Thinking blondes and heroes:
interpreting Jungian theory and hero stories for women’s psychology

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CHAPTER TWO

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Or tell me: if my father was foredoomed
By the voice of heaven to die by his own son’s hand,
How can you justly cast it against me,
Who was still unborn when that decree was spoken?
Unborn? Nay, unbegotten, unconceived.
And if, being born, as I was, for this calamity,
I chanced to meet my father and to kill him,
Not knowing who he was or what I did -
How can you hold the unwitting act against me?
Likewise my mother - O shame, that you should force me
To speak as I must about your sister’s marriage -
But you have broken all bounds of piety,
And I cannot be silent. She was my mother -
My mother, and knew not - neither of us knew
The thing we did - her shame! - she bore my children.

(Oedipus at Colonus, Sophocles, trans. 1947, pp. 110-111).

Jason brings out my judgmental side; his behaviour was at best self-deluding, at worst cynically self-serving, so I can find little sympathy for him.
What can be said of his motives? Oddly it is the possibility of self-deception which troubles me most - it is much easier to have an opinion about egotism.
But what about altruistic heroes? What are the hazards of real heroism? Was the tragedy of Oedipus’s story unfortunate chance, or was there an unconscious complicity involved there too?
The Hero Myth:

Mad Max staggers back, blinking dust, sweat and blood from his undamaged eye, his face twisted in fury and exhaustion. But somehow we know he will manage to haul himself into his deathmobile again and continue to hunt down his vicious adversaries. Then, there he is again, in Braveheart, still avenging the crimes against his family, but this time in kilt and woad, then again, joking his way through comic revenge in Lethal Weapon, or raging as the wronged Everyman in search of his kidnapped child in Ransom and yet again, agonising as Hamlet. Mel Gibson has become something of a specialist in playing the reluctant hero, the man galvanised into furious vengeance by an unprovoked and brutal attack on his family.

Many of the characters played by Mel Gibson fit Theodore Sarbin’s (1997, p. 75) description of the “American Monomyth” - stories of the frontiersman who saves his community with an act of violence. Moreover, Gibson’s portrayals often reflect something of the Australian version of the frontiersman. In his Australian incarnation the frontiersman - the outback or bush pioneer - is not only independent, but he is especially anti-authoritarian. He is celebrated as the tough, often tragically wronged, bushranger (highwayman), or as the waggishly irreverent, but loveable larrikin. Anachronistically in a mostly urban, mostly conservative and conventional nation (where law and order were recently important election issues), the form persists both in historical and modern guise as Australian folklore, suggesting that it serves some compensatory function. Psychodynamic explanations help elucidate such apparent anomalies, and that will provide the principal focus of this chapter.

Hero adventures still have the capacity to fascinate. The exploits of Jason, Ulysses and Heracles have been inspirational to lovers of literature, history, and popular adventure stories for more than two millennia now. Equivalents
abound in modern hero stories from popular culture. There are altruistic strangers with mysterious, superhuman powers or Herculean strength, such as Superman, the Phantom or The Lone Ranger. At times they even revisit their historical antecedents, as when the Phantom performs his own version of the Labours of Heracles in *The 12 Tasks*! (Falk & Moore, 1990). Then there are the noble human heroes of the ubiquitous *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* sagas, earnestly employing their advanced technologies and unshakeable moralities for the betterment of all. Alternatively there are the more pragmatic, wily and self-serving equivalents of Ulysses, from Sherlock Holmes and Sam Spade to Dirty Harry.

One especially famous and convincingly complex modern Ulysses is James Joyce’s (1972) Leopold Bloom. Even Jung (*CW* 15, § 163ff.) wrestled with his reactions to Joyce’s novel. Due to the cult status of *Ulysses*, its complexity, and the plethora of learned studies it has inspired, it would require a thesis in its own right, so reluctantly, I have put it to one side. But perhaps the most familiar of all hero stories in the Western tradition is that of Jesus Christ. Although focusing on Greek myths for most of the thesis, I will take up the theme of Christ as hero in chapter six, where I discuss theories of self.

Since the hero form is an essentially male form, female heroes of the journey and quest are less common. I am deliberately avoiding the use of the feminine form “heroine” not only in the service of non-sexist language, but through a long-standing personal prejudice against the term as we applied it to the heroines of adventure stories encountered in childhood. Heroines were the frail beauties elegantly recoiling from danger, awaiting the rescuing hero’s dramatic arrival, and with whom (apart from coveting some of their stylish frocks) I felt no inclination to identify myself. Yet there are women characters who fit the questing hero category, from the Amazon Atalanta, one of the
Argonauts, to Joan of Arc and even Wonderwoman and the relentless hero of the *Aliens* movies. Full equal employment opportunities, it seems, now apply to all levels of command for the crews of the Star Trek space fleet. A plethora of hard-nosed, soft-hearted female P.I.’s has appeared in the crime genre. The issue of warrior women is taken up in detail in the next chapter, but the most familiar and most popular versions still tend to be stories with male heroes. So, prior to investigating some variations on the hero story in which women characters feature more prominently, it is worth exploring further some of the themes in the hero’s journey, using an example with a familiar male hero. The aim in this chapter is to highlight ways in which the hero story mirrors a typical description of the successful individualist, an essentially masculine ideal. Psychodynamic, particularly archetypal, exploration makes explicit psychological tendencies to personalise hero stories and to be seduced by the individualist ideal.

At the end of the hero’s quest, as we close the book, or watch the credits roll, there is usually a satisfying sense of closure. Our hero has done his best and certainly has made a difference. We know life is rarely as clear cut as that, unfortunately ... wouldn’t it be nice if it was ... or would it? To have absolutely final resolutions of either a ‘happily ever after’, or a catastrophic tragedy, offer only extreme options. In life, after the big adventure or the shattering crisis, somehow the routine is eventually resumed and life moves on. The hero’s quest is thus a rather limited metaphor for the entire life journey; it is more appropriately a slice, a neatly encapsulated segment. To make the hero’s quest the metaphor for all of life is as reductionistic as to claim that it is the model for all narrative forms. Such convenient analogies have unfortunately become fashionable in branches of Jungian psychology, popular culture and cultural theory.
Yet it would be unfair simply to dismiss the hero form, since at its best, it is developed with considerable subtlety and can signal many of the preoccupations of current Western culture. The story of Oedipus is one such version, and it has the added advantage in this case of being peculiarly familiar to psychology. It is especially rich both as exemplar of the hero myth, and in its attention to the aftermath of the hero’s exploits; it dramatises the faltering continuity of life. Hence the Oedipus story will be explored in some detail below, to expand on the implications, positive and negative, of the hero myth as the narrative of choice for twentieth century Western culture. A few comments are warranted first on where the reluctant hero like Oedipus fits into the broader category of hero myth generally, before moving on to the relationship of the myth to archetypal theory.

