THE UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING OF ARCHETYPAL
PATTERNS IN THE WRITINGS
OF ALICE WALKER

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

Linda S. Linn, B.A., M.Ed.
Denton, Texas
May, 1994
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Significant passages in Alice Walker's writings give evidence of archetypal patterns from Carl Jung and feminine archetypal patterns from Annis Pratt. Since a knowledge of archetypal patterns can influence the total understanding of aspects of Walker's writings, a study of these patterns in the undergraduate classroom benefits the student and opens up another system of analyzing writings, particularly writings by African-American women.

The information in this study is organized thematically with chapters including the background of archetypes, archetypal patterns from Jung in Walker's writings, feminine archetypal patterns from Pratt in Walker's writings, methods for teaching archetypes in the undergraduate classroom, a syllabus and outline for an undergraduate course on archetypes in Walker's writings, and conclusions, implications, and recommendations. A summary of archetypes with references to works by Walker where each archetype can be found and of the ostensive, intrinsic, and extrinsic approaches that can be used in teaching the archetypes in the undergraduate classroom is included in the appendix.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study presents an analysis of Alice Walker's writing with an emphasis on the connection of the writings with archetypal patterns, particularly feminine archetypes, as outlined by psychological writers and critics of the twentieth century such as Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and Annis Pratt. This study also presents methods of teaching these concepts in the undergraduate classroom. Because nothing has been written about this aspect of Walker's writings, providing organized information about the psychological aspects of her writings, identifying conscious and unconscious strains in her writings, and presenting methods for using these concepts all establish valuable research for the teaching of modern writings in the undergraduate classroom.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are (1) to identify significant passages and themes in the works of Alice Walker that give evidence of archetypal patterns and feminine archetypal patterns; (2) to describe the general characteristics of archetypal patterns and feminine archetypal patterns as they apply to the writings of Alice
Walker; (3) to analyze the effects of these archetypes on the overall structure and themes of Walker's writings; and (4) to present methods for including these purposes in the undergraduate classroom.

**Research Questions**

To achieve the purposes of this study, the following questions were formulated:

1. What is the background of archetypes?
2. What are the definitions for archetypes and archetypal patterns?
3. What are the usual designations of archetypes?
4. What are the characteristics of archetypes?
5. What writings by Walker have examples of archetypes?
6. How do archetypes influence the total understanding of Walker's writings?
7. How are archetypes typical of twentieth-century writings?
8. What impact, if any, does the philosophy behind archetypal patterns and feminine archetypal patterns have on Walker's writings?
9. How can these patterns be presented in the undergraduate teaching situation?
10. How will undergraduates benefit from learning about archetypal patterns, especially the feminine patterns, in the writings of Alice Walker?

**Background and Significance of the Study**

For years the study of the novel and the short story centered on plot, character, and theme. In the mid-nineteenth century, writers of realistic fiction began to examine the internal and psychological underpinnings of humanity. In the early twentieth century, psychologists and psychoanalysts such as Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud began to explore the concept that many human actions are based on patterns existing in the collective unconscious. Carl Jung, particularly in *Man and His Symbols*, explored patterns that influence humanity and are especially evident in literature. Erich Neumann, a Jungian theorist, used mythological connections such as the stories of Cupid and Psyche to explain and broaden literary characters. Literature of the twentieth century has been a fertile field of exploration for the archetypes of the unconscious.

In 1981, literary critic and feminist thinker Annis Pratt carried the masculine archetypes of Jung into a new direction by identifying and defining feminine archetypes found in women's literature in her *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*.

Much study has pursued the archetypal patterns and
especially feminine archetypes found in the writings of many white female writers, but no significant study has attempted to identify these archetypes in African-American women writers. Additionally, no study has attempted to incorporate methods for teaching archetypal patterns in the undergraduate classroom with the study of the African-American woman writer Alice Walker. This study unites these two purposes.

