *Alabaster Jar* in 1993, Starbird speaks of her strength in the midst of her fears:

The path has been sometimes dark, even terrifying at times, the footing often treacherous. But I am finally ready to commit the story of my quest to writing because it is important that the hidden version of the Christian story survive. (ibid: xi)

It is evident in *The Goddess in the Gospels* that Starbird is deeply passionate about and focuses heavily on the reclamation of the Magdalene story—to the point where Magdalene overshadows Starbird as the protagonist in the memoir. This is certainly

intriguing considering that Starbird and her publishers are promoting *The Goddess in the Gospels* as an auto-biographical memoir; unlike the previous authors in this study, Starbird's central goal is not to inspire others to follow her on her path but to open her readers to the possibility of an alternate history of Christ. Starbird states in her Preface:

I feel it is important now to share this prophetic material, gleaned over the years from myriad sources, as it directly relates to the restoring of the Bride to the Christian story, and in the process, to each of us and to our world as well. (ibid: xiii)

Starbird believes restoring Mary Magdalene as the Partner of Christ is the way forward for the Roman Catholic Church in an attempt to both heal a myriad of wounds (and sins) and curtail the present-day exodus of adherents. Starbird is also aware, however, that there are far wider and deeper implications and possibilities not only for the Church community but also for the psychological well-being of the individual members of the Church, she writes:

In releasing Magdalene from bondage and enthroning her with Christ in a celestial model of intimate partnership, we will restore a healing balance "on earth as it is in heaven." And in restoring this blessing of partnership, each individual will reclaim a precious piece of human nature. We will teach one another to honour the body with its deep intuitive wisdom and the planet Earth as the source of life. We will learn to laugh again, and to appreciate beauty. We will learn to honour and appreciate feminine attributes of gentleness and relatedness, feminine values of intuition and inspiration, and feminine roles of nurturing alongside and in harmony with prevailing masculine values. (ibid: 27-28)

It is interesting to note that many of the statements made by Starbird in the above citation echo comments from Jung and Jungians Marie-Louise von Franz and Emma Jung (Carl's wife)—both cited in Starbird's Selected Bibliography. Writing concurrently as Jung, von Franz and Emma Jung continued Jung's gender essentialist Feminine Divine and wrote at length about the alchemical process of union between the feminine and masculine within one's conscious mind. This process and its components would be later revised by post-Jungian feminists; however, Starbird would limit her reading and enquiry to Jung's original models and theories including the imminent Feminine Divine (Anima). Starbird would incorporate the Jungian models of the Anima, the archetypes, and the collective

unconscious mind into her justification for the reclamation of Mary Magdalene including the use of Jungian terminology; she writes:

The significant role of Mary Magdalene, who—I am convinced beyond any doubt—embodies the *eternal feminine* as Bride, has been misunderstood and neglected, perhaps even deliberately obscured, and needs to be re-examined. In releasing her from her bondage and restoring her to the partnership *mandala*, we will restore the *archetypal balance of feminine and masculine*—“on earth as it is in heaven”—at the same time restoring the feminine to a place of honour in our own lives. (ibid: 63, emphasis is mine to indicate Jungian terms or models)

As Jung’s archetypal eternal feminine, Mary Magdalene is the centre and purpose of Starbird’s memoir. Starbird incorporates several original Jungian concepts into her recollections of her journey. For example, Starbird speaks of the Anima in terms of ‘direct personal encounter of the soul’ (ibid: 35) and includes a Jungian interpretation of the Christian cross. (ibid: 90-91) The following passage not only exemplifies how Starbird has incorporated Jungian theories and models into her ‘way of knowing’ Goddess, but also how these Jungian interpretations alter Starbird’s understanding of Christianity.

Jung’s disciples have since explained that the symbol of the cross is unbalanced: the vertical “masculine” bar is greater in length than the horizontal “feminine” bar. The cross is a visual representation of orthodox Christianity, which (expressed in Jungian terms) values Logos/reason more highly than Eros/relationship. It seemed to me that the cross was a visual image of the cultural imbalance of male and female and therefore, quite appropriately, a symbol for suffering. (ibid: 91)

As exemplified above, Starbird’s understanding of the Divine has been transformed by Jungian thought. In turn, her memoir attempts to incorporate this Jungian thinking in confronting and attempting to reform the oldest and most powerful sect of Christianity in the world—the Roman Catholic Church. Bringing the ‘feminine’ into this territory, apart from devotees to Mary as the Holy Mother of God and Charismatic Catholics, has often proved to be a near impossible task. Starbird writes:

Many people just do not want anyone to tamper with traditions concerning Christ. Some are hostile to the idea, even though they have never personally examined the issue at all! They just assume that Jesus was never married, since that is the party line of established

Christianity. I was feeling apprehensive about the criticism and rejection I would surely face from many quarters, perhaps even from some of my friends, and certainly from the clergy in the establishment. (ibid: 151)

Starbird not only wants to ‘tamper with traditions,’ she wants to reconstruct them completely—doing so requires a complete change in the religious paradigm of the Roman Catholic Church and certainly a vast majority of the sects of Christianity as a faith tradition. Changing the Christian story to include Mary Magdalene requires a new consciousness—a new religious paradigm inclusive of Goddess.

5.2.2.2 Spark a Religious Paradigmatic Change in Western Consciousness

While *Alabaster Jar* was a means for Starbird to present the results of her independent research, *The Goddess in the Gospels* is specifically intent on revealing what Starbird terms ‘a new blueprint’ in human consciousness. (Starbird, 1998: 150) She writes:

At some point in my journey, I understood that my original goal had evolved into a much larger purpose. I now realise that I am charged not only with restoring the Bride to Christianity—the Goddess in the Gospels—but also with restoring the partnership paradigm that was the cornerstone of ancient civilisations and the archetypal blueprint not only for the Temple of Solomon, but for the human psyche as well. (ibid: 153)

Starbird’s ‘archetypal blueprint’ is a religious ‘partnership paradigm’ that strongly resembles the Jungian Union of Anima (feminine) and Animus (masculine), echoes the paradigmatic change encouraged by both Kidd and Bolen as well as emulating the Eastern Taoist concept of Yin and Yang—two halves, often described as female and male respectively, which, *together*, create union and wholeness. Starbird writes:

This “reclaimed” version would include the neglected and forgotten feminine, setting us free at last from long centuries of male-oriented traditions and the stifling hegemony of male celibate priests for whom the highest virtue has long been proved to be obedience rather than love. The perceived misogyny of Christianity was not indigenous to the Church in its infancy and was never the teaching of Jesus. My intent is to restore the paradigm of sacred partnership that was once at the very heart of the Christian message. (ibid: xv)

It is important to note that due to the underlying theories and assumptions examined in section 5.2.5, including the influence of Starbird's independent research into Biblical history and her exposure to a variety of Jungian concepts through Charismatic Catholicism, Starbird is convinced that she is not introducing a new model of religious paradigm but restoring the religious 'paradigm of sacred partnership' *lost* to the Church the early years of its formation.

For two millennia, these doctrines have robbed us of a model for relating to one another as real and equal "flesh and blood" partners. We have not been taught to honour our bodies as sacred vessels of life, and this neglect of our own bodies has extended to our planet—our dear mother "vessel"—as well. How different our experience might have been if we had understood that sexual union is both sacred and holy! I am convinced that a model of Bride and Bridegroom, united in intimate mutuality and loving service, could have moulded us into a different society—a more integrated, wholesome community—and I am convinced that reclaiming the lost model of sacred union in Christianity can help to heal us now. To *reclaim this lost paradigm of wholeness and harmony*, we must first restore the lost Bride of the Christian story—the Goddess of the Gospels—to her rightful place at the side of Jesus. (ibid: 23, emphasis is mine)

In essence, Starbird's *The Goddess in the Gospels* is calling for a religious paradigmatic change. As Küng has noted, a religious paradigmatic change only occurs as the direct result of 'wide-scale upheavals' within the existing religious paradigm. (Küng, 1989a: 214) Altering the Roman Catholic doctrine to include the once-repudiated Mary Magdalene as equal partner to Christ would undoubtedly cause 'wide-scale upheaval' in the Church; however, this elicits the question of whether or not incorporating a Divine Feminine partner to Christ would even be possible in the Catholic Church—an institution that, to this day, still refuses to acknowledge the rights of women in the Church. If it were possible to bring about a paradigmatic change in the Catholic Church, what would have to transpire? Considering that Mary, as the Mother of God, is not understood doctrinally as Goddess, would Starbird's 'lost bride' who, in and of herself is a partner to Christ, be a more successful feminine image to incorporate into Catholic dogma? Does a Christian Goddess have to be a bride, and therefore subject to man? Although there are sects of Christianity that elevate Sophia as Goddess of Wisdom and co-creator of the world (through Proverbs 8), Mary Magdalene as a Saint, or other sects that devote themselves to the Virgin Mary or Our Lady of Guadalupe, these groups have impacted no successful paradigmatic changes in the dogma of the

Catholic Church. Although Starbird understands that to bring about a change in the Church, one also needs to bring about change in oneself; she writes:

I am committed to reclaiming the image of the lost Bride to all levels of the human psyche, reclaiming her attributes of gentleness, beauty, intuition, and inspiration and enshrining them in a place of honour alongside the perceived masculine values of strength, order, and reason. (1998: 37)

In other words, Starbird, and *The Goddess in the Gospels*, are committed to bringing about a change in the Western patriarchal religious paradigm that shifts towards a union between the masculine and the feminine—the same union of Anima and Animus proposed by Carl Jung at the beginning of the twentieth century. After his split with Freud, Jung was often derided for his opinions, but his followers, a vast majority of whom were women, grew in number. (Anthony, 1999) Eighty-two years later, the number of people calling for a paradigmatic shift in Western consciousness that includes Goddess is growing, and Starbird stands as an example of how these ideas have reached even into the formal and overtly patriarchal Roman Catholic Church.

The obvious follow-up question regarding the two main intentions of *The Goddess in the Gospels* is: did the memoir achieve its objectives? I believe, even though it is shrouded in controversy, *The Goddess in the Gospels* achieved its first aim beyond all expectations. The continuation of the ‘hidden history’ of Mary Magdalene in its most controversial form will be examined in more detail in the following section. Considering the paradigmatic change invoked by Starbird echoes the awakening to ‘Goddess Consciousness’ described by all three previous authors, Jung and post-Jungians, feminist, feminist theologians, theologians, and many adherents in the Western Goddess Movement, it may then be included within the visible current shift towards Western ‘Goddess Consciousness’; however, it is not indicative of a paradigmatic change at this point in time—only a positive and concerted effort towards including ‘Goddess Consciousness’ in the West. The two most significant achievements of *The Goddess in the Gospels* are exemplified in the following main functions of the memoir.

5.2.3 How does the text function?

Assessing the functions of *The Goddess in the Gospels* reveals to what extent Starbird's memoir achieved its primary intention to promulgate her 'hidden history' of Mary Magdalene. Starbird's memoir, however, may not have accomplished this primary intention in the manner she had hoped; nonetheless, the 'hidden history' proposed in her memoir is now deeply ingrained in contemporary culture—beyond what Starbird could have ever imagined. Starbird's memoir is unique amongst the rebirth memoirs in this study due to the fact that it is perhaps the only memoir that was, and continues to be, well-known for its controversies. The arguments are varied and significant as will be examined below and do constitute the key functions of this memoir. As a result, the first function of *The Goddess in the Gospels* is as a source of theological and academic controversy. The second function, however, is perhaps even more contentious as Starbird's memoir finds itself as a source of 'credible' information for the notorious 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.

5.2.3.1 Source of Theological and Academic Controversy

Without question, out of the five rebirth memoirs in this study, *The Goddess in the Gospels* has resulted in, by far, the most controversy. Fundamentally, this critique takes two forms: theological and academic. The theological argument stems from the fact that in both *Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels* Starbird's thesis challenges the very foundations not only of the Roman Catholic Church but most of Christianity. The academic debate surrounds Starbird's substantial reliance on a text considered by many not to be a work of scholarship but rather a work containing extravagant and unsubstantiated claims. Both of these controversies shall be examined further.

Theological Controversy: Heresy

The theological charge of heresy against Margaret Starbird is not unfounded. Starbird is the first to admit that the ideas and beliefs she proposes are substantially at odds with the orthodox doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. She goes on to comment about how publically standing in opposition to the Church filled her with fear:

I began to feel physically sick. Suppose the whole edifice of Christian doctrine was a house of cards? I was aghast. Suddenly it dawned on me

that my discoveries had grave implications for the Church, and I broke out in a cold sweat. [...] *I was a heretic*, just like those tortured and burned alive in the Middle Ages. (Starbird, 1998: 88, emphasis is mine)

However, Starbird came to this conclusion while still immersed within the teachings of her Roman Catholic upbringing; within these confines there was no other conclusion Starbird could arrive at other than heresy. There is little room in the Roman Catholic Church for dissention-especially by women. Starbird was so terrified by this new knowledge that her fear kept Starbird from divulging her 'discovery' to anyone—denying it even to herself. Over time, however, Starbird became convinced that it was her task to confront the Church and began speaking publically about her thesis and 'lost history' of Christ; Starbird writes:

Being a heretic is extremely uncomfortable, I have learned, a very grave matter indeed. Occasionally at lectures I give, someone in the audience scoffs at my theory because it is so clearly at variance with two thousand years of the "party line" of the established Christian churches. One Christian minister called the host of a radio talk show where I was a guest and informed me and all the listeners tuned into the program that I would go to hell for teaching such heresy. Many people, even some friends of mine, are still afraid to examine the strong evidence for the marriage of Jesus published in my book, afraid they will be tainted in some way, afraid they may jeopardise their faith. (ibid: 21)

Despite freely admitting to being a heretic and using the term repeatedly throughout her memoir, Starbird later denies the allegations of heresy by drawing upon the teachings of alternate forms of Christianity. In an attempt to justify her actions with fellow Christians, Starbird proposes a theological argument for her heretical thesis; she writes: 'In the first century among the earliest Christians it was *not* heresy to believe Jesus was married.' (ibid: 21, emphasis in the original, ref. Phipps, *Was Jesus Married?*, 1970) Concentrating her argument on the parallel of the pre-Christian belief in the *Hieros Gamos* (Sacred Marriage of Goddess and God) and the documented actions during the Feast of Bethany, Starbird writes:

If the anointing was actually Jesus' marriage rite and Mary of Bethany his wife, then important traditional beliefs of Christianity are radically affected. In this case, Jesus was not the celibate deity insisted upon by a much later Christian tradition. The "heresy" was the later implied doctrine of his celibacy, not the original model of the Sacred Marriage! (ibid: 25)

Although Starbird does not deny the accusation of heresy, she attempts to shift the charge from herself to the Church, and she starts to question the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to this new discovery of Mary Magdalene's lost history. Starbird struggles in her memoir to find the will of God. Devout in her relation to God, if not her adherence to the Roman Catholic doctrine, Starbird started to question God directly; she writes: 'Heresy and truth are not mutually exclusive.' (ibid: 88) Starbird did not believe she was opposing God's will; Starbird justifies her heretical thesis through her passionate belief that she is carrying out the *will of God*. For Starbird, the will of God was a higher authority than the will of the Church Fathers.

Justification through Divine Revelation

Starbird attempts to justify her theological thesis by implying that it was the direct result of Divine intervention. Confounded by the theses presented in *Holy Blood*, *Holy Grail*, Starbird seeks guidance from God through prayer; she writes:

Several days later, I sat down on my living room sofa with my Bible, my journal, and a copy of *Holy Blood*, *Holy Grail*. I began to pray. I told Jesus that I would burn the book on my friend's recommendation, but first I wanted to know whatever he himself wanted to show me about it. / The biblical passages I received in prayer that afternoon were as riveting as they were unexpected. I let my Bible fall open to a random page and stared down at the frontispiece of the New Testament. It stated "New Testament . . . A REVISION . . ." (ibid: 73)

Perhaps unconsciously seeking Divine intervention and guidance to burn the book in question and be released from this theological and psychological cognitive dissonance, Starbird is surprised to discover that through prayer, she was obtaining some sense of validation of her perceived 'lost history'. She goes on to write: 'I remember thinking as I looked down at the page in my Bible, *Lord, do you mean that we need a revision of this New Testament?* I was frightened at the mere idea; it seemed blatantly, outrageously presumptuous!' (ibid: 73, emphasis in the original) Despite her seeming courage to question the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, Starbird is reluctant and intensely apprehensive about questioning the responses she obtains through prayer; Starbird continues:

I closed my Bible and prayed for clarification: "In what ways does the New Testament need to be revised?" I asked. Then I opened my Bible again, [...] Second Book of Kings. [...] Then I read a line from the upper

right-hand column, to which my thumb seemed to be pointing: “Restore my wife whom I espoused to me . . .” (ibid: 73)

Starbird presents this moment of Divine response through prayer as an epiphany where ‘Direct revelation had confirmed the “heretical” thesis that I had wanted to deny [...].’ (ibid: 77) However, it is important to note that Starbird’s biblical reference is incorrect. It may be a minor oversight in notation on Starbird’s part at the time of the prayer, but the chapter and verse Starbird cites is not in 2 Kings, but 2 Samuel 3:14 ‘[...] ‘Give me my wife Mi’chal, whom I betrothed to myself [...].’ (NIV, 2005: 252) Considering the close proximity that 2 Samuel has to 2 Kings in the Old Testament of the Bible, this may be a notational error; it does however, add to the list of questionable source material and adds speculation to the credibility of the prayer section included in Starbird’s memoir. This response was not enough to fully convince Starbird that she was truly embracing the will of God; she writes: ‘[...] I was cautious, not wanting to accept the evidence before my eyes. Again I prayed for enlightenment, orthodox to the last [...].’ (Starbird, 1998: 74) Further prayer led Starbird to the, then, head of the Roman Catholic Church—Pope John Paul II.

Aligns with Pope John Paul II

Starbird then spent some time learning more about Pope John Paul II and his personal background prior to his ascension in the papacy. Hailed in Poland, and seen around the globe as ‘the people’s Pope’,⁸⁰ John Paul II remained close to his Polish roots in often displaying various manifestations of public piety in devotion to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa.⁸¹ Starbird aligns herself with Pope John Paul II and his adoration of the Black Madonna; she writes:

The verse from Saint Malachy’s prophesy that corresponds to the pontificate of Pope John Paul II is “*de laboris solis*” [...]. I am convinced that the verse refers to the rising of the sacred feminine to true partnership with the masculine, symbolized in the conjunction of the moon and sun that has occurred during the years of this pope’s pontificate. (ibid: 8-9)

Starbird goes on to write: ‘For it is to Pope John Paul II that we owe the recent explosion of interest in the Black Madonna, having brought media attention to her

⁸⁰ For more see **Rodriguez J** (2008) *Meet John Paul II: The People's Pope*.

⁸¹ For more see: <http://catholicstraightanswers.com/pope-john-paul-ii-had-a-strong-devotion-to-our-lady-of-czestochowa-how-did-this-devotion-come-about/>

image because of his devotion to the dark Lady of Czestochowa [...].’ (ibid: 9) The Pope’s devotion to the Black Madonna raised her profile within the Church and amongst adherents—many of them learning of the dark Lady of Czestochowa for the first time. Moreover, Starbird writes: ‘In 1997 it was widely reported that Pope John Paul II was strongly considering naming Virgin Mary, the Blessed Mother, the “Co-Redemptrix” with Christ, a possibility that engendered strong opposition from many quarters.’ (ibid: xiv) Starbird believes that Pope John Paul II’s devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Black Madonna could bring about a reformation within the Church; she writes:

Pope John Paul II [...] laid the foundation for a new “mystical” temple, not as yet by decree but by bringing to our consciousness a “treasure out of the darkness” in the image of the Black Madonna—the beloved feminine—and in his reported desire to name “Mary” the Co-Redemptrix with Christ. The explosion of interest in this image and in the Divine as feminine has been remarkable in the years since his inauguration, along with dramatically increased devotion to “Mary”, “Our Lady,” and the many faces of “Goddess,” especially her dark ones. (ibid: 50)

However, Starbird’s alignment with Pope John Paul II as a theological ally is ill-founded as his devotion to the Black Madonna made no difference to his belief that women had a lower place than men. Mary has been understood doctrinally as ‘Co-Redemptrix’ for many centuries, and that has yet to cause any significant advancement of either women or a female or ‘feminine’ deity in Roman Catholicism—saints, angels and the Cult of Mary notwithstanding. However, through Starbird and *The Goddess in the Gospels*, Pope John Paul II is now intricately linked as a potential ally with the Western Goddess Movement.

Starbird begins by addressing the accusation of heresy and admitting that her new found ‘lost history’ stands in direct opposition of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Starbird then attempts to shift the onus of heresy from herself to the Church through interpretations found in alternate (and some Gnostic) sects of Christianity. Following this, Starbird then uses acts of prayer (a highly-unverifiable source) to indicate that she is complying with God’s will citing an inaccurate Old Testament verse. Starbird aligns herself with the Emmanuel Community, Charismatic Catholicism, and Pope John Paul II in an attempt to show how there is a theological foundation for her thesis of Mary Magdalene’s ‘lost history.’ Whether or not this connection is made is left to the imagination and

deductive abilities of the individual reader. As a result, however, Starbird's work including both *Alabaster Jar* and her memoir *The Goddess in the Gospels*, are justifiably considered inaccurate, suspect, and heretical in some theological circles. Her reliance on unverifiable material is further exasperated in the academic critique of Starbird's thesis and publications.

Academic Controversy: Starbird's reliance on *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*

Starbird's theological model is certainly controversial in the context of the Roman Catholic Church; perhaps more contentious, however, is the source material Starbird uses to form and propagate her thesis—*Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Starbird depends heavily on the results of her independent research. '[...] I soon discovered that evidence of the belief of Jesus' marriage was far more widespread than I would have imagined. I examined medieval art works and literature, the earliest Grail legends, rituals of Freemasonry, myths, and symbols.' (ibid: 77) The entire 'hidden history' however, was discovered in a book written by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln in 1982 entitled *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.⁸² Starbird utilises this text to validate and confirm her contrary 'lost history' and cites this text as a historical authority. As the major source of information for her thesis and publications, Starbird appears to be utilising *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* as a textual self-fulfilling prophecy whereby Starbird relies heavily on this text to substantiate her claims. Her source material, however is seriously flawed; Martin Kemp, Professor of Art History at Oxford called it 'a tower of hypotheses and speculation.'⁸³

Starbird discovered *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* through a friend's recommendation '[...] thinking that with my background in medieval European studies and my interest in the Bible and the origins of Christianity, I might be intrigued by it.' (ibid, 65) She goes on to say: 'At the time, I was orthodox to the core, both in belief and in practice of my Roman Catholic faith, the "faith of our fathers." I taught religious education classes for our local parish [...].' (ibid, 65) Unfamiliar with the title, Starbird went to the library to see the book for herself. She picked up the book and read the front cover which claims 'The Secret History of Christ' and 'The Shocking Legacy of the Grail.' Starbird turned the book over to see large

⁸² Published as *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* in the United Kingdom by Jonathan Cape.

⁸³ Martin Kemp, Professor of Art History at Oxford University, on the documentary *The History of a Mystery*, BBC Two, transmitted on 17 September 1996.

gold letters asking: ‘Did Jesus marry and father a child? Are his descendants alive today?’ Starbird writes:

I fumbled with the book, trying so hard to put it back on the shelf that I almost dropped it. Like the proverbial “hot potato,” it seemed to be burning my fingers. The thesis of the book was heresy: the suggestion that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had a child. [...] / I escaped from the library as fast as I could. I did not want to know anything that was at variance with the teachings of the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. (ibid: 65-66)

Eighteen months later, Starbird returned to the library and finally took *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* home. Expecting, at most, to find the book challenging, Starbird discovers it to be ‘devastating.’ (ibid: 67) In fact, Starbird’s reliance on this text as her main source material would have devastating effects on her scholarly credibility among academics and theologians. There is no question that the lack of appropriate evidence to substantiate the historical claims made by both Baigent et al. and Starbird is problematic and detrimental to the credibility of this memoir. Perhaps if, like Bolen and Downing, Starbird had proposed to offer a new mythology rather than attempting to make unsubstantiated historical claims, her work may have been better received. What may be even more problematic, however, is that these claims are then taken as credible by a relatively unknown author researching his latest novel and then presented to the world as historical fact.

5.2.3.2 Source material for Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* (2003)

The second function of Starbird’s *The Goddess in the Gospels* is, by now, famous—as Starbird’s work (including *Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels*) are taken alongside Baigent, Leigh and Shaffer’s *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* as the source material for a 2003 novel called *The DaVinci Code*. Mention Dan Brown’s fictional novel *The Da Vinci Code* amongst a group of theologians and jeers, derision, and laughs resound. It is certainly not a work of fiction that is taken seriously by most scholars or clergy. It is, however, a novel that arguably has been one of the most controversial works of the early twenty-first century—and Margaret Starbird’s *Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels* are fundamental source material for Brown’s novel. Central to Brown’s novel is the theses put forward by Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln, and expounded upon by Starbird, that: Jesus was married; his wife was Mary Magdalene; she was with child at the time of the crucifixion; and

the Church has destroyed this part of early Christian history. What has drawn perhaps more attention to this work of fiction than any other promotional event (not including the 2006 film premier) is the reaction to its ideas.⁸⁴ Despite rumours to the contrary, the Vatican has never officially remarked on the novel. *Catholic Answers* writes:

Actually, the Church as an institution has had no comment, one way or the other, on *The Da Vinci Code*. The book has not been placed by the Vatican on any “forbidden books” list nor have any “official” sanctions been placed on it. (*Catholic Answers*, 2004)

The 2006 film release, however, did incite significant controversy and protest. (‘Iolana, 2009) Even before the film’s release in 2006 there were a vast array of articles and monographs refuting the historical and theological claims in Brown’s novel. Among a sea of published refutations, *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code: A Historian Reveals What We Really Know about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Constantine* (2004) written by Bart D Ehrman, Chair of Religious Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill and the 2004 Catholic Answers 15-page report entitled ‘Cracking *The Da Vinci Code*’ written by Jimmy Akin, Senior Apologist at Catholic Answers⁸⁵ stand apart as scholarly theological responses to Brown’s novel. In the report, Akin responds to a variety of questions that surround Brown’s novel including: ‘Why should a Catholic be concerned about the novel?’ to which Akin replies: ‘Although a work of fiction, the book claims to be meticulously researched, and it goes to great lengths to convey the impression that it is based on fact.’ (Akin, 2004: 1) This is perhaps the most significant problem of the end function of Starbird’s memoir—her dependency on an unsubstantiated and non-credible source material and her inability to critically engage with this revised history allows Starbird’s thesis to confound and legitimise the inaccuracies and fabrications contained in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Brown, discovering the self-validating writings of Baigent et al., and Starbird, builds upon them in his novel thus further propagating this creative historical revision and disseminating it to a much wider and global audience. Akin takes issue with the theological credibility of Brown’s source material:

⁸⁴ For more see: ‘Iolana P (2009) *Literature of the Sacred Feminine: Great Mother Archetypes and the Re-emergence of the Goddess in Western Traditions*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.

⁸⁵ The entire report is available on-line at: <http://www.catholic.com/documents/cracking-the-da-vinci-code>

These titles represent works of New Age speculation that run counter to established history, focus on alleged secret societies and conspiracy theories, attempt to reinterpret the Christian faith, and are imbued with radical feminist agendas. Historians and religious scholars do not take these works seriously. / The author of *The Da Vinci Code* does take them seriously. (Akin, 2004: 4)

And with the final sentence, Akin summarises the inherent problem with the second function of *The Goddess in the Gospels*—Dan Brown takes the thesis of Mary Magdalene as Jesus' wife and then presents it to his readers as a historical fact hidden in a mire of murder and conspiracy by the Catholic Church. Starbird relied heavily on Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln's theses, and built on them in both *Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels*. Basing her theories on unsubstantiated or unverifiable source material, Starbird presents an alternate account of Jesus as historical fact whilst failing to engage with any findings that refute her thesis or any scholarly criticism. In fact, it could be argued that through Starbird's use of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* she has damaged the credibility of the reformation she seeks to bring about. Even though Starbird's research and source material is certainly questionable, it, somehow, continues to find resonance with contemporary scholars. In a 2012 essay entitled 'The Deification of Mary Magdalene'⁸⁶ Mary Ann Beavis examines Starbird's controversial work and writes: '[...] her central theological assertion is highly relevant to Christian feminist theo/alogy.' (Beavis, 2012: 147) Forming the basis for one of the most controversial books of the early twenty-first century, Margaret Starbird has earned herself a unique position with her eternal connection to Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*. Widely read by people with no apparent interest in Christianity or in the Western Goddess Movement, Brown's novel introduced a wide audience to a conspiracy theory which Brown admits is fictional—and what remains for the reader is the agency to question the dogma of the Catholic Church. The theses contained in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, and expounded upon in *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels* continue to be carried forward decades later as exemplified in the 2014 *The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Ancient Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary the Magdalene* by Simcha Jacobovici and Barrie Wilson. Starbird's continued popularity with readers is exemplified, in part, by the fact that seventeen years later, not only is *The Goddess in the Gospels* still in publication, but also it was the first memoir to be available in a Kindle™

⁸⁶ *Feminist Theology* 21(2): 145-154.

edition shortly after the product's launch in 2008. This seems to indicate that despite the various controversies, historical inaccuracies, and her dependence upon unsubstantiated claims, Starbird's thesis provides some relevant foundation to the Western Goddess Movement and contemporary feminist theology and thealogy that helps to keep her memoir and her thesis alive nearly two decades later.

5.2.4 What are the significant strengths of this work?

The only major strength of *The Goddess in the Gospels* is Starbird's courage of conviction (however questionably informed it is) to publically challenge the Roman Catholic Church conscious of the fact that it would lead to charges of heresy and apostasy. The ability to place oneself in the midst of the public eye and declare a challenge to the history and legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church is no easy task. Assured of excommunication and public humiliation, and fearful of a Church history that included the public execution of heretics, Starbird spent years contemplating this decision; she was definitively a reluctant pilgrim. (Nineteen years had passed between the beginning of Starbird's journey with the Emmanuel Community in 1974 and the publication of her thesis in *Alabaster Jar* in 1993. It would be a further five years before Starbird would publish her memoir recounting specific moments during the previous two decades.) After years of struggle and psychological distress, Starbird alternates between accepting and refusing to follow the path before her; she writes:

I silently told Jesus that I was washing my hands of the Holy Grail. I asked him please to take the Grail back and put it on a shelf until he found some one strong and brave enough to handle it. Unless he did something radical to reaffirm my quest and to assure me that he was with me, helping me in my quest for the truth, he would just please choose someone else to proclaim his lost Bride. (Starbird, 1998: 112)

Despite the criticisms and the rebuke her theory met from friends and family during the decades of contemplation, Starbird believes that she received, through prayer, the confirmation and reassurances that she needed to continue and returned to her path for a third time - this time determined to help reclaim what she perceives as the lost Goddess in the Gospels—the Bride of Christ. She writes: 'I began to cry softly [...]. I had come a long way on my journey, and now I felt reassured that I had not travelled alone.' (ibid: 151) In other words, echoing Jung's construct of Divine Union with the Anima, Starbird believes she had a

personal relationship with God and that God was alongside Starbird in her endeavour. This is the fundamental component that kept Starbird moving forward in her quest to advance Mary Magdalene as the Bride of Christ. In fact, one of the integral elements of *The Goddess in the Gospels* as well as being a source of personal strength for Starbird is that Starbird felt her research was a Divine revelation from God; in her memoir Starbird describes what she comes to understand, through Divine revelation, as Goddess. Starbird writes:

She embodies the communal, archetypal Bride in a larger and more profound sense than any one historical woman can—even the Blessed Virgin Mary or Mary Magdalene. So we must look at the many facets of the sacred feminine in order to understand what we truly need to reclaim. (ibid: 146)

The Bride of which Starbird speaks is a definitively Jungian construct; Starbird even describes her as ‘archetypal’ and as the ‘sacred feminine’—both Jungian terms. In fact, evaluating this Divine encounter from a post-Jungian perspective, it could be said that Jung’s autonomous Anima archetype manifested itself in Starbird’s consciousness in a manner and form that Starbird would psychologically and theologically be able to relate to—and then personified itself as the lost Bride of Christ. If understood through this Jungian lens then Jung’s claim that archetypes can ‘seize’ an individual from the unconscious mind⁸⁷ also applies—making Starbird’s public proclamation an eventual psychologically-necessary event. Whether this was a journey of Divine revelation or a journey guided by the Anima in Starbird’s unconscious mind, one thing remains certain: Starbird wavered for years, but it was the courage of her convictions that ultimately prompted Starbird to make her public proclamation through *Alabaster Jar*.