**Recognising Heroes:**

The hero, as individualistic problem solver and rescuer of the oppressed, remains a dominant theme in modern story telling, as Joseph Campbell (1953, 1988) demonstrated so comprehensively. In his enthusiasm for a good story and (through no fault of his own) in his elevation to guru status, Campbell has been co-opted into the reification of the hero myth. There is an irony in the fact that Campbell’s (1953, 1991b) extensive studies have provided invaluable insights into hero stories, but have also been pressed into service by the mass marketeers of the entertainment industry, to reinforce simplistic, formulaic themes of invincible heroes and, usually, happy endings for blockbuster movies and novels.

In criticising the oversimplifications of popular hero stories I do not mean to be sanctimonious; they can be good entertainment, even if they’re psychologically unsophisticated. Yet there is a probable psychological cost to their popularity. They seem to have assumed something of the same moral and
allegorical function as that held by fairy tales in nineteenth century Western story telling. Since the heroic quest is such an appropriate metaphor for the ideals of individualism, popular heroes become role models for children and adults alike.

Given the conjunction of the heroic with individualism, the professed escapist nature of populist hero tales becomes questionable. No matter how hard they try, average, everyday heroes are unlikely to change the world, vanquish evil and live happily ever after. In one of his dark musicals, *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim explored the possibility that it did not even happen that way in the fairy tales. Yet fictional heroes manage such feats in fifty minutes on the televisions screen, on a daily basis. Admittedly, many of the fictional heroes too seem to be coming to the conclusion that eliminating evil is not always easy, as evidenced by the increasing number of revenge stories in popular culture - if the world cannot be changed at least the enemy can be made to suffer. The empowerment offered by revenge stories is usually reduced to sheer fire-power.

My misgivings about popular adventure stories come from the basic inconsistencies, the lack of narrative truth. It is not so much that the stories do (or do not) take a particular moral stand, but that in its simplicity, the moral perspective is so often compromised. After a childhood diet of moral tales in which cheats, bullies and liars get their just deserts, it is disillusioning to discover that the stories themselves lie, that the world is not like that after all. So do the outcomes of oversimplified heroic tales ring false. I am not proposing a straightforward causal explanation akin to those which claim that violent screen images cause violent behaviours. But as popular representations of heroic deeds, the adventure stories are a record, a collective narrative or metaphor, for the preoccupations of large numbers of people in the
contemporary West. Individualism proposes an unrealistic and unattainable ideal of selfhood so the accompanying narratives oscillate between extremes of light and dark, optimism and pessimism. It is because escapist hero stories echo closely personal ideals that the plots tend to swing between impossibly sunny and apocalyptic imagery.

The Oedipus story appeals because it extends beyond the typical formulaic pattern in significant ways (as well as having obvious associations with psychoanalysis). In Sophocles’s (trans. 1947) King Oedipus we encounter the young man of noble birth, unremarkable except for a damaged foot, journeying to a strange land and destined for heroic deeds. However it is not a journey of quest but one of flight from a terrifying prophecy that he was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. From this follows a saga of prodigious feats of well intentioned heroism, which result not only in release and benefit, but also an excess of mind-numbing tragedy. Oedipus can be seen as an archaic story of brutal and summary justice from the early stirrings of Western culture, as an account of primitive obeisance to arbitrary gods and goddesses, to fate or destiny, or, alternatively thanks to Sigmund Freud, as a metaphor for the central crisis of childhood psychological development. Then again, in broader Jungian psychodynamic interpretation, the Oedipus story provides both case study and illustration of the functions of conscious and unconscious processes.

Along with the psychoanalytic application of the Oedipus myth, I will draw attention to its particular associations with archetypal psychology. Carl Jung (CW 5; CW 9i), Joseph Henderson (1964) and James Hillman (1985) for instance, all presented the archetypal hero myth as having particular relevance to modern Western society. For Jung (CW 9i, § 281ff.), the hero is representative of a stage in the individuation process (the discovery of Self), a stage following on from the early awakenings of Self (the Divine Child). The
hero's feats in conquering dark forces are metaphors for the bringing to consciousness (to light) unconscious (dark) aspects of psyche. Henderson (1964) saw the hero myth as a story of the adolescent rites of passage, the transition from childhood to adulthood. In the West there has been a long tradition of admiration for single-minded, capable, active people (usually men) who undertake the heroic quest, often at great personal cost.

The hero type fits well with the now somewhat sullied but persistent ideal of individualism. Jung and Hillman in particular warn of the dangers of being seduced by this ideal. Single-mindedness can become blind, activity can preclude reflection, naivety or ignorance can lead to unforeseen disastrous consequences. The dangers of a excessive attraction to the hero story, as Hillman (1978, 1985) pointed out, is a permanent psychological immaturity, a stunted obsession with adolescent hero fantasies. The Jungian analyst, Marion Woodman (1990), goes so far as to claim that the hero is irredeemably masculine and the myth inevitably alienating for women. This is precisely why I cannot share Campbell's (1988) enthusiasm for the unidimensional heroes of modern screen stories. The adventures in which Luke Starwalker and Indiana Jones find themselves are exhilarating fun, but complex, well-rounded humans these heroes are not.

Myth as Case History:

Myths such as that of Oedipus, however, offer a complex array of qualities to be appreciated and interpreted. Put in psychopathological terms, myths are an excellent source of case studies; their narratives cover a wide range of events, characters, attitudes and values which are of concern and interest to people generally. There is an additional advantage with myth. Individual case histories are usually available only in the version - disguised for privacy reasons - presented by the professional care-giver. Myths are publicly available stories,
so any interpretation, such as mine here, can be compared with the original sources.

So, to the analyst's couch. Even non-psychoanalytic psychologists are familiar with what is implied by the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1970). A sufferer with this particular dilemma would be, typically, a man who has been unable to resolve the conflict of his strong but repressed sexual attachment to his mother, his consequent sense of rivalry with his father and the need to rid himself of this rival who, after all, has the power to castrate him (psychologically at least). But what if Oedipus himself were to take the analyst's couch? Would he too be diagnosed as suffering from an unresolved Oedipus complex?