**Methodology**

By means of historical methods, this study delineates as much as possible the archetypal patterns and feminine archetypal patterns evident in the writing of Alice Walker.

The historical research for this study was accomplished by a systematic search of primary and secondary sources that provided or contained facts about the writing of Alice Walker and about the methods for teaching this information in the undergraduate classroom. According to Louis Gottschalk, "A primary source is the testimony of an eyewitness, or of a witness by any other of the senses or of a mechanical device . . . of who or that which was present at the events of which he or it tells. . . ."\(^{1}\) Selected primary sources include original writings, interviews, and classroom lectures.

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Gottschalk also defines a secondary source as "the testimony of anyone who is not an eyewitness--that is, one who was not present at the events of which he tells." Secondary sources for this study include books and articles by various individuals who have written about feminine archetypes, Alice Walker, or related subjects.

The facts and opinions in this study are organized and presented thematically.

\(^{2}\)Ibid.
CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF ARCHETYPES

Archetypes and archetypal patterns are terms that have somewhat different meanings when used in the classical sense; however, the distinction between the two terms is ambiguous, and the terms are used interchangeably in this study. For archetypes to be adequately studied in the undergraduate classroom, a knowledge of the background of the terms archetypes and archetypal pattern must be investigated. The term **archetype** comes from Carl Jung's psychological studies of the unconscious that he developed in his break with the psychological patterns of Sigmund Freud. Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht, feminist and archetypal critics, see archetypes as having real explanatory power.

Presumably the concept [of archetypes] survives because of our sense that it refers to something real in our experience—whether we describe that reality as a seemingly infinite variety of related forms, as images that are "unfathomable" and "necessary." The concept survives in these forms because it has real explanatory power.\(^1\)

According to Eric Gould, archetypal critic, the archetype contains not a fixed reality but a propositional statement

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that experiments with the literal. He writes that "the 
archetype is subjective in that it depends on interpretation 
for its very existence." 2 Psychologist and critic James 
Hall adds that no fixed number of archetypes exists since 
any recurrent human experience can be archetypally 
represented. Hall further suggests that a more correct term 
would be archetypal fields. "Archetypes are not inherited 
images; they are part of the tendency to structure 
experience in certain ways." 3

Connecting Archetypes and the Feminist Writer

Over the years, other psychologists and critics, such 
as Erich Neumann and Toni Wolff, have added to the knowledge 
about archetypes. However, not until relatively modern 
times has the archetype and archetypal pattern debate taken 
on significance for the feminist writer. Freud and Jung 
assumed that their ideas were for men and were either the 
same or could be adapted for women. Feminist writers and 
critics like Annis Pratt, Estella Lauter, Carol Schreier 
Rupprecht, Sylvia Brinton Perera and others have explored 
new meanings for archetypes as they apply to women. Pratt 
writes that "women's fiction reflects an experience

2 Eric Gould, Mythic Intentions in Modern Literature 

3 James Hall, Clinical Uses of Dreams: Jungian 
Interpretations and Enactments (New York: Grune and Stratton, 
1977), 116.
radically different from men's because [women's] drive towards growth as persons is thwarted by our society's prescriptions concerning gender." Pratt observes that, according to the patriarchal society, "a woman aspiring to selfhood is by definition selfish, deviating from norms of subservience to the dominant gender." In other words, under our western patriarchal system the unmarried girl belongs to her father and the married woman belongs to her husband. This tension between submission and rebellion is characterized best in the Greek myth of Apollo and Daphne. Daphne, unwilling to submit to Apollo's advances, turns herself into a tree. Pratt writes,

Tension between what Apollo intends and what Daphne is willing to accept--between forces demanding our submissions and our rebellious assertions of personhood--characterize far too much of [women's] fiction to be incidental.