Starbird’s strength, her courage of conviction, is then the memoir’s only strength. However, had Starbird followed Downing, Bolen, and Kidd by proposing a ‘Jungian’ mythological account of Jesus’ relationship to Mary Magdalene that focused on sacred partnership (Divine Union) as an alternative to the salacious claims that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute, then it could have been argued that Starbird’s thesis was a strength of *The Goddess in the Gospels*; as it is, Starbird’s memoir and *Alabaster Jar* are both highly-problematic because Starbird frames her thesis

⁸⁷ McGuire and Hull (1977): 294.

as history and bases it upon unverifiable theories. Moreover, this memoir is criticised for elements in addition to the her reliance on unverifiable hypotheses as source material and faulty research practices, and these difficulties will be addressed in the following section on the underlying theories in *The Goddess in the Gospels* and how they, in turn, negatively impact the validity of the work.

5.2.5 What theories underlie the work? Do they affect its validity?

There are four major assumptions or theories that underlie Starbird's *The Goddess in the Gospels*—all of which have heavily influenced Starbird's research and conclusions in significant ways. These influences are the Emmanuel Community; the art of sacred geometry, or *Gematria*; Baigent's theses contained in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982) including that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene; and the common denominator that links Starbird's memoir to the previous three memoirs examined and the Western Goddess Movement in general—Jungian analytical psychology. All four underlying theories or assumptions will be examined in greater detail along with a critique on Starbird's appropriation of certain pre-Christian and Jungian ideas.

5.2.5.1 Emmanuel Community

Although the four underlying theories or assumptions are clear throughout Starbird's rebirth memoir, the Emmanuel Community is the only significant influence that focussed upon in its own chapter in *The Goddess in the Gospels*. For Starbird, this community provides three significant pieces to her quest: (1) a theological, prayer-based home within the Church; (2) the prayers, trends, and prophecies declared by the Emmanuel Community provide Starbird with a fundamental theological purpose from which her quest begins—the healing of the Roman Catholic Church; (3) the prophecies of the community serve as an essential theory underlying Starbird's thesis. In chapter 4, 'The Community Emmanuel,' Starbird speaks at length about discovering and joining the community; she writes:

When my husband's assignment to teach engineering at the military academy moved our family to West Point in June of 1974, I learned about a close-knit group of *charismatic* Catholics there who met often for prayer, their worship centred around the altar and liturgy of the local Catholic church, the Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity. [...] They called themselves "Emmanuel," a Hebrew name meaning "God with us." (Starbird, 1998: 41, emphasis is mine)

It is important to point out that the *Charismatic* movement within Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, has often been credited to Jung. (Noll, 1994; Hird, 1998) Based upon the evidence, this assertion is correct. The Charismatic (or Pentecostal) movement values the core concept of Jungian analytical psychology—*personal religious experience* of the Divine over scripture and dogma. Moreover, the Emmanuel Community believes strongly in *Synchronicity* which is another Jungian postulate. Although Jung's influence will be examined separately in a following section, it would be a mistake in this instance to not highlight the intricately combined influences of the Emmanuel Community and Jung.⁸⁸

The Emmanuel Community was officially consecrated to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa '[...] at a special liturgy in May 1979 as intercessors for the purification and healing of the Roman Catholic Church and her priesthood.' (Starbird, 1998: xii) Tasked with the healing and purification of the Roman Catholic Church and her priesthood, the Emmanuel community sought guidance from God focusing on prayer and prophecy:

Several of the individuals in the little prayer community Emmanuel felt guided beginning in 1973, a year before I met them, to record the revelations and inspirations they received in prayer—through locutions (words spoken to the heart) or timely Scripture passages. *Synchronicity*—meaningful coincidence—played an important role in their gradual enlightenment [...]. (ibid: 142, emphasis is mine)

For the Emmanuel Community, as well as for Starbird, the resulting years of meticulous journals and record keeping began to reveal trends, which the community interpreted as messages from God. Starbird writes: 'The recorded prophecies of the Emmanuel community are not incidental to my Grail quest; they are at its very heart' (ibid: 47) It would be an appropriate assessment to say that the Emmanuel Community often struggled with the Divine answers to their questions about the health and purity of the Church; she writes: 'There was so much we did not know in 1979, when we committed ourselves to the specific purpose of praying for the purification and healing of the Roman Catholic Church

⁸⁸ For more information on how intricately connected Jungian ideas are in contemporary Christianity, see: **Dourley** JP (1981) *The Psyche as Sacrament: A Comparative Study of C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich*. Toronto: Inner City Books; **Hird** Rev E (1998) Carl Jung, NeoGnosticism, & the MBTI A report by the Past National Chair of Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada available at: http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/st_simons/arm03.html and **Lachman** G (2013) Why Jung is Important. In: *Huff Post Religion*. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-lachman/why-jung-is-important_b_2664409.html

and its priests.’ (ibid: 76) And Starbird was often afraid to share her own Divine revelations with her friends in the community: ‘Of my Emmanuel friends, only Mary Beben knew the whole Grail story I had shared with her and even she was uncomfortable about it [...].’ (ibid: 111-12) So while the Emmanuel Community provided Starbird both a home for her faith and offered her a theological purpose for her personal quest—the healing of the Roman Catholic Church—she still felt at odds with her community because her radical thesis about the nature of Mary Magdalene would stand in contradiction to everything this community believes in—the Roman Catholic Church. Despite Starbird discussing many of the prophecies of the Emmanuel Community in her memoir; it is the process the Emmanuel Community followed that left a lasting theoretical impact on Starbird—the validation of prayer and Divine intervention as a source of valuable information. Starbird’s memoir relies heavily on information gleaned through prayer and this is nearly an impossible source to refute. From a Jungian perspective, the Anima is perceived by the individual as the voice of God. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 28) Jung accepts this voice without question because *the individual accepts this voice* without question. This means that from a Jungian or post-Jungian perspective, the prophecies and information gleaned through prayer or Divine intervention are accepted as a personal fact not requiring further validation—they are *real* to the individual. The academic validity of critical information obtained through prayer is, once again, unverifiable. However, unlike the academic and theological controversies, the power of prayer is one source of Starbird’s that many Christians find hard to refute. This means that prayer and prophecy could serve to help validate Starbird’s claims for those who believe in the power of prayer and the ability to be in conversation with God. This could, in turn, help to validate Starbird’s thesis for some readers—and by extension, *Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels*. For those who do not hold these theological beliefs, prayer and Divine prophecy through prayer is yet another invalidated source of information and further negatively impacts on the overall validity of the memoir. The impact of the validity, in this case, rest wholly on the theological *and/or* psychological perspective of the reader.

5.2.5.2 Gematria

Starbird begins the tale of her self-described ‘Grail quest’ by talking about the leading influences on her quest. In the ‘Preface’ she writes:

An additional significant source of revelation for me was the ancient canon of sacred geometry and a numerical system known as *gematria*, in which alphabet letters were used as numbers which carried symbolic meaning. This system was widely practiced by both Hebrew and Greek authors and was especially popular during the Hellenistic period when the Gospels were written. (Starbird, 1998: xii)

Also known as Sacred Geometry or Biblical Numerology, and differing from the contemporary controversy of the 'Bible Code', Starbird writes that the art of *Gematria* has a rich history which begins with the ancient Greek language:

The ancient system of gematria is based on the fact that there are no separate characters for numbers in classical Greek. Each letter was used as a number, and each number value carried symbolic meaning. Each Greek word written on a page could also be understood as a number, and the values of the digits could easily be added. (Ibid: 155)

It is a system, I cannot claim to thoroughly understand, and defer to others more knowledgeable in the area to comment further on its scholarly and biblical applications.⁸⁹ Starbird adds that she, herself: 'studied the Hellenistic practice of gematria so prevalent in the New Testament, a level of interpretation of the sacred texts that had later been abandoned.' (ibid: 128) Starbird's discussion around Gematria, which includes an attached appendix entitled 'Fundamentals of Greek Gematria,' centres on applying numeric values to the text of the Bible. Starbird states:

New Testament phrases coded by gematria tie into the sacred numbers for the ancient cosmology and were intentionally coined to adapt the Jewish messianic martyr Jesus to the framework of existing religious beliefs in the Mediterranean region. In the mystery religions of the Hellenistic world, mystical regeneration by means of sacramental participation in the death and sacrifice of a redeemer god was already practiced in the cults of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Dionysus. (ibid: 132)

Through her application of Gematria to the Bible, Starbird concludes: '[...] the epithets of Magdalene and her unique *gematria*, [...] clearly indicate that she was originally understood to have been the true partner of the Christ.' (Ibid: 27, italics)

⁸⁹ General discussion on the ancient application of *Gematria* to Biblical texts may be found in **Scholem G** (1995) *Major Trends of Jewish Mysticism*; see also **Idel M** (2002) *Abraham Abulafia and Ecstatic Kabbalah*. Available at: http://archive.org/stream/MoshelIdelAbrahamAbulafiaAndEcstaticKabbalah/MoshelIdelAbrahamAbulafiaAndEcstaticKabbalah_djvu.txt

in the original) Noticeably, Starbird used Gematria in *The Goddess in the Gospels* to confirm her theses, writing:

[...] direct evidence for the sacred union indigenous to Christianity is found embedded in the gematria of the New Testament texts themselves. The numbers coded in the New Testament, silent for centuries, are irrefutable and eloquent beyond words; the geometry they generate reflects the harmonious workings of the cosmos. (Ibid: 143)

Starbird summarises the tremendous influence of Gematria in her search for the sacred feminine in Roman Catholicism and how this ancient tradition was corroborated through her work in the Emmanuel Community. Starbird writes:

In light of the traditions of Judaism and the concrete evidence encoded by gematria in the Gospels themselves, I am certain that Jesus was married and that the woman called Magdalene was his partner, his Beloved, and his wife. *Incredible synchronicities along my path have confirmed this truth.* (ibid: 151, emphasis is mine)

In this instance, it is clear how Starbird is combining the Jungian concept of synchronicity (a ‘perceived meaningful coincidence’ learned from the Emmanuel Community) with the application of Gematria. In fact, Starbird is using Jungian synchronicities to cross-validate the information gathered from her application of Gematria. Starbird’s use of Gematria is problematic because it is not generally considered a valid method of textual interpretation, and Starbird makes claims based on this method, again, as historical fact—which cannot be historically substantiated. Understood by the orthodox Roman Catholic Church as a ‘New Age’ fad not applicable to the Church, the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM) discusses the problems with a system of textual interpretation that relies so heavily on the speculation of the interpreter; this can lead to inaccurate conclusions—or the seeking of conclusions only as a means of self-fulfilling validation; CARM writes: ‘[...] mystical interpretations can be discovered as well as "inferred" by examining the mathematical equivalents of various numeric words and then attempting to discover what those mathematical relationships might mean.’⁹⁰

⁹⁰ <http://carm.org/gematria>

Again, much is left open to the interpretations of the individual. However, that does not mean that Starbird's use of Gematria is completely useless. As a means of encountering Goddess, Gematria could perhaps be a useful method but only if the results are accurately cited as ahistorical. Within this framework, Starbird may well have discovered the Goddess in the Gospels. However CARM further stipulates: 'Kabbalists could take the phenomena too far in their esoteric and mystical explanations of Scripture.' This would indicate, that perhaps, CARM might also be critical of Starbird's 'hidden history' of Mary Magdalene as they have defined a perceptible boundary for the allowable or acceptable interpretations "inferred" through Gematria.

5.2.5.3 Jesus Was Married to Mary Magdalene

Starbird's theses that she continues to argue in *The Goddess in the Gospels* is based on two assumptions: 1) Jesus was married in partnership with Mary Magdalene, and 2) Mary was with child at the time of the crucifixion. Starbird develops her theses through the 'heretical' work of Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln (which has been discussed at length in this chapter) combined with Biblical history and references to St Bernard of Clairvaux and Origen. Additionally, Starbird appropriates elements of pre-Christian rites and worship that accommodate her theses—often without crediting the ideas.

Married with Children

Starbird's main contention is that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and a royal bloodline exists. She writes: 'Years of research had convinced me that the celibacy of Jesus was a false doctrine and that the interpretation of the New Testament needed to be revised to include his wife.' (Starbird, 1998: 23) Starbird is not alone in authoring books on the significance of Mary Magdalene to Christianity. Karen L King, Elaine Pagels, and Rosemary Radford Ruether all write about the Magdalene and her significance to Christianity through the Gnostic Gospel of Mary.⁹¹ In fact, Ruether states: 'In this gospel, Mary Magdalene represents the female consort, or counterpart of Christ.' (Ruether, 2005: 124) Ruether is confirming Starbird's first thesis, yet, Starbird never references or cites any credible scholars. Despite the fact that *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (Meyer,

⁹¹ For more see: King KL (2003) *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press; Pagels E (1989) *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage Books; and Ruether RR (2006) *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*. London: University of California Press.

2007) and *The Gnostic Bible* (Barnstone and Meyer, 2003) are not considered orthodox canonical texts, they are certainly more academically reliable than Starbird's source material and do offer a credible location for theological contemplation. Disappointingly, Starbird relies on *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* as the main source material; it wasn't until Starbird read this book that she '[...] fully realised that the foundation of the Church was fatally flawed [...].' (ibid: 77) This realisation led Starbird to examine the history of Christianity alongside Biblical history without the use of contemporary historical or theological scholars; she writes: 'During my years of research into the Grail mystery, I had learned much about the faith of the early Christians.' (ibid: 25) Starbird's research leads her to believe that the story of Mary Magdalene has been 'hidden' for far too long, and she bases her call for Magdalene's reinstatement as the Bride of Christ primarily on the actions during the anointing at the Banquet of Bethany and the pre-Christian religious rite of *Hieros Gamos*; Starbird writes: 'The anointing of Jesus in the Gospels is an enactment of rites from the prevailing fertility cult of the ancient Middle East.' (ibid: 24) She goes on to state: 'My research had shown me that in the ancient rites of the Near East, it was a royal bride who anointed the king. Together they embodied the Divine in a life-sustaining partnership—the *hieros gamos*.' (ibid: 24) The *hieros gamos* (Sacred Marriage between a Goddess and a Sacrificial God or a King with a priestess representing the Goddess as Earth) is a Pagan or pre-Christian religious ritual of Divine Union. (Farrar and Farrar, 1987: 14) Starbird appropriates the pre-Christian *hieros gamos* through the Catholic Feast of Bethany for her 'way of knowing' Jesus and Magdalene. Although Starbird is attempting a fusion of pre-Christian and Christian beliefs, opting to utilise the term *hieros gamos* automatically sets Starbird outside the orthodox Christian tradition. This choice leads to several questions: Did Starbird appropriate this term to reach a wider, non-Catholic or even non-Christian audience? Is she intentionally trying to connect herself with the Western Goddess Movement by linking pre-Christian and Christian concepts? Or is it yet another example contained within *The Goddess in the Gospels* that exemplifies Starbird's lack of academic form and rigour? Starbird writes:

Highlights of this story [...] are reminiscent of myths celebrated in pagan fertility cults of the Middle East, those of Tammuz, Dumuzi, and Adonis. In the pagan rituals surrounding the ancient myths, the Goddess (the Sister-Bride) goes to the tomb in the garden to lament the death of her Bridegroom and rejoices to find him resurrected. (1998: 24)

Starbird is drawing parallels between the story of Jesus and Mary Magdalene and pre-Christian deities such as the Sumerian Inanna, Queen of Heaven and her consort Dumuzi (referred to in the Bible as Ashtoreth and Tammuz),⁹² or the Egyptian Isis and her consort Osiris. When examined from a broad perspective there are vast similarities in the myths and stories of the various world religions both extant and extinct. However, Starbird's use of a 'tomb' and the Bride's only role as that of mourner and witness is problematic, especially with the pre-Christian deities she appropriates. In the Ancient Sumerian tablets translated and compiled by Wolkstein and Kramer, Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth is the one who sacrifices herself for the salvation of her people while her consort Dumuzi attempts to overthrow her reign in her absence.⁹³ The tablets tell the story from 2,000 BCE in which after three days of being hung on a wooden peg in the underworld, Inanna is resurrected by the water and breath of life, and returns the sacrificed saviour of her people. With regards to the Ancient Egyptian pair of Isis and Osiris, once Osiris was destroyed, Isis scoured the globe to find the scattered pieces of her lover/consort in order to bring him back to life. Through Isis, Osiris is reborn, and through the resurrected Osiris, Isis is impregnated with their son, Horus. (Gadon, 1989) These are not goddesses who meekly sit by and lament a lover; these are goddesses of creation and rebirth. Starbird minimalizes these pre-Christian deities to make them fit into the patriarchal context of her Catholic sensibilities and her submissive Bride which makes her appropriation of pre-Christian goddess and the concept of the *hieros gamos* an affront to the goddesses she appropriates.

In addition to appropriating the ritual of *hieros gamos* to support her theses, Starbird also appropriates another pre-Christian religious concept; she writes: 'It is this absence of the feminine that caused our brokenness and so desperately needs to be healed—as above, so below!' (1998: 43) This is another pre-Christian or Pagan element that Starbird appropriates—the saying 'as above - so below' which she uses numerous times in *The Goddess in the Gospels*. Traced back to the original Hermetic writings of 'The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus' 'as above - so below' is a shortening of 'That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, to

⁹² See Judges 10:16 and Ezekiel 8:14.

⁹³ For more information on Inanna see: **Wolkstein D** and **Kramer SN** (1983) *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*. New York: Harper & Row.

accomplish the miracle of the One Thing;’ it is a fundamental work for Hermetic beliefs according to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.⁹⁴ As indicated above with her misinterpretation and misapplication of the *Hieros Gamos*, Starbird once again falls short by appropriating this pre-Christian understanding and trying to meld it with her continuing Christian beliefs. Starbird describes the saying/concept in a Christian context with *above* as transcendent and *below* as earth-bound, directly implying ‘as in heaven so on earth.’ In some pre-Christian (or Pagan) understandings, especially the neo-Pagan Wicca, *above* is terrestrial and *below* is underground in the earth *and* within the individual. Hermeticism, Jungians, and post-Jungians derive their understanding based on a form of spiritual alchemy (spiritual self-transformation that in the Jungian world is the Path of Individuation), instead utilising the original meaning of Hermes taking his three realms of knowledge into consideration: physical, emotional, and mental. In this understanding, what happens in one realm ‘above’ in the physical realm happens in the other ‘below’ in the emotional and mental (or psychic) realms as well. Often depicted in a cutaway image of a great tree—one half in bloom *above* the ground, and one half *below* ground depicting a visible intricate root system. For many it is either a celebration of the union between ourselves and the Earth with Nature as sacred, or it expresses the union of mind, soul, and body fundamental to Hermeticism and post-Jungian theory. It is not a celebration of a transcendent patriarchal religion. Had Starbird conducted a bit more research into her choice of supporting evidence, she may have discovered some of these inconsistencies and misinterpretations herself.

5.2.5.4 Jungian Analytical Psychology

Unlike Downing, Bolen, and Kidd before her, Starbird admits: ‘I knew nothing about psychology, nothing about personal myths or the unconscious associations that often serve as guides, pressing us forward along the way toward enlightenment and transformation.’ (Starbird, 1998: 33) She is introduced to a number of Jungian concepts through the Charismatic Emmanuel Community. In fact, it was one of Starbird’s closest friends in that community, Mary, with whom Starbird previously shared her heretical theses, who introduced Starbird to Jung. In *The Goddess in the Gospels* Starbird refers to a number of Jungian concepts including, in Starbird’s words: the ‘neglected feminine principle’ (ibid: 76); ‘the

⁹⁴ <http://www.golden-dawn.com/eu/displaycontent.aspx?pageid=115-hermetic-tradition>

lost archetype of the Bride' (ibid: 145); the importance of synchronicity in validating her research (see previous section and pp xi, xii, 79, and 151); Divine immanence in writing: 'These communities taught a simple gospel of spiritual transformation and believe that the Spirit filled not only the life of Jesus Christ, but *each* human life, imbuing it with holiness.' (ibid: 125, emphasis in the original); 'the ancient blueprint of sacred union' which Starbird images in the six-pointed star—a Jungian union of Riane Eisler's 'chalice' (the feminine) and 'the blade' (the masculine) (ibid: 38); and Starbird sees: '[...] parallels in the practice of medieval alchemy, turning lead into gold, and I realise that it was part of a spiritual process.' (ibid: 81) Although Starbird mentions von Franz in her memoir, she fails to credit von Franz in this realisation; the art of Jungian spiritual alchemy is a topic von Franz wrote about at great length after studying with Jung.

Starbird utilises Jungian concepts and terminology throughout her memoir; she writes: 'I covered much unmapped terrain during my journey into the depths of my unconscious.' (ibid: 109-10) But Starbird's use of Jung also exemplifies her limited knowledge of Jungian theory. She writes:

[...] I realize that I discovered things [...] about the workings of the human psyche, about psychology and symbolism, and about the interchangeability of mind and matter that I could never have learned in any other way. It was *as if* the encounter with the naked contents of my own unconscious were a necessary shortcut through the dark forest of the unknown, without which I would not have been prepared to receive the enlightenment that followed. (ibid: 106, emphasis is mine)

In analytical psychology, Starbird's 'encounter with the naked contents' of her unconscious *is* a necessary step on the Path of Individuation. In fact, it is the first step along Jung's Path, (Jung, 1968) and further research into Jungian theory could have revealed this critical information to Starbird. With this knowledge, her comment about it being '*as if* the encounter' were necessary implies that Starbird is the first to draw this conclusion when, in fact, she is basing it on Jungian theory. In this example, Starbird's word choice and her lack of research are problematic, and it is easy to see why Jungians or post-Jungians may take issue with Starbird's cursory grasp of Jung's theories and models.

Starbird also discusses the transition from Roman Catholicism to a form of Gnostic Christianity in Jungian terms; she writes:

The symbol for wholeness I now embrace is one of neither matriarchy nor patriarchy, but rather a “Godde”-centred, holistic partnership at all levels. (This creative new spelling of God represents the “sacred union” and is designed to include both masculine and feminine attributes of the Divine.) We do not seek to banish the masculine principle or injure it further; it is suffering intensely already. (ibid: 109)

Starbird credits Jung and connects him to the Ancient Greek thinkers upon which Jung drew some of his most fundamental theories; Starbird writes:

It is precisely this principle of balance that was understood by the Greek philosophers and alchemists and preached again in the twentieth century by Carl Jung and his disciples. This integration of male and female is fundamental to our healing—of ourselves, our families, our societies, our planet. (ibid: 152)

There are, however, two problems with her inclusion of Jung that negatively impact the validity of Starbird’s work with scholars. To begin with, and most disturbing to academics, Starbird often cites Jungian concepts as her own. The following citation is a perfect example; Starbird writes:

[...] Mary and I did not think in terms of the personal holocaust that would be suffered in our own psyches. That was something we would learn about only through direct experience. What follows here is a painful personal witness to the devastation brought about by this “sudden death” of my own belief system. Looking back I see parallels in the practice of medieval alchemy, turning lead into gold, and *I realise that it was part of a spiritual process*, but at the time it was excruciating—the “dark night” of my soul. (ibid: 81, emphasis is mine)

Although her ideas appear throughout *The Goddess in the Gospels*, Marie-Louise von Franz, a devout student of Jung, is not credited. Fascinated by Jung’s concept of spiritual alchemy, von Franz specialised in the transformation of the self through connection with the Divine Source. Never cited as the source of these concepts, von Franz and her colleague Emma Jung are, however, both listed in the selected bibliography. Though Starbird implies she has read von Franz’s book *Alchemy* and her collaboration with Emma Jung, *The Grail Legend*, several of the main themes contained in these works are uncredited in *The Goddess in the Gospels*. This is another serious impediment to the validity of Starbird’s memoir. The problem is further hampered in that the reader, perhaps unaware of the underlying theories that Starbird has appropriated, may assume that Starbird is contributing new theories to the dialogue when, in fact, she is appropriating them

from others and either implying they are her own revelations or presenting them as historical fact.

The other difficulty with Starbird's use of Jungian analytical psychology is that she limited her research to von Franz and Emma Jung—the two students of Jung's who stayed true to Jung's theories without revising or amplifying them much beyond Jung's established boundaries. Starbird does not seem to read any post-Jungians, including Harding, missing the entire feminist revision of Jung indicating that Starbird is very much still a Daughter of the Church, and by Kidd's standards still in a Deep Sleep, undoubtedly limited in her 'ways of knowing'—and, therefore, limited in her awakening. While Starbird includes a feminist commentary on the patriarchal nature of the Church she offers no feminist commentary on Jung's original theories and models. She is the only author in this study who does not engage with any post-Jungian feminist revisions of Jung, and it is evident that Jung's original theories and models permeate Starbird's memoir.

Examining the underlying theories in *The Goddess in the Gospels* also reveals the many difficulties and faults with the memoir as a work of literature. In addition to the controversial use of Gematria and the theses of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, Starbird appropriates some Jungian and pre-Christian rites or terms in an attempt to bolster her argument. Her use of Jung is problematic for reasons examined in earlier chapters of this study as well as the uncredited appropriation of von Franz and Emma Jung. All of these elements negatively impact the validity of this rebirth memoir and made finding significant strengths in *The Goddess in the Gospels* a challenge.

Starbird is the most contentious of all the authors in this study having received the most criticism for her work as speculative and unscholarly. Considering that the validity of the memoir is questionable, it begs the question why include it in this study? The answer was examined in the two functions of the memoir: *The Goddess in the Gospels* is important both as a source of theological and academic controversy and as crucial source material for Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). As part of the source material for Brown's novel, Starbird and her thesis have been transmitted to the general population. This work of fiction has been widely read by people both with an interest in the religious subject matter and with no interest in this matter. Both the novel and the later film's popularity

indicate that despite the historical and theological inaccuracies, the theme of the film resonates with many readers/viewers. Moreover, this memoir seems to be finding its place amongst the host of literature shared in the Western Goddess Movement. *The Goddess in the Gospels* was highly recommended to me by several adherents in the Movement as an exemplary memoir. It may be highly problematic for scholars, but this memoir is having an impact on popular culture and contemporary theology. The continuance of Starbird's (and Baigent's) theories indicates that despite academic censure, the general population is, in fact, discussing these ideas. This has strong implications for theology and feminist theology that surely warrants further enquiry. Starbird's memoir is also significant to the Western Goddess Movement as it establishes both that the Movement has crossed over into Catholic laity and that Jung has been incorporated into Catholicism through the Charismatic movement. (Noll, 1994; Hird, 1998) Furthermore, *The Goddess in the Gospels* continues the historical thread of the Jungian Anima and Whitmont's (and Bolen's) reclamation of the Goddess through the Grail legends. In the next chapter, the final memoir, *Book of Shadows*, will reveal how diverse the Western Goddess movement has become, how Jung and Harding have persisted in contemporary faith practices, and how one voice can advocate for and shed light on an entirely misunderstood faith tradition.

Chapter 6

Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess

Phyllis Curott

1998

*There is nothing more magical than
the presence of the sacred in one's life.
It changes everything.⁹⁵*

6.1 In Summation

The previous chapters explored four diverse rebirth memoirs, each of which utilises Jungian and/or post-Jungian theory in different ways. Chapter 2 examined Downing's memoir, *The Goddess* (1981) as an Individuation memoir built upon the theories of Carl Jung together with her substantial contributions to the second wave of feminism and the Western Goddess Movement through her continuation of Jungian Theory and building upon Harding's early feminist revisions of Jung. Chapter 3 analysed Bolen and her rebirth memoir *Crossing to Avalon* (1994). Bolen follows Jung and a host of post-Jungians, and her memoir is substantial in tracing the history of both the key figures and the central beliefs of the Western Goddess Movement. Bolen also drastically changes the terrain established by Jung from psychological theory to religious praxis. Chapter 4 examines *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (1996) as Kidd introduces the 'reluctant pilgrim' and combines extensive academic research and personal therapy with a Jungian therapist to perpetuate Jung, Harding, Neumann, and Bolen's Great Mother Monomyth (amongst a host of other Jungian and post-Jungian beliefs). Kidd also advances Bolen's bridge from theory to praxis by offering her reader a pragmatic path away from the Church and toward Goddess. This led to Chapter 5 and Margaret Starbird who, while not having the same academic rigour as Kidd, still provides a memoir that is worthy of theological reflection revealing a vastly 'popular' and continuing source of beliefs that contradict the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. By

⁹⁵ Curott, 1998: 89.

utilising original Jungian theory, unrevised by post-Jungian feminists, Starbird helps to further propagate Jungian theory in relation to the Catholic Church and Christian Gnosticism. This chapter shall examine Phyllis Curott's memoir, *Book of Shadows*, and its main intention to break the socio-cultural stereotype and change the 'world's prejudice' against Curott's faith tradition—Wicca. (Curott, 1998: 55) Curott, like the authors before her, also utilises and cites both Jungian and post-Jungian theory; however Curott is distinct in this study as she fluidly blends Jungian and post-Jungian theory with modern-day Wicca.

