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Critical notice

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BISHOP, PAUL. *Analytical Psychology and German Classical Aesthetics. Goethe, Schiller, and Jung. Volume 1. The Development of Personality*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008. Pp. xiv + 233. *Volume 2. The Constellation of the Self*. London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Pp. xii + 221.

This is a thrilling book to read, but one that, like a carriage passing through a vineyard, yields the rich vistas it surveys not at a glance, but at a gathering pace. It moves with 18th century leisure in the first volume, where one frequently has to read a sentence more than once to see, through the window of one's limited access to the sensibilities of that period, what one is expected to take in. The logical connections between sentences overlap like gnarled, dry vines trailing through the thoughtful landscape that is being so patiently revealed. They can seem to be nothing more than dense dry wood that is there simply to point the way through this complicated chapter in the history of ideas. Bishop has to tease out for us a philosophy nearly unknown to English-speaking readers, the aesthetic principles of classical education's chief humanizers, Goethe and Schiller, who working in Weimar did much in their day to shape the German attitude toward education that we find in Jung and can sometimes seem precious to an Anglophone. It won't after reading this book: no one else has exposed the psychological premises of the Weimar view of education as a lifelong acculturating project in such detail and with such warm, infectious empathy. By the time we get to the second volume of this work (and the volumes are not long, just comfortably sized), we are going at an increasing pace, first at a canter and then at full gallop, as Bishop's passionate sentences quicken to press their points home to our rapt attention. As his sentences deliver their astonishing evidence for the way Goethe has (to use a word the poet himself might have used) *anticipated* Jung, they seem to hurl themselves forward with our own anticipation of their vitality: the argument develops leaves, even bloom on its dry vines and becomes increasingly animated.

It culminates, only after we have fully savoured its efflorescence, in a final, satisfying image of fruit—grapes served by Goethe himself at an 1828 banquet, celebrating not just his undoubted creative accomplishments but also his outsider status as one of the very few figures who knew how to deliver the nectar

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of classical culture to a world increasingly caught in the modernist fantasy that it didn't need it. This image of what the sage of Weimar, and his long departed comrade, Schiller, had cultivated for the world unlocks the meaning of a dream that Jung had in the summer of 1914, of standing in front of a tree that has leaves but no fruit, until a cold frost turns its leaves into 'sweet grapes full of healing juices' that Jung plucks and offers to a waiting crowd (vol. 2, p. 180).[1] Bishop's tour has convinced us that the tree that had fallen into disuse was the aesthetic stance Goethe and Schiller had cultivated through their appreciation of the idea of culture itself. What Bishop is calling their 'German classical aesthetics' was an attitude toward living that for these literary figures meant the continuing relevance of the ancient world's emphasis on self-cultivation, a big part of the civilizing project that led them consciously to attempt to live in a way that was not only culturally whole—in the range of consciousnesses it could embrace, from the scientific to the political to the literary—but also compellingly beautiful. For the cultivation of human consciousness via the aesthetic attitude, the vineyard is the classical symbol. Jung's dream was showing him that such an attitude, even if not empirically scientific, was quite relevant to healing and therefore to his psychology. The dream, coming just after the break with Freud, at a time when Jung was still trying to find the right ground for his own analytical psychology, was reminding him of his own cultural root. The tree with no leaves, put in the context Bishop supplies, represents the loss for the culture of psychology of the values that the Weimar champions of classical aesthetics had cultivated. As a therapy for individuals, the aesthetic attitude of Goethe and Schiller had fallen into disuse in the cold medical-scientific climate of Freud's psychoanalysis, but Jung's dream was telling him that it was not actually barren of possibilities for depth psychology. The cultural project implied by the Weimar ideal could be made part of what analytical psychology might choose to offer the world.