Pratt has been instrumental in offering a warning to feminist writers studying the archetypal patterns. She believes that any evolving discipline must not become stuck in any one theoretical perspective or methodology. She uses her warning when she redraws the maps provided by Jung, an archetypal psychologist; Northrop Frye, a literary critic;

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5Ibid.
6Ibid., 9.
7Ibid., 6.
and Claude Lévi-Strauss, an anthropologist; all in limited ways can serve as models for feminist archetypal theory. Pratt "not only demonstrates multiple 'ownership' of the concept of the archetype, but shows how feminists can 'spin among fields,' gathering ideas from several disciplines, as they develop new theories."

Emphasizing the pragmatic approach to archetypal patterns, Pratt reiterates the following:

[Archetypal patterns] represent categories of particulars, which can be described in their interrelationships within a given text or within a larger body of literature. A dogmatic insistence upon preordained, invariable sets of archetypal patterns would distort literary analysis: one must not deduce categories down into a body of material but induce them from images, symbols, and narrative patterns observed in a significantly various selection of literary works."

Defining Archetypes and Archetypal Patterns

In order to write about archetypes and archetypal patterns, researchers must come to a definition that suits most situations. Holman and Harmon's A Handbook to Literature gives the following definition and explanation:

[Archetypes] is a term brought into literary criticism from the psychology of Carl Jung, who holds that behind each individual's "unconscious"--the blocked-off residue of the past--lies the "collective unconscious" of the human race. . . . The literary critic applies the term to an image, a descriptive detail, a plot pattern, or a character type that occurs frequently in

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8 Lauter and Rupprecht, 18-19.
9 Pratt, 6.
literature, myth, religion, or folklore and is, therefore, believed to evoke profound emotions because it touches the unconscious memory and thus calls into play illogical but strong responses.\textsuperscript{10}

Jung's definition of archetypes is as follows:

The concept of the archetype . . . is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairy tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. . . . They impress, influence, and fascinate us. They have their origin in the archetype, which in itself is an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time.\textsuperscript{11}

Archetypal theorist James Hillman gives this definition:

All rich images, that is, fecund, generative images that merit our repeated attention, are archetypal. [We] make them archetypal as [we] extend and value them in our image-making work.\textsuperscript{12}

Erich Neumann, close associate of Jung, gives yet another definition:

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are intrinsically formless psychic structures which become visible in art. The archetypes are varied by the media through which they pass—that is, their form changes according to the time, the place, and the psychological constellation of the individual in whom they are manifested. Thus, for


example, the mother archetype, as a dynamic entity in the psychic always retains its identity, but it takes on different styles—different aspects or emotional color—depending on whether it is manifested in Egypt, Mexico or Spain, or in ancient, medieval, or modern times.  

Pratt adds to this idea of retaining identity yet changing styles:

The presentation of an archetype in subsequent tellings depends upon the cultural bias of the storyteller and varies with the teller's role in her or his culture. A medieval Christian would make Apollo an embodiment of sin and canonize Daphne for purity or, conversely, blame her for tempting him to his downfall. Norman Mailer would be more likely to color the scene with Achaean heroics, cheering Apollo on and hinting that Daphne should relax and enjoy his assault. Doris Lessing, on the other hand, would be more interested in Daphne's state of mind and more likely to savage Apollo for his crassness. This tendency of archetypes to vary in interpretation from culture to culture and author to author makes the archetypal critic's task complex.

Lauter and Rupprecht conclude from these definitions as follows: "We call something archetypal when we believe that it is basic, necessary, universal . . . without reducing what is interpreted either to the (merely) personal or the symbolic."  

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14Pratt, 5.

15Lauter and Rupprecht, 10.
Altering the Archetypes for Women's Fiction

Beginning with Jung, Pratt shows how his descriptions of the archetypal rebirth journey must be altered in order to serve as a guidepost to similar journeys in women's fiction. Pratt finds that the feminist's task is to disentangle feminine archetypes from the masculine warp of culture. In her Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction, she argues for the following:

French feminist theoreticians are fond of a process they term "volant," usurping elements of masculine theory useful to them while discarding the biases, and [we] find it useful to imitate them.