Oedipus did kill his father and marry his mother, which is about as concrete as one could get in terms of an Oedipus complex. But the details of the story provide much more elaboration, convincing rationales, greater moral justification, or powerful social influences, depending on one's particular psychological interpretation. An Oedipus complex in Freudian terms is a product of repressed anxiety, anxiety resulting from an appreciation that early childhood sexual desire, especially incestuous desire, will be severely punished (Freud, 1990a). The interpretation I endorse here broadens psychosexual anxiety to encompass a social conflict between those with power and those who are controlled (French, 1985). This is reflected in individual family interactions where the parents control the child but also teach the child in turn how to become a controller. This ambiguous situation is well reflected in the Oedipus story. The extended interpretations can be readily explained in Jungian terms. For Jung (CW 9i, § 88), a "complex" represents the psychic orientation, or the collection of qualities and feelings, within the personal unconscious, which reflects the archetypal or prototypal image as manifested in the social or collective unconscious. The personal unconscious anxiety is directly influenced
by shared unconscious anxieties about power and control. Myths provide a
dramatic framework within which the archetypal images can be articulated in a
specific, comprehensible cultural form. So to speak of an Oedipal complex in
Jungian terms is to immediately move beyond a personal psychological
predisposition, to an engagement with archetypal, collective forms of human
attachments in the family group. (The Jungian perspective is further developed
below.)

At a conscious level of course, Oedipus had no idea that it was his father,
Laius, whom he had killed on the road between Corinth and Thebes. All he
knew was that he wanted to get as far away as possible from his home and his
supposed parents, the king and queen of Corinth, once he had heard the
horrifying prophecy that he was destined to kill his father and marry his mother.
Along the way, he encountered an extremely bad-tempered old man with
belligerent attendants, who were adamant that he would not pass without
confrontation. Oedipus killed them all but for the one who ran away to later tell
the tale.

Closer still to Thebes, Oedipus encountered the fearful Sphinx, who killed
all those passers-by who failed to correctly answer her riddle. Her tally had
been formidable to that point, but our hero was successful, and this time it was
the Sphinx who was destroyed. When he reached Thebes, Oedipus discovered,
as a reward for defeating the Sphinx, that he was entitled to take the throne and
marry the widowed queen, Jocasta. They had two sons Eteocles and Polynices
and two daughters, Antigone and Ismene.

Then a terrible plague struck Thebes - nothing would slow its progress. In
desperation Oedipus sought the advice of the revered, blind prophet, Teiresias,
who said that only the apprehension and punishment of the murderer of King
Laius would end the plague. At this point no-one suspected Oedipus, as the
only survivor of the massacre had been too ashamed to admit that a lone man had slain Laius and all his attendants. He claimed instead that a band of fierce robbers had attacked them. The denouement is predictably horrific. When the truth is discovered, Jocasta hangs herself, Oedipus blinds himself with brooches taken from Jocasta's clothing and, with his devoted daughter Antigone as companion and carer, sets out on a life of wandering exile. Ismene, with Jocasta's brother Creon, stays at home to take care of her father's interests while the two brothers attempt, unsuccessfully, to co-rule.

*Psychodynamic Explanations:*

Given that Oedipus neither knew it was his father he killed, nor his mother he married, why should Freud choose this particular story to epitomise the classic patriarchal father/son rivalry? There are other myths with the same theme, the conflict between Uranus and his Titan sons for instance. Importantly, from a psychodynamic perspective, the fact that Oedipus didn't know is essential. The notion of a dynamic interplay between unconscious and conscious processes within the human psyche provides a basis for explanations of the irrational and unpredictable aspects of human psychology. Just as human biology shows certain predispositions, reflexes, instincts, so does human psychology. Jung claimed that the child is not born a "tabula rasa" but brings to life psychic as well as physiological predispositions and tendencies (CW 9i, §136). Psychological development involves coming to understand those unexpected tendencies in oneself and others, and where necessary, adjusting them to socio-cultural requirements.

From a Freudian perspective the inevitability of the story, comes from unrecognised or unconscious wishes (Freud, 1990d). Freud's idea of the instinctual force of libido has an inexorable energy, even intentionality, which unless recognised and countered by the conscious ego, will push on to its
unavoidable end. So at some level, in psychoanalytic terms, Oedipus, the devoted son of the Corinthian royal couple, with his damaged feet and the stigmatising name drawing attention to them, knew and railed against his origins.

King Laius, also very aware of a curse that his son would kill him and marry Jocasta, had ordered one of his shepherds to kill the newborn boy by leaving him exposed on a mountain. The curse had been made against Laius by another king, Pelops, when Laius, as a young man, abducted and raped Chrysippus, Pelops's son. In one version of the story, Jocasta is also further implicated in the tragedy. Because of the curse, Laius had avoided any sexual contact with his wife, until she eventually managed to seduce him (Devereux, 1988). However a Corinthian shepherd found and saved the abandoned Oedipus, who some say was strung up by his ankles to a tree, others say pierced through the feet and pinned to the ground. Either way, it was early childhood trauma of unquestionably grave proportions.

If he had been a more psychologically sophisticated lad, this tragedy might have been averted. Had he stayed at home with his adoptive parents and faced his fears, the prophecy would have been thwarted. But as it was, he gallantly relinquished everything he cherished, so as not to put his parents at risk. He set off into the world stoutly and confidently defending himself against all assaults, then happily accepted the proffered rewards. The unexamined life, the active, extroverted hero life, is fraught with hidden danger. The tricks of the oracles, the "self-fulfilling" prophecies, serve as more than dramatic devices, in the psychodynamic sense. They illustrate the powerful unconscious counter current, the dark consequences of consciously justified action. This is a negative view of the unconscious, more in line with a Freudian interpretation. Although Jung, too, warned of the hazards of unconscious tendencies, of
archetypal possession, he saw some very positive qualities of the unconscious, especially when they were consciously recognised.

Contrasting Jung and Freud:

Historically, there is nothing at all remarkable in the fact that both Freud and Jung used myths as explanatory tools in the development of their respective psychodynamic theories. Although both men were trained in medicine, not only was a study of the Greek and Latin Classics an accepted part of education at the time, both Freud and Jung were influenced by the nineteenth century Romantic movement (Ellenberger, 1970). Romanticism, reacting against the rigidities of rational, mechanistic ideologies of the Enlightenment, encouraged a growing interest in nature, folk stories and cultural anthropology. Although Jung’s writings show more conspicuously non-rational and spiritual tendencies, Freud too was heavily influenced by cultural anthropology. With an accent as well on the national and the individual, the Romantic orientation led to a sharply hierarchal and elitist perspective on humanity, with the educated, intellectual European male securely situated at the pinnacle. The Oedipus story too provides an excellent analogy for the Romantic world view. The story is larger than life, with the hero struggling gamely against relentless destiny, his courage ennobling and inspirational. He exemplifies the dedicated, passionate, honourable Romantic martyr.

Oedipus’s story also dramatises the kind of psychic conflict for which psychodynamic theory was advanced as explanation. Long philosophical and literary traditions of the unconscious as an active, passionate force (Whyte, 1960), brought together with the preoccupations of Romanticism, set the groundwork for a psychoanalytic understanding of the unconscious as unruly life-force; exciting but dangerous reserve of creativity, and for Freud the sexualised, for Jung the spiritual/mystical aspects of the psyche. Above all
though, psychoanalytic theorising proposes an unconscious which is intentional and purposive. Given the explosive power of the unconscious, as conceptualised in psychoanalytic theories, it demands active attention. To ignore the unconscious, is not simply to leave part of mind unexplored, it is to risk psychopathology, in the same way that failing to propitiate the gods was considered to be courting danger. Hence Jung declared, “We are still as much possessed by autonomous psychic contents as if they were Olympians. ... The gods have become diseases ...” (CW 13, § 54).