This book may be to its audience what Jung's dream was to Jung, a way of helping persistent readers recover the aesthetic attitude within their own analytical psychology tradition. In recent years Jungian analysis has been emphasizing instead its connections to the history of science and to scientific paradigms emerging in our own time. Not that this book isn't rigorous. Both its style and its content convey the love of ideas and solid scholarship of its author, a professor of German at the University of Glasgow. Readers of this journal may know his *Jung in Contexts: a Reader* (1999), which collected recent scholarship on the sources of analytical psychology. Rather than reduce analytical psychology to its sources, that book proved that analytical psychology becomes more alive, that is, less like an odd, 'just so' story one can only listen to, not really interact with in a living way, when it can be shown to be part of a specific set of traditions (to name just one, John Kerr's demonstration of the way

[1] See Jung, C. G. (1963), p. 67 for a full account of this dream.

a tale of E.T.A. Hoffman confronted the reader with the shadow in a manner that fully anticipates Jung's presentation of the same archetype[2]). The present study is entirely by Bishop himself, and it makes good on the promise of the title of the earlier book by providing one of the most important of all contexts for analytical psychology, the Weimar school that only a Germanist with Bishop's diligence could have presented to us this fully. How to frame Jung's analytical psychology in the history of thought has often evaded academic critics, who can be dismissive of Jung's work when it is presented as the latest chapter in the history of religion or philosophy, a claim for which they cannot find enough hard evidence. Similarly, claims that analytical psychology offers a new scientific paradigm have been hard to justify. The value of this book for Jungian studies is that by turning to the tradition of aesthetics Bishop really can find support for the context in which he has chosen to position analytical psychology.

He is utterly convincing when he argues that, situated historically between Leibniz and Kant at one end of a line of philosophical development and Schopenhauer and Nietzsche at the other (this being the philosophical tradition usually claimed for Jung, since he was an informed reader of all of these German philosophers), the Weimar school of classical aesthetics actually provides the fullest context to analytical psychology's claim to be not only a philosophical, but a cultural project, a way of personal education, which is exactly what Goethe and Schiller a few generations earlier had sought, with considerable success, to foster. They had come to see their own making of art as requiring a cultural context that they had to provide in a method of education and self-cultivation that would involve a revival of the contemplation of antique forms and practices. They drew from the Greek philosophical schools of the Hellenistic age, which also addressed the question of how life should actually be lived, and the role of beauty in such a life, as an approach to acculturating modern sensibilities. The neo-classical movement in Germany was not inaugurated by Schiller and Goethe; it drew on the pioneering achievements of the father of modern archaeology and art history, Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), and emerged as part of the cultural moment that offered an alternative to the austere religious Pietism that reached its height in Germany in the middle of the 18th century and equally to the proudly less tradition-tethered Romanticism that began to shape cultural attitudes throughout Europe so strongly at the beginning of the 19th century. The Weimar approach, as a way to integrate the study of classical literature, art, philosophy, and science via a robust aesthetic appreciation for the principles embodied in these models, became important on the world scene when the educational system of all Germany began to shape itself on its foundation. The kind of gymnasium education Jung was exposed to in Switzerland included the study of classics read in the original languages as

[2] Kerr, J. (1999). '*The Devil's Elixirs*, Jung's 'theology', and the dissolution of Freud's 'poisoning complex',' in *Jung in Contexts*, ed. Paul Bishop. London: Routledge.

models for living and was richer for the influence of Weimar. Everyone undergoing that education read Goethe and Schiller. This is not to say that a schoolboy in Switzerland would have been exposed to all the implications of their project for psychology. Jung had to find that for himself, and we rediscover the ground he had to cover as we read Bishop's book. The author has generously provided the archeology of that foundation, as well: there are sections on Jung's reception of Faust, on Freud's reception of Goethe, and on the priority of Spinoza, even though he was no major aesthetician, in conceiving some of the seminal principles that were to guide Weimar aesthetics. I will have to leave the pleasures of visiting those digs to the interested reader, so that I can stay on its surface. I would like to devote the rest of this review to the aesthetics because it is of such significance to the way analytical psychology has developed. Some of its most characteristic attitudes and practices are on an aesthetic basis and yet it has tried to cut its ties to the main intellectual tradition through which the healing power of beautiful images might be understood.

The Weimar poets conceived their philosophical approach to be like that of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies of late antiquity, which they consciously attempted to combine in it, seeing their opus as not just the study of art, but an art of living in its own right. It was a cultural activity that aimed to get human beings to experience the fact that that they were poised between their human limitations and the enormous possibilities of nature, including the nature available to them through the unconscious, a concept Goethe was entirely familiar with. With generous quotations, Bishop reveals how much the premises of this now all but forgotten chapter in the history of modern culture-making were identical to those of Jung's analytical psychology nearly a hundred years later, and how much Jung's reception of these premises can be demonstrated in his own writings.