6.1.1 Phyllis Curott, JD, HPs (1954 -)

Phyllis Curott's childhood was both intellectual and humanist; she situates her early impressions in her memoir:

In the past, everything about my life had been thoughtful and sensible. My parents were intellectuals who had left the superstitious constraints of religion behind them long ago. As a young girl, I remember asking my mother whether God existed. I was satisfied with her answer and lived my life as I had been raised—by the Golden Rule and the basic conviction that human beings were responsible for their own destinies. (Curott, 1998: 7)

She goes on:

But though my parents' moral beliefs were founded in reason, they were still two of the most spiritual people I had ever known. I'd learned from example as they practice their beliefs. My father, who'd gone to sea at the age of twelve, was a union organiser; my mother was a diplomat who, despite her wealthy upbringing, was part of the early fight for racial equality. I'd been raised with Woody Guthrie and the Metropolitan Opera, John Steinbeck and William Shakespeare, in a family that defied the boundaries of class, religion, and race. As my parents had, I defined myself by my intellectual capacities and convictions. I studied philosophy at Brown University and attended one of the top law schools in the country. (ibid: 7-8)

Trained at NYU Law School to be discerning and thorough, Curott was a dubious and reluctant pilgrim; she writes: 'I remained sceptical, that was my nature. Or perhaps my conditioning.' (ibid: 75) Her hesitation, similar to both Kidd and Starbird, is a major strength of this memoir and shall be examined in greater detail in a following section. Curott's own experiences however, including prophetic dreams and premonitions that would later come true, would prompt her towards a path she was both reluctant to follow or speak of; she writes: 'My idealism, and

my career choice, seemed resolutely sensible [...]. My recent psychic experiences, however, were not “sensible.” They were extrasensory, and the world I lived in had no explanation for them. And so I kept my secrets to myself.’ (ibid: 8)

But that was at the beginning of her journey in 1978. Three years after it began, Curott would be initiated into the mysteries. By 1983, Curott would start working as an advocate for other practicing Wiccans. In a brief video produced by Howcast Media, Curott introduces herself: ⁹⁶

I have been a Wiccan Priestess since 1981, so that’s more than 30 years. [...] I’m also a lawyer, and I’ve been practicing law for as long as I’ve been practicing Wicca, [...]. I was the only Wiccan attorney for a long time, and I was public since 1983, so I handled a lot of the early Wiccan-rights cases: the right to perform legally binding marriages in New York; the right to perform a Full Moon Ritual in a public park in Chicago, which other religions had been able to use for their purposes; I consulted on the ‘Pentacle Case,’ the Army Pentacle Case [supporting the request to be able to place pentagrams on the tombstones of fallen self-identified Pagan soldiers], and lots of high school students who wanted to wear pentacles. (Curott, 2013)

Curott also continues to lead, advocate, and educate others through her devotional work as the founder of the Temple of Ara, ‘[...] one of the oldest Wiccan congregations in America, a shamanic tradition rooted in the experience and ethics of immanent divinity.’⁹⁷ Curott holds various leadership and pastoral roles within Goddess-centred faith communities such as President Emerita of the Covenant of the Goddess and guest minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church in New York City and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Curott also works on an international level serving as:

[...] the Vice Chair of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, which is the world’s oldest and largest interfaith organisation which introduced Yoga and Buddhism to the United States, to the West, and which in 1993 was the first modern parliament to introduce Wicca and contemporary paganism to the world. (Curott, 2013)

In April 2014, Curott was awarded for her ongoing work with the Parliament. Heather Greene reports Curott was one of two Pagans ‘[...] inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr. International College of Ministries and Laity at Morehouse

⁹⁶ <http://www.howcast.com/>

⁹⁷ For more information see: www.templeofara.org and <http://www.phylliscurott.com/>

College in Atlanta, Georgia. [...] for their ongoing efforts in the interfaith movement namely for the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religion.' (Greene, 2014: 1) Curott, along with Andras Corban-Arthen of the EarthSpirit Community, are the first two Pagans to receive this interfaith honour.

Curott also participated in the United Nations' NGO Committee on the Status of Women and has served as the Wiccan representative to the Harvard University Religious Pluralism Project's Consultation on Religious Discrimination and Accommodation. She is also featured as an expert in Howcast's 'How to Understand Wicca' video series, 48 videos 2012-2014. A prominent figure in modern Western Wicca, Curott continues to advocate, educate, and strives to 'change the world's prejudice' against Witches and Pagans on an international scale. (Curott, 1998: 55)

6.1.2 *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess* (1998)

Book of Shadows chronicles a three-year period in Phyllis Curott's life from her awakening in 1978 to her 1981 initiation as a Wiccan Priestess. Although the titles of the other four memoirs are descriptive of the journey contained within, Curott's title holds a deeper, double meaning; she explains:

Thousands of years ago, the Sumerians created a legendary collection of invocations to the Goddess, ordaining their magical corpus of poetry and songs a "Book of Shadows." Over time, *Book of Shadows* has come to refer to a Witch's journal, a record of spiritual wisdom, a diary of spells, songs, chants, rituals, and invocations. (Curott, 1998: xi)

However, because Curott is writing about a faith tradition known for its secrecy, which is commonly feared, misrepresented, and often misunderstood, she is careful to protect the identity of both her colleagues and her sister Witches. In an 'Author's Note' Curott writes:

The story that follows is true. In an effort to safeguard the privacy of individuals whose lives have touched mine, all the names and many of the identifying details have been changed. In some cases, composite characters have been created and some events altered for the purpose of further disguising the identity of individuals. (ibid: xv)

Revisions for anonymity can be anticipated in the memoir genre. It is the author's choice, perhaps in consultation with the individuals themselves, whether or not

to change or name the identity of those involved. Bolen and Starbird were both public about the individuals who aided in their awakening; Kidd, however, was more cautious to protect her circle of friends. Curott makes a choice to safeguard their privacy, perhaps due, in part, to concerns centring on domestic violence issues detailed in the memoir combined with the culture of fear that surrounds Witchcraft and Paganism. Despite the revisions for anonymity, the individuals depicted as part of her awakening are a dynamic and diverse group of women who accompany her along the path to Goddess. Her journey would begin with unwanted visions; Curott writes:

The visions had started a few months back—coming in psychic flashes, premonitions, and even precognitive dreams. It was 1978, my final year in law school, and while most of my fellow students were narrowing their sights on which corporate or tax law firm they wanted to work for, my world was expanding in ways I could not comprehend. (ibid: 3)

Curott would repress these visions for the duration of her academic studies. Unwanted and unrelenting, the images would continue for over a year. Directly after receiving her Juris Doctor from NYU Law School, Curott started working in the music industry. Early on, she met a band manager named ‘Sophia;’ as two of the relatively few women in the music industry in the 1970’s, they often spent time talking when their paths crossed. During one conversation, Sophia mentioned that she was a Witch; and Curott was taken aback. Over time, however, Curott’s interest would grow, and Sophia would be the first person to guide Curott on her path.

Taking the First Step – A Tarot Card Reading

Sophia offers to take Curott to a bookstore called the Magical Cauldron. There she is introduced to the proprietor, ‘Maia,’ who greets Curott warmly and offers a Tarot card reading. After being comfortably seated, Maia places the Tarot deck on the table and asks, “What is your question?” Curott writes: ‘And in spite of my scepticism, I found myself speaking from the heart. / I asked: “Where does the path lie?” / Without hesitation she replied, “It lies within.” / “But how do I get there?”’ (ibid: 15) This would be the question that would be revealed in the Tarot reading. Curott details the reading with vivid imagery and reactions despite the fact she is chronicling events from twenty years ago. She spends three pages describing this experience and reveals: ‘Maia spoke of things that I had told no

one, small things that astonished me [...].’ (ibid: 16) The sceptic in her was being challenged by the revelations held by Maia, a complete stranger, and her Tarot deck—things that not even Sophia knew. As Curott sat in astonishment, she writes: ‘In the space of less than an hour, my perception of the world, like the cards spread before me, had again been turned upside down.’ (ibid: 16)

Selected: Training in the Coven

After the Tarot card reading, Maia invited Curott to meet a group of like-minded women. Continuing to be sceptical, Curott would take some time to finally accept this invitation. When she did, she was welcomed into a community and offered a chance to learn the ways of Wicca. They gather in a hidden antechamber inside the bookstore. Each week the space is transformed for their circle, and their training begins with history, research, visualisation techniques and guided meditations. As the candidates progressed, the instruction moved on to working with the elements of air, earth, fire, water, and spirit, and the four quarters, north, south, east, and west—all of which hold individual properties and energies. After months of work, the time had come to decide who would remain for further training. Curott writes:

“I have a very important announcement to make,” Maia poured red wine into the Goddess chalice in the centre of the altar as she spoke. “It’s taken several weeks to make our determination. You are the women we have chosen for training and initiation into our coven [...].” (ibid: 50)

Eight very different women were chosen for training; they were a diverse group of colour, culture, sexual orientation, and economic strata. But they shared similarities as well:

We were women seeking a spiritual home, a place where we would be respected and welcomed, where our souls would be healed and empowered, and where our experiences would be honoured as a source of spiritual wisdom. We were seeking the Goddess [...]. (ibid: 55)

Curott does take a moment in her memoir to comment on the gender construct of her coven speaking about sharing this sacred space with two other practicing covens—one of mix gender initiates and another group dedicated to men. This coven, the ‘Mother Grove of the Sisterhood,’ would be dedicated as a women-only circle. According to Berger, Leach, and Shaffer (2003) there is a relatively high

number of men who also pursue Goddess-centred Witchcraft.⁹⁸ Curott makes this point to her reader to include men (and those who might not identify with either of those gender ‘types’) along on her path to Goddess. Wicca is a tradition open to and practiced by all genders—and this all-inclusive foundation is enticing to a growing population.

Curott’s training continued—a constant combination of research and practice, she learned herb lore, the making of potions, oils, and amulets, and the art of casting a ritual circle. ‘With each circle, each day that passed, I was travelling deeper into a sacred landscape and learning the language of this realm.’ (Curott, 1998: 117) Curott also learned how to protect herself from harm by creating a ‘psychic shield’ around her. (ibid: 153)

Learning the Tools of Divination

A fair amount of magical work is accomplished with tools of divination. Curott writes: ‘A divinatory tool provides you with information regarding forces, possibilities, and probabilities so you can make wise decisions.’ (ibid: 148) She spent years learning to master tools from a variety of ancient traditions: Curott studied the Chinese *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, dating back to the 11th century BCE; the Elder Futhark Runes, also known as Old Norse, a Germanic language, often credited to the Norse God Odin who sacrificed his eye for knowledge, which dates back to the beginning of the Common Era; the ancient art of astrology with roots in both ancient Greece and China several centuries before the Common Era, and Tarot cards which date back to the early 15th century in Milan. She writes:

Some were easier to use and master than others, and they varied in the depth with which they could see into one’s soul, into the future or the past. The *I Ching* and runes revealed the infinite wisdom of the moment: The Tarot stretched further ahead and back in time, and astrology charted the most distant course. (ibid: 147)

As her training progressed, Curott was becoming more comfortable and less sceptical, but she felt she was still missing one integral experience: ‘[...] what I wanted most was to experience communion with the Goddess.’ (ibid: 152)

⁹⁸ See: **Berger** HA, **Leach** EA and **Shaffer** LS (2003) *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo Pagans in the United States*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Drawing Down the Moon

Curott would get her wish when the Coven needed to send healing energy to their ailing Elder. On this night, they would perform the sacred ritual of ‘Drawing Down the Moon’—incidentally the title of another famous contemporary Witch’s handbook by Margot Adler.⁹⁹ A trance technique used by High Priestesses, ‘Drawing Down the Moon’ is a complex ritual that requires a full moon and a strong, skilled, and willing Priestess, “[...] to experience communion with the Goddess. It’s a mystical altered state in which the priestess becomes a vessel for her. She may have visions, receive guidance or empowerment. And the Goddess may even speak through her [...].” (Ibid: 193) This is a temporary role similar to the Oracle of Delphi. Curott details how the group raised a ‘cone of power’ containing healing energy. During this ritual, Curott comes face-to-face with Goddess; she writes:

I had struggled to find her, but it was she who had found me. [...] I had experienced an extraordinary presence, a feminine force of transformative power. I *had* heard the Goddess, speaking through her priestess. I had seen her shining in my sister’s eyes. (ibid: 195, emphasis in the original)

When Two Worlds Collide

Book of Shadows not only chronicles Curott’s early years in discovery of Wicca, but also her early law career as well: ‘My circle was cast and some part of each day was now spent between the worlds.’ (ibid: 124) She speaks candidly about how she struggled to compete in male-dominated industries such as law and music and how her path to Goddess was affecting her sense of self and her perspective on her career. She writes:

The stresses at work were accumulating [...]. Instead of feeling confident and empowered by my glamorous job, I was feeling increasingly anxious and uneasy. I had been delighted at the possibility of working in the arts, but this world of the rich and famous seemed so often to be driven by greed and fool’s gold. (ibid: 133-34)

Curott’s memoir details the openly misogynistic views held by many corporations in the 1970s. She shares moments of public disgrace and her own raw emotions; she writes:

⁹⁹ See: Adler M (1979) *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers and Other Pagans in America*. NY & London: Penguin Books.

There were very few women in the music business back then, and on this day I'd had only a brief brush with the reality women too often had to deal with. Today I'd won what I wanted for my clients, and I hadn't succumbed to humiliation. In fact, I'd handed out a fair dose right back, and frankly that had felt pretty damn good. I'd been clever and strong, played by the rules of the game—I'd won. (ibid: 159)

Her elation turned sour: '[...] I felt violated. I was proving that I had what it took to win. But I was becoming someone I didn't want to be.' (ibid: 159) The time was fast approaching for Curott to make some hard choices: could she continue in her career path even though it stood against everything she was coming to believe in? And could she take the final step required and face the unknown rite of initiation?

The Rite of Initiation – a Time of Rebirth

Curott put herself forward for initiation: 'With gratitude and certainty, I entered the circle of rebirth.' (ibid: 277) She describes in shocking detail how she allowed herself to be stripped and bound, left waiting at the entrance to the sacred space—naked and alone in the dark bookstore. Including these details drew heavy criticism from other Witches—angry that their secret mysteries were now being made public knowledge. Curott took a great risk including such ritual detail in her memoir, but ultimately decided that breaking the shade of silence and revealing some of the mysteries might better serve the community to breakdown long-held cultural stereotypes of Satanic rituals. In other details, Curott was more selective; she writes: 'I was taught the use of magical tools, of sword and wand, cup and pentacle, and more. I was given the secret names of the Goddess and the God. And I was given my copy of our traditions' *Book of Shadows*.' (ibid: 277) After facing her fears, her own shadow, and enduring a spiritual rebirth, Curott emerged anew; she writes: 'Finally, unbound and unveiled, I was presented to my community and to the Goddesses and Gods as Aradia, in whose name I emerged from my initiation consecrated as a priestess of the Goddess.'¹⁰⁰ (ibid: 277) Curott remembers that night as a moment that transformed her; she writes:

I now know my consciousness and my life had been forever changed. I found the Goddess, and, with her, the key to the secret of my story . .

¹⁰⁰ Curott explains her choice in names; she writes: '[...] Aradia, an Italian priestess of Proserpina's mysteries. She was someone who had actually lived during the 1300s, a kind of female Robin Hood. As a priestess of the people, she taught the ways and wisdom of the Old Religion, leading peasants and runaway slaves in rebellion against the brutal nobility and their allies, the Catholic Church.' (Curott, 1998: 273). Interestingly, *Aradia* is also the name of a well-known early text on witchcraft written by American folklorist Charles Leland published in 1899.

. on the other side of the threshold, one life had ended, and yet another was born. (ibid: 278)

Coming Out of the Broom Closet - 1983

The last integral step on Curott's path was finally going public—a term humorously referred to in Witchcraft as 'coming out of the broom closet.' The first person, outside of the coven, to know about Curott's new commitment to Goddess was her mother; she writes:

During the past year I'd hinted at my unusual feminist interests, and as a feminist my mother had listened with an open-mindedness and sympathy. But she was an intellectual who'd long ago distanced herself from the superstition and oppression of religion. [...] / As she took in my radiant expression, she understood, in her heart, the truth and value of my experiences. (ibid: 279-80)

6.2 Critical Review

6.2.1 Who is the intended audience? Are they reached?

Curott addresses two distinct audiences: fellow aspiring Witches and curious strangers; her audience and networks are global.

6.2.1.1 Aspiring Witches

Akin to the other memoirs in this study, *Book of Shadows* was written, in part, for those who follow Curott on her path to Goddess. In her Preface, she writes: 'I have found a beacon of truth, a torch that I offer for your journey into the future, into the realms of wonder, magic, and divinity.' (Curott, 1998: xiv) Curott provides enough detail to whet the appetite of anyone who is curious about Wicca, but retains certain central mysteries. She also provides an Appendix that includes a wealth of information for the curious or eager pilgrim: Curott charts the four quadrants (N,S,E, &W) in a table of magical correspondence relating the quadrants to the elements, nature, aspects, qualities, goddesses, gods, animals, time, colours, tools, astrological signs, plants and spirit form; includes directions and rituals for several spells, charms and magical potions; names and explains the eight holy sabbats (Samhuinn, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lughnasadh, and Mabon); lists resources including Wiccan and Goddess guides, periodicals, newsletters and magazines, spiritual organisations, educational institutions, centres, and programmes; merchant catalogues, special events, and Goddess pilgrimage tours, including the one hosted by Carol P Christ through the Ariadne

Institute—the same pilgrimage that Sue Monk Kidd took during her quest. The Appendix concludes with a list of ‘Books of Interest’ that includes a number of major figures in the Western Goddess Movement—including Bolen, Christ, Eisler, Harding, Jung, Neumann, Reuther, Stone, and Zimmer-Bradley. Curott’s research, exemplified in her ‘Books of Interest’ mirrors that of Sue Monk Kidd, and will be examined in further detail as a strength of *Book of Shadows*.

As a High Priestess whose primary task is in passing on her knowledge and training to others, Curott continues to educate anyone who wants to learn more about Wicca. Her ongoing advocacy for Wicca and Paganism will also be examined as a primary function of this memoir.

6.2.1.2 Curious Strangers

While Curott’s identified audience is addressed directly in her Preface, her *implied* audience is apparent through the ultimate intentions and functions of the memoir. Seeking to inform those who might hold preconceived prejudice against Witches and Pagans, Curott intends to break the cultural, Hollywood distorted, stereotypes of Witches—to change the ‘world’s prejudice’ of the curious strangers. (ibid, 55) She also addresses what she understands to be the responsibilities of organised religion in the vilification of women. *Book of Shadows*, functions, however, as an advocate for and source of knowledge of Wicca—one of the many faith traditions included in the Western Goddess Movement. Therefore, Curott’s implied audience are the same individuals who hold the distorted prejudices she is trying to confront.

In both respects Curott has been very successful in reaching her audience. Her 1998 memoir was a best-seller in the US. The 1999 trade paperback was simultaneously released in the US and the UK. Since then, *Book of Shadows* has been translated into Italian (1999), Spanish (2000), German (2002), and Dutch (2003). A Kindle™ edition was made available in 2013. As with all the other memoirs in this study, *Book of Shadows* is still in print, seventeen years later. Her work as both an educator and an attorney has made a significant contribution in the acceptance and recognition of the rights of Wiccans and Pagans in the United States, and her work with the Parliament of World Religions has introduced a strong and credible Pagan voice to the current global interfaith dialogue.

6.2.2 What are the intentions of the work? What did they achieve?

Phyllis Curott published her memoir nearly twenty years after her spiritual rebirth for three specific reasons. Despite her ongoing advocacy and litigation to advance Wiccan and Pagan rights in the United States, Curott found herself, time and again, facing unrealistic and irrational prejudice and fear from all walks of life. The secrecy that shrouded Wicca and the various faith traditions commonly deemed as 'Pagan,' originally meant to safe-guard its practitioners, was now working to reinforce the cultural stereotype and prejudice Curott was fighting to change. *Book of Shadows* was written for three main reasons: 1) to break the cultural stereotype changing the 'world's prejudice', 2) to address the responsibility of organised religion in the vilification of women, and 3) to celebrate women's religious experience. (Curott, 1998: 55) Each intention shall be examined further in the following sections.

6.2.2.1 Break the Cultural Stereotype; Change the 'World's Prejudice'

In order to break the cultural stereotype and attempt to change the 'world's prejudice' Curott was aware that she would have to increase the scale of the audience to which she would both advocate and educate. (ibid: 55) She writes: 'I knew that the truth about Wicca would never be embraced until those who knew it had the courage to speak it, to challenge the lies, to retrieve the healing power of which that word was once honoured.' (ibid: 242) However, Curott does not ask the reader to blindly buy-in to Wicca and Paganism; she takes the reader along with her as she confronts and questions the stereotypes she struggled with; she writes:

Nothing could have prepared me for what I encountered when I stepped into the room behind the hidden door. I had never thought that Witches were real, and, despite lovely, blonde Sophia with her stylish haircut and impeccably hip wardrobe, when I did think of them at all, I couldn't help but recall images from a lifetime of fairy tales and Shakespeare, movies, and television. There were the hurly-burly hags who predicted Macbeth's fate, poisoned Snow White's apple, and coveted Dorothy's red shoes—ugly old crones with warts on their noses, wearing black hats, riding broomsticks, brewing potions in their cauldrons, and casting evil spells in the company of black cats. (ibid: 23)

Stepping into the room, Curott discovered that her preconceived ideas were quite inaccurate. Behind the door she found a group of women very much like herself; this was the first step in breaking down Curott's long-held prejudices. She reveals

her own preconceived misconceptions alongside the discoveries she makes. 'Erroneously dismissed as godlessness, paganism is actually just the opposite: It is a spirituality in which everything in the natural world is experienced as holy.' (ibid: 116) Curott uses her own prejudices as a point of reference, and she cleverly builds an argument by alternating between her own misconceptions and the actuality she encountered. Aware of some of the major misunderstanding about this Goddess-centred community, Curott addresses them head-on; she writes:

The great myth is that we cast spells over people, or try to bend nature to our will with supernatural power. That idea of magic has nothing to do with our practice of the ancient ways of the Goddess. It's actually a reflection of the patriarchal religions and their view of supernatural power, like when Moses parted the Red Sea. It reflects a very different spiritual world view from ours—one in which God placed man upon the earth to have dominion over it. We don't work with supernatural forces, we work with nature's divine energy. (ibid: 72)

And despite the commonly-held misconception that Witches and Pagans operate without a moral code, implied by the continuing stereotype of Witches and Pagans cavorting with Satan, Curott openly includes in her memoir the fundamental moral principles which guide and bind all adherents of Wicca and most contemporary non-Wiccan Witches. Witches are bound by two sacred laws:

The first is "And ye harm none, do what ye will" [... followed by] the Threefold Rule: "That which you send out will return to you threefold." This is true of both good and bad energy and so we never send out bad. If you do not practice in accord with these ethical precepts, you are not a true Witch. (ibid: 82)

The first principle is quite similar to the 'Golden Rule' that Curott was raised to believe in. This first, and most important law, sets the foundation for all those who practice Witchcraft whether they work in a group or as solitary practitioners. It warns all who practice Witchcraft to *never* do harm to others—emotionally, psychologically, or physically. The second principle, commonly known as the 'Law of the Threefold,' echoes beliefs found in other Nature-based or Goddess-centred faith traditions. It constantly reminds each and every practitioner that whatever energy they put out (be they positive or negative) will return to them *three times greater*. Therefore, the concept of sending out malicious or negative energies or spells is quashed by the individual's adherence to this strict code of conduct—and perhaps a large fear of magical repercussions. No morally-grounded Witch would

consciously bring such harm upon themselves—or others. Curott writes: ‘Wicca is a spiritual practice concerned with the union of spirit and matter—spirit animating matter, and matter embodying spirit. The true and sacred nature of this communion is love.’ (ibid: 215) Through this inclusion, Curott directly dismisses the notion that Witches and Wiccans hold no moral code.

The Mother Grove of the Sisterhood

Another attempt to break the cultural stereotypes is in the way Curott introduces the women with whom she shares her path--chapter 3 of *Book of Shadows* is entitled ‘A Coven of Witches.’ In order to dispel the long-held, Hollywood influenced, stereotype of Witches as old, wart-ridden hags, Curott introduces the reader to the seven other women who were chosen alongside her. The coven is led by a trio of Witches: “Bellona and I [Maia] are the High Priestesses of the Sisterhood, and Nonna is our Elder, I’ve been a Third Degree priestess for almost ten years.” (ibid: 51) Curott writes:

These Witches, these women were members of an ancient college of priestesses and keepers of the Old Ways. Sophia called them shamans, visionaries with knowledge of the spirit world, carrying on the ways of the sacred earth and the Great Goddess. Since the beginning of human history, priestesses had played the vital, though long hidden role of spiritual guide. They were the wise women, they were Witches, and they were to be my teachers of the ancient wisdom of the Goddess. (ibid: 43)

Curott is joined by ‘Annabelle,’ a romance novelist in her mid-30s; ‘Marcia,’ who describes herself as ‘a gay hospital orderly’ in her mid-20s; ‘Mindy,’ a chiropractor in her mid-40s; ‘Gillian,’ a socially-prominent magazine editor in her late 20’s; ‘Onatah,’ a 19-year-old college student; ‘Jeannette,’ a phone company employee who refused to reveal her age; and ‘Naomi,’ a sculptor in her mid-20’s. (Ibid: 51-53) Curott confronts the reader’s culturally held stereotypes by introducing a group of real and diverse Goddess-centred women. She also talks about the empowerment and safety of working in a group; she writes:

[...] we were creating a place of safety and support by sharing our experiences, our fears and our dreams, by learning and working together. Our circle strengthened our confidence, our abilities, our faith in our instincts and intuitions, and our sense of community. We were delving into realms of consciousness even more empowering, and if the culture had no place for priestesses, we would create one. (ibid: 55)

Curott made intentional choices in introducing her sister Witches and including moments from their lives in her memoir. By portraying them as real, three-dimensional women with their own life struggles and victories, Curott breaks down the cultural stereotype of the Witch-hag. These are vibrant women aged 19 to well over 50 from all walks of life—women with whom Curott’s readers may find a connection.

Although truly a vocal and highly-recognised advocate for Wicca and Paganism, Curott is not alone. There are others who have spoken out—exemplified by the authors in this study; she writes:

I am grateful for the brave and often public efforts of many remarkable women and men of the Wiccan and Goddess traditions. Their willingness to work for and speak out on behalf of our growing community has laid the foundation of public acceptance and interest. (ibid: vii)

Fostering ‘public acceptance’ is a primary intention of Curott’s *Book of Shadows*.

6.2.2.2 Address the Responsibility of Religion in the Vilification of Women

Curott’s secondary intention with *Book of Shadows* is to address what she deems as the responsibility of organised religion in the vilification of women. Curott proposes this by revealing what she deems the ‘hidden history’ of women’s vilification and demonization in the West; she writes: ‘There is a hidden history that few people know, a history that holds many interwoven truths—about women, about the earth, and about how Western civilization lost its soul.’ (ibid: 32) In this section three main complaints are addressed: (1) the rise of the Hebrew Military Kings, (2) the role of the Church in the advancement of the plague, and (3) the Church’s responsibility in the creation and use of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (also known as *The Hammer of Witches*). While Curott makes some very valid arguments about the lost history of women in various religious traditions, the inclusion of the material below, however, is where Curott’s research and memoir become somewhat problematic for the critical reader. Several questionable or unsubstantiated historical claims are made by Curott. Her historical scenarios, exemplified in the following sections, include historical claims and events which are decontextualized. In this Curott displays her lack of theological history and often relies on the accounts of others as historical fact. These issues will be examined, in context, below.

The ‘demonization’ and ‘vilification of women, Curott believes, occurs through their lost history in religion. Invariably, Curott echoes Jung’s complaint with the religious dogma of the Abrahamic faith traditions. (See Jung, 1995: 73.) Curott writes: ‘Here also was the tragic history of how humanity lost its connection to the sacred, how it came to lose its way in a maze of ultimate alienation, and how we have come to stand, now, at the brink of extinction.’ (1998: 64-65) She goes on to write:

The Goddess’s sacred culture began to disappear from the face of Western culture. A male God assumed the throne of heaven, as kings seized the thrones of the earthly realm and religion became the sole dominion of men. Only they could become clergy, only they could interpret the divine, which was now entirely masculine: God the Father, and his Son, and the Holy Spirit. A masculine trinity now replaced the ancient Threefold Goddess of Mother, Maiden, and Crone. (ibid: 65)

According to Curott, this overthrow of an existing faith tradition was aided, in large part, by the rise of the Hebrew ‘Military Kings.’

Rise of the Military Kings

Curott claims that with the rise of the Abrahamic monotheistic faith traditions who centred upon a transcendent and judgemental Father God, existing faith traditions favouring a Mother Goddess were in danger of being devastated—attempting to historically pinpoint the beginnings of the patriarchy and the subjugation of women on a global scale; Curott writes:

Temples had been destroyed and statues shattered as priestesses were replaced by priests and political power began to be held by military kings. With the military predominance of the Hebrews, worship of the Goddess was punishable by death, and a period of prolonged warfare led to the gradual destruction of neighbouring Goddess cultures. The status of women declined precipitously. They were no longer independent citizens who could rule or own property. Not only were women forbidden to participate as religious or secular leaders, they were now chattel, the property of fathers or husbands, who had absolute power over them. (ibid: 63-64)

Curott evidences this statement through Old Testament references citing both Exodus 34:13-14 ‘But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves, for thou shalt worship no other god [...]’ and Deuteronomy 2:34 ‘We captured . . . and put to death everyone in the cities, men, women, and dependents; we left no survivor.’ (ibid: 62-63) She goes on to summarise the

forced conversion to the patriarchal faith traditions as vicious: ‘Violence enforced theology: stoning and other brutal deaths were inflicted on women who worshiped the Goddess, who refused arranged marriages, who were not virgins at marriage, who had sexual relations outside of marriage, or who were raped!’ (ibid: 64) In other words, Curott is claiming that the rise of the Military Kings would bring about the decimation of the ancient faith traditions that existed for millennia—vilifying and demonising women as weak, corrupt, and sinful—a sociological, political, and theological campaign that would continue to this very day. Her conclusions, however, are problematic. By citing the Old Testament as evidence to her claims, Curott is implying that the Bible is a historical and literal document. While the belief of a minority of Christian doctrines, the literal interpretation of the Bible as history, is, in contemporary times, vastly discarded in favour of a metaphorical or allegorical interpretation. There are, however, theologians on both side of this biblical debate. From a historical analysis perspective, it is too convenient for Curott to lay the blame for the decimation of Goddess worship, the birth of the patriarchy and the subjugation of women to one historical point in time. Her historical causation is problematic due to its decontextualized nature and lack of engagement with the source material. Her brief discussion is taken out of the context of its history, and history, especially women’s history, is notoriously the by-product of a number of events, beliefs, and causes—never one perfectly perceived, singular event as inferred by Curott.¹⁰¹

Cats, Rats, Plagues, and the Church

Included in Curott’s ‘hidden history’ is an intriguing theory that I had not encountered before. In speaking about the hostile relationship between the Church and practicing Pagans, Curott writes: ‘The Church was actually responsible for the Plague—they were the ones that killed all the cats.’ (ibid: 34) In her memoir, the source of this information is one of the coven’s three High Priestesses—Maia. Unfortunately, Curott does not cite any academic research in support of these contentious claims. There are two distinct accusations against the Church that need to be examined further: (1) that the Catholic Church was responsible for the mass killing of cats in medieval Europe, and (2) that through this act the Church was thereby liable for the spread of the plague in Europe.

¹⁰¹ For more information see: **Tosh J** (ed) (2000) *Historians on History*. Harlow: Pearson Education, with special attention to ‘Part Three: The New Radicalism’.