It will be profitable at this point to define some of the distinctive features of a psychodynamic view of mind, however it is not appropriate to digress into the metaphysics of mind and consciousness. I am using the term “psyche” as an equivalent for mind and consciousness, but it also is meant to cover a broad conceptualisation of human psychology. Hence psyche becomes a notion of mind inevitably embodied and situated in a social context. Moreover, I am assuming a process model of consciousness, not topographical or mechanistic, and am incorporating a dynamic approach to the conscious/unconscious interactions. Theodore Sarbin (1986), discussing root metaphors appropriate to psychology, criticised psychodynamic theories as inevitably deterministic, due to the use of mechanistic metaphors, implying causality, for their explanation. Both Freud and Jung made use of mechanism as explanation, but not exclusively so. Jung also repeatedly asserted the essential vitality of psyche (CW 6, § 717; CW 8, § 59, 618; CW 11, § 141). By exercising some restraint in the treasure house of metaphor it is possible to imagine consciousness and the unconscious as complementary processes, with their particular vital energies as aspects of the living human psyche.

When speaking of consciousness both Freud and Jung spoke in terms of ego consciousness, or the self-aware, self-conscious form of human perception. Ego
however is only a part of the human psyche; it refers to that aspect of the self which interacts with the everyday world, uses language as its major mode of expression and is usually the centre of a sense of “self” as such. For Freud (1988) though, the ego is the civilised, essentially human part of the human psyche, that part which must strive, using reason and logic, to remain in control of the libidinous forces of the unconscious. On the other hand Jung does not promote the ego as the most valued aspect of personal psychology. It is certainly a very necessary part, not only enabling self-conscious perception but also enabling a sense of identity and the necessary executive skills to deal with the world. If, however, it is perceived as the essential person, Jung (CW 9i) suggested there are not only risks from intrusions of unconscious material into conscious life, but there would also be the loss of appreciations and understandings derived from the unconscious.

Scientific authentication is difficult with theories proposing an unconscious, so metaphors of mechanics are employed to provide the bases for scientific explanations. Despite his adherence to Romantic values, Freud’s professed aim and, he believed his achievement, was to subject the successes and failures of humanity to a critical scientific appraisal. From his perspective, he had available humankind’s most valuable and powerful method of analysis and explanation. He set out specifically to turn this scientific method back on its creator, the human being. It would be a bold and brave demonstration of objectivity. He believed he succeeded (MacIntyre, 1958). Others have not been so sure. Yet his influence on twentieth century psychology has been profound, and is wryly summed up by Whyte (1960, p. 179) with; “... he [Freud] was the last pre-Freudian rationalist, passionately upholding a rationalism of the conscious intellect which his doctrines would rapidly undermine.”
The Jungian Unconscious:

Jung does seem closer to the Romantic perspective. He also advocated the notion of psychology as a science, but he was not prepared to sacrifice meaning and significance to the strictures of scientific method. Rather, he advocated a more inclusive science (Jung & Pauli, 1955; Rychlak, 1991). In his discussions with the physicist Pauli, he was able to see the importance of the interchangeability and interconnectedness of observer and subject in sciences generally (Jung & Pauli, 1955; CW 8, § 440). Specifically, Jung demanded that psychology in general, and psychotherapy in particular, should respect the subjectivity of the individual.

In all other branches of science, it is legitimate to apply a hypothesis to an impersonal subject. Psychology, however, inescapably confronts you with the living relations between two individuals, neither of whom can be divested of his subjective personality, nor, indeed, depersonalised in any other way.

(Jung, 1964b, p. 58).

Jung’s ideas of psychic energy have much in common with Freud’s idea of the libido from the point of view of the life energy originating in the unconscious. But for Jung the libido is not only a physiological and essentially sexual energy, it is a more generalised dynamic energy (CW 8, § 54ff.).

Jung does refer to homeostasis or entropy (tension release), especially when he is using a concept of psychic energy which he equates with the energy of physics, obviously mechanistic metaphors (CW 8, § 3 & § 49). This parallels Freud’s use of hydraulic metaphors for conscious/unconscious balance. However his notion of equilibrium includes the concept of “... enantiodromia, a conversion of something into its opposite.” (CW 5, § 581). Opposites, dualities, are not mutually exclusive but are the extreme poles of a single whole.
Evidence for the existence of one pole inevitably entails the presence of the other, even if only in unconscious or shadow form. This connects with a distinction Jung (CW 8, § 59) made (admittedly rather obscurely) between explanations of energy as mechanism, expressed as "... the energy of the psychic ..." contrasted with the transformative, vital "... psychic energy". In short, Jung identified psychic energy with libido (CW 5, § 194). Libido in turn was understood as a "life-urge" or a will to live, that is, as intentional energy (CW 5, § 195ff).

Conceptualising conscious and unconscious as process, as a continuous and lively interchange, hints at the same application of dynamics of psyche.

Consequently, from a Jungian perspective, in a therapeutic situation the hidden aspects of the unconscious are of positive benefit. It is not a process of linking a current problem with a repressed desire in order to cancel out a neurosis, rather it is an additive process in which the unseen, unconscious remainder of a notion is uncovered to expand the conscious understanding; "... the unconscious produces compensating symbols which are meant to replace the broken bridges, but which can only do so with the active co-operation of consciousness." (CW 16, § 252). This presumes a particularly active involvement on the part of the client of therapy in order that unconscious activity is integrated into, not overwhelming to, ego consciousness (CW 16, § 503ff.).

With his concept of a collective unconscious, "... a common psychic substrate ..." Jung (CW 9i, § 3) also extended unconscious activity to a recognition and appreciation of archetypal form. For Jung (CW 9i, § 46) "... the collective unconscious is anything but an encapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world." Through connections with the collective unconscious, the individual has an innate potential or predisposition to identify both the nature and the significance of
archetypal forms (CW 9i, § 136). Archetypes are not personal but transpersonal, hence are not repressed personal complexes - they existed before they were known by the individual (CW 9i, § 314ff.). Even, or especially, if the archetype is not properly recognised, it can have profound effects on human lives. Hence the well meaning young hero, dashing about saving people from themselves, may well kill the demon, marry the queen and rule the kingdom, but in his enthusiasm he can, nonetheless, call down disaster on them all. As patterns and potentials of meaning, archetypes (with the collective unconscious) provide an organising framework within which compelling narratives can be explained psychologically. Archetypal meanings are deduced when the archetypal pattern and potential (which contribute orientation and rationale) are given context in a broad narrative structure (a myth for example). That is, the abstract form is given a specific cultural perspective and continuity. The third element, the personal interpretation, the individual response to the story, is where the immediacy, vibrancy and relevance are situated.