'Weimar classicism' is explained in an earlier book that Paul Bishop wrote with R. H. Stephenson on Nietzsche's reception of it, and there they admit that it is a 'much disputed expression' that they nevertheless apply to 'the Kulturkampf undertaken by Goethe and Schiller in the years from 1794 to Schiller's death in 1805, and continued thereafter by Goethe until his own death in 1832 . . . '.[3] Though like all classicism, it involved 'a canon of qualities and ideals turned to account over and over again in all the plastic arts for well over two thousand years',[4] its Weimar twist was an emphasis on 'aesthetic mindfulness of the individual object'[5], whether a work of art or a beautiful aspect of nature that might be contemplated scientifically, as the basis of knowledge. Education that proceeds from this basis was the only antidote, Goethe and Schiller believed, to a

[3] Bishop, P. & Stephenson, R. H. (2005). *Friedrich Nietzsche and Weimar Classicism*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, p. 4.
[4] Ibid, p. 5.
[5] Ibid, p. 10.

one-sided self-education of the kind that starts with the latest trends in religion, philosophy, and art—exciting as these were in their own lifetimes. Aesthetic mindfulness was a discipline these creative geniuses imposed on themselves so as neither to become inflated nor incomplete, and it was one they felt requires an integration of the entirety of a person's capacity for consciousness.

This led Schiller, whose insight Jung acknowledges in his own *Psychological Types*, directly to the type problem. Schiller (in advance of Nietzsche) accepted that the idea that we call mind is not one thing, but is composed of many kinds of consciousness, and he knew that one or more of these consciousnesses could dominate an individual personality. Even though Jung acknowledges in *Psychological Types* that Schiller is his forerunner in developing such a theory, it is startling to realize, reading Bishop's fuller account, how differentiated Schiller's notion of type was before 1800. Here is Schiller writing to Goethe in 1794:

> Your mind works intuitively to an extraordinary degree, and all your thinking powers appear, as it were, to have come to an agreement with your imagination to be their common representative. In reality this is the most that a man can make of himself if only he succeeds in generalizing his perceptions and making his feelings his supreme law. This is what you have endeavored to do, and what in great measure you have already attained . . . My understanding works in a more symbolizing method and thus I hover between ideas and perceptions[6] (quoted by Bishop [2008], vol. 1, p. 86).

This reads like the kind of letter I exchange with fellow students of typology today, and I recognize in such a passage the *Urphänomen* of the kind of discourse we are trying to engage in. We learn again from Bishop that Schiller actually introduced the terms 'superior and inferior functions' (though he seems to have meant them somewhat differently from the way Jung used them in his typology and the way they are conceived today in type circles). Already in their time, Schiller and Goethe had a faculty psychology enabling them to identify within consciousness 'four different faculties—the senses and reason, the imagination and the understanding'. These faculties are essentially what Jung, in *Psychological Types*, calls the 'four functions of consciousness': sensation, feeling, intuition, and thinking.

Schiller seemed to be using his idea of superior/inferior as a moral judgment that the rational functions—the reason and the understanding—through which we exercise judgment are superior to the inferior functions—the senses and the imagination—through which we simply perceive.

In the second volume, *The Constellation of the Self*, we learn about the other key parts of analytical psychology that were anticipated by the Weimar poets, particularly those elaborated by Goethe, who outlived Schiller by twenty-seven years. Schiller had been able to write to Goethe in 1801 that 'unconsciousness

[6] Schmitz, L., tr. (1877-1879). *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe from 1794–1805*, tr. L. Schmitz, 2 vols. London: George Bell & Sons, 1877-1879, *I*, 12–13.