While an enormous amount of supposition abounds this theory, mainly from the Wiccan and witchcraft community, I discovered several interesting threads on Catholic Answers Forum where I read discussions regarding Pope Gregory IX and a series of bulls in 1232 or 1233 called '*Vox in Rama*'.¹⁰² Donald W Engels, Associate Professor of History at the University of Arkansas does, in fact, connect the decimation of the European cat population to the *Vox in Rama* of Gregory IX in his 1999 *Classical Cats: The rise and fall of the sacred cat*. Engels writes: 'One of the most significant facts in the history of witchcraft and the cat is the promulgation of Pope Gregory IX's first bull of the *Vox in Rama*, on 13 June 1233.' (Engels, 1999: 183) The bull connects Lucifer (or Satan) to black cats in the rites of witches. In fact, this historic period of cat killing inspired by the Holy Roman See was dubbed 'the great cat massacre' in 1984 by American Cultural Historian Robert Dalton.¹⁰³ Dalton also draws a link between 'the great cat massacre' and the condemnation of black cats as Satanic in the '*Vox in Rama*' of 1233. While not an official proclamation from the Pope to *kill* cats, the Pope's blatant connection between black cats and Lucifer could instigate the Catholic faithful's superstitious and fearful killing of many cats throughout Europe. This leads to the second proposition—the Church's responsibility in the spread of the plague throughout Europe. Originating in Asia in the early 1330s and reaching Europe via the Silk Road, the bubonic plague, or Black Death, is widely believed to have been caused by bacteria carried by fleas living on black rats.¹⁰⁴ If the '*Vox in Rama*' did incite the mass killing of cats then a correlation could be theorised that by decimating the cat population the invading and infected rat population was left unchecked and able to thrive—thereby spreading the plague more widely than if the rat population had been culled by the feral cat population. Consequently, the '*Vox in Rama*' (and therefore the Church) *could* be a major contributing factor to the long-lasting, widespread pandemic European outbreaks of plague at the time. Despite speculation, there is little historical evidence that cats were actually killed in large enough numbers to have facilitated the spread of the plague. Moreover, even if all the black cats were killed, cats come in many other colours, and even the decimation of all black cats would leave a large enough feral cat population to tend to the rats. Regardless of the historical accuracy of the claim,

¹⁰² <http://forums.catholic.com/showthread.php?t=455365>

¹⁰³ For more see: Darnton R (1984) *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. Basic Books.

¹⁰⁴ For more information see: "The Black Death of 1348 to 1350". HistoryLearningSite.co.uk. 2014. Web. Available at: http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/black_death_of_1348_to_1350.html

however, the idea that the Church was responsible for the death of cats and the spread of the plague remains an ‘urban legend’ within some traditions within the Western Goddess Movement, including Wicca.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*

The third instance where Curott accuses the Church of the vilification in women is taken from documents approved by the Church. Pope Gregory IX’s plan to combat heresy took an evil turn indeed. During the Medieval period, canon law on heresy was developed and enforced, and the Church moved to eradicate all heretics, including Goddess worship, by placing itself in judgement of those who were ‘non-believers’ and proceeding to either convert or execute them by fire. However, according to Curott and despite the Church’s efforts, the practices and mysteries continued. Curott writes:

Those who practised the old ways—in southern Italy, in the small towns of the British Isles, and, several centuries later, in rural parts of West Virginia and New England—were forced to do so secretly, having been driven underground nearly five hundred years ago, when accusations of Satanism first arose. From these accusations came the “Witchcraze,” the Church’s crusade to suppress the Old Religion of the Goddess and establish religious hegemony in Europe. Hundreds of thousands were killed in an unholy campaign, most of whom were women, who suffered great losses in economic and social power. But this was not the only wound to Western culture. The ancient knowledge of the village wise woman, and man, was nearly lost, as the sacred rites that maintained the connection between people, the earth, and the divine were rent asunder. (1998: xiii)

The implement of destruction for the witch craze was the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*). Published in 1487, the *Malleus* was written by two Dominican friars—Jacobus Sprenger and an unnamed collaborator.¹⁰⁵ Sprenger was an Inquisitor as authorised by Pope John XXII in 1320. Armed with a Papal Bull issued by Pope Innocent VIII in 1484, the *Malleus* was used as the guidebook for all inquisitors to follow—complete with Papal blessing. The *Malleus* was printed widely and in vast numbers—and was intended to bring about the end of any Goddess-centred worship that remained. It was used to strike fear in the hearts

¹⁰⁵ There have been ongoing debates about the identity of this second author; see: Mackay CS (Trans) (2009) *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*. Cambridge University Press.

and minds of men and women, and its after-effects would last to this day. Curott quotes the Coven Elder, Nonna:

“The grotesque distortion that we still contend with today, that Goddess worship is Satanism, was perpetrated by the Church to destroy the Old Religion. There is no Satan in the Old Religion. He belongs entirely to the patriarchal religions; he is their figure of evil.” Nonna continued, “Really, the Church’s assertion that Witchcraft is Satanism, or demonology, is a projection of their own fears and phobias. And they used this accusation to justify their violence. Those whom the Church could not convert, they finally tried to destroy with the Witch-hunts. And they were brutal.” (ibid: 28)

Curott speaks candidly about the horrors contained within the pages of the *Malleus*. She writes: ‘It was the women’s holocaust. [...] At least a hundred thousand people, mostly women, were executed on the basis of “confessions” that were obtained through the most vicious and sexually perverted forms of torture.’ (ibid: 28) Throughout this lengthy section of her memoir, Curott reveals some of the foundational ideas contained in the *Malleus*, she writes:

Witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable [...]. When a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil [...]. Women are intellectually like children [...]. Women are liars, it said, wicked-minded and in need of constant male supervision. They are responsible for impotence in men, for seducing them and destroying their souls. It accused Witches of making pacts with the devil and engaging in sex with him, sacrificing babies and eating children, flying through the air, and making a priest’s penis vanish. It ended with praise to God, “who had so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime.” (ibid: 28)

The witch craze would last centuries; Curott writes: ‘It was a prolonged period of ferocious persecution. The churches and their political allies seized the property of their victims and became very wealthy. And they were able to consolidate their own power and control.’ (ibid: 35) They were unable, however, to completely eradicate Goddess worship from the West. Curott quotes the coven Elder, Nonna: “Those who worshiped the Great Goddess had to go into hiding, or they would be killed. And traditions were passed down secretly, within families or magical orders” [...]’ (ibid: 33) Curott appears to be propagating the contentious and academically-problematic Murray thesis (1921) which shall be discussed in greater detail in a following section.

According to Curott, fear and secrecy endured; Curott writes: ‘Hundreds of years after the Witchcraze, the archetype of the horrific hag continues to hold tremendous power as a repository for modern culture’s fear of women, sexuality, and individual freedom.’ (ibid: xiii) Witch hunts are still common practice in many parts of Africa and South America. Moreover, the fear of Witchcraft has not abated as is evident by Elizabeth Dodd’s *Wicca and Witchcraft: Understanding the Dangers* (2011). Published by the Catholic Truth Society, the UK publishers for the Holy See, the 56 page pamphlet was written as a guide for Catholics to recognise and convert Witches to Catholicism. Dodd, a former Wiccan, converted to Catholicism—a path she feels strongly that all other Witches should follow. What *Wicca and Witchcraft* exemplifies however, is that 700 years after the Inquisition, the Church still feels threatened by those who dedicate their life to the Goddess. This fear is the reason many Witches prefer to stay in the broom closet even in today’s supposedly ‘advanced’ society; Curott shares the warning given her at her admission to the coven for training:

“We also ask you to respect each other’s confidentiality,” Bellona added firmly. “Because of Maia’s work at the shop, she’s public and out of the broom closet, but the rest of you may not want anyone to know you’re studying Witchcraft. Participation in a coven has been kept secret for a long time because people’s lives were at stake. We can’t be burned today, but people have lost their jobs, lost custody of their children, had their homes burned, and worse. So, until the world’s prejudices change, secrecy must be honoured.” (ibid: 55)

6.2.2.3 Celebrates Women’s Experience

Curott offers more than a historical and literary criticism of the Church as part of the intentions of her memoir, *Book of Shadows*, she also offers other women’s experiences as part of her memoir. She includes conversations between members of the coven including their introductions; Curott quotes others as she introduces the women: “‘I’m gay,” she [‘Marcia’] admitted frankly, “and I’m into the Goddess ‘cause there isn’t any other religion that respects women’s power. I’m really into Artemis, she’s a warrior goddess, protector of women. She’s helped me find my own strength.”” (ibid: 52) Curott writes of ‘Naomi’ who, raised by a Jewish mother and Episcopalian father, had ‘[...] been exposed to both faith traditions, but much like myself, she considered her upbringing to be primarily intellectual and humanitarian.’ (ibid: 53) Curott continues:

Gillian suddenly spoke up. [...] “I was raised in the Episcopal Church. The teachings of Christ are full of wisdom and beauty, and I adore the Gnostic Gospels—in fact, I call myself an Episcopagan, which shocks my family,” she said, smiling. “But the religious institutions that have grown up around Christ’s teachings are political. And the church’s institutional misogyny simply turned me off. Wicca seems to be the only faith tradition which honours the divine as feminine—and I find that so empowering.” / “What’s misogyny?” asked Marcia. / “Hatred of women,” I replied. / “Something that afflicts all three of the patriarchal religions.” Naomi spoke up. “There just doesn’t seem to be room for women.” / “And one reason why so many women are finding their way to the Goddess and the Old Religion,” Bellona added. (ibid: 53)

Curott’s incorporation of these other voices into her memoir is a powerful choice. By including the experiences of the women who had gathered in the coven, Curott can examine women’s experience more thoroughly, including their collective history with traditional Western faith traditions; Curott writes:

We all knew clergy and worshipers who were deeply spiritual and who respected women. And we had found wisdom and beauty in the faiths of our upbringing. But we also found all of us were dissatisfied with the teaching and practices of the religions with which we had been raised, and specifically, we felt alienated by their attitudes toward women: Marcia described how her mother had to kneel and beg the Catholic priest’s forgiveness after she’d given birth to Marcia’s brother. Gillian’s sister had gone through a similar Episcopal “churching” ritual, and Naomi was forbidden to read from the Torah at the age of twelve because, though still a girl, she was considered a woman and “unclean.” (ibid: 53-54)

Curott’s underlying intentions in *Book of Shadows* are obvious to the reader. She writes a compelling story with specific goals in mind—to change the ‘world’s prejudice’ and confront the ‘hidden history’ of Western women. Curott has been successful on both counts, and continues to advocate for Witches and Pagans in the United States and the West. However, Curott faces generations of cultural prejudice and fear, and understands that she must continue to educate as many people as she can in order to change cultural perceptions of Witches and Pagans world-wide.

6.2.3 How does the text function?

Fear can be powerful. Fear, however, is not the only factor affecting the misconceptions and falsehoods surrounding Goddess-centred faith traditions in the West; misinformation is also at the heart of this matter. The *Book of Shadows*

functions mainly to advocate and educate; it also provides a ‘way of knowing’ Goddess and Witchcraft for others to follow.

6.2.3.1 Advocate and Educate

As discussed previously in the section examining the intentions of the work, Curott set out to advocate and educate on behalf of Wicca and Pagans in the US. As such, Curott works in every facet of her life to further advance the rights of the individual and collective members of the Western Goddess Movement. *Book of Shadows* was written specifically to break the cultural stereotype and change the ‘world’s prejudice’ against Goddess-centred faith traditions. In fact, Curott followed up her 1998 rebirth memoir with *Witch Crafting: A Spiritual Guide to Making Magic* (2002) and the sequel to *Book of Shadows*, *The Love Spell: An Erotic Memoir of Spiritual Awakening* (2005) which chronicles the results of a love spell created during the time of *Book of Shadows*. However, Curott uses various mediums to advocate, and print is just one of them. She hosts internet websites, travels around the world speaking publically, and is highly visible in on-line videos while participating in the tremendous interfaith work being done by groups such as the United Nations, Harvard University’s Religious Pluralism Project, and by serving as Vice Chair to the Council for the Parliament of the World’s Religions. Curott’s advocacy for her Wiccan ‘way of knowing’ is pervasive and continuing.

6.2.3.2 Provides a ‘Beacon of Truth’ as a ‘Way of Knowing’

In the Preface, Curott writes: ‘I have found a beacon of truth, a torch that I offer for your journey into the future, into the realms of wonder, magic, and divinity.’ (ibid, xiv) Curott’s beacon centres upon ultimate questions at the centre of faith; she writes:

[...] I discovered the answers [...] the questions buried at the centre of my soul—questions, it turns out, millions of people also want answered [...]. How are we to find our lost souls? How can we rediscover the sacred from which we have been separated for thousands of years? How can we live free of fear and filled with divine love and compassion? How can we find and fulfil our magical destinies? How can we restore and protect this Eden, which is our fragile planet? (ibid: xii)

Now a High Priestess and founder of the Temple of Ara—positions that come with many responsibilities—Curott uses *Book of Shadows* to shine a light on Wicca offering a distinctive ‘way of knowing’ Goddess; she writes:

I will share with you all my knowledge and perspective. That is what a priestess is for. We do not intercede on your behalf with the Divine; we will not tell you what to believe or what to do. These are responsibilities you must fulfil yourself. A priestess is a teacher, and we will share with you all of the wisdom that has been passed to us, all of the techniques we have mastered. But your journey is your own. It is as unique as each of you and only you can understand and fulfil its purpose. (ibid: 54)

Curott details ritual life both as a solitary practitioner and as a priestess in the Coven. As discussed in section 6.2.1 analysing the audience of the memoir, Curott has written intentionally for both the curious strangers and the aspiring Witch—both female and male. Curott speaks of Witchcraft in practical and poetic ways including revealing ‘sacred teaching’ she has received from Nature:

Magic is the fulfilment of destiny. Three dimensions are space, the fourth is time, and the fifth is where the spirit dwells. And there are twice these when you look into the mirror of the Goddess. Which realm casts the shadow and which is the reflection remains for your discovery. This is where your destiny awaits you. Open yourself to the movement of the divine and its energy will carry you beyond all limitations. It is present with every breath you take. It spirals, uniting past, present, and future, energy and matter, love and desire. It is the journey of the heart’s ambition and the soul’s awakening. [...]. (ibid: 206, italics in the original)

6.2.4 What are the significant strengths of this work?

The strengths of *Book of Shadows* are substantial (many of which are examined elsewhere as aims, functions, or underlying theories) and have contributed to the memoir’s best-selling rating and continued publication—both in print and electronic. This analysis shall focus on four specific strengths: 1) the writing style of *Book of Shadows*; 2) Curott’s scepticism and journey as a reluctant pilgrim; 3) common threads shared with the other authors in this study; and 4) Curott’s extensive research.

6.2.4.1 Writing style

Although all five memoirs in this study have proven to be significant works in the Western Goddess Movement, perhaps Kidd’s *Dance of the Dissident Daughter* and Curott’s *Book of Shadows* stand above the others with regards to writing style and accessibility for the reader. This is not surprising considering that Kidd is an award-winning author and Curott has been professionally trained in the arts of discourse and persuasion. This training is evident in the writing style encompassed in *Book*

of *Shadows*. Curott structures her memoir in a way that is similar to an argument for court (or comparably an academic thesis), by providing both the negative and the positive elements and allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions—her through-line being advocacy. Curott’s style is compelling, deeply personal, and takes the reader along on her journey of discovery. Unlike the other memoirs in this study, *Book of Shadows* is a linear tale of the events during a three year period. It does, however, come full circle, as the memoir begins and ends with Curott’s vision:

I look around the circle of women who stand with me—their eyes full of fire, skin flushed and glowing, their hair dancing about their radiant faces. “Thou art Goddess,” the woman next to me says. “Thou art Goddess. I reply and turn to send the blessing around our circle. / Our magic is done. (ibid: 1-2, 284)

6.2.4.2 Reluctant Pilgrim

The theme of the reluctant pilgrim has appeared several times before in this study (reference chapters 4 and 5). Therefore it deserves to be unpacked further with regards to *Book of Shadows*. There are many layers to Curott’s scepticism and disinclination, and she examines them within her memoir. Before examining Curott’s distrust, it is important to note the similar incredulity of Kidd, Starbird, and Curott. The first two authors in this study, Downing and Bolen, whilst perhaps anxious about the lessons Goddess had in store for them, were eager pilgrims steeped in post-Jungian analytical theories. Those who followed, Kidd, Starbird, and Curott, were all reluctant to heed the call of Goddess. Within each of their memoirs is a story of denial and rejection followed by a preponderance of experiences that continued to push them forward despite their vocal objections. These are not women who are eager to embrace a new ‘way of knowing.’ These are women who are arguably being led by Goddess despite themselves. This is an important point of consideration and reflects the experiences of a significant number of adherents within the Western Goddess Movement. There are those who willingly go in search of Goddess, and, as evident by the memoirs in this study, there are those who, arguably, the Goddess searches out and drags reluctantly along the path. These memoirs are far more compelling because of this central element—because these women struggle with rejection, doubt, and fear.

Kidd's hesitancy and disbelief centred around her denial of both the second wave of feminism and the over-arching patriarchal divinity in Christianity; Starbird's reluctance was with the feminine face of Goddess and the repercussions of standing in vocal opposition to the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope; Curott's reluctance mirrors the knee-jerk reaction of a vast majority of Western society—Curott was averse to Witchcraft. When confronted with it for the first time, Curott recalls thinking she was: '[...] unable to understand how a bright person like Sophia could be involved in anything so . . . offbeat.' (ibid: 13) Curott asked the same question of herself when she agreed to accompany Sophia to the Magical Cauldron bookstore; she reflects:

I felt foolish and the sceptic within me began to rise up in rebellion. I wondered, looking around at them, what an intelligent, soon to be highly successful, lawyer like me, who had just had lunch at the Russian Tea Room, was doing here. I had moved from discussions of history, with which I was quite at home, to ritual, which pushed all my buttons about religious superstition. (ibid: 41)

Despite her reluctance and doubt, Curott finally accepts Maia's invitation to meet like-minded women, perhaps unaware that this larger group was being assessed for their potential as candidates for initiation. These initial gatherings focused on revealing the 'hidden history' of the Goddess alongside mind-centring techniques such as visualisation and guided meditation. Curott also questions herself as she begins this journey, still deeply uncomfortable with the negative implications of Witch and Witchcraft; she writes:

I had come to understand the Old Religion as a survival of the ancient Goddess religions. [...] But in this technological era of skyscrapers and computers, wonder drugs and hospitals, science and supermarkets, what did Wicca have to offer that could not be found elsewhere? Who would become a Witch? And why? Why would I become a Witch? What was the pull that had brought me back, week after week—was it the promise of a life filled with magic? Was it the energy that it gave me? Or a mystery even more profound? (ibid: 50-51)

Even after Curott had been selected for training in the Coven, she remained dubious and uneasy; she writes: 'I still felt very sceptical and uncomfortable about "casting spells." It seemed silly and impossible.' (ibid: 70) She goes on to say: 'Despite my lingering scepticism, the only word to describe my spontaneous experiences and amazing synchronicities, even the principles of quantum physics,

was magic.’ (ibid: 70-71, emphasis in the original) Curott is a reluctant pilgrim filled with doubt and preconceived notions, and she continues to question her choices and the process along the way until she experiences a moment of union with Goddess; she writes:

Where was the Goddess? I wondered desperately. I stood, a tiny, solitary figure in the midst of an alien metropolis. The heavens parted and rain began to fall like heavy tears pounding through my clothes, drenching my sadness with the Goddess’s own. I washed my face in her waters, ran my fingers through my hair, bathing in the heavenly seas, the starry ablution. I felt the crust of encultured scepticism crumble, the uncertainty dissolve. I was renewed, restored, and released. I was a woman unto herself, and no longer alone. (ibid: 195)

Bathed in the heavenly seas, Curott hears the directive ‘*Why are you standing there? Move! [...] Dance!*’ (ibid: 195, italics in the original) And Curott begins to whirl and dance around her rooftop—transformed. It is only near the end of the journey documented in *Book of Shadows* that Curott finally stops doubting her path and becomes a willing pilgrim.

Considering that Curott is using *Book of Shadows* to advocate and educate, she, therefore, assumes her readers will hold their own preconceived notions and ideas. By examining her role as reluctant pilgrim and breaking down all of Curott’s personal stereotypes, misinformation, and prejudices, she is also addressing the stereotypes, misinformation and prejudices held by her readers—an aim, function, and strength of this memoir.

6.2.4.3 Common Threads

The third major strength of *Book of Shadows* is the common threads Curott shares with Downing, Bolen, Kidd, and Starbird. This strength is intricately connected to charting the historical evolution of Western Goddess Consciousness as exemplified in the three commonalities examined below. Despite the inherent differences in the beliefs, rites, and practices of Goddess Spirituality, Charismatic Christianity, and Witchcraft (Wicca being only one sect of current Witchcraft practices), Curott shares the threads of Jung and Harding, the Grail legend, and belief in the need for a Western paradigmatic shift in consciousness towards Goddess.

Jung and Harding

As examined in the previous five chapters, Jung and Harding's feminist amplifications of Jung's theories and models, including the various post-Jungian revisions and amplifications, have been intricately woven into many of the rites and practices within the Western Goddess Movement. Downing and Bolen both discovered Jung at university and his theories became the centre of their scholarly pursuits. Kidd stumbled upon post-Jungian theories in personal therapy—providing a contained and safe space in which Kidd could examine the immanent feminine divine. Starbird discovers pre-feminist Jungian ideas through her fellow Charismatic Catholics. Curott, like Starbird, would also discover Jung through her spiritual pursuits—this time revealing a harmony of Jung and Wiccan fundamentals.

One central Jungian archetype prevalent in four of the five memoirs is a significant amplification created by M Esther Harding—the 'Virgin' Goddess. Curott writes: 'Virgin actually mean a woman unto herself, not a woman who had never had sex. It meant a woman who was self-defined, not defined by her relationship to a man.' (ibid, 184) This is a concept that has been examined in nearly all of the previous chapters. Downing speaks at length about Harding's 'Virgin' Goddess and introduces the reader to the 'virginal' Persephone, Ariadne, Athene, Artemis, and Aphrodite. Bolen also mentions Harding and the 'virgin goddess' in her memoir, but she focuses on this idea much more significantly in a publication previous to her memoir entitled *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives* (1984) in which chapter three examines 'The Virgin Goddesses: Artemis, Athena, and Hestia.' Kidd introduces Harding's 'virgin' Goddess in her memoir along with several other ideas Kidd discovered when she read Harding. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 129.) Starbird is the only author in this study that doesn't speak about the 'virgin' Goddess. This is due, in large part, to the fact that Starbird has not read any feminist revisions or amplifications of Jung—from Harding onward. Starbird's only exposure to Jung, as indicated by her notations, was through the work of his wife Emma and Marie Louise von Franz both of whom stayed close to Jung's original ideas and models. Curott, on the other hand, has read Harding, and this is reflected in her memoir; she writes: 'The moon has long been a symbol of the Goddess, women's spirituality, and the spirituality of the unconscious.' (Curott, 1998: 184) Harding's 'virgin' Goddess isn't just a major feminist amplification of

Jung's archetypes, it is also a public and psychological validation of the 'virgin' nature in all women. This is an integral tenet in the Western Goddess Movement—one traced easily back to M Esther Harding who years before the second wave of the Women's Movement was writing about an independent, self-contained woman expressed in archetypal terms. The integral theories of both Jung and Harding will be examined in greater detail in the following section analysing the underlying theories of the memoir.

Grail Legend

Another common theme found in the memoirs in this study is the various interpretations of the Grail legend all portraying the Grail as a symbol of Goddess. Bolen and Starbird both speak extensively about Goddess as the Grail. As discussed in previous chapters, the Grail as Goddess symbol was also an idea prevalent in Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*—a novel that heavily influenced Bolen and that Curott has included in her 'Books of Interest'. Curott writes that the Grail legend pre-dates Christianity, and like many things in Curott's new world, has a double meaning:

Long before the story was Christianised, and its original mythological meaning was altered, the Grail was an ancient pre-Christian symbol of the fertile, holy earth and the divine feminine spirit that animates the natural realm. In this tradition, the Grail was a stone platter that held all the bounty and blessings of the earth, the Goddess incarnate. The knight's quest was to find this Grail and discover his true masculinity by serving the divine feminine—within himself, in the land, and ultimately, in the form of his beloved. (Curott, 1998: 171)

She goes on to say: 'But the true Grail awaits our discovery, shrouded in the obscuring mists of time. Its essential shape and purpose still shine for [...] the Holy Grail is an ancient symbol of the Goddess, of the divine feminine.' (ibid: 171) Like Bolen and Starbird before her, Curott was on a Grail quest; she writes: 'A divinity present in the world that I live in, a divinity that imbues all with sacred energy—this was a divinity that I could celebrate and honour with all my heart. This was the meaning of the Grail quest.' (ibid: 255)

Paradigm Shift in Goddess Consciousness

The final unifying theme in all of the rebirth memoirs in this study is the call for a mass paradigm shift toward Goddess-centred consciousness. Believing Goddess to be wholly immanent, Jung's model of Individuation is a long-term path of

awakening and discovery of Goddess. At the centre of Jung's Path of Individuation (and Jung's Collective Unconscious) is the Anima, who, for Jung, is 'the feminine and chthonic part of the soul' (Jung, 1968: 59) This path, as examined extensively in chapter 2, requires a number of psychological shifts in consciousness that centre upon the reclamation of this Jungian feminine soul. In other words, an individual shift in consciousness (or awakening) towards a Goddess-centred awareness is a Jungian pre-requisite for one to attain Selfhood or Individuation. It is quite similar to the feminist awakening and shift in consciousness that takes place when one discovers feminism—exemplified in Kidd's memoir. What these authors are asking for is for individuals to accomplish their own shift in consciousness and then share this new awareness with the world thereby *causing* a paradigmatic shift in consciousness on a mass scale. Accepting this required individual shift in consciousness (or awakening), Downing presents the modifications of her consciousness in subtle ways throughout her memoir, *The Goddess*. Bolen, on the other hand, is much more clear and precise in calling for a paradigmatic shift towards what she terms as 'Goddess Consciousness.' This need for a shift in consciousness is reflected as an intention of Bolen's *Crossing to Avalon*, and is evaluated in section 3.2.2.2. Kidd's memoir, *Dance*, functions as a stimulus for a paradigmatic shift in consciousness towards Goddess as examined previously in section 4.2.3.2. Starbird is also intent on sparking a paradigmatic shift toward Goddess-centred consciousness with her memoir, *Goddess in the Gospels*, as analysed in section 5.2.2.2. Curott follows suit, although she couples her realisation with her ever-present dubious nature; she writes: 'I didn't believe in a Goddess, but I was beginning to sense the vast shift in consciousness that accompanies a conception of the sacred that is feminine.' (ibid: 65) In this sense, Curott claims that a shift in individual consciousness (or awakening) is not dependent upon theological claims of faith or belief; Curott understands this as a psychological shift independent of religious or spiritual belief. For all the authors in this study, as for a vast majority of the adherents in the Western Goddess Movement, this shift in consciousness appears to be happening to the individual who thereby attempt to incite a collective shift in consciousness on a global scale. Feminist theologian Anne E Carr agrees that there has been a shift in consciousness towards women—especially in the academe and politically as a result of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. Carr writes: 'For women, the old paradigm has indeed already broken down, especially as it is represented in textbooks and

histories which record only the theories and deeds of men [...].’ (Carr, 1989: 398) Political feminism, theological feminism and Jung’s Anima-centred analytical psychology all contain the same seed: at the centre of them all is the ‘feminine.’ It is this ‘feminine-centred’ shift that Bolen refers to as ‘Goddess Consciousness’ and Kidd as ‘We-Consciousness.’ All of these memoirs were written to help spark an individual feminine-centred shift in the reader with the hopes of impacting a collective change in consciousness. Curott writes:

At this moment of greatest crisis, [...], at the end of the great patriarchal epochs, a quantum shift is occurring. This is the moment of rebirth, the moment of return from the Underworld. [...] there will be no lasting change until people have changed themselves, until they have awakened to their divine inheritance. (1998: 283)

Curott sees our current age as a time of great transition as the number of adherents of Goddess-centred faith traditions continues to grow:

We are entering a new era, an age of the Divine Feminine, when the illumined power of women and men will bring new life to a dying world. It is a time of critical change that depends upon our spiritual awakening, a collective epiphany, a summoning of the sacred into our lives. Now is the time for the Goddess’ return, for the return of our lost souls. For the return of life to a world laid waste by spiritual and environmental crises. Through the re-empowerment of the feminine principle, our world can become a holy vessel of connectedness, grace, and joy for all. With Her return, we will rediscover the Paradise which dwells within and which encircles us on this sacred, beloved planet. (ibid: xiv)

Curott is also very specific that this is not just a woman’s journey—it is a human journey; she writes: ‘It is a journey being taken by women, and *men must accompany them*, for only together can we embody the mystery of rebirth.’ (ibid: 283, emphasis is mine) This call for men to join the quest is also prominent in Kidd’s memoir as she documents her husband, Sandy’s, parallel journey to both Goddess and Jung. While this is an inclusive idea, it does have its limitations in that it is a decidedly heteronormative statement which does not include various non-binary genders. However, one must remember that these memoirs were written in the late twentieth century before the improved academic understanding of the heteronormative and recognition of genders other than the binary male-female now prevalent in the early twenty-first century. What is important to note here, however, is that *Book of Shadows* continues the apparent

collective push to change the way the Western world both understands and interacts with Goddess on a global scale.

6.2.4.4 Research

The fourth and final strength of *Book of Shadows* is the research Curott conducts during her awakening and the resources she offers to the reader in pages 295-302. As mentioned previously, Curott's research is similar to Kidd's and includes a number of significant writers in the Western Goddess Movement, including: Margot Adler, Paula Gunn Allen, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Z Budapest, Joseph Campbell, Carol P Christ, Mary Daly, Simone De Beauvoir, Riane Eisler, Cynthia Eller, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Jane and Stuart Farrar, Maria Gimbutas, Naomi Goldenberg, Robert Graves, Esther Harding, Carl Jung, Erich Neumann, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Monica Sjoo, Charlene Spretnak, Starhawk, Merlin Stone, Barbara Walker, Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. However, Curott's research is much more expansive than Kidd's. Using various sources for information from the Magical Cauldron bookstore, her father's private library, the New York public library, and accessing scholarly texts through her NYU alumni card, Curott's research is an integral component of the fluid argument she makes advocating Wicca in *Book of Shadows*. It was also a necessary part of her own awakening; she writes: 'Like a woman escaping the burning heat of the desert, I was thirsty for knowledge.' (ibid: 61) And Curott shares the knowledge she gathered with the reader, she writes: 'My reading confirmed that the Goddess religion of Europe as well as the Near and Middle East did indeed predate the three patriarchal Western religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—by thousands of years.' (ibid: 57) She goes on to summarise Wolkstein and Kramer in their translation of the Ancient Sumerian tablets relating to Inanna, the Queen of Heaven:¹⁰⁶

Long before the people of the Middle East worshiped and battled over a male divinity, the people of Canaan paid reverence to a goddess called Queen of Heaven. The Goddess was the divine Creatrix, law giver, mother, warrior, healer, bestower of culture and agriculture. As my father had advised, I turned to the ancient historians Diodorus of Sicily, Herodotus of Greece, and even Sophocles. They described the laws of Egypt, which gave pre-eminence to women as rulers, wives, and citizens. These laws were rooted in the worship of the Great Goddess

¹⁰⁶ See: **Wolkstein D and Kramer SN** (1983) *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*. New York: Harper & Row.