Accusations that Jung’s is an unchangeable, essentialist epistemology are based on a failure to distinguish between the archetype as an abstract form and its many possible manifestations. It is the archetypal form which determines the broad pattern of the hero myth - that which makes it a hero myth. However the particular story, of Oedipus, or Jason, or Christ - its characters and plot, its cultural heritage, the chosen version - all provide the counterpoint of individuality, of particularity. The archetypal form provides the identifying framework and a rationale for the persistence of certain forms (the hero story, or the forms of gender differences, for instance). Individual responses to archetypal forms can be as varied as lively imaginations will allow. The value in recognising archetypal manifestations is that they provide something identifiable, something articulated, to which the imagination is able to respond.
There is the hero as psychological type, there is Oedipus, the specific example of the reluctant tragic hero, and then there are my (and others') reactions to the extravagantly calamitous story.

There is a benign as well as a malign aspect to the unconscious in Jungian terms in the sense that, when it is used in conjunction with conscious knowledge, a broader appreciation can be integrated into personal understanding. It is only when the processes of the unconscious are ignored that they are apt to lead the individual (or group) into trouble. The idea of personal conscious processes working in conjunction with a personal and a collective unconscious distinguishes the Jungian from the Freudian perspective. Because the unconscious, in Jungian terms, has a capacity for intelligence of its own, a way of knowing and understanding, it can complement consciousness thus providing people with more complete understandings. Rationality, analytical and logical thinking are seen as the province of consciousness while the unconscious is able to engender more holistic understandings, so having much to do with creativity and synthesis. The special skills of the unconscious are the appreciation of metaphor and recognition of archetypal forms. Most importantly however, both consciousness and the unconscious involve intentionality and purpose. Jung does not dismiss rational and analytical thinking, he sees them as major achievements in human evolution, nor does he advocate metaphorical (archetypal) understanding as the only adequate form of understanding (CW9i, § 174). It is when rationality finds itself in harmony with the unconscious that we are struck by the reality and the significance of a particular realisation.

Where Freud chose to simplify and reduce for the sake of clarity and precision in his psychoanalytic account of the developmental process, Jung wanted to do justice to the complexities of the human psyche in his theory.
Instead of Freud’s two warring tendencies, Jung understood the conscious and unconscious to be the complementary aspects of the total potential of human development. Hence the unconscious is not exclusively sexual, brutish, or unpleasant, but is instead a bewildering array of tendencies which complement the conscious orientation. If the individual is introverted there will be a corresponding unconscious extroversion (CW 7). For the very masculine individual, there will be a corresponding feminising tendency (anima) in the unconscious; for the feminine individual there will be the unconscious masculine animus (CW 9ii). (The anima and animus are explored in the following chapters.) If there is an excessive preoccupation with the devoutly religious, there will be an unconscious carnality and vice versa (CW 9i).

The aim however is not to create an endless list of opposites, nor to describe an endless oscillation between extremes. Jung advocated exploring and acknowledging these contrary tendencies in order to incorporate as much as possible of the variety into one’s sense of self, to expand the breadth and complexity of the personality. It is by acknowledging the countervailing unconscious tendency that the irony becomes obvious in the pacifist’s commitment as a warrior for peace, the moralist’s preoccupation with the sordid transgressions of the sinner, or the high-minded young man’s fear of a prophecy predicting he will harm his parents, resulting in his flight from home into disaster.

Just as in the Oedipus story there is a grinding inevitability about the fateful consequences of the oracular pronouncements, in a psychodynamic view of mind the unconscious tendencies, although by definition out of awareness, still have profound and continuing influence on person and behaviour. Whether conceived of as external, superhuman forces in myth, or as internalised social explanations and requirements in psychology, the predisposition to given
outcomes is highlighted. If Oedipus or even his father Laius had discovered how to best appease the gods, kingdoms would not have been destroyed; or if the young Freud had been able to find cause to unreservedly respect his father as a representative patriarch, twentieth century psychology would have had a very different face. In his journey towards his goal, be it external and physical or internal and psychological, the hero sets in train far more than he might have anticipated.

**Exemplary Heroes:**

More fully elaborated stories of reluctant heroes, like Oedipus explore the wider psychological possibilities and satisfy some of the curiosity about the paradoxes and dilemmas of living. A modern version of the broad theme unfolds in the movies *Jean de Florette* (Berri, 1986a) and *Manon of the Spring* (Berri, 1986b). Unlike Oedipus, the hero Jean, takes his family with him on the journey. But there are many similarities; a dedicated and high minded hero with a mild physical disability, travelling to a foreign area, which it later transpires, is his mother's country. With his hunch-back and his city sophistication, he is treated with suspicion and some ridicule by the locals. He is finally overwhelmed by his dream (and the treachery of his greedy neighbours), but is finally vindicated, after his death, by his half feral, goatherd daughter, Manon.

Other examples of the reluctant hero include Joseph Knecht, in *The Glass Bead Game* (Hesse, 1987), who undertakes an entirely intellectual quest to master the sophisticated, elitist glass bead game, only to be overtaken by the shocking realisation of the triviality and futility of the quest, too late to make a genuine difference for his suffering people. In *Lila* (Pirsig, 1992) the hero, Phaedrus, also undertakes an intellectual quest - to develop his philosophy of morals - in the unencumbered seclusion of his boat on a river journey. But he too is dragged from his chosen task, by the more immediate demands of the
disturbed Lila, for whom he becomes reluctant rescuer and protector. For Phaedrus, though, there is time for the integration of this unwelcome challenge into his theoretical musings. In *The Shipping News* (Proulx, 1994) Quoyle, like Jean de Florette, takes his family, (that is, his two daughters and the aunt, after the death of his impossible wife), on a trek to the unknown ancestral home in Newfoundland. With delightful black humour, this particular unlovely, inept hero bumbles his way to self-respect and satisfaction, as he gradually conquers the large and small ordeals of domestic and workaday life in an inhospitable land among cautious and suspicious townsfolk.

Some of the extended and more complex psychological possibilities are developed in the character of the very much older and wiser Oedipus, at the time of his death at Colonus, in Sophocles's (trans. 1947) *Oedipus at Colonus*. The now blind Oedipus is no longer the typically active, independent hero, he is physically dependent on Antigone for all his needs. As a person however, he is less impetuous, arrogant, naive. In fact he assumes some of the same qualities as the blind seer Teiresias. Yet he remains stern and unrelenting, cursing his brother-in-law Creon and later his aggressive son, Polynices, when they attempt to force Oedipus to return to Thebes. Oedipus's body, it had been prophesied, would be a source of power and stability to the land in which it was buried; his greatest power was reserved for after his death.