combined with reflection constitutes the poetic artist' (Bishop, p. 294, n.30). This is one of many statements the younger man made that suggested to Goethe the idea of totality, which as Bishop puts it 'haunts all of Schiller's aesthetic writings'. They assume 'the artist as the human individual who becomes whole' (p. 87). Goethe, however, anticipating Nietzsche, thought of the self that had to be integrated through the artist's creative process as a 'multiplicity' (p. 98). He wrote for instance, in an essay he published in his own journal, *On Morphology*, that 'each living thing is not unitary in nature but a plurality' and 'even insofar as it appears to us an individual, it remains a collection of independent living beings' (p. 98[7]). These plural selves needed to be integrated 'around a unified nodal point', a *Mittelpunkt* (here Bishop demonstrates that Goethe anticipates the very language Jung used in the second of his *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* to present his own notion of a central archetypal self with the power to unite all the other selves in the psyche, these other selves being nothing but part personalities that Jung had identified in his earlier writings as complexes, which according to Jung's empirical observations as a psychiatric researcher as well as psychotherapist lived split-off lives in the unconscious). In common with Jung, Goethe did not restrict integration to the unconscious; he felt that the 'four different faculties of consciousness'—the senses and reason, the imagination and the understanding (*Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft*, *Einbildungskraft und Verstand*)—could be coordinated into a single totality, 'a coherent whole' (*eine entschiedene Einheit*) (Bishop, p. 99[8]). It was through these very ideas that analytical psychology evolved its notion of what the individuating ego had to do to make sense of an unconscious peopled by autonomous complexes but centred in a self.

Goethe saw the need for a science that could apply equally to all natural processes, including those of the human soul, and he named his candidate for such a science *Morphologie*, which Bishop translates as 'morphology'. This was defined by Goethe, Bishop tells us, 'as including 'the principles of structured form, and the formation and transformation of organic bodies', and 'its "intention and method" were to see nature as in a process of "*Bildung*", – meaning 'shaping,' 'formation', in other contexts 'education'– to describe the end product *and* what is in the process of production as well'. Bishop instances Goethe's 'The Metamorphosis of Plants' (1790), in which 'he developed an understanding of the plant as a transformation of the leaf' (vol. 2, p. 53), which is quite close to Jung's notion of individuation, as well as a gloss on Jung's 1914 dream of the leaves that become grapes, another indication of how much

[7] Goethe, J.W. (1807). 'The Purpose Set Forth', in *Goethe's Collected Works*, vol.12, *Scientific Studies*, ed. & trans. D. Miller. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 63–7.

[8] Goethe, J. W. (1824). Review of E. A. Stiedenroth's *Psychology in Clarification of Phenomena from the Soul,* in *Goethe's Collected Works* (1983–1989), vol. 12, *Scientific Studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 45–6.

Jung's unconscious was resonating to Goethe's morphology at the time he was establishing the basic principles of his own analytical psychology.

This leads to the question of how the unconscious gets its ideas; clinical experience has taught me that it is not so much that a dreamer is consciously dwelling on a particular ideology and then dreams it, but rather that the unconscious picks up on ideas that are in the background of the dreamer's culture and foregrounds them, as if to suggest that just these ideas, above others the dreamer may be focusing on at a conscious level, might be important to what the dreamer is trying to put together. Among the concepts in Goethe's morphology that spoke to Jung in this way are polarity, intensification, and the *Urphänomen*. Polarity refers directly to the problem of opposites that continually shaped Jung's notion of unconscious process (he never seemed to warm to Freud's term 'conflict'). Bishop tells us that there is a fragmentary text titled 'Polarity' in which can be found

> a comprehensive list of the opposites in which Goethe is interested—subject(s) and object(s); light and dark; body and soul; the 'two souls' that live alas! in the breast of Faust, spirit and matter; God and world; thought and extension; ideal and real; sensuality and reason; fantasy and practical thought; being and yearning; the two halves of the body; right and left; breathing (in and out); and magnetism (positive and negative)' (vol. 2, p. 56)[9]

One could not find a better summary of the opposites with which analytical psychology has concerned itself.

Intensification (*Steigerung*) is very like Jung's concept of individuation, for it refers to the process by which an organism becomes more definitively itself in the course of development, through a dialectical process involving its own opposites. Goethe writes, in the unfinished text on Polarity that "whatever appears in the world must divide if it is to appear at all', but 'what has been divided seeks itself again, can return to itself and reunite', and the union may occur in a higher sense if what has been divided is first intensified . . . and then 'in the union of the intensified halves' it will produce 'a third thing, something new, higher, unexpected'' (vol. 2, p. 56).