Au Set, whom the Greeks called Isis. She gave laws to her people just as Yahweh, the Hebrew god, gave laws to Moses for the people of Israel. (ibid: 58)

Reading both ancient history and contemporary archaeology, Curott finds a common theme. 'In book after book I found evidence: Throughout the world, most of humanity once worshiped a goddess.' (ibid: 59) Curott continues:

I sat in the great reading room of New York's public library, [...], turning the pages of dense academic tomes with their frequent untranslated quotations in Greek, Latin, or German. I found that throughout the world, and throughout history, goddesses and women who had been warriors, queens, priestesses, and scholars were proof of women's lost past, and inspiration for our future. (ibid: 61)

According to her memoir, Curott's research was conducted in two phases. The first phase being prompted by reoccurring dreams of Isis during her college years. These dreams led her to discover the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* as well as both historical information and contemporary information on the cult of Isis. The second phase of Curott's research was prompted by her new relationship with the coven at the Magical Cauldron bookstore. Curott's research was now being influenced by the members of the coven—one of whom owned the bookstore. The bookstore, and the presumably bias pro-Wicca material contained therein, became a significant source of Curott's material which makes the above citation from the memoir curious. It is interesting to note that Curott's use of the phrase 'dense academic tomes' is situated alongside information gathered from academically non-rigorous sources. Perhaps this is done to provide the reader with a sense of academic credibility to her claims. If so, it may appear as academic validation to the non-critical reader. It is problematic for the critical reader however, as most of Curott's research has been influence by the Murray thesis (1921) which was later refuted by the academe yet became the foundation of Gerald Gardner's Wicca. (York 1999) The Murray thesis and its criticisms shall be examined in greater detail in the following section on the Old Religion. Perhaps, as I will argue later, Curott was not made aware of the academic controversy surrounding the Murray thesis. If that is the case, then it is possible that Curott had other ulterior motives in utilising the phrase 'dense academic tomes'—to persuade and appeal to archaic, academic, and presumably predominantly male authorities. This gendered appeal is supported by Curott's Logos-based argument about her research; she writes:

I wasn't looking for an epiphany, nor a basis for conversion or belief. My original interest was intellectual and feminist. I did not have to believe in a feminine divinity to understand the implications for women: Here was a historical basis to challenge the limitations long imposed upon us and the justifications for those constraints. (ibid: 62)

Curott is specifically giving a Logos-based rationale for her research in stark contrast to the Eros-based rationale for the first phase of her research—her dreams and intuition. While admitting that it was her own inner voice that sparked the first venture into research, Curott is demonstrating the union of Logos and Eros thought that overwhelmingly pervades Jungian and post-Jungian theory. Through *Book of Shadows* Curott is appealing to the Logos and Eros natures in her readers. Although some of her conclusions may be unknowingly based on flawed material, Curott offers a rational argument meant to persuade the Logos-based thinker as much as her own self.

6.2.5 What theories underlie the work? Do they affect its validity?

There are three fundamental theories or assumptions that underlie *Book of Shadows*: 1) quantum physics; 2) Carl Jung; and 3) the 'Old Religion.' Curott blends these three seemingly opposing 'ways of knowing' into a Jungian influenced, neo-Wiccan 'way of knowing' Goddess. Each of these underlying theories shall be examined in further detail.

6.2.5.1 Quantum Physics and Goddess

Unlike the other authors in this study, Curott takes a scientific approach to her research seeking with her analytic (Logos-based) mind either the validation or censure that she believes only 'hard science' can offer; she writes: '[...] I turned to science for sensible and rational explanations.' (ibid, 8) This is not an author who had been, in any way, affected by the supposed 'New Age' theories and models prevalent in the West: '[...] this was New York City in the 1970s. I'd been too young for the psychedelic sixties, I'd never read Carlos Castaneda [...]. I had no frame of reference for understanding or cultivating what was happening to me.' (Curott, 1998: 8) Consequently, seeking a Logos-based frame of reference for her experiences, Curott turns to her father for assistance. After a long discussion, Curott's father recommended she begin with quantum physics. What Curott found was surprising:

[...] I read that physicists had discovered *a new level of reality*. Underlying the three-dimensional, physical world described by Newton's Laws, they found an "invisible" realm, a quantum level of subatomic particles and energy. It is a realm that underlies, pervades, and forms the world we "see" and live in each day. *At the quantum level, everything is interconnected energy, even matter.* (ibid: 8, emphasis is mine)

Interconnectivity

Through quantum physics, Curott was beginning to find a useful frame of reference; she writes: 'With growing excitement I learned that my experiences reflected an entirely different set of rules about reality.' (ibid: 9)

Quantum reality is *another level of existence*, another dimension. Here the energy field is the underlying order, a hidden or shadow reality of our daily lives. We see solid material objects as separated from one another—a rock, a table, a human being—but on the quantum level, they are all actually bundles of vibrating, interacting energy. And though we perceive them to exist separately, these energies—the rocks and tables and ourselves—are interconnected. (ibid: 8, emphasis is mine)

The theory of interconnectivity offered by quantum mechanics is valuable to each of the authors in this study, since interconnectedness and interrelationships are part of the journey of individuation - even though only Curott and Bolen mention quantum physics overtly. For example, Downing's memoir, *The Goddess*, focused on the concept of being 'in relation to' an ancient source (which for Downing is Jung's primordial archetype the Anima), being 'in relation to' Self, and being 'in relation to' Others. While she did not utilise the terminology of quantum mechanics, Downing's memoir exemplified that being 'in relation to' Goddess, and, by extension others, connects the individual to the wider human community and the world-at-large. Being interconnected to every particle in our known universe shifts one's personal being from a life of isolation and disconnection to a model of interconnectivity, wholeness, and the responsibility interconnection brings. Bolen echoes this sense of being connected to others in *Crossing to Avalon* when she writes:

I have often felt myself to be a point of light connected to everyone I have ever loved or mattered to, each also being a point of light, in turn connected to those they love, so that somehow we are all part of a vast web of twinkling lights. (Bolen, 1994: 203)

Margaret Starbird echoes this web of connection in her memoir *Goddess in the Gospels*; she writes: ‘I am now persuaded that all of reality is interwoven, a fabulous tapestry of silken threads linked with tiny knots behind the fabric [...] interconnected by the unseen hand of the Weaver.’ (Starbird, 1998: xi, 114) Many adherents in the Western Goddess Movement refer to this connection as a ‘web’ whose image echoes not only a spider web but also the Buddhist Wheel - where all things are connected from a single source—in this case, that source is Goddess. Beverly Clack explains that this understanding of interconnectivity is at the heart of process theology and panentheism posited by such influential individuals as feminist theologian Carol P Christ¹⁰⁷; Clack writes: ‘God is thus viewed as the web of life which passes through all existent beings.’ (Clack, 1995: 109) Michael York, who specialises in the New Age and Neo-Pagan movements, comments on the concept of interconnectivity in his 2003 text *Pagan Theology*. York states: ‘With the perception that everything is sacred and alive comes the notion that all is interdependent and connected [...]. Spirit and matter are not considered separate but interrelated parts of the whole.’ (York, 2003: 46) Although scientific theory lies at the centre of quantum physics, at the heart of interconnectivity in the Western Goddess Movement, however, is Goddess. Curott writes: ‘Goddess is that which unites, connects, and affirms the interrelatedness of all life, all people. Being related is at the core of Divine Feminine Being. She is the dance of relation [...]. [...] the Divine co-inheres all that is.’ (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 155, 159)

However, while quantum physics could assist Curott in understanding what was happening to her and how this alternate reality functioned, it could not answer an all-important question for Curott; she writes:

[...] science couldn’t help me explain the quality of my experiences—why the world was now intoxicatingly alive, full of wonder and miracles, strange events and shimmering beauty. Most exhilarating of all was the unshakable feeling of a presence observing, accompanying, and even guiding me. I began to sense I was in touch with an *elan vital*, an intelligent and creative universe. (1998: 9)

It was this need for a way of understanding the ‘quality’ of her experiences that caused Curott to turn to from quantum physics to Wicca. In her memoir, Curott

¹⁰⁷ For more see: Christ CP (2003) *She Who Changes: Re-Imagining the Divine in the World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

explains at length how she believes science is corroborating long held Pagan beliefs found in the Western Goddess Movement. She also explains, more fully, the parallels between the theoretical quantum explanation for this interconnectivity and the beliefs held by her Wiccan community. How then did theoretical quantum-level physics come to be integrated with the Western Goddess Movement?

Carl Jung, Wolfgang Pauli, and Quantum Mysticism

Carl Jung was not merely a theoretical psychologist—he was a practical psychologist who treated patients from all over the globe. His clientele included men and women from all walks of life. In her 2005 text, *The Innermost Kernel: Depth Psychology and Quantum Physics. Wolfgang Pauli's Dialogue with CG Jung*,¹⁰⁸ Suzanne Geiser states one patient who sought out Jung's assistance during a difficult period was Nobel Prize winning quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli (1900-1958). (Gieser, 2005) Jung and Pauli shared some significant commonalities beginning with their early careers. Jung was mentored by and then disassociated himself from Sigmund Freud; while early in his career, Wolfgang Pauli was mentored by Albert Einstein. (Gieser, 2005: 22) Like Jung, Pauli would come to eventually disassociate himself from his mentor. Pauli sought out Jung for therapeutic reasons but discovered someone like-minded who shared his concerns about quantum matter and consciousness. Not only did Jung analyse Pauli, they began a correspondence with each other during the between times. These letters were later gathered and published in a collection edited by CA Meier entitled *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters* (1992). Pauli's correspondence was not limited to Jung either; Pauli corresponded with Jung's secretary Aniela Jaffé and Jung's student and alchemical theorist Marie-Louise von Franz. (Gieser, 2005: 5) There was an ongoing relationship post-therapy between Jung and Pauli—brought together by their inherent interest in quantum reality and its effect on consciousness; this is evident in their 1955 joint publication *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* which contains a substantial essay from Jung entitled 'Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle' written in 1952, and Pauli's 'The Influence of Archetypal Ideas on the Scientific Theories of Kepler' (1955). Geiser

¹⁰⁸ The title of Gieser's 2005 book (and her doctoral thesis) reflects the influences of German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer on Pauli and Jung as the term 'innermost kernel' is from Schopenhauer's essay entitled 'Psychological Observations.'

citing Pauli as a ‘convinced adherent’ of Jungian analytical psychology, (Gieser, 2005: 5) Jung’s theories and models influenced the theories and world-view of Wolfgang Pauli, and in return, Pauli’s theoretical ideas influenced the theories and world-view of Carl Jung. Even by theoretical physics standards, Pauli held unique views. Lisa Zyga writes:

Pauli favoured a hypothesis of “lucid mysticism”, a synthesis between rationality and religion. He speculated that quantum theory could unify the psychological/scientific and philosophical/mystical approaches to consciousness. Pauli’s perspective was influenced by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, whose views on reality were in turn influenced by Eastern religions. (Zyga, 2009: 2)

So three key elements drew Pauli and Jung together as theorists outside of analysis—quantum mechanics, the power of the conscious and unconscious mind, and the influence of Eastern traditions. Pauli and Jung both inhabited that liminal space between science and religion both attempting to make sense of how the quantum world around us functions on the conscious and unconscious mind. This connection and correlation between quantum mechanics and analytical psychology continues to contemporary times. A number of Jungian and post-Jungian writers have examined this integral connection between quantum physics and Jungian analytical psychology. For example: Laughlin’s 1996 essay ‘Archetypes, neurosis, and the Quantum Sea’ attempts to integrate archetypal psychology and the neurosciences; Subhash Kak’s 2009 article ‘The Universe, Quantum Physics, and Consciousness’ examines these theories from within the Eastern religions; Birgit Heuer’s (2008) ‘Discourse of illness or discourse of health: towards a paradigm shift in post-Jungian clinical theory’ examines zero-point field theory within the field of quantum mechanics; she writes: ‘A multitude of experiments (McTaggart, 2001) suggests that consciousness itself might be quantum in nature, able to function both as wave and particle, and that it might be consciousness that creates material reality out of probability (Goswami, 1995).’ (Heuer, 2008: 185) In essence, what each of these individuals is discussing is that consciousness *is* quantum in nature. In other words, *if* consciousness is quantum, and everything is interconnected and can affect each other then, by conclusion, conscious intent can affect the world around us—this key idea of the human capacity to consciously affect and change, for better or worse, to the physical world is the basic foundation for magical work (Witchcraft, Wiccan, Druids, Shaman, Healers, and the like included).

These constructs, however, have led to criticism about this particular application of quantum mechanics. Similar to the dismissal as a ‘mystic’ that surrounded Jung, this branch of quantum theory has been dubbed as ‘mystical physics’ by Stengler (1996) and ‘quantum mysticism’ by Zyga (2009). However, the data from research indicates that there is some cross-corroboration of theories; Heuer writes:

Zero-point field theory represents research findings that strongly suggest that quantum laws cannot be neatly consigned to an inanimate world of small particles, but that they extend and underpin the living world and human consciousness also. The zero-point field is a world of subatomic particles or waves of potentiality that are in constant motion through exchange of energy, “an ocean of microscopic energy in the space between things” (McTaggart 2001: xxi). *It is thought to hold an extraordinary amount of information stored in wave interference patterns, i.e. all memory of all time*, because it is thought that all physical events are interlinked with quantum events. It is also thought to hold an unimaginable amount of energy [...]. Zero-point field energy is thought to be responsible for the stability of matter, so that all atomic structures would collapse without it. (Heuer, 2008: 184, emphasis is mine)

The crucial link between quantum mechanics, and in this regard, zero-point field theory, is the collection of information stored, what Heuer refers to as ‘all memory of all time.’ This description is very similar to Jung’s theories on the collective unconscious that contains all primordial information, from the dawn of time, which any one individual can tap into and use to his or her benefit. Jung writes: ‘The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes but in the living mental organism of everyone.’ (Jung, 1938: 41) The quantum and Jungian theories of a collective memory also mirrors the morphic resonance theory of Rupert Sheldrake (utilised by Bolen in her discussion on connected consciousness). Bolen writes:

Sheldrake describes morphic fields as a source of cumulative memory based on experiences of a species in the past. The human morphic field is what we tap into and are resonating with and influenced by when we respond as members of the human race, doing what humans have done. (Bolen, 1994: 96)

Bolen goes on to conclude: ‘Sheldrake’s morphic resonance theory (as applied to humans) and Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious are very similar ideas. Both theories account for collective memories, knowledge, behaviour, or images that we did not acquire in our personal lives [...].’ (Bolen, 1994: 96)

Taking the working and theoretical relationship between quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung into consideration, the apparent similarities in the theories of Jung's collective unconscious, Pauli's 'lucid mysticism', and Sheldrake's morphic resonance theory one can see how quantum physics became intricately linked with Jung's Anima, *Anima Mundi*, and the wider Western Goddess Movement. In fact, this interesting intersection for contemplation has also filtered from the academe to the mass population. Contemporary books by non-academics, such as Laura Judith's 2011 *Goddess Spirituality for the 21st Century: From Kabbalah to Quantum Physics* alongside the rebirth memoirs at the centre of this study, are bringing the quantum theories of Pauli, Jung, and Sheldrake into the heart of the Western Goddess Movement.

The important question to ask, however, is does Curott's use of quantum theory help to validate the beliefs and practices exemplified in *Book of Shadows*? Curott demonstrates a concerted effort to find validity in the beliefs and rites of Wiccan practices through science. Considering that Curott, Jung, quantum mechanics, and Sheldrake's morphic resonance theory are all implicated in the same unified memory and quantum level of consciousness, it does tend to lend a sense of credibility to these claims. While an untrained reader from within the Western Goddess Movement may not be able to grasp the full theories of Jung, Sheldrake, or quantum mechanics, these scientific endeavours appear to cross-validate and verify the claims made by Curott. In a sense, then, science is used to validate ideas that were typically left to 'magical' explanations. When it comes to a general consensus however, more readers may find the information they seek in Curott's use of quantum physics and Goddess.

6.2.5.2 Carl Jung: A Wiccan Path to Individuation, Modern-day Fusion, and 'Your Worst Nightmare'

Both Downing and Bolen used their Jungian training in their memoirs as the construct for their own Path of Individuation. Kidd came to know Jungian and post-Jungian theories through her personal analysis and cited many of his major psychological models; whereas Starbird came to know Jung through Charismatic Christianity and was only familiar with Jung and his students prior to the feminist revisions of Jung. Curott, however, discovers Jung through her research and then does something compelling by utilising Jung in a different way based on her own reading and understanding of Jung's major models and theories. In her memoir,

Curott utilises a number of Jungian and post-Jungian models and theories and includes, like those before her, Jung's archetypes, Individuation, Divine imminence, Harding's virgin goddess, and synchronicity. But she also includes, unlike the others, a serious interest in the line of spiritual alchemy followed by Jung's student Marie-Louise von Franz¹⁰⁹ and offers a dark aspect of Jung not yet demonstrated by the other authors in this study. Curott utilises Jung in three significant ways: (1) Like those who came before her, Curott offers a path for others to follow—but, unlike the others, this path is decidedly Wiccan. (2) Based on the quantum theory that everything is connected on the atomic level, Curott blends quantum mechanics with Jung and post-Jungians and the writings of Gerald Gardner (considered by many the father of modern Wicca). (3) Curott's most forceful and effective use of Jung is in the way she anthropomorphises Jung's Shadow offering the reader a horror story in miniature as a way of helping her readers understand Jung's shadow and its importance to one's Individuation. Each of these three important utilisations of Jung will be examined in more detail below.

A Wiccan Path to Individuation

Deploying an intriguing blending of Wiccan and Jungian terminology, Curott speaks about Jung's Path of Individuation from her own interdisciplinary understanding; she writes:

I used to think Witches cast spells over people. Now I understood that true Witches work only to gain power over themselves. They work to accomplish self-mastery—to achieve healing, wisdom, compassion, and freedom, and to liberate themselves from the constraints that the world, or their upbringing, have trapped them in. Magic is part of this process of self-awareness and liberation. To do sacred magic, we must first come to know ourselves. And to see ourselves as we truly are, we must have a mirror. (Curott, 1998: 147)

According to Curott, the work of a true Witch is to know thyself. The processes of 'self-mastery', 'self-awareness,' and individual 'liberation' which Curott invokes in the above citation are all Jungian concepts attainable through the Path of Individuation. Curott makes a statement that aligns both Wicca and Jungian analytical psychology when she writes: 'The divine dwells within, in ever-changing

¹⁰⁹ For more see: **von Franz** ML (1980) *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*. Toronto: Inner City Books; and (1979) *Alchemical Active Imagination*. Shambhala.

outward form, its inner presence eternal. The journey is its discovery.’ (Curott, 1998: 276) Read from a Jungian perspective: The divine dwells within (Jung, 1995: 62); the Anima at the centre of the collective unconscious and source of divine immanence, is ever-changing (Jung, 2003: 94); the Anima’s presence is primordial (Jung, 1982: 106) and thus, eternal; the Path of Individuation leads to union with the Divine (Jung, 1995: 328-29). Curott appears to have a firm grasp on Jung’s models and theories and has incorporated them into her memoir, *Book of Shadows*, by offering her readers Wicca as a Path *for* Individuation. As she never mentions it in her memoir, there is no way to know for sure how Curott came to incorporate Jungian ideas into her ‘way of knowing.’ Had she discovered Jung during her research into quantum physics? Had she encountered Jung in readings from within the Western Goddess Movement, such as Bolen’s memoir or Neumann’s *The Great Mother*? There are a number of Jungian and post-Jungian books listed in Curott’s Books of Interest at the end of her memoir, including Bolen and Neumann, but there is no indication as to which one she read first. Perhaps Jung was mentioned in her coven, or she discovered him on the shelves of the bookstore. This might, however, be significant to know as Curott presents Wiccan and Jungian concepts intertwined as if they had always been so. A prime example of this fused understanding is evident when Curott writes: ‘The alchemy of spiritual transformation remained protected and hidden by country clans and urban magical orders who secretly practiced Western mysticism.’ (Curott, 1998: 125-26) Jung’s Path of Individuation is indeed the process of alchemical spiritual transformation of the individual; he wrote it was: ‘[...] the transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components, of the differentiated with the inferior functions, of the conscious with the unconscious.’ (Jung, 1928, cited in Palmer, 1997: 122) Did Curott fuse Jung and Wicca in this way to attract adherents of post-Jungian Goddess Traditions? Or is she trying to offer various scientific forms (quantum mechanics and analytical psychology) to validate Gardner’s Wiccan dogma? If so, these scientific enquiries appear to offer confirmation of the Wiccan beliefs and practices included in *Book of Shadows*. Offering Wicca as a Path for Individuation is the major way in which Curott utilises Jung in her memoir; the fusion of Jung and Wicca, however, continues throughout her memoir and is not limited to her discussion about Individuation.

Modern-Day Fusion

Throughout her memoir, *Book of Shadows*, Phyllis Curott continues to blend Wiccan and Pagan ‘ways of knowing’ with Jung and quantum level mechanics. As exemplified above, she blends them so seamlessly, it would be difficult for the untrained reader to identify where one ‘way of knowing’ ends and another begins. Curott writes: ‘Everything is connected in the Goddess’s cauldron, the shaman’s web of life, the physicist’s quantum reality.’ (Curott, 1998: 256) What is most intriguing about what Curott is doing in her memoir is that she presents these ideas to her readers as if they have always coexisted together. Is this because she was led to believe that these differing ‘ways of knowing’ have always cross-validated each other’s theories? This appearance of theoretical coexistence is exemplified in the following statement where Curott speaks of a Jungian concept with reference to both quantum physics and Wicca:

Synchronicity. Jung had coined the term, but I’d only recently begun to understand its meaning: A coincidence that’s more than a coincidence because it is filled with meaning. Synchronicities seem to arise at the quantum level. They are the clues the universe provides, and they can direct us to the meaning of our lives. They are magic. (ibid: 36)

Is this a blending of similar theories and models of consciousness, or did Curott find flaws in Gardner’s Wicca that she filled with Jungian theory and models? Consider the potentiality that lies in the following example:

I had only begun to understand and experience the power of these ancient symbols and archetypes. Under my priestesses’ tutelage, I was learning an ancient symbol system which, as Jung discovered, was a vital language for communication between the conscious and unconscious aspects of my mind. Even more exciting, this system was also a vocabulary for dialogue between ourselves and the divine. (ibid: 126)

Perhaps this fusion of Wicca and Jung was passed down to Curott from the High Priestesses training her through the coven. However Curott came to discover Jung and fuse his ideas with those of Wiccan practices, *Book of Shadows* stands as a unique memoir that fuses modern-day Wicca with Jung and quantum theory providing a new Wiccan, yet decidedly Jungian, ‘way of knowing’. Curott’s fusion is evident when she speaks about theory as well as ritual; she writes:

With divinity tools and altered states, we can see the deep archetypal and sacred forces at work in our lives, and most important, we can see their meaning, rising from the depths of our unconscious to the conscious light of our daily vision. (ibid: 149)

Book of Shadows offers the reader a unique perspective and ‘way of knowing’ Wiccan traditions through both quantum mechanics and the theories and models of Jung’s analytical psychology. By fusing these three traditions together, perhaps in proposing a scientifically validated path for others, she offers a modern form of Wicca—a world where science and magic coexist both in quantum reality and in ours.

Anthropomorphised Jungian Shadow

By far Curott’s most startling use of Jung is in her depiction of an encounter with her anthropomorphised Shadow. Through this, Curott offers readers a fascinating nightmare reminiscent of the fear landscapes produced by Edgar Allen Poe, Stephen King, or HR Giger.

Curott tells how during a banishing ritual, she felt overcome by something powerful; she writes: ‘It had the texture of fear and self-doubt.’ (Curott, 1998: 167) This indescribable thing continued to stay with her despite subsequent cleansing rituals and baths. It followed Curott everywhere and permeated her dreams. She writes: ‘[...] it surfaced again, embracing me and twirling me in a macabre minuet whenever I least expected it.’ (ibid: 167) Finally, unable to take the strain and fear any longer, Curott decides to take action. Following Wiccan traditions, Curott consults a ‘scrying mirror’ (a special mirror typically used for divination). Sitting there, in the dark in her apartment, gazing into her own reflection in the mirror Curott writes:

What was it? Where did it come from? And how was I to free myself? I stared into the mirror without looking away from myself. It was a hot, sweltering night with no relief from the day’s hellish accumulation, but the temperature in the room began to drop. A chill seized me; and then it appeared. A black ghost robed in open wounds crept toward me, undulating visibly the way air does when scorched by the summer sun. The skin on the back of my neck crawled and a wave of nausea hit me, but I did not look away. The room was freezing. My heart was racing. I was terrified, afraid to look away, more afraid to turn around and confront it—for then my shadow would stand before me, as in my dream. I forced myself to turn, counterclockwise, feeling as if my body was made of lead, hoping that it was no more than an illusion of smoke

and mirrors. / It was a Shadow. It hovered at the threshold of my front door, blocking my exit. I moved, slowly, as if underwater, to the left; it followed. I moved to the right; it followed. I felt as if I was suffocating. [...] “What are you?” I demanded, remembering that knowing the name of a demon gives you power over it. / Nothing. And then I knew, I heard it, within. “I am the Guardian at the Gate, I am the Shadow. Push against me.” / Touch it? I stood paralyzed and the Shadow moved towards me. (ibid: 167-68)

Facing her own personal Shadow, Curott ultimately found the strength to meet this nightmare head on. Well-acquainted with the Jungian Shadow, Curott knew there was no way to ignore this nightmarish vision. Curott summarises this challenge in a way that would make Jung proud; Curott writes:

We can't run from our shadow, we can't turn our back on it. If we deny its existence, we succumb to our own weaknesses, or more dangerous still, we risk projecting them onto others, which can lead to the unspeakable brutality with which people have treated each other for far too long. [...] the Shadow is part of ourselves. And no attempt to bury it within our unconscious, or to rationalise its dominance of our culture, will free us from the terrors of its presence. (ibid: 169)

Curott is aware that facing her Shadow is a vital part of her psychological well-being and a significant beginning to one's Path of Individuation. For Curott, as for Jung and the post-Jungians, coming to terms with one's Shadow is not only required for one's psychological health but also for one's spiritual health as well; Curott writes:

Any truly spiritual journey will, inevitably, lead you to the Guardian at the Gate. Until we confront it, and master the challenges this shadow presents, it will hold us back from the fullest experience of our true divine selves. Once we understand the Shadow is our teacher, in whatever shape it assumes—fear, doubt, hunger for power, shame, selfishness, or any self-destructive or harmful trait—we can wrest from it the keys to the realm of the Goddess. (ibid: 168)

Mirroring Jung, Curott states that confronting the Shadow will ultimately lead to Goddess just as for Jung confronting the Shadow leads one further along the Path of Individuation where, for Jung, a relation with the Anima (or Goddess) awaits. (Jung, 1968: 29) Curott was certainly not the first author in this study to examine Jung's Shadow nor its importance in beginning the Path of Individuation. But what Curott did that the other authors in this study did not was personify the Shadow by anthropomorphising it into a human form covered with open wounds. This

nightmarish image, torn from Curott's own experiences, is unique in that she is removing the Shadow from the psychic world and placing it, in physical form, in the reality in which she lives. Curott's Shadow is a physical limitation blocking her way, mirroring her movements, and filling her with fear. Why then, would Curott take her readers along with her on this fear-provoking journey? Surely these nightmarish images would terrify readers—potentially scaring them away from the key element that might aid their own psychic health? Curott's inclusion of this story in her memoir could frighten those unfamiliar with Jung's theories and models; conversely, trained Jungians and post-Jungians may find this anthropomorphosis useful as a concrete example of Jung's theoretical model. Curott employs two distinct theoretical models in her memoir, *Book of Shadows*; she utilises both Jungian analytical psychology and quantum mechanics. For some readers, theoretical models such as these may be far too intangible to understand completely. Therefore, Curott may have decided to make the Shadow a tangible entity—one that can exist in the physical plane of our own three-dimensional existence. Perhaps she made this choice in order to exemplify how the Shadow works both for herself and her readers. Curott's tale of the Shadow ends with the one important lesson that Curott learned during this experience; she writes: 'I now knew you must be prepared to face your worst nightmare or you cannot free yourself from it.' (ibid: 170) Perhaps then, Curott came to understand Jung's Shadow as one's 'worst nightmare' and that is the only way she could portray it in her memoir—a living nightmare that must be confronted. Through this recollection Curott offers the reader a Jungian Shadow that is tangible, that can interact with our physical world, and that can substantially block one's Path. She creates a physical barrier which one must both confront and defeat through incorporation as part of the process of Individuation.

6.2.5.3 The Old Religion and the Murray Thesis

The final underlying theory in *Book of Shadows* is, by far, the most critically controversial element in Curott's memoir: the history and purported renaissance of the pre-Christian 'Old Religion.' There are two major lines of analysis that must be taken into consideration when examining Curott's use of the Old Religion as an underlying theory in her memoir: (1) to define and examine the Old Religion as a faith tradition, and (2) scrutinise the academic history and theoretical impact of

Margaret Murray's 1921 Witch-Cult Hypothesis—otherwise known as the 'Murray Thesis'—to contemporary Neo-Paganism and the Wiccan movement.