The proposed concept of the archetype requires consideration of the experiential context in which the image occurs. In other words, image and behavior are inextricably linked. Nancy Chodorow has proposed, for example, that girls develop less firm ego boundaries than do boys because of their differing early experiences of being mothered and because of their continuing experiences of the permeable boundaries of their bodies in menstruation, intercourse, pregnancy, and lactation. Lauter and Rupprecht argue that "the archetype becomes a feminist tool for re-examining and

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16Ibid., 18-19.
17Pratt, 7.
re-evaluating patterns in women's experiences as they are revealed in psychotherapy, studies of the arts, myths, dreams, religion, sociology, and other disciplines as well."^19

Several feminist researchers have begun criticizing Jung and his followers in their treatment of the archetypal theory as it pertains to women. Lauter criticizes the Jungian description of gender-linked archetypes. If they exist, then they ought to correspond with the patterns of images found in works of visual art by women created outside the clinical setting.^20 Lauter has studied archetypes in visual art by women and while her studies by her own admission need to be tested against other female sources, she believes that "the concept of the archetype could be, in the hands of feminists, a way of recovering and revaluing women's experiences, of discovering nodal points in women's history."^21 Lauter's studies found the following:

Only the archetype of the mother proved sound.
. . . [The] other archetypes Jungians have posited as central to human development--the persona, the shadow, the Self, the wise old woman, and so on--deserve our scrutiny.^22

^19 Lauter and Rupprecht, Archetypal Theory, 16.


^21 Ibid., 81.

^22 Ibid.
Lauter and Rupprecht "regard the patterns in works by women as important regardless of their degree of closeness to or distance from patterns created by men." As editors of *Feminist Archetypal Theory*, Lauter and Rupprecht feel that they and the other feminist writers who contribute to archetypal studies represent the first steps toward the formation of a coherent yet flexible framework for a feminist archetypal theory and a post-Jungian approach to the female psyche. Pratt has warned extensively of the need for a scholarly approach to the feminist archetypal theory:

> If we go without an adequate theory to the documents of experience prepared by or gleaned from women, we will repeat the errors of oversight, underestimation, exclusion, projection, and devaluation made by our (mostly male) predecessors, or we will fall into new errors of exaggeration, distortion, and overestimation.

With definitions and scholarly groundwork in place, now a search must begin for the terms and meanings as they affect women writers—Alice Walker in particular—and for ways to present these ideas in the undergraduate classroom.

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23 Lauter and Rupprecht, 15.
24 Ibid., 22.
25 Ibid., 16.
CHAPTER III
ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS FROM JUNG
IN WALKER'S WRITINGS

A study of Alice Walker's writings and the archetypal patterns they follow and the presentation of this information in the undergraduate classroom require that the terminology permeating archetypal discussions be identified. Archetypal patterns, although connected, are discussed in this study from two perspectives: Jung's terms, and occasionally Freud's terms, for archetypal patterns in general and Annis Pratt's terms for feminine archetypal patterns in particular. Although these two approaches have overlapping definitions and uses, a need exists for differentiating among the terms.

In her study of archetypal patterns in Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook, Lorelei Cederstrom makes several points that come from both Freud and Jung.

The archetypal rite of passage occurs when the hero undergoes a process of psychological development that begins with the breakdown of her defenses against certain frightening realizations. A dangerous vulnerability of ego is evident in the fragmentation of her conscious personality, in her difficulties in maintaining a persona, or social
façade, and in the irruption of archetypal elements of the unconscious into her ordinary life.\(^1\)

Therefore, a joint understanding of both Freudian and Jungian terms must be discussed. Since Jung more often uses ideas that apply to literature, these terms are more often used in the classroom rather than in clinical studies which more often used Freud's terms. However, the terms often overlap, and a definitive separation is impossible. In this part of this study, Jung's terms and definitions will be used frequently.