Already, in this expansion of the basic Oedipus story, there is an elaboration of the meaning, of the rationale, for what Freud called the Oedipus complex. The father/son rivalry is not an arbitrary psychological fear on the part of the boy. It is a shared conflict between father and son, unconscious predispositions are activated by social circumstances. My intention is not to be so literal as to claim that the Oedipus complex is caused by a difficult or abusive father, or even by questionable social ideals. Despite Naomi Goldenberg’s (1990) claim
for the more direct, physiological, hence creditable, basis for Freud’s interpretation, the Oedipal crisis is still fundamentally a narrative. Even in Freudian explanation the Oedipus complex is a story of adulthood, composed of recollections and re-interpretations of childhood memories (Downing, 1988). The story can still have the focus of jealousy of father and love of mother in a competitive society, but the rationale and the implications are extended to encompass the paradoxes of rushing in to save the world, or of standing one’s ground versus running away, or of duty versus desire. If he survives, the ageing hero is likely to become the wise old man; Oedipus assumes some of Tiresias’s qualities; stories spill over into each other, just as lives progress.

Robert Steele (1986) presented an interesting combination of myth and case history in his discussion of Freud and Jung. He considered the importance of the hero myth to both Freud and Jung, not only as explanatory metaphor in their theorisings, but as framework for the recording and construction of their personal histories. With careful shaping and judicious omissions, their respective stories took on the characteristics of myth: “Freud’s frame is that of the earthy rebel; Jung’s the spiritual prophet.” (Steele, 1986, p. 270). There is nothing especially remarkable about this coincidence, considering the degree to which both men used themselves as their own case histories for the development of their theories. Given Steele’s distinction between the hero as rebel and the hero as seer though, more precise parallels ensue with the Oedipus story.

Freud selected for himself the early part of the Oedipus story - the unconscious drive to usurp the father - and it certainly fits the orthodox biographies which portray Freud as the iconoclastic warrior pitted against the intractable establishment. Jung, however, is more readily identified with the older Oedipus, disenfranchised and wandering strange lands, subdued but still
fiery, and offering valuable insights to those who honour him. The urge becomes irresistible to make allusions to his dedicated wife and helper, Emma, as an Ismene, and his soul-mate, mistress and *femme inspiratrice*, Toni Wolff, as an Antigone.

**Oedipal Ideologies:**

Freud was not preoccupied with gender complementarities, so the unconscious is sexualised and gendered in the sense that libido is energy, which in turn is masculine. The woman is neither a symbol of the unconscious, nor of the dangerous unconscious forces. She is simply less evolved, that is, less conscious and has less libido, hence is less able to discriminate and less capable of the extremes of good or evil in the world. Consequently Freud (1990c) predicted she would be less successful in resolving the Oedipal crisis. Juliet Mitchell (1974) surprised feminists by proposing psychoanalysis did provide an accurate account of sexual development, however not as a psychophysiological inevitability, but as an accurate account of the distorted way in which children are socialised in Western culture. Subsequently, psychoanalytic feminists such as Jane Gallop (1982) and Jane Flax (1990) are among those who have insisted on the culturally specific nature of the Oedipus complex, as associated with Western individualism. This certainly fits my assertion that psyche is heavily influenced by the social context, and consequently with the Jungian proposition that the hero myth is the appropriate myth for modern Western society. The archetypal, mythopoetic approach offered by Jungian psychology provides a means to explore and expand on the social and psychological connections between patriarchy, power and gender. Individualism, with its focus on autonomy, action, control of the environment, and brought to a peak of absurdity in the ‘self-made-man’ of economic rationalism, grooms, encourages and idealises the young hero. Heroic deeds are exceptional, they demand breaks
with accepted conventions, yet oddly, they are promoted as a social ideal to which everyone should aspire.

The individualist ideal, as exemplified by Oedipus the young saviour of Thebes, best represents the adolescent transition to adult independence from parents. But as Jung (CW 9i, § 304) and especially Hillman (1978) warned, the hero can remain a perpetual boy, a *puer aeternus*, forever accumulating his list of impressive exploits for the approval of parents. By definition, to be exceptional, the exploits must be out of the ordinary. Yet people generally are still judged as successful by their capacities to perform wonders (providing they are socially approved). This fires an image of frantic activity, as generations of young heroes vie for conspicuous achievements to ensure celebrity. This seems a rather bizarre social ideal, to say the least.

The successful hero (a successful individual), in the quest for the greater good pursues the goal alone, outside the safety of accepted ways. If he is truly successful and finds the pot of gold, walks on the moon, finds the cure for cancer, then he is not only accepted back into his community, but feted and honoured as well. This is where the stereotypical hero story usually ends, with a complete and final solution to the problem. But the myth records a more complicated and more ambiguous story.

The extended hero myth points to some of the complications and ironies of the individualist ideal. It is a socially sanctioned ideal in which, to be a fully developed human being, one needs to tread a fine line between social compliance and autonomy. Adolescent rebelliousness, providing it is a controlled challenging of accepted values, is considered a sign of a vigorous and healthy psychological development. But there are boundaries, often difficult to read. It is only a matter of degree separating the healthy, independent individual from the eccentric or the alienated social misfit. So the success of the truly
heroic, or truly independent action, seems to depend mostly on the outcome. If the grail is found, if the scourge is halted, then public recognition and adulation follow; failure can mean banishment, public scorn or pity. Taken to its logical extreme, the alternative would seem to be a society of individual heroes perpetually saving themselves from each other (or more absurdly still, saving each other) something which seems very close to a definition of war.

So what is a truly heroic deed? Was Oedipus most heroic in leaving his adopted family in Corinth, in saving Thebes from the Sphinx or in choosing exile to rid Thebes of the plague? Leaving Corinth was noble but misguided. Defeating the Sphinx was motivated as much by self-preservation as by altruism. Choosing exile was the one action undertaken in full understanding of the situation, but it still failed to save his family and Thebes from another generation of tragedy and death. Being a hero really seems to be fraught with hazards. Unfortunately the confident, optimistic, ideal of individualism seems to have been seduced more by the possible fairytale ending than by the myth. It has become trapped by its own social engineering, its own moral allegories for adolescents. From its perspective, the hero fails only if he fails to win or hold the prize.