The Old Religion as Faith Tradition

Curott speaks at-length about what she calls the Old Religion in *Book of Shadows*. She defines it through her independent research, through information passed down to her from the High Priestesses of the coven, and through discussions with other Witches. In her memoir, there are eight integral elements Curott discusses specifically to define the Old Religion: (1) Historical lineage; (2) Defining the Witch; (3) Personal Experience; (4) Divine Immanence; (5) No Structural Hierarchy; (6) Spiritual Environmentalism; (7) Satan and Wicca; and (8) the ever-present Jung. A brief examination of how Curott defines these important elements follows:

1. Historical Lineage

The historical lineage of Wicca is a contentious claim. The difficulties with this assertion of historical lineage will be examined in the following section on the Murray Thesis. At present, it is important to understand both what Curott's concept of this historical lineage is and the sources which provide the information. According to *Book of Shadows*, what is passed down to Curott is a historical lineage of Witchcraft that predates the Abrahamic traditions. As the keeper of the coven's history, Nonna is the one who is tasked with passing down the oral history to new initiates. Curott is quoting Nonna in her memoir when she writes:

“There is a hidden history that few people know, a history that holds many interwoven truths—about women, about the earth, and about how Western civilization lost its soul. The Old Religion is very old. It predates the three patriarchal Western religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—by thousands of years. It is an ancient earth-based spirituality, a religion that experiences the divine as both feminine and masculine. For our ancestors, the Goddess was as important, often more important, than the God. The Old Religion is the shamanism of ancient Europe and the Middle East. It is very similar to Taoism, and Native American and other aboriginal spiritual practices.” (1998: 32)

Drawing similarities to Eastern and indigenous traditions is an integral component of Nonna's oral history of the Old Religion. In *Book of Shadows*, Curott is neither relying on nor providing the reader solely with the historical lineage of Wicca as

decreed by Gardner; instead, what Curott is providing is *a connection to historic traditions* through shared fundamental values; Curott writes:

I was amazed to find common threads in the Old Religion of Europe and the Middle and Near East and in the other earth-based religions—Taoism, Shintoism, Native American, and other indigenous and aboriginal spiritual practices. In all of these traditions, the divine is known to be both immanent and transcendent. With the gentleness and strength of a mother's love, the Goddess spoke to the reality of most people's lives, for they lived close to the earth, which nurtured and sustained them. (ibid: 59)

The essence of this statement seems to indicate that, for Curott, these commonalities are shared because a construct of the Numinous is shared. Curott names Goddess as the historical link between these various faith traditions. In comparing Wicca to these traditions, Curott weaves an invisible web between ancient traditions and Wicca. These links, however, are given to Curott by various individuals within her new community. Sophia, the woman from Curott's music career who introduced Curott to Witchcraft, was also a significant source of information; Curott quotes Sophia when she writes:

"The Old Religion is a lot like Native American spirituality—it's the indigenous earth religion of Europe. There's a Goddess as well as a God, and everything that exists in nature is experienced as sacred, as part of the Goddess, and the God. There are also remnants of the Mystery Schools of ancient Greece and Egypt in Wiccan cosmology." (ibid: 11-12)

The question that ultimately remains regarding the Old Religion, if one is drawing from what one perceives as an ancient tradition, is this: is there any room for new Goddess images, or by drawing on ancient traditions is the implication that only ancient Goddesses can be worshipped in the Old Religion? Does a historical legacy automatically imply that only ancient Goddess constructs (such as Isis, Demeter, or the Morrigan) can exist in the Old Religion? Curott speaks of several incarnations of Goddess in her memoir, but at no point does she introduce what could be considered a contemporary Goddess. This is particularly interesting in the United States as there are no ancient Goddess images connected with America—other than the First Nation indigenous tribes, and First Nation cultural appropriation remains a significant problem in the United States—especially for the First Nation tribes. The United Kingdom, by contrast, has a lineage of various Goddesses in

their ancient history that are still worshiped today. (Hutton, 2003; Farrar and Farrar, 1987) Americans, however, have no choice but to appropriate a Goddess image from an existing source—be that the primordial images from the collective unconscious or ancient Goddesses from faith traditions outside the United States. It seems evident that at the heart of the historical lineage of the Old Religion lies the ancient Goddess lineage—with little room for contemporary improvement.

2. Defining the Witch

Unlike the other four authors in this study, Curott was born into neither a psychological tradition nor a religious tradition. She freely admits that she knew nothing about Wicca or Witchcraft and includes material that not only helped Curott understand the world she was contemplating, but also helps the uneducated reader learn about the basics of Witchcraft—beginning with a definition of ‘Witch.’ Again, as Curott gains most of her information from fellow Witches, she is quoting Sophia in the following citation; Curott writes:

“The word Witch comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word *wicce*.” She [Sophia] pronounced this word just as she said the word Witch, adding a soft *a* to the end of it. “It meant wise one, a seer, a shaman. And, it may also reflect an old Nordic word, *vitke*, which meant a singer of sacred songs.” (Curott, 1998: 11, italics in the original)

It is interesting to note that the word ‘magic’ does not appear in this definition. Instead Sophia (and Curott) present a description of a Witch that connects to alternate ancient traditions such as Shamanism and keepers of oral histories. This connection is drawn, perhaps, to link Wicca with traditions that invoke a sense of respect through praxis—such as Shamanism. Curott writes: ‘The Old Ways still seemed to be best suited as a means to wisdom, not as a way to seek worldly fortunes.’ (ibid: 228) For Curott then, Wicca is a path through which one can gain Self-wisdom; it is not a means of controlling or harming others. In which case, Curott’s definition might help to alleviate the modern-day fear of Witches as old hags who routinely curse people (which is what Hollywood would have us believe).

3. Personal Experience is Key

The third element that Curott introduces as fundamental to the Old Religion centres upon personal experience. This is one the eight elements where Wicca and Jungian psychology intersect. For Jung, ‘[...] in religious matters only

experience counted.’ (Jung, 1995: 119) The same emphasis on personal experience can be found in Wicca. Curott explains, through Nonna’s character, that Wicca is a tradition based *solely* upon experience; Curott writes: ‘It’s a direct and personal experience available to everyone. The art of magic is about experiencing the sacred and working with it in an appropriate way.’ (1998: 83) According to Curott, the Sacred can be encountered in a number of ways—from the embodiment of the Divine in human form, the quantum mechanics of the natural world, to the Sacred within.

4. Divine Immanence

Divine Immanence is the second element where Wicca and Jungian psychology find common ground. For Wiccans, as for Jungians and some post-Jungians, Goddess is immanent. Curott writes: ‘But the Old Religion is nothing if not a fertility religion—a celebration of an immanent divinity that makes the world a Garden of Eden.’ (ibid: 228) The Wiccan understanding of Divine Immanence is exemplified in a quotation from Curott’s memoir that cites what is known as the last line of ‘The Charge of the Goddess.’¹¹⁰ Curott writes: ‘*If that which you seek you find not within you, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you since the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.*’ (ibid: 277, italics in the original) The origins of the ‘Charge of the Goddess’ is credited by Carol P Christ to Doreen Valiente in 1989 derived from Charles Leland (Christ, 2003). However, this may not be accurate; writers within the Witchcraft community such as Ronald Hutton (1999) or Janet and Stewart Farrar (1987) understand the history of ‘The Charge’ to include Gerald Gardner—whom Christ dismissed. The ‘Charge,’ as it is known today and used by many Wiccan and Witchcraft practitioners in sacred rituals, was written by Gerald Gardner (the architect of modern-day Wicca) in *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows* (1949). Gardner based his version of the ‘Charge’ upon Charles Leland’s *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches* (1899) which purportedly captured the rites and rituals of practicing witches in Tuscany. According the Farrar and Farrar (1987) Valiente later revised this ‘Charge’ with Gardner’s approval. Considered by many to be the ‘Call’ of Goddess to Her adherents (Farrar and Farrar, 1987; Hutton, 1999; Starhawk, 1999; Adler, 1979), ‘The Charge of the Goddess’ is reminiscent of, and could potentially be either structured on or responding to Augustine of Hippo’s

¹¹⁰ This note also applies to the opening epigram found directly after the title page of this work.

declaration of the immanence of God in *The Confessions of St Augustine* (circa 400 CE).¹¹¹ This concept of an immanent Divine is also found in the mystical sects of many of the world's faith traditions such as Christian Mysticism, Jewish Mysticism (Kabbala), and the Charismatic sects of Christianity (to name only a few). As 'The Charge of the Goddess' can only be traced historically back to 1899 and author Charles Leland, it is possible that Augustine's writings (which precede Leland by 1500 years) influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, writers who followed. Ultimately, it is impossible to know whether Christianity had any influence on this fundamental tenet, or if this call to adherents had another source entirely. Wiccans, however, would argue, as does Curott, that 'The Charge' is far more ancient than Augustine or the three Abrahamic traditions which may be indicative of the lasting influence of the disproved 1921 Murray Thesis.

5. No Structured Hierarchy

Another slightly controversial claim is made in Curott's memoir by the coven elder, Nonna. Speaking about the structure of the coven, Nonna explains that the Old Religion is a faith tradition without a structured hierarchy; Curott writes:

In the Old Religion all are equal. The priestesses are teachers who share their wisdom and their skills so others can learn to make use of them for themselves. Priestesses are honoured and respected as elders, but no one stands above another in the circle, no one has sole authority to interpret divine wisdom. That's a gift that everyone who practices the Old Ways experiences themselves. (1998: 101)

While this is certainly a concept that draws a number of adherents into Wicca or Witchcraft, this claim is not entirely true with regards to *organised* Witchcraft. There is, indeed, a hierarchy for prospective adherents—a series of learned rituals and practices that move one up the adept ladder towards High Priest or Priestess. This is evident not only in Gardner's Wicca but sects such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the Rosicrucian Order as well (Greer, 1995). Structured similar to university, the incoming adherent begins with general knowledge and rituals and works his or her way up the hierarchy by mastering certain elements of the magical work conducted by the coven. This, of course, does not apply to

¹¹¹ See: **St Augustine** (1960) *The Confessions of St Augustine*. Ryan JK (Trans). Image Books.

solitary practitioners; however, for those who choose to work in a coven, there is an experience-based hierarchical structure in place.

6. Spiritual Environmentalism

As exemplified in the previous discussion on quantum physics and Goddess, the Old Religion is also a tradition that practices deep reverence for and personal interconnection with Nature. Accepting and/or incorporating the underlying theory in quantum mechanics that everything is interconnected in quantum reality, it is not surprising that many involved in Wicca (and by extension the Western Goddess Movement) are also ecologically-minded or trained environmentalists. Curott writes:

The Old Religion is frequently referred to as spiritual environmentalism. Wiccan reverence for the earth reflects a deep ecological concern that is far more than pragmatic. As an embodiment of the divine, the earth is not treated as a utilitarian object to be exploited, polluted, and destroyed for man's short-term greed. Rather, it is inherently sacred in its value. Practitioners of the Old Religion know that to live in harmony with nature is to live in accord with the divine. This reverence has drawn many people to the practice of Wicca, and, as with other indigenous religions, it may be one of its greatest contributions to a world imperilled by ecological crisis. (ibid: 254)

This foundational principle evokes an environmental activism in most adherents. The first national survey of Neo-Pagans in America (conducted between 1993 and 1995) exhibited that a dramatic percentage of Witches and Neo-Pagans in America are politically active in environmental concerns when compared to the general American population. (Berger et al., 2003) Berger, Leach, and Shaffer argue: 'The large disparity between the responses of Neo-Pagans and the general American public supports Harvey's (1997) claim that participation in Neo-Paganism strengthens individual's commitment to environmental issues.' (Berger et al., 2003: 67) However, environmental activism emanates from the important relationship one has with the natural world. Curott writes: 'The shamanistic practices of the Old Religion enabled women and men to attune their psyches and their daily lives to the cycles of nature and the mystical wisdom found in the earth's profound rhythms.' (Curott, 1998: xiii) Once this personal connection is made, environmentalism follows. Berger, Leach, and Shaffer rightfully point out, however, that 'Those drawn to Neo-Paganism may come from part of the American public that is already sensitive to environmental issues.' (Berger et al., 2003: 67)

7. There Is No Satan

Including Satan in her memoir was imperative for Curott in her ongoing attempt to change the ‘world’s prejudice.’ (Curott, 1998: 55) Again, this information comes from the coven elder, Nonna, and Curott cites her as she writes: “‘There is no Satan in the Old Religion. He belongs entirely to the patriarchal religions; he is their figure of evil.’” (ibid: 28) It is important to point out that there are a number of Gods worshipped in various Pagan and Neo-Pagan traditions who are ‘horned’ gods—Baphomet being the most notorious of these deities. However, these are not images of Satan, the Devil, or Lucifer. The worship of horned gods or gods of the underworld (such as Hades), while perhaps the impetus for the Devil construct, has been, according to Curott, misinterpreted.

8. Jung Again

Curott presents an Old Religion that seems to be deeply intertwined with Jungian and post-Jungian thought. As examined previously, it is almost impossible to say, considering Jung’s early interest in the occult (Noll, 1997), whether these were long held religious beliefs that impacted Jung and his theories or whether the introduction of Harding’s women-centred theories in 1935 affected the beliefs and practices of these Goddess-centred faith traditions as they emerged in the United States and beyond. An example of this seamless blending is evident in the following description; Curott writes: ‘The Old Religion is a chthonic spirituality—one first descends into the Underworld before ascending to the heavens [...].’ (Curott, 1998: 216) Jungian analytical psychology *is* a chthonic psychology, for the first step in Jungian analysis is for the patient to confront his or her own chthonic Shadow following Persephone into the Underworld of the unconscious mind. (Jung, 1968: 29) Through her own research, it appears that Curott has also discovered Jung and Harding’s significant influence on the Western Goddess Movement—something she alludes to below:

[...] one of the most important aspects of Wiccan spirituality: the idea of personal ritual and revelation. Wicca was not a system of dogma, rules, or regulations. As a spiritual practice, each individual could master and make use of techniques to personally experience the divine. And because the divine was immanent as well as transcendent, feminine as well as masculine, yin and yang, anima and animus, it was immediately accessible to us as women. This was to become a wellspring of creative spiritual exploration and expression, not only for myself, but for *the entire Goddess movement*. (ibid: 186, emphasis is mine)

Curott's seamless fusion of Jungian theory, Wicca, and quantum physics was discussed at length in section 6.2.5.2; it is, however, important to point out that Curott's history and description of the Old Religion is decidedly Jungian in its theory and perception.

A Dubious Title and History: Leland, Murray, and the Witch-Cult Hypothesis

Of the eight elements Curott specifically mentioned as fundamental to the Old Religion, the historical legacy and title 'Old Religion' remain, for the most part, critically rejected. The term *Old Religion* is credited to American folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903) who conducted a study into Italian Witchcraft. In the Preface to his 1899 publication *Aradia: Gospel of the Witches*, Leland writes: 'For a brief explanation I may say the witchcraft is known to its votaries as *la vecchia religione*, or the old religion, of which DIANA is the Goddess, her daughter Aradia [...] the female messiah [...].' (Leland, 2007 [1899]: 8) Although applying the term utilised by adherents to an extant form of Italian Witchcraft at the end of the nineteenth century, the term *Old Religion* has been embraced by a number of contemporary traditions that lay claim to one historic legacy or another. In *Book of Shadows*, Curott writes: 'I had come to understand the Old Religion as a survival of the ancient Goddess religions.' (Curott, 1998: 50) Critics such as Hutton (1999), York (1999), and Simpson (1994) find the term problematic with Simpson calling the term Old Religion 'deplorable' in its constant use. (Simpson, 1994: 93) While an American folklorist may have coined the term, Old Religion, it would be a British folklorist who would, problematically, define the Old Religion for generations who follow.

Dr Margaret A Murray (1862-1963)

In a chapter entitled 'God (and Goddess) Parents', British historian Ronald Hutton names four key individuals who he believes have had a '[...] direct and obvious influence upon modern pagan witchcraft and have been acknowledged by many modern witches as sources of inspiration.' (Hutton, 1999: 171) Included in this parental lineage is *Aleister Crowley* (1875-1947); *Violet Firth*, aka *Dion Fortune*, (1890-1946); *Robert Graves* (1895-1985); and *Margaret Murray* (1862-1963). Hutton includes Murray in the '[...] first generation of women to make a serious impact upon the world of professional scholarship.' (Hutton, 1999: 194)

Dr Margaret Alice Murray was a prominent and well-respected British Egyptologist, archaeologist, and folklorist; she was also the 'erstwhile assistant and colleague to Sir Flinders Petrie [...]' (Drower, 1995 [1985]: xxi) the pre-eminent archaeologist and Egyptologist during her years at University College London. Murray was in her forties when she entered the academe; she worked in a variety of academic disciplines (writing also in anthropology and history), including fieldwork, and published often. Murray was also a staunch suffragette and actively campaigned for women's rights. (Hutton, 1999; Drower, 1995 [1985]) Hutton writes:

Her significance here, [in the list of parents] and the one which has provided her widest public reputation, is that she appeared to become the first person to provide apparent supporting evidence, based on systematic research, for the long-rehearsed theory that the victims of the early modern witch trials had been practitioners of surviving pagan religion. (Hutton, 1999: 194-95)

The Murray Thesis

1921 *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*

While a specialist in Egyptology, Margaret Murray turned her attention to the European Witch trials as subject matter for research. Hutton writes: 'Between 1917 and 1921 she had appeared to provide sound documentary support for the theory that medieval and early modern witchcraft had been a pagan religion.' (Hutton, 1999: 198) However, that was not the only theory that Murray posited. Simpson writes: 'Murray maintained that witches were keeping alive an ancient religion concerned with fertility, a notion which fitted current assumptions in the 1920s.' (Simpson, 1994: 92) Alongside her Witch-cult theory, Murray, according to Simpson, 'created a startling new figure, the witch as a benevolent purveyor of fertility [...]' (Simpson, 1994: 92) Murray's approach to her research and her claims contained in her 1921 publication *The Witch Cult in Europe* initially found a welcome academic reception, until scholars took a closer look at Murray's sources and conclusions. Simpson writes: 'No British folklorist can remember Dr Margaret Murray without embarrassment and a sense of paradox. She is one of the few folklorists whose name became widely known to the public, but among scholars her reputation is deservedly low [...]' (Simpson, 1994: 89) Historian Ronald Hutton explains that the difficulty with Murray's thesis lie in her source material and her eventual conclusions; Hutton writes:

The Witch Cult in Western Europe rested upon a small amount of archival research, with extensive use of printed trial records in nineteenth-century editions, plus early modern pamphlets and works of demonology. Most of the material was Scottish, with some from England and a little from the Continent, and Murray combined it all to give an impression of a fairly uniform pagan religion, surviving all across Western Europe until the seventeenth century. (Hutton, 1999: 195)

In declaring her findings to be ‘normative’ (Hutton, 1999) across cultures and geographic boundaries, Murray took a decidedly reductionist approach to her research data. Simpson writes: ‘But reductionist interpretation is not in itself a sin against scholarship. Murray is far more to blame for the extreme selectivity with which she cited from her sources, producing a cumulative distortion which she unscrupulously exploited.’ (Simpson, 1994: 91) Simpson goes on to say: ‘Her manipulation of sources is sometimes so blatant as to be naïve, for even a cursory reader can spot what is going on.’ (Simpson, 1994: 91) The difficulty appears to be in the academe’s lack of willingness to publicly refute Murray’s ideas. Murray held a highly respectable place in the academy working alongside Sir Flinders Petrie. Perhaps Petrie’s esteem as a pioneer in archaeological methodology and preservation techniques, alongside his celebrated academic eminence, extended on to Murray. If so, this might have made Murray appear as almost infallible, especially if Petrie supported her work. Why were her theories and methodologies not criticised earlier? Was Petrie protecting his colleague? The lack of scholarly criticism (with the scant exception of Halliday in 1922) of Murray’s theses from Murray’s peers meant that her theories were endorsed by silent consent in Murray’s academic community—allowing her unsubstantiated claims to acquire a following and be perpetuated into modern times.

1929 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Because of her unique position as a leading archaeologist, and her recent publication of *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* and its popular acclaim, Murray was perceived as the leading academic in this field of Witchcraft studies. Through this notoriety, Murray was asked to write the 1929 entry on Witchcraft for the prestigious *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Simpson writes that Murray:

[...] seized the opportunity to set out her own interpretation of the topic as if it were the universally accepted one. This entry was reprinted in later editions up to 1969, making her views virtually infallible in the eyes of the public, and influencing such well-known authors as Aldous Huxley and Robert Graves. They were also accessible to journalists,

film-makers, popular novelists and thriller writers, who adopted them enthusiastically; by now they are so entrenched in popular culture that they will probably never be uprooted. (Simpson, 1994: 89)

Due to the continued reprinting of Murray's entry on Witchcraft, generations of writers, researchers, and curious readers would be influenced by the perceived dominance of the Murray Thesis. This notoriety was further expanded when Murray published her next book on the subject matter in 1933—*The God of the Witches*.

1933 *The God of the Witches*

Murray's 1933 sequel to *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, *The God of the Witches*, was, according to Hutton a '[...] a restatement and reinforcement of the thesis of the earlier book [...]' (Hutton, 1999: 196) There were, however, two significant changes made in this text: first, the 1933 sequel was published by a popular press (Sampson Low) obviously intended at a mass market rather than a scholarly one. According to Hutton: 'The approach was no longer analytical, but celebratory, the "Old Religion" (Murray having taken up Leland's phrase) being characterised as a joyous and life-affirming one, contrasted with the gloom of Christianity [...]' (Hutton, 1999: 196) The second change was a heavy emphasis on the deity at the centre of this Witchcraft phenomenon—for Murray, the main deity was Pan. According to Hutton, Murray asserts: '[...] the doctrine that the horned god of the greenwood had been the oldest male deity known to humans, and traced his worship across Europe and the Near East, from the Old Stone Age to the seventeenth century.' (Hutton, 1999: 196) With these claims, Murray was connecting Witchcraft as a distinguishable religion with a history that could be traced from the Palaeolithic to her present day (1933). Murray was offering a historical legacy for Witchcraft that predated even the Minoan and ancient Sumer cultures. The after-effects of this publication will be examined in a following section. However, the academe discredits Murray, and even some notable Pagan scholars take issue with her work. Michael York writes:

To begin with, let me state from the beginning that there is little or no evidence that modern earth spiritualities and related traditions in the West are anything but contemporary creations. Instead, the modern Neo-pagan movement deriving from Gardner, Murray, Charles G. Leland, Robert Graves, and Doreen Valiente can be seen as a multiple conflation of numerous traditions or sources, many of which were patently contrived or even erroneous. (York, 1999: 138)

York's statement effectively crushes the historical legacy claimed by many Neo-Pagan and Wiccan traditions. Major criticisms of Murray's thesis began appearing two decades after she first published her thesis in 1921. Scholars such as Runeberg (1947); Parrinder (1958); Rose (1962); Cohn (1976); Simpson (1994); Purkiss (1996); Hutton (1999); and York (1999) have been confronting Murray's thesis and research methodology. Hutton reveals why there was a delayed academic response to Murray's thesis:

A quarter of a century had been required for Margaret Murray's own ideas to enter popular knowledge, and it was hardly surprising that at least the same would be needed for them to be widely rejected. [...] Many of the earlier textbooks and popular works on witchcraft remained in schools and public libraries well into the 1980s, and people who had left education before the mid-1970s were likely to preserve the impressions of history which they had acquired before then. Even when new textbooks were revised or old texts revised to take account of the new scholarly research, their authors almost never attacked the obsolete ideas about witchcraft head-on, but ignored them or deleted them silently. (Hutton, 1999: 362-63)

The longevity of Murray's thesis, and its inclusion in early feminist academic pursuits could possibly explain why second-wave feminists (such as Mary Daly) and third-wave feminists (such as myself) have such disparate views on Goddess. Second wave scholars were trained with the Murray Thesis, whereas third-wave feminists arrived in the academe once the Murray Thesis had been refuted. Murray's inclusion in years of academic training has left a lasting legacy both in the academe and in the general population of the United States.

Murray's Legacy

There are a number of assertions made in Murray's body of work on Witchcraft: (1) Witchcraft is a continuation of Pagan (and thus pre-Christian) religion; (2) this history is traced back to the Palaeolithic era; (3) Witchcraft is a fertility religion, and by extension, Witches are fertility figures; (4) the horned God is the main deity; and (5) she established a Witches calendar including historic sabbats or holy days. Immediately following her three major contributions on Witchcraft, in 1934, Murray made yet '[...] another significant contribution to medieval scholarship, by contributing an essay on "Female Fertility figures" to the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*.' (Hutton, 1999: 198) This article appeared to validate all of Murray's theories and probably heavily influenced those that would follow in her footsteps and become prominent in the Western Goddess Movement such

as the also-controversial archaeologist/mythologist Marija Gimbutas¹¹². According to Hutton, Murray's thesis arrived in the United States during the second wave of feminism. He writes:

America's most distinctive single contribution to that witchcraft, however, arose from a different phenomenon: its assimilation to the women's spirituality movement. This was based upon the simple and fundamental fact that the witch is one of the very few images of an independent female power which historic European cultures have bequeathed. (Hutton, 1999: 341)

Second-wave feminist Mary Daly played a significant role in perpetuating the feminist as Witch, and Hutton comments at length on her contributions to scholarship which perpetuate the Murray Thesis. Hutton writes: 'As the United States became the main source of modern feminist thought in general and radical feminist thought in particular, the appropriation of this image [witch as independent powerful female] became virtually inevitable.' (Hutton, 1999: 341) But it was not merely the academe that had been effected by Murray; Hutton writes: 'These works have a considerable impact on the general public.' (Hutton, 1999: 378) Murray's thesis, however, would have the most important impact on one individual—Gerald Brosseau Gardner.

Gerald Brosseau Gardner and Wicca

Murray was a prominent member of the Folklore Society in Britain; in fact, she would go on later in life to sit as the President of the Society—despite her academic downfall. (Simpson, 1994) Another member of the Folklore Society was Gerald Brosseau Gardner; Simpson writes: '[...] the only member of the Folklore Society to adopt her theory wholeheartedly was the very untypical Gerald Gardner, founder of the Wicca movement.' (Simpson, 1994: 89) Michael York and Ronald Hutton both agree with Simpson. York writes:

This tradition of magical practices, along with various English folk customs and ideas from Margaret Murray and Charles Leland, became synthesized in the 1940s by Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964), a retired English colonial civil servant, who appears almost

¹¹² See: **Gimbutas M** (1996) *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 6500-3500 BC, Myths and Cult Images Rev Ed.* Berkeley: University of California Press and (1989) *Women and Culture in Goddess-Oriented Old Europe*. In: Plaskow J and Christ CP (eds) *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco: 63-71.

singlehandedly to have fashioned the contemporary Wiccan movement. (York, 1999: 139)

Hutton describes Murray as ‘[...] an almost literal godmother to modern pagan witchcraft by writing a supportive foreword to the first book devoted to it, Gerald Gardner’s *Witchcraft Today*.’ (Hutton, 1999: 201) York, Hutton, and Simpson all agree that the Murray Thesis has been disproved and has provided a false basis for a number of faith traditions within the Western Goddess Movement—including Wicca which is the fundamental belief system in Curott’s memoir. This is how Curott’s purported historical legacy becomes problematic as it is based on theories that have been academically refuted yet remain dominant in the general population—and fundamental to many adherents in these faith traditions. York writes:

Consequently, modern witchcraft or Wicca owes its essential origins, via Gardner, to the Murray thesis of a fertility cult worshipping a god and goddess, celebrating the Celtic quarter festivals, and organized into covens. The once popular argument, that the victims of the medieval Inquisition were the remnants of an earlier fertility religion who had survived despite the advent and success of the Roman Catholic Church, has now been exposed as a conscious selection, repression, and manipulation of evidence. In other words, it is a patent forgery and becomes an invented base for a religion [...]. (1999: 139)

Back to Curott

Considering the above examination of the Murray Thesis and Curott’s inclusion of all five of the major theories to come out of Murray’s body of work in her understanding of Wicca, Curott’s lack of engagement with Murray is noticeably missing in *Book of Shadows*. Curott writes: ‘My studies led me to realize that Witchcraft, as the Old Religion is often called, and its modern renaissance, are rooted in the ancient Goddess religions from which Western culture was originally born.’ (1998: 65) The material of her studies, however, had all been tainted by the Murray Thesis. It wasn’t until the 1980s and 1990s that international academic scrutiny of the Murray Thesis came into the scholarly dialogue—especially from British historians. Hutton writes: ‘All this outpouring of information had the effect of dismantling many previous assumptions and models, including that provided by American feminism.’ (Hutton, 1999: 379) However, by then, it was too late. The second wave of American feminist, and especially radical feminist theologians such as Mary Daly, grasped on to the Murray Thesis and continue, to this day, to

propagate Murray's ideas to the potential critical detriment of modern witchcraft and Wicca.

I find it intriguing that Curott, considering her training in evidence gathering and debate as a lawyer, would ignore the Murray Thesis and not engage with its criticisms in her memoir *Book of Shadows*. I do however, have a theory as to why Curott does not engage with these critiques—she is, as an adherent, unaware of them. Leading writers in the Western Goddess Movement including Starhawk and Margot Adler both write about Murray in their influential texts. In *The Spiral Dance*, originally published in 1979 and later republished with revisions for its 20th anniversary, Starhawk only makes brief mention of Murray citing her for popularising the Horned God in Witchcraft (Starhawk, 1999: 46) Despite the fact that the 20th anniversary edition could have engaged with the eventual academic demise of the Murray Thesis, Starhawk makes no note of it and continues to perpetuate Murray's theories. Adler, however, does address the controversy in her expanded 2006 edition of her 1979 classic *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druid, Goddess-Worshippers and Other Pagans in America*. In a chapter entitled 'The Wiccan Revival' Adler discusses, at length, what she deems 'The Murrayite Controversy'. Writing sympathetically, Adler seemingly dismisses Murray's thesis while lauding her importance as a writer: 'While modern Wicca has very little to do with the witchcraft of the Middle Ages or the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the revival was strongly influenced by Margaret Murray's writings.' (Adler, 2006 [1979]: 44) With regards to the controversy surrounding Murray's thesis, Adler writes:

The arguments against her were many: that she took as true stories that may be have been fabricated under torture; that, while she gave good evidence for Pagan survivals in Britain, she did not give evidence that an *organised* Pagan religion survived, or that this religion was universal, or that covens or sabbats existing before they appeared in trial reports. (Adler, 2006 [1979]: 46, emphasis in the original)

Instead of engaging with any of these criticisms, however, Adler goes on to write:

The primary value of Murray's work was her understanding of the persistence of Pagan folk customs in Britain and her realisation that Witchcraft could not be examined in isolation from the comparative history of religions or from the study of anthropology and folklore. But most scholars today dismiss most of her work. (2006 [1979]: 46)

Considering these sympathetic views of Murray's thesis, it is no wonder that Curott was unaware of the scholarly debate over Murray's methodologies and findings. As evidenced by both Adler and Starhawk, formidable names in the Western Goddess Movement and authors Curott acknowledges reading, those within the Movement appear either hesitant to engage in criticism of Murray or mention her in a cursory way as to avoid engagement with the critics. The findings would indicate that academic criticism regarding the Murray Thesis is essentially non-existent in the mass writings of the Western Goddess Movement. Instead choosing to adhere to the Murray Thesis and draw a historical lineage in the ancient practice of Witchcraft to today's Neo-Pagan movement. It could be argued that this critique of the historical lineage of Wicca is being intentionally kept away from adherents. I can attest, as an active member of the Western Goddess Movement for over twenty years, it was not until I started to examine this movement from an academic perspective that I encountered both Margaret Murray and the critiques of her thesis. Perhaps this is the same situation in which Curott finds herself. Curott's ignorance to the Murray Thesis and its academic critiques could explain why she doesn't address this theory and its academic history in *Book of Shadows*.

Nonetheless, Curott does something even more intriguing by fusing Wicca with the theories of Carl Jung. Wicca lays claim to a historical lineage—that we now understand to be, in the words of York, '[...] a patent forgery and [...] an invented base for a religion [...].' (York, 1999: 139) Carl Jung also lays claim to an ancient lineage—a primordial pool of knowledge accessible through the collective unconscious. (Jung, 1976: 123) However, Jung does not make assertions of a historical lineage. His theories include a psychic (psychological) lineage connecting all human beings over the history of time. Apparently validated by scientific theories of quantum mechanics and Sheldrake's morphic resonance theory, Jung's collective unconscious may be the less academically controversial than relying solely on the claimed historical legacy of Wicca. By aligning herself with Jung, Curott potentially bypasses the difficulty of the Murray Thesis' historical legacy by claiming affiliation with Jungian theory that does not draw on a contentious and delusional historical legacy. This lack of critical engagement with the Murray Thesis and her critique from within the Western Goddess Movement is a serious flaw that needs to be addressed. It is obvious that even a

perceived critique of Murray is negated within the writings of various influential members of the Movement, but not knowing your own history, even if it is merely a contemporary history, is a damaging case of short-sightedness on the parts of academics within this community. There are those in the Movement who do not lay claims to a rich historical lineage, and this lack of historical legacy seems to matter far less than the fundamental tenets of the practices, rites, and beliefs of the tradition to which they adhere. (Berger et al., 2003) Despite the lack of appropriate evidence for Murray's claims, the Movement has established a beneficial and significant set of beliefs and practices that, while new rather than old, serve the needs of the community.