**Understanding Jung's Process of Individuation**

Jung's process of individuation is a pattern of psychological transformation in which a person is forced to confront all the personal and collective demons that he or she has in the past held at bay.\(^2\) Jung believes that archetypal patterns are a projection of the collective unconscious in which each represents qualities the hero does not wish to acknowledge as part of himself or herself; thus, often these qualities are embodied in dreams or personified in others.\(^3\) According to Jung, the archetypes that the hero

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid., 51.
struggles with the most are the animus, the anima, and the shadow.

Struggling with the Animus and the Anima

The parts of the psyche that the self must struggle with most frequently are the animus and/or the anima. According to Jung, the animus is the male personification of the unconscious in the woman. The animus is basically shaped by the woman's father, who endows his daughter's animus with the special coloring of unarguable, incontestably "true" convictions that never include the personal reality of the woman as she actually is.\(^4\) When the animus takes the form of the hidden "sacred" conviction that is often preached with a loud insistent masculine voice or imposed on others by means of brutal emotional scenes, the underlying masculinity in a woman is easily recognized.\(^5\) The woman may be outwardly feminine, but the animus may make a woman suddenly obstinate, cold, and completely inaccessible.\(^6\) In some instances the animus may lure women away from all human relationships and especially from all contacts with real men. In other words, the animus "personifies a cocoon of dreamy thoughts filled with desire and judgments about how


\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Ibid.
things 'ought to be' which cut a woman off from the reality of life." The negative side of the animus can be seen in the following:

[The animus] personifies all those semiconscious, cold, destructive reflections that invade a woman in the small hours, especially when she has failed to realize some obligation of feeling. . . . She then begins to think about the family heritage and matters of that kind—a sort of web of calculating thoughts—filled with malice and intrigue which get her into a state where she even wishes death to others.8

Walker reveals the negative side of Evelyn-Tashi's animus in Possessing the Secret of Joy when she allows Tashi to say the following about M'Lissa, the tsunga who is responsible for Tashi's sister's death and for Tashi's painful genital mutilation in adulthood:

What, other than her lying life, did I want from M'Lissa? I worried this question incessantly, as only the insane can. Each night I fingered the razors I kept concealed in the stuffing of my pillow, fantasizing her bloody demise. I swore I would mutilate her wrinkled body so much her own God wouldn't recognize her. I smiled to think of her nose lying bloody on the bed.9

The parallel form of the animus in a woman can be very good; however, the woman must give the animus conscious attention, which may entail time and suffering. When and if a woman realizes who and what her animus is and what it does

7Ibid., 191.
8Ibid., 191.
for her, she can then face these realities rather than be possessed by them. Her animus can turn into an invaluable inner companion which endows her with masculine qualities of initiative, courage, objectivity, and spiritual wisdom.¹⁰

In The Color Purple, Walker presents such a woman for Celie's animus in the character of Shug, a woman whom both Celie and Mr. _____ (Albert), her husband, love.

Mr. _____ ast me the other day what it is I love so much bout Shug. He say he love her style. . . . Shug act more manly than most men. I mean she upright, honest. Speak her mind and the devil take the hindmost, he say. You know Shug will fight, he say. Just like Sofia. She bound to live her life and be herself no matter what. . . . Sofia and Shug not like men, he say, but they not like women either.¹¹

Shug's self-possession and action as Celie's animus later cause Celie to become self-possessed and active herself. In the end, Celie has a successful business, admiration from her friends, and love from Albert.

Mr. _____ is busy patterning a shirt for folks to wear with my pants. . . . And just when I know I can live content without Shug . . . Shug write me she coming home. . . . If she come, I be happy. If she don't, I be content.¹²

However, even with the few positive possibilities of the animus, many feminists continue to criticize this archetype. Naomi Goldenberg, a feminist critic, has written

¹⁰Jung, 194.