The myth, on the other hand, suggests that winning the prize is only part of the story. What the prize is and what it means, and what follows from that, are crucial elements to be considered. The way the Holy Grail has been progressively concretised from its likely matrifocal origins, to be Christianised into the chalice which caught the blood of the dying Christ, illustrates well the way stories of heroic quests have been progressively simplified into clearly definable, hence more attainable goals. The visually spectacular movie, *The Fisher King* (Gilliam & LaGravenese, 1991), has only limited success in attempting to reverse this trend, when the guilt-ridden modern “knight”
undertakes dangerous adventures to steal a cheap sports trophy, realising its symbolic value for his suffering “Fisher King” friend. The romantic, happy ending might be comforting, but it belies both the suffering of the dying king of the original myth and his bereaved and traumatised counterpart in the movie.

What of the relevance, to women, of the masculine hero form? The hero, as a personification of a modern Western ideal is familiar to women as well as men; it is also a social ideal appealing to women. Nonetheless, its essential masculinity does create problems from a woman’s perspective. The women characters associated with the heroes in the traditional hero stories do offer some alternative perspectives, but there is a risk here too, of simply reinforcing traditional gender distinctions. The Sphinx, Jocasta and Antigone in particular offer some fascinating insights into notions of the feminine. However, they are portrayals of the feminine as ideal other, or as anima, in Jungian terms. Jung (CW 5) identified the Sphinx with the Terrible Mother; Jocasta is the mother seductress; Antigone is a soul companion, a spiritual guide. Once again each gains her significance in specific relationship to the male hero.

Within a Jungian perspective then, I need to ask questions in terms of what are the benefits and the costs, for a woman, in an encounter with the hero type. There is of course always the possibility of a woman being saved by the hero, but that privilege is usually reserved for the young, virginal beauty, or for someone’s enfeebled, ancient granny. I for one, consequently need an alternative strategy. One way is to become the hero myself. At this point I am simply concerned with the implications of accepting the challenge of a quest. Many women, as well as men, take up that challenge. There are, after all, causes, issues, which are worthy of commitment, and someone has to do something about them. But if I become impassioned, say by a feminist ideal, or by the need to develop an adequate psychology of women, what can go wrong?
The ideal and the goal are clear enough, but the costs are not always so obvious. I don’t believe it is necessary to spell these out in detail, most people would have observed the obsessive and often destructive efforts of someone totally dedicated to a cause, doggedly pursuing some goal to the exclusion of all else (it is always easier to see this in someone else, of course). Once again then, one is brought back to the dilemma and compromise as portrayed in the myth. If I am to act at all, the best I can do is to try to see as much of the situation, to understand as much of the story, as possible.

**Myth as Psychology:**

This chapter brings together the classic hero myth and the psychodynamic approach to psyche. From a mythic or narrative perspective, by exploring various interpretations and implications of the hero story, both advantages and problems of becoming preoccupied with the hero theme are elaborated. Correspondingly, in psychodynamic terms, discovering the additional, previously unconscious aspects of a preoccupation, or “complex”, is a way to avoid entanglements. Myth and psychodynamics are drawn together in archetypal theory, where myths, images, symbols, are considered to be the language which articulates knowledge constellated by the unconscious. Appropriating myth as psychology may seem a high-handed act. It is of course, also used as cultural, political and religious allegory, it can be given a didactic purpose and it can be used purely as entertainment, or several of these at once. Yet all of these other uses of myth fit within the general notion of myth as human narrative. Human narratives in turn, stories of human experiences, accounts of human behaviour, are the concern of psychology. Not for a moment do I intend to reduce good stories to psychological analogies. Rather I am suggesting that effective story-telling, of itself, can be understood as a form of psychological explanation. Sarbin (1995, p. 217) has defined and labelled
this use of story as psychological explanation “dramatistic rhetoric”. Good stories including myths often interpret complex human behaviours not readily explained in more conventional psychological theorising. The narrative framework - character, plot, setting - in a well told story can be more effective than understandings proposed by scientific explanations.

There are those who will baulk at the inclusion of “accounts of human behaviour” (the scientific enterprise in psychology) with narratives, stories and myths. The scientific enterprise is, after all, concerned with the careful and systematic observation and recording of material facts, of “reality”, seemingly far removed from myth and fantasy. Yet enduring myths, appealing stories, as products of the human imagination, are real stories engendering very real human responses. People will judge stories accordingly for accuracy, relevance, meaning, insight - all serious considerations - along with the material and physical reality of human existence. Curled up on the sofa with a good novel, or sitting in a theatre or cinema, I am fully appraised of the fictional nature of the story. However I have equally no doubts about the genuine persuasiveness of the ideas and sentiments portrayed, nor about the authenticity of my laughter or tears. Moreover my satisfaction will be measured precisely according to the spontaneity and conviction of my real responses.

Myth is a valuable form of social or collective narrative history. The recurring themes convey human preoccupations which themselves have continual currency, despite variations in focus or accent. The Oedipus story for example, is but one version of the abandoned child who becomes a great hero by vanquishing strange and fierce demons; Jason, Perseus, Moses and St. George are others. Like the Fisher King, the Oedipus myth is also a death and regeneration story (or an allegory of the four seasons). Again, like the heroes of Shakespeare’s (n.d.) King Lear and The Tempest, Oedipus’s later life features
the theme of the exiled and alienated old wanderer who might finally bring knowledge, power or redemption to his estranged people. The many versions and interpretations indicate the rich tradition these myths encapsulate. Oedipus, as a mythic hero, is a reluctant, tragic hero, which makes his story especially fascinating from a psychological point of view. This chapter is not meant simply as a commentary on the Oedipus complex. Rather, I have used the story of Oedipus to illustrate my assertion that mythology has as much relevance to psychology as it does to classical studies or literature.

_In Summary; Seeing through Oedipus’s Eyes:_

To recapitulate, twentieth century Western society still has a strong attachment to the hero ideal. Moreover the popularised versions tend to highlight the sure, secure, fairytale aspects, the definitive outcomes where everyone can sigh with relief as the problem is finally resolved. Such a simplistic orientation is quintessentially archetypal possession; it involves seduction by the positive aspects and failure to see any other implications. The cult of youthful individualism promoted in Western society is exemplified in the socially desirable form of the hero story.

While many of the arbiters of values and ideals continue to be dazzled by the sanitised, optimistic, adolescent hero story, others have seen beyond it. Freud did. His explanation of Oedipus is only incidentally mythological, but he did call it the Oedipus complex, not the phallic complex or the incest complex. The psychological ambivalence associated with complexes comes from the interplay of conscious with unconscious processes. A psychodynamic explanation provides a framework for exploring the ambivalences and confusions, the complicated psychological issues such as relationships which engender both love and hate.
By adopting an even more directly mythological perspective it is possible to see past the heroic adventure tale to accommodate the more difficult and sometimes tragic aspects of the hero’s story. Myth and psychodynamic theory come together in Jungian archetypal theory, where direct connections are proposed between unconscious understandings and the stories, symbols and images which provide an accessible language for their interpretation. The specific interpretations of myths can vary considerably, even idiosyncratically; there is little question that what I make of the Oedipus myth will provide a different understanding to that taken home by the audience attending the original performances of Sophocles’s plays. Yet there remains a certain constancy in the fundamental meanings of the story, and that is the crucial point. It is what enables us to take up Jung’s injunction to “... dream the myth onwards ...” (CW 9i, § 271).