Drawing Conclusions

This penultimate chapter examined *Book of Shadows*—the last memoir in this study. The summation and critical analyses revealed Curott's intention to break cultural stereotypes and change the 'world's prejudice' against Wiccans and Pagans. Curott also takes the concept of rebirth memoir farther than the others by including a wide array of resource material for aspiring Witches or the randomly curious stranger. *Book of Shadows* is more than a memoir, it is a 'way of knowing' that includes rituals to follow, accessible explanations, and extensive further sources of information. *Book of Shadows* is a handbook—a how-to-manual for those who wish to utilise it that way.

Book of Shadows also exemplifies the extent in which Jungian and post-Jungian ideas and beliefs have woven their way into contemporary faith practices in the West, including the Wiccan tradition. By utilising and incorporating both Jungian and post-Jungian theory, Curott is also validating their significant and ongoing contributions to the Western Goddess Movement. In fact, each and every author in this study presents a Jungian or post-Jungian experience-based 'way of knowing' Goddess despite the variety of faith traditions from the analytical and humanist to Roman Catholicism and Wicca. This is how Jung comes to be at the centre of the Western Goddess Movement.

The final chapter shall assess why Jungian and post-Jungian theory is relevant and significant to the authors in this study and the Western Goddess Movement. It will synthesise how Jung and post-Jungian theory is used in the memoirs including a

brief study of their unified presentation of Jung's *Anima Mundi* and the non-Jungian difficulty in being a Reluctant Pilgrim.

Drawing Conclusions

*[...] each religion has its own style, its own inner dynamic, its own special meanings, its uniqueness. Each religion is an organism, and has to be understood in terms of the interrelation of its different parts.*¹¹³

7.1 In Summation

The preceding chapters examined the ways in which women encounter Goddess through a process of Jungian Individuation—from the most Jungian structured Path provided by Downing (1981) to the fluid and contemporary Path offered by Curott (1998). The inclusion of Jung varies from the purely post-Jungian (Downing), the union of Jungian or post-Jungian with Christianity (Starbird and Bolen), as an alternative to Christianity (Kidd) and in tandem with Wicca (Curott). These analyses also demonstrated how the Western Goddess Movement provides a literature of Individuation that helps to guide others through the process. This literature, prevalent within the Western Goddess Movement, offers a myriad of ‘ways of knowing’ Goddess aligned with Jungian and post-Jungian theory.

7.2 Jung’s Contributions

The overarching use of Jungian and post-Jungian theories in the rebirth memoirs of the Western Goddess Movement exemplifies why and how Jung’s analytical psychology is still relevant and useful today. Yet, from the critical analysis the questions remain: What has Jung contributed? Why do his theories dominate these memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement in general? And why do his theories seem to resonate with contemporary Western women? Jung’s original theories pose a model of inherent wholeness that includes the ‘feminine’ aspects of one’s Self. In the end analysis, I offer eight significant contributions that made Jung’s theories and models relevant to contemporary Goddess-centred faith traditions: (1) Jung offers an analytic path to Goddess without the problematic link to a

¹¹³ Smart, 1991: 17.

historical legacy found in many Goddess-centred communities and traditions (such as Wicca and examined in chapter 6) because in his model the Collective Unconscious contains all the primordial information from all of human life accessible to any individual through her or his own unconscious mind (Jung, 1968 and 1971). (2) Jung spends his entire psychological career focusing on what he deems as the missing ‘feminine’ (intuitive) element in Western thinking and belief (Jung, 1995) and for women who feel disempowered by the patriarchal West, this offers a women-centred perspective that many feminists crave. (3) As Jung’s Path of Individuation is a path of true Self-transformation it offers an important level of self-empowerment and self-validation perhaps available to Western women nowhere else. (4) Jung extolls interconnectivity at a psychic and quantum level connecting humanity with Nature in a symbiotic relationship that includes duty of care that is appealing to many women and men concerned about our ecological future (Paglia, 2006). (5) Jung’s analytical psychology extolls the fully Individuated Self as the centre of the psyche, and the Ego, while still existing, is subordinate and answerable to the Self, unlike the Freudian model of the Ego as the dominant centre of the psyche with the Self as subordinate and unable to control the Ego. This subtle shift in perception of the psyche is important as Jung utilises decidedly intuitive (Eros-based and therefore considered as ‘feminine’) methodology not only in the construction of his original models and theories but in their revision or expansion during his lifetime. Many in the post-Jungian feminist community see this as one of Jung’s major contributions to the West as it stands in direct opposition to the Freudian and patriarchal ‘way of knowing’ offering a fluidity and pool of possibilities not found in Freudian (patriarchal) psychoanalysis. (6) Jung’s Path of Individuation offers a personal relationship with Goddess (Anima) that is unmediated by an organised hierarchy (Jung, 1968: 29). That is not to say that one could seek out and find such an organised ‘way of knowing’ as evident in Curott’s memoir *Book of Shadows*, but it does mean that Jung offers a psychological process that is guided solely by the individual rather than the analyst. (7) Jung was surrounded by influential women during his career (Anthony, 1999; Rowland, 2002; Paglia, 2006), and while the accusations of Jung being gender essentialist and sexist (Goldenberg, 1979) are accurate he still fostered an environment whereby he encouraged the creation of Harding’s Jungian psychology for women and by women (Jung, 1971). In his memoir, Jung speaks well of the women who worked closely with him noting ‘Women [...] often have excellent

intuition and a trenchant critical insight, and can see what men have up their sleeves [...]. They see aspects that the man does not see.’ (Jung, 1995: 156) Jung also credited the women in his life with helping him develop his theories and models, he writes: ‘I had had mainly women patients, who often entered into the work with extraordinary conscientiousness, understanding, and intelligence. It was essentially because of them that I was able to strike out on new paths in therapy.’ (Jung, 1995: 168). It is often because of Jung’s dependence upon his female colleagues, his emphasis on the Anima, and Eros-based thinking that Jung’s analytical psychology is often considered ‘feminine’-centred. (8) Finally, and perhaps the most important contribution that Jung brings to the Western psyche is that he offers a mythological way of thinking (Jung, 1976: 151). As it has been argued by a number of scholars (Armstrong, 2005; Campbell, 1988; and Jung, 1976) and examined in chapter 2, mythology offers a rich ‘way of knowing’ and finding one’s fully Individuated Self; Armstrong writes: ‘Mythology was not about theology, in the modern sense, but about human experience.’ (Armstrong, 2005: 5) In the Jungian and post-Jungian worlds myth holds great personal knowledge and power, and the ways that post-Jungians would utilise myth alongside revised and amplified Jungian theories and models would help to pave the way for the development of the Western Goddess Movement.

7.3 Post-Jungian Contributions

The women who followed Jung and made feminist revisions to his theories and models must have seen something worthwhile in Jung’s original theories to expound upon them rather than dismissing them altogether. Perhaps the underlying reason for post-Jungian revising and amplifying was the potential for an individual to have an *archetypal experience*—especially when it came to seeking Goddess. From my reading of Jung, I would venture to say that the above eight important contributions by Jung are the elements that are the most significant and relevant both to a majority of post-Jungian feminists, the authors in this study, and those in the wider Western Goddess Movement. Before it could bear significant influence on the development of the Western Goddess Movement, however, Jung’s theories and models would be meaningfully revised by feminist thinkers shifting Jung’s theories and models from the purely analytical realm of the psyche to the physical landscape of ritual and praxis and making the final leap to a psycho-religious Path of Individuation that would and could accommodate a

wide variety of belief systems. From a close reading of the rebirth memoirs in this study, seven vital revisions or amplifications of Jung are fundamental to the authors in this study as well as to those within the Western Goddess Movement who lean towards a Jungian or post-Jungian tradition. (1) The first important revision would be made by M Esther Harding in 1935, would be repeated by four of the five authors in this study, and become a salient term in the feminist traditions within the Western Goddess Movement—this first shift would be in the revisioning and reclamation of the word ‘Virgin.’ As discussed in this introduction, Harding’s term dominates the memoirs; in *Woman’s Mysteries* (1935) Harding wrote: ‘As virgin she belongs to herself alone, she is “one-in-herself.”’ (Harding, 1971: 103) Harding, in a move that defied her existing cultural and social boundaries as a woman in the United States in 1935, turned an prevailing Western term upside-down and gave it new meaning. In redefining the term ‘virgin’ Harding attempted to rescue it from the denigrating Biblical and patriarchal connotations of placing value on a woman’s sexual virtue—and by extension, purity. Although criticised for not confronting the sexism inherent in Jung, (Downing, 1992: Anthony, 1999) perhaps Harding addresses this issue by taking a term that is antiquated and denigrates women by subordinating them to the dichotomy of purity or whoredom and is used even in contemporary times to place a stigma on a woman’s moral character, and reimagines it as a potentially empowering term for women. Harding writes:

She is not related to any god as wife or “counterpart.” She is her own mistress [...]. The characteristics of these great and powerful goddesses do not mirror those of any of the male gods, nor do they represent the feminine counterpart of characteristics originally male. Their histories are independent and their functions, their insignia, and their rites belong to themselves alone [...]. (1971: 105)

Harding’s revision of ‘virgin’ from a term of subjugation to a term of self-empowerment would later be echoed by Mary Daly in her attempt to create a feminist lexicon¹¹⁴ and would be quoted by Downing, Bolen, Kidd, and Currott and cited as a vital and relevant concept to embrace as part of their own Individuation. (2) Jean Shinoda Bolen made the second important contribution to Post-Jungian theory by providing the first pragmatic bridge from Jung, Harding, and Downing’s archetypal-centred Individuation as a process limited to the psyche to Goddess-

¹¹⁴ See Daly 1973, 1978, and 1984.

centred praxis including rituals and symbols in her 1994 memoir. Kidd and Currott would both follow Bolen and build alternate 'ways of knowing' that are aligned with Jung yet applicable and relevant to their own faith traditions. Bolen's memoir, *Crossing to Avalon*, would stand as the example that both Kidd and Currott (along with a host of others) would follow creating a variety of paths that align Jung with a range of faith traditions. (3) Post-Jungian feminists such as Goldenberg, Wehr, Perera, Rowland, and Bolen have revised Jung's original theories and models in indispensable ways to remove the original gender essentialism and sexism inherent in Jung's work. This post-Jungian feminist revision of Jung not only kept Jung and his theories topical during the second wave of feminism in America, it also provided a way for women to explore their own Selfhood without the social and cultural limitations and gender restrictions of both Jung and the patriarchal West. Post-Jungian feminist revision created a host of literature that is women-centred and was incredibly influential to the development of the Western Goddess Movement. A mere sampling of this massive publication trend can be seen in greater detail in the timeline found in Appendix A. Without the necessary feminist revision to Jung in the late twentieth century, I doubt his theories would be as prevalent among adherents in the Western Goddess Movement as they are now. (4) Another significant post-Jungian feminist revision of Jung was discussed in the Introduction and was a direct by-product of the early feminist revisions to Jung: some post-Jungians such as Wehr, Lauter, Rupprecht, and Rowland followed Goldenberg's 1976 critique and removed Jung's models (especially the gendered pairings of Eros & Logos and Anima & Animus) from their gender essentialist and sexist confines completely. This strategic revision of Jungian theory meant that the keys to Individuation and psychological wholeness and well-being were no longer gender-reliant constructs. This crucial revision is beneficial to the advancement of post-Jungian theory in the Western Goddess Movement because it allows any individual, irrespective of gender identity, the ability to integrate both Eros (Intuitive and empathic 'ways of knowing') and Logos (logical and pragmatic 'ways of knowing') as well as the Anima (Compassion) and Animus (Warrior). The removal of gender completely or understanding gender as fluid are also viable constructs for Goddess among adherents in the Western Goddess Movement. Gender fluidity in Goddess-centred faith practice was exemplified in 2015 and 2013 when the Beltane Fire Society in Edinburgh celebrated its annual Samhuinn Festival while bending genders: in 2013

the role of the Crone Goddess was performed by a man, and in 2015, the role of the Winter King was executed by a woman, demonstrating, in this case, two prominent gender theories: (1) gender was perceived through performance representative of the theories of gender performativity of Judith Butler (1990); (2) it also exemplifies how some adherents in Goddess-centred communities understand gender as fluid wherein the archetypal 'Feminine Divine' is portrayed by one in a biological man's body. (5) Utilising all of the aforementioned feminist revisions of Jung, the memoirs in this study indicate another critical post-Jungian contribution to the development of the Western Goddess Movement. Downing and Bolen provide a literature of Individuation that will stand as exemplary to those who follow including Kidd and Curott. Together, the five rebirth memoirs at the heart of this study, provide an even wider literature of Individuation that now represents a variety of perspectives and aligns with a number of differing faith traditions. As examined in the previous chapters, each author offers a Path of Individuation to her readers. For the post-Jungians Downing and Bolen this focus on Individuation would seem in keeping with their training and experiences, but Kidd, Starbird and Curott are not trained Jungians—yet their memoirs, too, are Jungian or post-Jungian centred and speak of Individuation. The three later authors rely on the writings of others such as Downing, Harding, Bolen, or von Franz to develop their frame of reference thus perpetuating various forms of post-Jungian and Jungian theory. This development will be examined further below. (6) The next post-Jungian contribution harkens back to earlier feminist revisions and was demonstrated in each of the five memoirs: the amplification (projection) of Anima and *Anima Mundi* to Goddess and Great Mother respectively which lead to a form of post-Jungian Monotheism extolled by Neumann (*The Great Mother*, 1955) and echoed in the early 1980s by Downing (*The Goddess*, 1981), Whitmont (*Return of the Goddess*, 1982), and Bolen (*Goddesses in Everywoman*, 1984). While each of the memoirs in this study amplified (projected) Anima as Goddess, the critical analysis of the texts in the previous chapters demonstrated the variety of ways each author encountered Jung's Anima as Goddess. However, the context of the study did not allow an examination of the amplification of the *Anima Mundi* which is another integral Jungian theory to both the authors in this study and was a crucial step in the development of the Western Goddess Movement. Therefore a section follows that will synthesise how each of the authors presents the amplified *Anima Mundi*—the Great Mother as a substantial post-Jungian

contribution to the Western Goddess Movement. (7) The final post-Jungian contribution is perhaps, as a theologian, the most perplexing: the concept of the reluctant pilgrim. The three non-Jungian trained authors in this study, Sue Monk Kidd, Margaret Starbird, and Phyllis Curott all express extreme psychological difficulty along their own Paths. The concept presented in the memoirs of the reluctant pilgrim has nothing to do with a forced conversion through colonialization as seen in the past with both Christianity and Islam. This concept of the reluctant pilgrim, which will be analysed further below, centres upon the Jungian model of the autonomy of the archetypes and how one is psychologically compelled towards Goddess.

The above seven revisions or amplifications of Jung's original theories and models were integral to the development of post-Jungian theory and the Western Goddess Movement. In other words, Jung provided the theories and models and the following post-Jungians would revise and amplify them in ways that would make them relevant to contemporary Western women and fundamental to the development of the Western Goddess Movement in the United States. I would be remiss, however, not to mention the disparity between the academe's opinion of Jungian and post-Jungian theory versus the general population's appropriation, use, and often misuse of Jungian and post-Jungian theory. What is demonstrated in the memoirs in this study is the continuation of post-Jungian feminist revisions, often without engaging with the scholarly critiques of Jung and his theories. But then again, these are not academic theses under consideration; they are personal memoirs. In both the memoirs and Western Goddess Movement in general the positive aspects and possibilities of Jungian and post-Jungian theory are discussed with little attention paid to critique. From an academic perspective, this is problematic as the reader is then only getting one side of this 'way of knowing' without understanding both its limitations and necessary revisions. But this may not be relevant or vital information to most practitioners and adherents. Despite the academic's need for an engaged critique, this incomplete perspective was analysed in chapter 6 and exemplifies that this is the liminal territory where faith, belief, and psychological integration meet, and critique will most often only be encountered by adherents who actively seek it out and academic studies such as this one.

I have demonstrated how Jung and post-Jungian theory dominates the memoirs in this study and a number of emerging Western faith traditions including the Charismatic sects of Christianity (Thevathasan, 1998; Noll, 1994; and Hird, 1996). As evidenced by Dourley (2006); Noll (1994); and Wehr (1987) Jung created and the post-Jungian feminists who followed (including the authors in this study) further developed a personal, archetypal, experiential religious framework which allows for a variety of faith perspectives from the purely analytical (Downing), a union of Jung and Christianity (Bolen and Starbird), post-Jungian Goddess-centred worship as an alternative to Christianity (Kidd), and, finally, to a fusion of Jungian and post-Jungian theory with Wicca and quantum mechanics (Curott). Jung's model of the archetype, built on the Platonic 'perfect form', has truly permeated Western culture and can be found in daily use. Jung's overall impact on the conscious mind of the West is indicative in the growing popularity of an archetype not mentioned in the five memoirs in this study, but one certainly emerging in the Western Goddess Movement—the Lilith archetype—the woman who refused God and refused to capitulate. Downing exemplifies this archetype through Artemis in her 1981 memoir, however, for those from an Abrahamic tradition, Lilith may be more appealing as an archetype of self-validity and empowerment as she refused the Garden of Eden and the patriarchal Father God. Judith Plaskow may have been influential in Lilith's contemporary devotion in the Western Goddess Movement through her creation of a tale of 'sisterhood' in her reinterpretation of the Garden of Eden. In Plaskow's story Lilith returns to the Garden of Eden and secretly speaks with Eve; forming an instant bond, Eve leaves the Garden of Eden with Lilith never to return. (Plaskow, 1979: 206-07) This tale exemplifies the influence and importance of Jung—his archetypes as revised and amplified by feminists who followed offered archetypes of empowerment to women—something still topical and necessary thirty-seven years later.

7.4 Building on Jung: Synthesised Paths of Individuation, Goddess (Anima) and the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*)

While Kidd, Starbird, and Curott were not instrumental in the formation of the Western Goddess Movement, they appear to have made some significant contributions to the Movement on behalf of eager pilgrims and aspiring Witches by providing three alternative 'ways of knowing' Goddess. Together they

propagate the Jungian and post-Jungian theories they find most useful and distribute them to the readers. Through these five authors one can trace the thread of Jungian and post-Jungian theories prevalent in both the memoirs in this study and the Western Goddess Movement in general. Jung begins by building upon and weaves together his analytical psychology with William James' concepts of inner religious authority, intuitive knowledge of the Divine, and Union found in his 1902 *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Jung adds his model of the Platonic Collective Unconscious which holds at its core the autonomous and eternal archetypes, is the first to amplify his own Anima archetype as Goddess, and offers Anima as a spark of the *Anima Mundi* or pervasive vital force. Jung publishes vigorously for forty years (1921-1961) and posthumous publications continue. Harding learns from Jung and, in 1935, capitalising on the first wave of feminism in the United States, amplifies Jung's Anima onto a variety of traditions that worship the Moon as Goddess (Anima) or Great Goddess (*Anima Mundi*) and creates the first analytical psychology for women by women; she does so with no critical engagement of the sexist and gendered nature of Jung's theories and models, but her revisions would be instrumental for those who follow. Neumann studies with Jung in the years following Harding and becomes Jung's heir apparent (Paglia, 2006), and puts forth his own amplification of *Anima Mundi* as the Great Mother offering a Creatrix Goddess and proposing a matriarchal phase of human history to post-Jungian theory in the 1955 *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Carol Christ commented in 2013 about how she was teaching both Harding and Neumann to her theology students at Yale introducing their post-Jungian theories to a new generation of feminist scholars and thinkers. (Christ, 2014a) Leading second-wave feminists such as Christ saw the relevance and importance of both Harding and Neumann's work to the development of feminist theory in the West and Christ and Downing (amongst a host of others) were instrumental in helping to shape and develop the academic fields of feminist theology and thealogy—without which this study, and the research being conducted by many of my colleagues, would never exist. Downing enters the timeline with her memoir *The Goddess* which builds on the post-Jungian revisions and amplifications of Harding. Downing shares her Path of Individuation as she encounters her Shadow in the Persephone and Hera archetypes, examines the Affirmation of her Destiny through Harding's 'Virgin' archetypes Aphrodite and Ariadne, embraces the many forms of psychological and Divine Union through more

‘Virgin’ archetypes in Athene and Artemis. Downing utilises Jung’s model of Individuation as a container and theory and incorporates Harding as a necessary feminist revision to Jung. Downing mirrors Harding’s psychology by women for women by being the first, through her memoir *The Goddess* (1981), to offer a Path of Individuation for women created by a women. EC Whitmont follows Downing a year later and builds on Neumann and, in 1982, creates the Union of Eros and Logos while reclaiming Jung’s *Anima Mundi* through the Grail legends in *Return of the Goddess*. Bolen builds on the post-Jungian revisions of Downing, Harding, and Neumann and offers further understandings of Jung’s Path of Individuation by focusing on her pilgrimage as a Grail Quest, paying particular attention to the need for child-like wonder and being vulnerable. Unlike Downing, Bolen begins her quest in a state of grace and speaks often of her pilgrimage as a Divine gift. And although Bolen made contributions to the development of the Western Goddess Movement in 1984 with her publication of *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women’s Lives*, she offers the first bridge from analytical theory to Goddess-centred praxis through the rituals included in her 1994 memoir. Bolen also treads into theological territory by offering a Union of Jung’s *Anima Mundi* (now amplified as the Great Mother) with the Christian Father God; this Divine Union offers a Path of Individuation that includes Christianity (albeit certainly mystical aspects) and post Jungian theories. Kidd, Starbird and Curott, who are all in the midst of the Western Goddess Movement, reveal different ‘ways of knowing’ Goddess and the challenges faced in being a reluctant pilgrim. Kidd builds on Bolen, Downing, and Harding among a host of Jungians and post-Jungians, even citing Bolen’s memoir in her own 1996 memoir *Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. She offers a unique perspective and understanding of Jungian theory through her own personal analysis. While Kidd begins her journey steeped in a conservative Christian tradition, her memoir offers those who seek a path out of Christianity toward Goddess-centred worship that is filled with a theological contemplation and discussion that is a new element in these emerging Individuation rebirth memoirs. Starbird, who ignores the second wave of feminism and post-Jungian revision in its entirety, builds on and incorporates many of Jung’s original theories and amplifies Jung’s gendered Anima to Mary Magdalene—as a sexist and gender essentialist daughter and wife to Christ in her 1998 memoir *The Goddess in the Gospels*. While Starbird is the most academically contentious of the authors she does reveal the extent in which Jungian theory has been

incorporated and utilised by the Charismatic sects of Christianity and offers a fusion of Jungian thought with Christian Gnostic belief. Publishing the same year, Curott's memoir is a stark contrast to Starbird's as Curott builds on the post-Jungian feminist revisions of Harding, Downing, Bolen, and a host of others to create a Path of Individuation specific to the Wiccan tradition by blending Jungian and post-Jungian theory with quantum theory and Gardner's Wiccan dogma. These five memoirs demonstrate how the Western Goddess Movement provides a literature of Individuation aligned with Jungian and/or post-Jungian theory that helps guide people through the process. Each of the five authors has incorporated Jung's Path of Individuation into their 'way of knowing' and have expressed that Path as viable for their readers. Five women from varying religious backgrounds all found Jungian and post-Jungian theory relevant to help them understand and describe the archetypal experiences they were having. Finding a synthesis in how each of the five women portray Jung's amplified Anima Mundi reveals further how Jung's theories and revisions are integral to the development of the Western Goddess Movement.

7.4.1 The Great Mother / *Anima Mundi*

Other than an amplification of Jung's Anima as Goddess, the other common archetype in the variety of perspectives provided in the memoirs in this study is the amplification of Jung's *Anima Mundi* as the Great Mother. This common ground of Goddess (Anima) and the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) despite the differing religious or spiritual beliefs presented alongside Jungian and post-Jungian theory expresses a synthesis of understanding and perpetuating Jung's model. Christine Downing writes about the powerful nature of this primordial Jungian archetype:

[...] like any primordial archetype, the Great Mother provokes profound ambivalence: her cruelty is no less salient than her benevolence. The nurturing goddess is also the devouring one. In the world of the goddesses, creation-and-destruction and feast-and-famine were seen as two phases of the one ever-recurring inescapable pattern, not as irreconcilable opposites. Perhaps it is the greatest gift of the goddess to teach us that good and evil, life and death, are inextricably intertwined. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 12-13)

All five authors in this study discuss the existence a Great Mother who stands as the original source of all creation. Downing writes; 'It seems established that the earliest object of religious worship was the Great Mother who from the beginning was associated with nurturing, with the provision of food.' (2007 [1981]: 9) While

Curott traces the history of the Great Mother back to Ancient Sumer in 2000 BCE through the research and translation of the ancient tablets by Wolkstein and Kramer (1983). Curott states:

Long before the people of the Middle East worshiped and battled over a male divinity, the people of Canaan paid reverence to a goddess called Queen of Heaven. The Goddess was the divine Creatrix, law giver, mother, warrior, healer, bestower of culture and agriculture. (Curott, 1998: 58)

Even if Curott's claims are unsubstantiated, her community's engagement with the idea of a Great Mother is particularly important. Kidd also reveals the all-encompassing nature of the Numinous imaged as the Great Mother. In her memoir, Kidd writes about her discovery that the Great Mother '[...] was known as the creator and sustainer of the universe who ruled over the rhythms and forces of nature. That she was all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful, bringing both birth and death light and dark.' (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 134) Whereas Bolen reminds us of an inherent importance of the Great Mother - her immanent and transcendent nature; Bolen writes:

In these moments, when each of us felt held in the arms of the Mother Goddess, a compassionate woman mediated the experience, leading me to understand that this feminine divinity comes through the body and heart of a human woman, created in Her image. (Bolen, 1994: 77)

What these women reveal in their memoirs is a Great Mother, Numinous Creatrix with whom one can have a personal and uniquely individual relationship. It is this relationship with Goddess that lies at the heart of these memoirs and the Western Goddess Movement. Kidd discusses the personal and communal importance of this archetype in her memoir:

I know of nothing needed more in the world just now than an image of Divine presence that affirms the importance of relationship—a Divine Mother, perhaps, who draws all of humanity into her lap and makes us into a global family. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 155)

What is significant is, despite the variety of perspectives, there is a unique similarity between these authors in their collective understanding of the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) archetype.

7.4.2 The Great Mother in the Memoirs

As an archetype, many within the Western Goddess Movement including the authors in this study argue that the Great Mother has been deconstructed, for over time she has been reduced into aspects of the various natures of the Numinous.

However, a fundamental image of the Great Mother remains. The central archetypal image of the Great Mother in the memoirs is Gaia, or Mother Earth. Three of the five authors name Gaia as the irreducible Great Mother/*Anima Mundi* archetype. Starbird, as the least rigorous in her studies, inaccurately connects the Great Mother in relation to humanity's historical timeline; she writes: '[...] ancient Neolithic representations of the Earth as the Great Mother—the eternal “vessel” or “Grail”—bringing forth all that lives in endless, ongoing cycles of creative activity.' (Starbird, 1998: 52) Whereas Downing, a trained post-Jungian, amplifies (projects) the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) on to the Ancient Greek pantheon; Downing writes:

[...] there is in Greek mythology a “great” mother in the background-Gaia, grandmother to Demeter, Hera, and Hestia, great-grandmother to Athene and Artemis, and ancestress also of Aphrodite who is born of the severed genitals of Gaia's son-lover, Ouranos. Gaia is the mother of the beginning, the mother of infancy. She is the mother who is there before time [...]. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 135)

Downing goes on to speak directly about the evolution of the various aspects of the Great Mother, Gaia. She states:

To know her fully is to see her in that which emerges from her. / Among the pre-Homeric offshoots of Gaia the most important are Themis, the Erinyes, Demeter, and Persephone [...] Themis, daughter of Gaia [...] shares many of her mother's functions and attributes, including her foreknowledge of the future [...]. The Erinyes also represent the forces which insist on such right ordering and emerge to re-establish it when it is disregarded. [...] Demeter and Persephone in their essential bond with each other represent the two aspects of Gaia, the vegetative and the chthonic. (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 152)

Bolen, on the other hand, presents a more late-twentieth century understanding of Gaia as Mother Earth; she writes: 'The Earth is the Great Mother Goddess: she births us and breaths us and feeds us and holds us to her body with gravity, and we return to her in death.' (Bolen, 1994: 257) This interesting array of understandings of the Great Mother testifies to the uniquely personal nature of this imaging process; however, the collectively-intriguing element is that all five women are in fact imaging a Great Mother through numerous known aspects of her.

Ariadne stands as one of the leading Great Mother aspects in the memoirs (although this is by no means an exclusive image of the Great Mother as her images are fluid and androgynous; it is representative only of the memoirs in this study).

As mentioned previously, while all five women image the Great Mother, that is the only image commonly shared by the authors in this study. There are, however, a number of aspects of the Great Mother that are mentioned by two or more authors. Downing and Kidd both write of Ariadne as a vital aspect of the Great Mother archetype. Downing states; ‘Ariadne is one of the Great Mothers, a great goddess of Crete. As such she is titled the Potent One, the Mistress of the Labyrinth, the Untouched One.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 63) Kidd, on the other hand, includes some of her research on Ariadne in her memoirs. Kidd writes about the Minoan myth of Ariadne:

[...]Ariadne was not a mortal princess [...] but the Goddess herself. The name Ariadne means “Most Holy,” and she was no doubt revered as the supreme power, the Great Mother whose totem companion was the snake. She was also known as the Lady of the Labyrinth. As the Great Mother, Ariadne was the source of all that is, and her womb was envisioned as a labyrinth that humans threaded on their journey through life, death, and rebirth. Her role was that of sacred guide, the one who aided persons through the dark, difficult passages. (Kidd, 2007 [1996]: 109)

Downing also invokes the Ancient Greek Olympian grandmothers (serving as Aunts to Zeus in the pantheon) of ‘Metis, the goddess of wisdom...and Themis, the goddess associated with the very existence of natural order’ in her discussion of incarnations (or aspects) of the ‘Great Mother paradigm.’ (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 79)

Phyllis Curott presents the syncretistic history and continuity of one aspect of the Great Mother in the context of the Near-Eastern world. She writes about the transformation of the Great Mother image and its androgynous nature:

[...] the Great Goddess of Chaldea, Magna Dea, was marked by an enormous black stone, the same stone where Al-Uzza, one of the three aspects of the Great Goddess of Arabia, was also worshipped. This very stone is still venerated in the Ka’aba shrine in Mecca, the most sacred place of Islam. A deep cleft that conjures images of a woman’s vulva, and is called the Impression of Aphrodite, marks the stone. It is now covered and served by men who have usurped the divine role of the Great Mother’s priestesses, men who are called Beni Shay-bah, Sons of the Old Woman. She survives, even veiled. (Curott, 1998: 58)

Whereas Margaret Starbird offers alternate images of Great Mother aspects from a variety of cultures in relation to the Christian tradition; Starbird writes:

[...] the great queens of heaven—the goddesses Inanna, Isis, Cybele, and Venus—reflected in the image of the dark Madonna. This anciently honoured Goddess image is being recognized at last, not just as the

“Virgin Mary”, but as the feminine face of God—Holy Wisdom—despised, scorned, rejected, and bound for more than two thousand years. (Starbird, 1998: 38)

Despite their diverse backgrounds and faith traditions, these five authors reveal a shared understanding of the Great Mother (*Anima Mundi*) who is imaged and understood in various cultural contexts. Yet what these five women also do is they weave these images together creating a tapestry image of a unified, monotheistic Great Mother of Creation, and this is a vital key understanding that permeates the Western Goddess Movement. This shared amplification of Jung’s *Anima Mundi* demonstrates, yet again, how important Jungian and post-Jungian theory has been to the development of the Western Goddess Movement and the views held by many adherents within the movement.