¹¹Ibid., 247.

that "Jung introduced 'animus' as the contrasexual element, the masculine element of the female psyche, in accord with his tendency to see the world as organized into opposites."\(^{13}\) Goldenberg feels that this tendency reinforces the patriarchal society. She voices the concern that, instead of being "explanations of reality experienced by females, archetypes of the feminine [especially the animus] have become categories to contain women."\(^{14}\) For example, if a woman behaves in what society deems a masculine way, her animus has caused her to lose her femininity and her respect for males. In order to avoid chastisement, women often are contained in society's narrow view of femininity.

The anima is another inner figure, the personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, or a "man's soul." Jung believes that as a general rule, the anima is shaped by a man's mother. If a man feels that his mother has had a negative influence on him, his anima often expresses itself in irritable, depressed moods, uncertainty, insecurity, and touchiness. Jung continues with the idea that the negative mother-anima figure endlessly causes the son to repeat this theme: "I am nothing. Nothing makes any sense. With others, it's


\(^{14}\) Ibid.
different, but with me . . . I enjoy nothing."\textsuperscript{15}

The "anima" mood can lure a man to suicide or to behave in a reckless, unrealistic way. In literature, as in real life, the anima that is projected on a woman is often called a "femme fatale," an unreal dream of love, happiness, and maternal warmth that lures a man away from reality and into a "wishful" fantasy that cannot be fulfilled and may—and usually does—lead to death.\textsuperscript{16} Again, Jung makes a case for the negative influence of women, an idea that angers feminist critics and makes them condemn Jung's ideas.

Walker presents such an anima in a male figure in The Temple of My Familiar. Arvedya, a musician who loves and marries Carlotta, finds himself being lured into reckless actions by his attraction to Zedé, his mother-in-law.

"I love you though," he said. "Not like a grandmother . . . maybe a little like a mother." He apologized with his smile, which was in his voice. His face was still turned away from her. "No," he said, "like a woman. Zedé, I love Carlotta; don't worry. I also love you."\textsuperscript{17}

The first attraction between these two does not stop.

Finally Carlotta discovers and confronts Arveyda.

When she confronted a weary Arveyda, too listless now to think of creating new work and looking about, Carlotta suspected, for drugs, he said

\textsuperscript{15}Walker, The Color Purple, 247.

\textsuperscript{16}Jung, 178-79.

\textsuperscript{17}Alice Walker, The Temple of My Familiar (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 22.
only: "The Greeks would know how to handle this. I don't. Zedé and I are guilty of falling in love." 18

Carlotta, not wanting to give up her marriage and children, thinks that they could manage to get around this situation if Arveyda and her mother have never made love. When she asks him, he says, "We made love once. . . . We have no intention of doing it again." 19 However, even when Zedé comes to ask for forgiveness, Carlotta knows that nothing can repair the damage that has been done. Arveyda has destroyed their relationship with a fanciful, artistic view of love. Not until Zedé returns to Central America and leaves Arveyda does Arveyda's destructive tendencies wane, and he then learns to overcome the negative assaults on himself by his anima. However, if a man can overcome the anima's negative assaults, these characteristics can even serve to reinforce his masculinity. 20

On the other hand, if a man's experience with his mother is positive, he may still have a negative experience if he becomes either effeminate or is preyed upon by women and thus unable to cope with the hardships of life. 21 This man may nurse fantasies by looking at films or strip-tease,

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18 Ibid., 26.
19 Ibid., 27.
20 Jung, 178.
21 Ibid., 179.
or by day-dreaming over pornographic material. Walker uses this idea in one of her short stories. "Porn" presents the two sides of sexual fantasy that men and women experience. Since the main masculine character's collection of pornography serves as a way of arousal for him, he shares his collection of pornography with her, his female companion, hoping she will have as sensational fantasies as he does when they make love. Instead, after viewing the pornography, something strange happens. Walker first presents the woman's view:

Now, when he makes love to her, she tries to fit herself into the white-woman, two-black-men story. But who will she be? The men look like her brother, Bobo and Charlie. She is disgusted, and worse, bored, by Bobo and Charlie. The white woman is like the young girl who, according to the Times, was seduced off a farm in Minnesota by a black pimp and turned out on 42nd Street. She cannot stop herself from thinking: Poor. Ignorant: Sleazy: Depressing. This does not excite or stimulate.\(^{22}\)

While Walker presents the woman's view of pornography, she tries to create the man's simultaneous view.