Bishop tells us that, for Goethe, a 'tangible example of intensification was provided in the plant world by the leaf, the petal, and the fruit', so that 'the same organ fulfills nature's laws throughout, although with different functions and often under different guises'. The same process, moreover, 'manifests itself in the work of the scientist in the form of the process by which knowledge itself becomes creative'. [Goethe puts it,] 'As knowledge . . . undergoes intensification . . . it begins to demand intuitive perception . . . it turns into intuitive perception without our noticing', and so 'the intuitively perceptive have already reached a creative stage'. This understanding that intensification involves the

[9] Goethe, J. W. (1989). 'Polarity', in vol. 12, *Scientific Studies*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 155.

addition of a new faculty is very similar to the way individuation includes the coming into play of other functions of consciousness than the one we have typically been using.

The *Urphänomen*, or 'primordial phenomenon' is perhaps the most important of Goethe's anticipations of analytical psychology, which has developed the analogous concept of archetype. It is well known that Goethe went to Italy in search of the ur-plant that would be the model for all other plant generation. Bishop makes much clearer what Goethe was seeking in his *Ur-pflanze*, which was much more than an actual botanical entity and was instead the product of 'a specific mode of perception' in which (as one of Bishop's many wonderful sources says) 'the particular becomes symbolic of the universal'.[10] Here are Goethe's words, as transmitted by Bishop:

> It gradually became increasingly clear to me that perception . . . could be activated on a higher level . . . : a challenge that I had in mind as a sensuous form . . . of a supersensible primordial plant . . . . I examined all forms as I encountered them in their transformations, and thus on the last stage of my journey, in Sicily, I saw perfectly the *original identity* of all parts of the plant, and from then on I sought to pursue this identity everywhere and to become aware of it again (vol. 2, p. 62).[11]

Jung couldn't bring himself to accept the aesthetic terminology of the Weimar school. Bishop makes a great deal of the fact that what Jungian theory has described as 'archetypal' perception was for Goethe and Schiller essentially 'aesthetic' perception, of the kind every artist understands, and that the greatest artists have refined to become both their preferred mode of observation and the way they transmit their ideas to others.

Jung's suspicion of the aesthetic comes through in the way he describes 'Schiller's Ideas on the Type Problem', which analyses particularly Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*' and 'On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry'. Jung recognizes the brilliance of Schiller's ideas, but dismisses the aesthetic foundation for psychological education that the Weimar poet, in common with Goethe, had sought to create. 'Aestheticism', Jung writes,

> is not fitted to solve the exceedingly serious and difficult task of educating man, for it always presupposes the very thing it should create—the capacity to love beauty. It actually hinders a deeper investigation of the problem, because it always averts its face from anything evil, ugly, and difficult and aims at pleasure, even though it be of an edifying kind.[12]

Jung chose, in preference to the aesthetic, the religious attitude as the proper ground for analytical psychology. Bishop is able to show that this was in some

[10] Henri Bortoft (1996). *The Wholeness of Nature*. Edinburgh: Floris, p. 22.

[11] Goethe, J. W. (1817). 'The Author Relates the History of his Botanic Studies', in *On Morphology* (ed. Goethe), vol. 1.

[12] Jung, C. G. (1921/1971). *Psychological Types*, vol. 6 of the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, para. 194.

ways a most unfortunate choice, because of course it made the verification of the archetype a religious, rather than an aesthetic experience. Had he taken his cue from Goethe, Jung might have found, Bishop argues, a way of presenting the archetype that would have sounded less like the forbidding invocation of a sacred mystery requiring some form of Gnostic revelation to enter and more like *Bildung*, a process of development that artists have always understood. The archetypal could then have been recognized as constructed as well as revealed, and the instrument for approaching that task, the educated creative imagination, might not have had to take second place, within analytical psychology, to the amplification of numinous images through the way they appear when used as dogmatic symbols. Fortunately, Bishop's book restores the aesthetic context to the archetypal hypothesis and to many phenomena that the Weimar school explored in advance of analytical psychology that I won't have room to explore here—the role of the feminine in imagination, for instance. As a work of acculturation, this book, like a dream, like a work of art, and like a person's unique psychological typology coming to our offices for analysis, has to be perused and contemplated to be appreciated. It is a great addition to our literature, for it has the capacity to help those of us who are already steeped in Jungian thought change the way we hold familiar things and to make it possible for many more that have not been able to accept Jung's premises, to see them in a different cultural light.