**Sorting the Bones with Antigone:**

_Jocasta, Antigone, Ismene: What is one to do with these tragic women? They are so much more difficult to speculate about than is the central figure Oedipus, even if they are accepted as anima figures. Jocasta and Ismene are relatively marginal characters in the Sophocles’s plays, while Antigone’s single-minded devotion to family is extremely daunting. Not one of them is a particularly complex, rounded character, but each still has her particular appeal.  

As an anima figure, Jocasta is portrayed as the passive, tragic feminine, overwhelmed by events, unable to respond, except in desperation by taking her own life. There is nothing here of the active, determined, powerful women who search for their lost sons/brothers/husbands in the earlier stories of Ishtar and Tammuz, or Isis and Osiris. According to Verena Kast (1986), this changing_
emphasis is no accident in the fast developing Greek patriarchy, where men rule unequivocally in the spiritual and intellectual as well as the civic spheres. If Jocasta did trick Laius into conceiving their child (maternal urges; desire to produce a royal heir), and made inevitable the unfolding tragedy, she certainly paid a heavy price. The dawning realisation of her incestuous relationship with Oedipus provokes the desperate appeal to him, “No! In God’s name - if you want to live, this quest must not go on. Have I not suffered enough?” (Sophocles, trans. 1947, p. 58).

The temptation here is to psychologise on the incest taboo with its Freudian connections, or on the Jungian association of the feminine with the unconscious; how Jocasta personifies the tendency to repression, to adopt the safe, obvious solutions. However my direct response to her plight is simply heartfelt pity for someone who has suddenly foreseen how all she holds dear is, once again, about to disintegrate. Jocasta displays little evidence, even unconsciously, of the controlling matriarch, the mother as seducer, or the dreaded ‘vagina dentata’. Rather, we are witness to the blighted dreams of someone swept along by the relentless fates.

The daughters, Antigone and Ismene, Oedipus’s “...Children, and curse-bearers - ...Sisters! Ay their father’s sisters!” are more easily aligned with typical anima forms (Sophocles, trans. 1947, p. 95). Antigone is the selfless daughter and sister. She is prepared to wander endlessly in exile with her blind father, like Cordelia caring for King Lear. Honour and devotion for the frail and troubled father leaves no question of alternative lives for these young women. Ismene represents a more domesticated, sensible female type, the “Martha” of the sisters, (as E. F. Watling, the translator of the Sophocles plays, puts it (Sophocles, 1947, p. 181)). Yet there is no question of her loyalty
to her father either, given her risky journeys to find him and pass on news of Thebes and his quarrelsome sons.

Antigone's passionate commitment to family honour continues, after Oedipus's death, and the deaths of her brothers, who have killed each other in battle. With noble but defiant persistence, she pursues the foolhardy goal of granting her brother Polynices's plea for a decent burial, despite the express interdiction of her uncle, Creon, now ruler of Thebes. The favoured brother, Eteocles, had been granted full burial rites, but the body of the banished Polynices, who had launched an attack against Thebes, was to be left as carrion for the dogs. For her breach of the law Antigone was sealed in a cave and left to die. When Creon finally relented, at the insistence of his son Haemon (Antigone's husband-to-be), it was too late. Antigone, like her mother, had hanged herself. Then in the final catastrophe, Creon's son and wife both suicided.

As an anima figure, Antigone certainly represents a lofty ideal, with I suspect, a special appeal to those holding traditional masculine values. What wonderful daughters/sisters Antigone and Ismene make! Such dedicated young women fit within a broader anima category of the young female initiate, like Prospero's daughter, Miranda (Shakespeare, n. d.), Viviane, who used Merlin's own powers to enchant him (Kast, 1989), Helen, companion to the magician Simon Magus (CW 14, § 160ff), the sisters, "sorors", of alchemical texts (CW 12), as well as Salome (she is the blind one of this couple) and Elijah, products of Jung's (1965) own active imaginings. They are typically larger than life, idealised women, who inspire not only with what they do, but particularly with what they promise. They are, in short, perfect examples of the inspirational, fascinating products of men's imaginings, the anima images much discussed by Jung (CW 7, 9i; CW 9ii).
Encapsulated in Oedipus's relationships with the three women, Jocasta, Antigone and Ismene, are all the main female/male relationships - mother, lover, daughter, sister; it only needs the Sphinx to round out the picture as the Terrible Mother, the fearful, negative, destructive anima. Through the structure of the stories as told by Sophocles, with Oedipus and Creon as pivotal characters, the female characters revolve around the males in classic anima guises. They portray the inspirational, puzzling and at times dangerous feminine qualities, as they might impinge on men's lives. So much for classic anima. But of course women also have mothers, daughters, sisters and sometimes female lovers, so inevitably many of the same inferences apply.

The relationships of the typical anima types to women, however, is more immediate but less mysterious. There are fewer barriers to relationship, more room to discuss and negotiate, in exactly the same way that Antigone and Ismene interact. Look after father, while I attend to the libations to the gods, Ismene instructs matter-of-factly, as the urgency of their situation presses in. Much later, they argue heatedly over Antigone's plan to bury Polynices, Ismene practical; "No sense in starting on a hopeless task." and Antigone passionate; "Oh, I shall hate you if you talk like that!" (Sophocles, trans. 1947, p. 141). Yet, unlike their brothers who fought, literally to the death, Antigone and Ismene go their separate ways with Ismene's reminder, "... But remember that those who love you ... love you still." (Sophocles, trans. 1947, p. 141). Even though great and dreadful deeds are involved here, even though Antigone might be just as inspirational to a noble minded woman, equally as to a noble minded man (with precisely the same anima inspiration from the feminine as unknown, as other - Antigones are not everyday people), I still find Antigone's single-minded dedication somehow more accessible, somehow closer. Am I simply falling for the anima stereotyping myself, showing more appreciation for the
feminine, the passionate, devoted, selfless Antigone than for the masculine, the relentless nobility and rigid commitment to ideals of Oedipus and Creon?

To what extent am I playing Antigone here? Am I the marked progeny of a narrow, incestuous, intellectual tradition blind to its own shortcomings? Do I fancy myself as femme inspiratrice? Is this honouring of the past the devotion of a daddy's girl, or maybe the stirrings of a matrifocal valuing of kinship over civitas? Am I doomed to despair before the rescuers arrive? No ... all too dramatic ... break down the door ... set out to find some more resourceful women ... see if it's possible to duck past the phalanxes of questing heroes, to discover if there are journeys and quests singularly rewarding for women too.