He watches her face as he makes expert love to her. He knows his technique is virtually flawless, but he thinks perhaps it can be improved. Is she moving less rhythmically under him? Does she seem distracted? There seems to be a separate activity in her body, to which she is attentive, and which is not connected to the current he is sending through his fingertips... He thinks frantically of what she might be thinking of him... He bites the pillow over her head: Where is she? he thinks.

Is she into fantasy or not? He must be. Walker concludes her comparison of a man's and a woman's thoughts and actions during sexual intercourse with the following:

Besides, she is involved in the activity inside herself and holding him—nostalgically. He feels himself sliding down the wall that is her body, and expelled from inside her. This crude, primitive aspect of the anima becomes compulsive only when a man does not sufficiently cultivate his feeling relationships—when his feeling attitude toward life has remained infantile. According to the scenario created by Walker, the man's dependence on pornography is infantile, and it substitutes for the reality of the moment.

Not only does the anima have these negative aspects, the anima also has some positive points. The anima is responsible for the man's being able to find the right marriage partner. Jung writes, "When a man's logical mind is incapable of discerning facts that are hidden in his unconscious—the anima helps him to find them out."

Sometimes these relationships are not the standard ones that society wishes to establish. Again, an examination of one of Walker's novels, The Temple of My Familiar, provides an

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23Ibid.

24Ibid., 84.

25Jung, 180.

26Ibid.
example of the intuitive guidance that the anima can give.

[Suwelo] knew that his uncle Rafe had loved Miss Lissie and loved also his friend, and hers, her soul mate and sometime husband, Mr. Hal. He knew they had lived together more or less harmoniously for many years and had remained friends until Uncle Rafe's death. . . . [Uncle Rafe and Mr. Hal and Miss Lissie] were all three of them rare people, Suwelo thought, for they had connected directly with life and not with its reflection; the mysteries they found themselves involved in, simply by being alive and knowing each other, carried them much deeper into reality than "society" often permits people to get. They had found themselves born into a fabulous, mysterious universe, filled with fabulous, mysterious others; they had never been distracted from the wonder of this gift. They had made the most of it. 27

Even though society would not approve of the triangle of love that Uncle Rafe, Mr. Hal, and Miss Lissie had created, their inner being had led them to be together, and they had successfully managed to live a full and rewarding life by their standards and not by society's.

Walker presents another example of this inner guidance in her novel Possessing the Secret of Joy. After Evelyn-Tashi has herself circumcised as an adult as a way to show her unity with the African and Olinka culture, she gradually grows insane. Finally, she goes to a psychiatrist who has earlier worked with anthropologists among African tribes. His niece, Lisette, has long been a comfort and strength to Adam, Evelyn-Tashi's husband, as Evelyn-Tashi descends into insanity. Later, Pierre, the son of Adam and Lisette, becomes the instrument that helps Evelyn-Tashi achieve peace

with her life and her actions. In a final letter to Lisette, Evelyn-Tashi, now accepting and coping with the trauma she has caused in her life and in the lives of her loved ones, reveals the following:

Pierre has been such a gift to me. You would be proud of him. He has promised to continue to look after Benny when I am gone. . . . I wish you could see Pierre--and perhaps you can, through one of the windows of heaven--as he continues to untangle the threads of mystery that kept me enmeshed.26

Evelyn-Tashi comes to realize why she has been driven insane and comes to grips with what has caused her insanity and the insanity of millions of other circumcised women. She continues her letter to Lisette: "Chère Madame, [Pierre] says, do you realize that the greatest curse in some African countries is . . . 'son of an uncircumcised mother'?"29 Then she relates the liberating idea, learned from Pierre, that in ancient times women were not circumcised.