7.5 The Reluctant Pilgrim

The ‘Reluctant Pilgrim’ is a common component in the last three memoirs of this study—a trait worthy of note as it is shared by all three of the non-Jungian authors. Kidd, Starbird, and Curott all struggle with and initially reject both the idea of Goddess and the various dreams, insights, and visions that keep pushing into conscious thought. The previous three chapters all explored the author’s fear, scepticism, experiences, and concerns in relation to being a reluctant pilgrim on the path to Goddess. Kidd, Starbird, and Curott have portrayed themselves as initially fiercely unenthusiastic and absolutely disinterested in even contemplating a ‘new way of knowing.’ And as examined in the previous chapter the authors’ reluctance and scepticism is integral in advancing the story whilst, perhaps, also mirroring and addressing the readers concerns and doubts as well. Their reluctance helps to provide a better developed and three-dimensional human experience with both the joy and horror. It reflects a human struggle filled with fear and worry, anger and rejection, moments of defeat and success, and the continuity of being spurred onwards in spite of themselves. The Reluctant Pilgrim demonstrates that some adherents in the Western Goddess Movement are not eager pilgrims grasping at the first Goddess-centred belief system that crosses their path. Does this evidence validate Jung’s assertion that the archetypes are autonomous and can act upon an individual at will despite the wishes of the individual? It would appear so. Jung wrote: ‘The archetype behind a religious idea has, like every instinct, its specific energy, which it does not lose even if the

conscious mind ignores it' (1968: 63) Jung has said that the archetypes are autonomous and can spontaneously arise from the collective unconscious to the conscious mind and seize the individual. (McGuire and Hull, 1977: 294) This notion of being led by an external force against one's conscious will becomes quite curious from a theological perspective whereby with the exception of forced conversions, seeking out a faith tradition is, theologically, led by both the individual and, perhaps, Divine intervention or calling. It certainly begs the question: Is Goddess calling pilgrims to their awakening? The evidence presented in *Dance*, *Goddess in the Gospels*, and *Book of Shadows* is favourable of this proposition. Starbird, however, felt her calling to Goddess through Mary Magdalene was a Divine directive from God. The concept of a reluctant pilgrim who is pushed on by an psychological imperative known by Jungians and post-Jungians as the Anima or Goddess appears to be a key piece of new knowledge gained through the five memoirs offers a unique understanding to the post-Jungian Goddess-centred faith tradition that has emerged within the Western Goddess Movement.

However, further analysis of the Reluctant Pilgrim is possible by examining both the potential need for psychological resistance as a stimulus for Individuation and the potentially dangerous negative psychological consequences. Jung believed that the Individuation process could autonomously press itself into consciousness because the psyche had a tendency towards wholeness; he writes:

[...] it is no wonder that the details of a transformation process [...] make no small demands on our understanding. In this respect they may be compared with all other biological processes. These, too, require specialised knowledge to become comprehensible. [...] this process can begin and run its course without any special knowledge having to stand sponsor to it. But if one wants to understand anything of it and assimilate it into consciousness, then a certain amount of knowledge is needed. If the process is not understood at all, it has to build up an unusual intensity so as not to sink back again into the unconscious without result. But if its affects rise to an unusual pitch, they will enforce some kind of understanding whether the consequences turn out more pathologically or less. (1968: 350-51)

Resistance then, may not be a stimulus for Individuation, but it will, according to Jung, hold the potential to exacerbate the psychological difficulties in the processes of Individuation, perhaps thereby bringing the focus of the psyche into conscious clarity. In other words, Downing and Bolen did not experience this

psychological resistance or reluctance because they already held the necessary specialised knowledge to comprehend their experiences; Kidd, Starbird, and Curott did not, and each woman's journey and reluctance differed with their process. Kidd, while a Reluctant Pilgrim, embarked upon Jungian analysis during this time which afforded her a safe space and guide for her Individuation transformation. Curott makes no mention of entering therapy during this period in her life, but the appendices to her memoir indicate extensive Jungian and post-Jungian research. She appears to have a basic understanding of Jungian and 'Goddess Feminism' post-Jungian theory and has the members and elders in her coven to turn to in times of psychological crises, so while Curott, too, is a Reluctant Pilgrim, she manages to navigate her own Individuation without any apparent negative psychological ramifications.

Individuation as a psychological path of personal transformation is potentially dangerous, and these memoirs reveal that this may depend heavily of the level of specialised knowledge or access to trained post-Jungian analysts. In *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (volume 9 of the *Collected Works*) Jung writes:

Experiences of this kind are not without their dangers, for they are also, among other things, the matrix of the psychoses. Stiffnecked and violent interpretations should under all circumstances be avoided, likewise a patient should never be forced into a development that does not come naturally and spontaneously. But once it has set in, he should not be talked out of it again, unless the possibility of a psychosis has been definitely established. (1968: 351)

Jung's Path of Individuation is a long-term psychological reconstruction that does hold potential psychological risk. This 'extraordinary task' (Jung, 1968: 287) is not necessarily a task that should be undertaken by anyone lacking the required specialised knowledge or guidance. Nowhere was this demonstrated better than in Margaret Starbird's memoir *The Goddess in the Gospels* (1998). Starbird possessed neither the specialised knowledge required (failing to read any post-Jungian revisions of Jung's theories) nor had any trained guidance or community to turn to. As a result, Starbird suffered a psychological breakdown and self-admitted to a psychiatric unit; she writes:

They were aware that something was radically wrong with me. My driving had been affected by my mental state, and it had become increasingly difficult for me to provide meals on time or even to utter coherent thoughts. My distress for them was making me even more frantic. Ten years later, looking back at that episode that occurred during the weeks of Advent in 1986, I realise that what I suffered was a spiritual crisis. Though now I know that it was a significant shortcut to my awakening that does nothing to mitigate the pain I caused my family at the time. The grim reality was harrowing for us all. (Starbird, 1998: 94)

Starbird's experiences demonstrate how Jung's feared possibility of psychosis is a tangible reality when the individual lacks the required specialised knowledge or guidance; in which case, Starbird's memoir can be held as exemplary of the potential negative psychological ramifications Jungian and post-Jungian Individuation holds, and a stark reminder that this is indeed perilous psychological territory. It serves as a warning especially to those who offer a post-Jungian Path to others to be inclusive of the required knowledge and advocate seeking out the necessary guidance to help the individual progress forward without negative psychological repercussions. It also helps to explain, in part, why Jungian and post-Jungian theory is so intricately connected to the Western Goddess Movement as a necessary component and companion along the Path.

7.6 Difficulties with Jungian Theory

There are complications with utilising Jungian theory in contemporary times, and a number of these problems have been addressed in the previous chapters. However, as these difficulties are not isolated to the memoirs in this study and persist in the Western Goddess Movement as well, they warrant a final consideration. A number of the authors in this study have been accused of misusing or misappropriating Jungian theory—often criticised for using Jungian theory in ways in which Jung did not originally intend. To that end, three foremost critiques shall be examined further; they are: (1) archetypal inflation and misuse, (2) taking myth literally, and (3) gender essentialism.

7.6.1 Archetypal Inflation and Misuse

Archetypal Inflation, as the name suggests, occurs when the archetype expands psychically to unhealthy levels of control and empowerment; it is, perhaps, the most problematic aspect within the context of this study. Jung's Path of

Individuation requires one to both identify with an archetype and integrate the archetypal characteristics into one's whole Self. However, the archetype cannot be left to dominate one's psyche. If the archetype is allowed to dominate, ego inflation results. Steven Walker writes: '[...] the ego must remain aware of its own all-too-human limitations and must stay humble in relation to the potentially overwhelming numinosity of the archetypal content.' (Walker, 2002: 103) Walker is critical of the literature within the Western Goddess Movement for their archetypal inflation; he writes: 'Nowhere has the incitement to archetypal inflation been greater than in those books touched by currents of modern feminism and the New Age mystique of a return of a religion of the Goddess.' (Walker, 2002: 128) Walker cites a number of texts by authors discussed in this study including Ginette Paris, Sylvia Brinton Perera, Christine Downing, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Jennifer Barker Woolger, and Roger Woolger, and his criticism has justification. However, the Jungian trained Downing and Bolen both offer a pantheon of goddesses in their memoirs specifically as a way to avoid the archetypal inflation of a dominant archetype. As examined in chapter 2, Downing comments in her memoir on the need for more than one archetypal image; she writes: 'Living more than one myth does not mean that one is schizophrenic; rather it is what keeps mythic identification from stultification or inflation.' (Downing, 2007 [1981]: 53) The difficulty arises because neither Downing nor Bolen include the second half of this integration process in their texts or memoirs: the process begins with identification and integration and, according to the original Jungian construct of union and wholeness, should end with a shift toward de-identification or at least decentralisation of the archetypal image as a viable part of union, thus limiting the psychological power of the archetype once it is brought into consciousness. Downing and Bolen's memoirs only demonstrate one half of the process and do not offer any overt recommendations about how to deflate the archetype once it is brought into consciousness. This deficiency is evident in the authors who follow Downing and Bolen. Kidd, Starbird, and Curott only identify with a single archetypal image: Kidd offers 'Herself'; Starbird advocates Mary Magdalene; and Curott speaks only of the Great Mother and her many guises. This may indicate that all three of these authors who followed Downing and Bolen have missed a vital step in the Individuation process. As Walker rightfully critiques, an archetypal inflation of Jung's Anima and *Anima Mundi* archetypes as demonstrated in the five rebirth memoirs could easily be considered a form of ego inflation which could

lead to the ego as the dominant force of the psyche instead of the fully individuated Self. This archetypal inflation is distinctly different from a healthy self-esteem and confidence, and also differs from Jung's original construct. Despite this critical difficulty, Walker and I both agree that these texts are vital to the community and embraced despite their deficiencies; he writes: '[...] there is no doubt that these books have struck a chord in the hearts of a large number of readers.' (Walker, 2002: 128) Downing and Bolen's solution of a pantheon of archetypal images is perhaps the best chance to offset this inherent difficulty and avoid archetypal inflation, although it would have been helpful if either Downing or Bolen had elucidated the second half of the process for their readers. This exemplifies another reason why having a reasonable understanding of Jungian theory outside of the material provided within the Western Goddess Movement is essential to successfully navigate Jung's Path of Individuation.

Moreover, David Tacey suggests that Jung '[...] may have misused [his own] theory of archetypes whenever he wanted to lend weight or "scientific" support to his deeply conservative view on sexuality, gender and society. We therefore need to rescue the theory from its author, as the theory appears to be bigger and broader than its author.' (Tacey, 2001: 142) Tacey raises two valid points: (1) it is essential to liberate Jung's theories from Jung, and (2) Jungian theory is both larger and more expansive as a field of psychological enquiry than anyone could have envisioned from the onset. Jungian theory has been revised and transformed over the past century and continues to be revised and expanded by both post-Jungian theorists and analysts alike. I, however, understand the potential in Tacey's second point: Jungian and post-Jungian theory offers a vast area of psychological enquiry with theological and theological implications. Jungian and post-Jungian theory has expanded the field of enquiry beyond the confines of Jung's analytical psychology with derivative forms of post-Jungian theory that include substantial revisions as demonstrated in feminist post-Jungian revision and in the creation of an entirely new school of thought as is evident in Hillman's Archetypal Psychology. (Hillman, 1983) In regards to this study, however, the authors use the theory of archetypes in ways that differ from Jung's original formulations, partly because these formulations have been revised by feminist post-Jungians, and partly because they themselves may have wanted to lend support to their views, usually

less conservative than Jung's, on 'ways of knowing' Goddess. They are therefore, in a sense - and despite some discrepancies - rescuing the theory from its author.

7.6.2 Taking Myth Literally

As discussed in depth in chapters 1 and 2 and throughout this study, myth plays a prominent role in Jungian theory. And while a vast array of Jungian and post-Jungian writing extols the virtues of mythology in analytical psychology, there is an inherent difficulty when working with myth that mirrors the difficulty with archetypal inflation—taking the myth literally and in its totality. Samuels, Shorter and Plaut raise a vital critique of Jungian and post-Jungian theory when they write:

There is also danger in taking myth literally. Myth is analogous to certain aspects of personal experience, but it cannot be seen as a substitute without consequent inflation. It provides a metaphorical perspective but it is not an explication or a portent to be fulfilled. It is a nonpersonal image that provides psychic space for individual expression. (Samuels, et al., 1992: 190-191)

Sallie McFague argues against this powerful lure of concretising myth and, instead, advocates for metaphors rather than archetypes. (McFague, 1982) McFague argues that a metaphor has far less opportunity to gain psychological control than one of Jung's archetypes, and while McFague's metaphors may offer an alternative 'way of knowing' for some feminist writers, the authors in this study demonstrate a preference for archetypal images rather than metaphorical images of the Divine. To some extent, Downing, Starbird, and Curott adopt historical and ahistorical mythologies, both literally and personally. Nevertheless, their literal adoption of these mythologies as part of their Individuation, and in the context of the Goddess Movement, allow them to develop that very space for individual expression that might have been thwarted by such literal interpretation. It seems likely that inflation is avoided, in this particular instance, because the mythologies they adopt are, for Downing, Starbird, and Curott, simultaneously literal and symbolic. Perhaps in a culture infused with images of a male monotheistic God the Goddess mythologies offer representations that are relevant and useful to adherents in the Western Goddess Movement despite their inherent flaws. Again, as in the case with archetypal inflation, it would have been helpful had the Jungians Downing and Bolen offered a constructive dialogue in their memoirs about the inherent difficulties with mythological concretisation.

7.6.3 Gender Essentialism

The difficulties with both the construct of gender and gender essentialism in Jungian and post-Jungian theory have been examined at length in this study, and a number of the authors have been accused of adopting Jung's gender essentialism without appropriate critique, and this could be a problem with both Bolen and Starbird. Patricia Perri Rieker and M Kay Jankowski write:

According to the social philosophy of essentialism, there is a universal female essence that determines women's behaviour. For example, in popular psychology, this essence has been represented by some Jungian psychotherapists as a goddess who dwells in every woman (Bolen, 1984). As a result of such premises, individual differences among women or race, class, and ethnicity are minimized, and women are often mischaracterized as a homogenous group. (Rieker and Jankowski, 1995: 30-32)

Starbird appears to be searching for the universal female essence in the divine, reflected in every woman. Her work makes little attempt to consider individual differences or social constructions. Bolen continues to posit *Goddesses in Everywoman* (1984) as well as its gender essentialist counterpart *Gods in Everyman* (Bolen, 1989) in a continuation of Jung's original sexist and gender essentialist thinking—all the while perpetuating gender as homogenous groups; perhaps a move away from Bolen's essentialist constructs towards gods and goddesses for everyone is required to further advance a more holistic perspective to the psyche and the individual for post-Jungian theory. All the authors in the study are interested in the relationship between women and Goddess, but there are also attempts to recognise the significance of Goddess for a variety of genders in the work of Downing and Kidd in particular. Starbird's quest for a Goddess who is simultaneously human and divine (in the person of Mary Magdalene, married to Christ) erases differences between women of diverse ethnicities and social backgrounds. Bolen is, to some extent, also interested in discovering the Goddess as an aspect of essential femininity, but displays little awareness of individual differences. Part of the difficulty is inherent in Jung's theory of the archetypes: as part of the Collective Unconscious they are considered to be outside cultural constructs such as race and class (but not gender), and while feminist revisions of Jung's thought have attempted to deal with gender, more attention no doubt needs to be given to issues such as ethnicity, class, disability and so on. However,

these categories may be more at issue in archetypal images and complexes than in the archetypes themselves.

Summary

The five authors considered in the study use Jungian and post-Jungian thought in a variety of ways for their own specific purposes. Although criticisms can be, and have been, made of their use of Jung, the fact remains that the Western Goddess Movement has been significantly influenced by Jungian and post-Jungian thought, however imperfectly mediated. The Western Goddess Movement, despite claims of ancient antecedents, is a relatively new phenomenon, saturated with Jung's ideas of archetypes, the Collective Unconscious, synchronicity, Individuation and alchemy. These concepts are popular and useful to the Movement perhaps because they offer possibilities of constructing new 'ways of knowing' that depart from more dominant Freudian epistemologies, since the latter have been adopted by the same social and patriarchal structures that many in the Movement wish to refuse or destabilise. As rebirth memoirs, the five works explored here make no claim to Jungian orthodoxy; as records of Individuation they may be haphazard in their adherence to strict Jungian definitions. However, as a sample of personal histories documenting the development of the Western Goddess Movement, they offer an account of the ways that women are using - and even misusing - Jung's thought as a means of expressing their experiences of personal transformation within a particular set of new environments of belief and practice. It is unlikely that Jung himself could have anticipated this phenomenon, although given his hopes for the development in Roman Catholic doctrine of a quaternity to include Mary as a feminine element¹¹⁵, perhaps he might have been rather gratified by these contemporary revisions.

7.7 Drawing Conclusions

Through the memoirs of Downing, Bolen, Kidd, Starbird, and Curott, it becomes evident that Jungian and post-Jungian theory has been instrumental in each woman's journey and transformation. Moreover, each of them offers a Jungian or post-Jungian Path of Individuation for others to follow representing the diversity

¹¹⁵The quaternity as union of the Three seem to be aimed at by the Assumption of Mary. This dogma adds the feminine element to the masculine Trinity, the terrestrial element (*virgo terra!*) to the spiritual, and thus sinful man to the Godhead.' (Letter to William Lachat, 27 March 1954. In: **Erdinger**, 1996: 179.)

of beliefs found in the Western Goddess Movement. The analysis examined ways in which these five women encounter Goddess through a process of Jungian Individuation and traced the development of Jungian and post-Jungian theories by identifying the key thinkers and central ideas that helped to shape the development of the Western Goddess Movement. The findings demonstrate the vital contributions of the analytical psychology of Carl Jung; post-Jungians M Esther Harding, Erich Neumann, Christine Downing, E.C. Whitmont, and Jean Shinoda Bolen; the additional contributions of Sue Monk Kidd, Margaret Starbird and Phyllis Curott, and exhibits how the Western Goddess Movement provides a literature of Individuation that helps guide people through the process of spiritual transformation. Through these memoirs, Jungian and post-Jungian pathways to Goddess are revealed and the significance of Jungian and post-Jungian theory to the development of the Western Goddess Movement is demonstrated.

Appendix

Appendix A

Timeline of Significant Events and Publications in the Western Goddess Movement: 1840-2013

This timeline has been constructed from a variety of sources and includes events as well as publications which were significant to the formation and development of the Western Goddess Movement; this timeline provides both a sense of historical perspective and context as well as demonstrating the continuity of ideas to the present day. While the memoirs examined in this study could be considered, by some, outdated, this timeline exemplifies the relevance of these late twentieth century memoirs and their influence on writers who follow. The timeline further demonstrates the dramatic publication increase that accompanied and followed these initial memoirs. By no means should this timeline be considered all-inclusive for the historical period included therein. While the timeline, events, individuals, and publications are not limited to the US, all government legislation noted is American.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1840-1924 | The Suffragettes make up the First wave of the Women's Rights Movement (Feminism). ¹¹⁶ |
| 1902 | William James publishes <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature</i> . The text contains 20 Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1901-1902 (New York: The Modern Library). |
| 1916 | Carl Gustav Jung publishes <i>Psychology of the Unconscious: a study of the transformations and symbolisms of the libido, a contribution to the history of the evolution of thought</i> in English. Originally published as <i>Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido</i> in 1912. Beatrice M. Hinkle Trans. London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner. |
| 1920 | The 19 th Amendment to the US Constitution grants women the right to vote. |
| 1921 | Margaret Sanger founds the American Birth Control League (which evolves into Planned Parenthood in 1942). |

¹¹⁶ Key events in Women's Rights Movement provided by Ohio State University (2004) 'Timeline: Woman's Rights and Feminism (U.S.)' 1790-2004, electronic resource Back to History programme. Available at: <http://backtohistory.osu.edu/resources/events/Suffrage%20and%20Feminism%20Timeline.pdf>

- 1922 Sir James George **Frazer** publishes *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Republished in 1996, Abridged Edition. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- 1924 **Equal Rights Amendment** introduced to Congress - the First Wave of Feminism gives way to the Second Wave.
- 1933 M Esther **Harding** publishes *The Way of All Women*. New York: Putnam.
- 1935 M Esther **Harding** publishes *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern* with an Introduction written by CG Jung. Boston: Shambhala Publications. This work was actually written as early as 1929 during Harding's studies with Jung.
- 1935 Mary McLeod Bethune organises the **National Council of Negro Women**, a coalition that lobbies against job discrimination, racism, and sexism.
- 1948 Robert **Graves** publishes *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- 1949 Simone **de Beauvoir** publishes *Second Sex* which laid the groundwork for feminist theory and its publication is often considered as the symbolic start of the Second Wave of Feminism.
- 1952 CG **Jung** publishes *Symbols of Transformation* (Collected Works Vol.5) in English; it is a complete revision of *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912/1916) originally published in German.
- 1955 Erich **Neumann** publishes *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* Trans. Ralph Manheim Bollingen Series XLVII. Princeton University Press.
- 1956 CG **Jung** publishes *Symbols of Transformation* (Collected Works Vol.5), a complete revision of *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912/1916) and translated into English.
- 1960 The US Food and Drug Administration approves **birth control pills**.
- 1963 Betty **Friedan** publishes *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: WW Norton.
- 1963 US Congress passes the **Equal Pay Act**.
- 1964 Enactment of the **Civil Rights Act**, including Title VII that bars discrimination in hiring on the basis of sex.
- 1966 The **National Organisation of Women (NOW)** is founded.

- 1969 Peter L **Berger** publishes *A Rumour of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural*. New York: Anchor Books.
- 1969 Ninian **Smart** publishes *The Religious Experience of Mankind*. In 1991, it is revised and republished as *The Religious Experience*, Fourth Edition. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company.
- 1971 The first '**Feminist Caucus**' is held at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) conference in Atlanta (gathered by Carol Christ with the approval the AAR President). It was originally founded as the 'Women's Caucus' and was co-chaired by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Carol P Christ.¹¹⁷
- 1971 The first AAR Women's Caucus founded the 'Women and Religion Working Group' chaired by Mary Daly and a 'Task Force in the AAR on the Status of Women in the Profession'
- 1971 **Christine Downing** is elected the first female President of the American Academy of Religion (AAR)
- 1971 ***Ms Magazine*** is first published as a sample insert in *New York* magazine; 300,000 copies are sold out in 8 days.
- 1972 The **Equal Rights Amendment** (ERA) is passed by Congress.
- 1972 **Title IX** of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools.
- 1973 Mary **Daly** publishes *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. London: The Women's Press.
- 1973 Supreme Court Case **Roe v. Wade** helps establish a woman's right to safe and legal abortion.
- 1974 Marija **Gimbutas** publishes *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe*. It was later republished in 1982 as *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 6500-3500 BC, Myths and Cult Images* Revised Edition. University of California Press.
- 1974 David L **Miller** publishes *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. New York: Harper & Row.
- 1976 Merlin **Stone** publishes *When God Was A Woman*. Orlando: Harvest/Harcourt Brace. This is a US reprinting of the UK version entitled *The Paradise Papers* (1976).

¹¹⁷ 1971 AAR Women's Caucus information provided through personal dialogue with and anniversary commentary by: Christ CP (2011) Forty Years and Counting: Women and Religion in the Academy. In: *Feminism and Religion* blog 21 October 2011. Available at: <http://feminismandreligion.com/2011/10/21/forty-years-and-counting-women-and-religion-in-the-academy-by-carol-p-christ/>

- 1979 Margot **Adler** publishes *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-worshippers and other Pagans in America*. New York & London: Penguin Books. Later revised and updated for its 20th Anniversary in 1999.
- 1979 Carol P **Christ** and Judith **Plaskow** publish their first anthology of feminist theologians entitled *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- 1979 Naomi R **Goldenberg** publishes *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the end of traditional religions*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- 1979 Elaine **Pagels** publishes *The Gnostic Gospels* Republished in 1989 by New York: Vintage Books / Random House.
- 1979 Elaine **Pagels** publishes 'What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity' in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (eds). San Francisco: Harper and Row: 107-119.
- 1979 **Starhawk** publishes *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. HarperSanFrancisco. A 20th Anniversary Edition was published in 1999.
- 1980 Carol P **Christ** publishes *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on a Spiritual Quest*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- 1981 Christine **Downing** publishes *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*. Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press. This is the first rebirth memoir in this study.
- 1981 John P **Dourley** publishes *The Psyche as Sacrament: A Comparative Study of C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- 1981 Sylvia Brinton **Perera** publishes *Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- 1982 Marion Zimmer **Bradley** publishes *The Mists of Avalon*. New York: Ballentine Books.
- 1982 Sallie **McFague** publishes *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- 1982 EC **Whitmont** publishes *Return of the Goddess*. New York: Crossroads Publishing.
- 1983 Diane **Wolkstein** and Samuel Noah **Kramer** publish *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*. New York: Harper & Row.
- 1984 Jean Shinoda **Bolen** publishes *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives*. New York: One Spirit.

- 1985 Estella **Lauter** and Carol Schreier **Rupprecht** publish the anthology *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Revisions of Jungian Thought*. University of Tennessee Press.
- 1985 Wayne **Proudfoot** publishes *Religious Experience*. University of California Press.
- 1986 Virginia Ramey **Mollenkott** publishes *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female*. New York: Crossroad.
- 1986 Ginette **Paris** publishes *Pagan Meditations: The Worlds of Aphrodite, Artemis, and Hestia*. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.
- 1987 Carol P **Christ** publishes *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- 1987 Joan Chamberlain **Engelsman** publishes *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- 1987 Demaris S **Wehr** publishes *Jung & Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- 1988 Joseph **Campbell** and Bill Moyers publish *The Power of Myth*. New York: Anchor Books.
- 1989 Elinor W **Gadon** publishes *The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol For Our Time*. San Francisco: Harper.
- 1989 **Personal Narratives Group** publish *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*. Indiana University Press.
- 1989 Judith **Plaskow** and Carol P. **Christ** publish their second anthology of feminist theologians in *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- 1989 Jennifer Barker **Woolger** and Roger J. **Woolger** publish *The Goddess Within: A Guide to the Eternal Myths That Shape Women's Lives*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.
- 1989 Although debate centres upon an exact date, most third wave feminists agree that the **Second Wave of Feminism** gives way to the **Third Wave of Feminism** in 1989.
- 1990 Baumgardener, Richards, Heywood, and Drake¹¹⁸ all cite **Third Wave Feminism** (post-second wave generation and post-modern theorists) beginning in 1990s and continuing to date.

¹¹⁸ Gillis, et al., (eds) 2004 *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan:2.

- 1990 Maura O'Neill publishes *Women Speaking, Women Listening: Women in Interreligious Dialogue*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- 1991 Joseph Campbell and Charles Muses publish *In All Her Names: Explorations of the Feminine in Divinity*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- 1991 Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor publish *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*. San Francisco: Harper.
- 1992 Christine Downing publishes her homage to Esther Harding with *Women's Mysteries: Toward a Poetics of Gender*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co.
- 1992 Clarissa Pinkola Estés, PhD publishes *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*. New York: Ballentine Books.
- 1992 Tikva Frymer-Kensky publishes *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.
- 1992 Asphodel P Long publishes *In a Chariot Drawn by Lions: The Search for the Female in Deity*. London: The Women's Press.
- 1993 Cynthia Eller publishes *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*. Boston: Beacon Press. This is a work Eller would later recant.
- 1993 Asia Shepsut publishes *Journey of the Priestess: The Priestess Traditions of the Ancient World - A Journey of Spiritual Awakening and Empowerment*. London: The Aquarian Press.
- 1993 Margaret Starbird publishes *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail*. Rochester, VT: Bear and Company.
- 1993 Karen Jo Torjesen publishes *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- 1994 Jean Shinoda Bolen publishes *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage*. New York: Harper Collins. This is the second memoir in this study.
- 1994 Mary Maynard and June Purvis publish *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis, Ltd.
- 1994 Richard Noll publishes *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement*. Princeton University Press.
- 1995 Riane Eisler publishes *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*. HarperSanFrancisco.

- 1996 Sue Monk **Kidd** publishes *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine*. San Francisco: Harper One. This is the third memoir in this study.
- 1996 Melissa **Raphael** publishes *Theology and Embodiment: The Post-Patriarchal Reconstruction of Female Sacrality*. Sheffield Academic Press.
- 1996 Marion **Woodman** and Elinor **Dickson** publish *Dancing in the Flames: The Dark Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- 1997 M. Scott **Peck** publishes *In Search of Stones: A Pilgrimage of Faith, Reason and Discovery*. London: Pocket Books.
- 1998 Robert **Bly** and Marion **Woodman** publish *The Maiden King: The Reunion of Masculine and Feminine*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- 1998 Margaret **Starbird** publishes *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine*. Rochester, VT: Bear and Company. This is the fourth memoir in this study.
- 1998 Phyllis **Curott** publishes *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess*. New York: Broadway Books. This is the fifth and final memoir in this study. Curott goes on to become a leading advocate for Wiccan and Pagan rights in the US.
- 2000 Herman J. **Ruether** (husband of feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether) publishes about Goddess from a husband's perspective in 'Reflections on the Goddess Gate' in *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain and Ireland School of Feminist Theology*, No. 24, May 2000, Lisa Isherwood, et al., (eds). Sheffield Academic Press: 56-60.
- 2002 Susan **Rowland** publishes *Jung: A Feminist Revision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 2003 Jean Shinoda **Bolen** publishes *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives*. New York: One Spirit.
- 2004 Karen **Armstrong** publishes *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb out of Darkness*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.
- 2004 Jean Shinoda **Bolen** publishes *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Quest for the Sacred Feminine 10th Anniversary Edition*. HarperSan Francisco. This is the 10th Anniversary Edition of second rebirth memoir in this study.
- 2005 Jean Shinoda **Bolen** publishes *Urgent Message from Mother: Gather the Women, Save the World*. Boston: Conari Press.

- 2007 Sue Monk **Kidd** publishes *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine 10th Anniversary Edition*. San Francisco: Harper One. This is the 10th Anniversary Edition of third rebirth memoir in this study.
- 2010 Susan **Rowland** publishes *C.G. Jung in the Humanities: Taking the Soul's Path*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books.
- 2013 Jean **Kirsch** and Murray **Stein** publish *How and Why We Still Read Jung: Personal and professional reflections*. London: Routledge.
- 2013 Gary **Lachman** publishes 'Why Jung is Important' in *Huff Post Religion*, 25 February 2013.

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