Well, he says, it is a clue to something important! . . . . [What] is less noted about these people, these women, is that in their ancient societies, they owned their bodies, including their vulvas. . . .30

Evelyn-Tashi finds strength for herself and the ordeal of death she faces in the promise that Pierre makes.

On the day of my execution, he says, he will


29Ibid.

30Ibid., 276.
rededicate himself to his life's work: destroying for other women—and their men—the terrors of the dark tower. A tower you told him about.\textsuperscript{31}

Adam, Evelyn-Tashi's husband, at times seems lost in the events swirling around him; however, Walker presents the anima as the guide that leads Adam to relationships with Lisette, and, in turn, allows their son Pierre to guide Evelyn-Tashi to an understanding of her life and her actions.

The proper role for the anima is as a guide or mediator to the world within and to the self. If a man follows this purpose, he will experience a higher, more spiritual form of life, which he often fixes in some form such as writing, painting, sculpting, making music, or dancing.\textsuperscript{32} Pierre provides this role in Possessing the Secret of Joy as he reaches a higher, more spiritual form of life through his research and writings.

\textbf{Facing the Shadow}

According to Jung, in addition to facing the anima or animus, a person must also struggle with the shadow. Although the shadow is not the whole of the unconscious personality, it represents unknown or little-known attributes and qualities of the ego—aspects that belong

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Jung, 186.}
mostly to the personal sphere and that could just as well be conscious.\textsuperscript{33} In dreams and myths the shadow appears as a person of the same sex as that of the dreamer.\textsuperscript{34} The shadow can be said to have two aspects: one dangerous and the other valuable.\textsuperscript{35}

There is a disadvantage in projecting the shadow. People, in general, do things behind their own backs constantly, though involuntarily, to support the opposing side. They unwittingly help their own enemies.\textsuperscript{36}

With the shadow, attempts to understand the hints of the unconscious fail. In such difficulty, one can only have the courage to do what seems to be right. For example, in Walker's \textit{Possessing the Secret of Joy}, her main character, Evelyn-Tashi, finally finds the courage to do what she thinks is right, even though this right will be the murder of the old woman M'lissa. Evelyn-Tashi knows she can come to terms with herself only through stopping the old woman with a great act of defiance. Jung says that sometimes it is "better to resist the urge of the unconscious, even at the price of feeling warped by doing so, rather than depart

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{33}] Ibid., 168.
\item[\textsuperscript{34}] Ibid., 169.
\item[\textsuperscript{35}] Ibid., 175.
\item[\textsuperscript{36}] Ibid., 173.
\end{itemize}
too far from the state of being human."\textsuperscript{37} Evelyn-Tashi has to live out a criminal act in order to be completely herself and, of course, in doing so, destroys herself.

The shadow represents the hidden side of one's personality that is projected onto a person of the same sex. The shadow may reappear several times but presents a slightly different emphasis each time it occurs.\textsuperscript{38} The shadow can be seen in a person of the same sex, but it can usually be less annoying in this form and can more easily be pardoned. Jung expresses this idea in the following:

When an individual makes an attempt to see his [or her] shadow, he [or she] becomes aware of (and often ashamed of) those qualities and impulses he [or she] denies in himself [or herself] but can plainly see in other people—such things as egotism, mental laziness, and sloppiness; unreal fantasies, schemes, and plots, carelessness and cowardice; inordinate love of money and possessions—in short, all the little sins about which he [or she] might previously have told himself [or herself]: "That doesn't matter; nobody will notice it, and in any case other people do it too."\textsuperscript{39}

Originally Evelyn-Tashi in \textit{Possessing the Secret of Joy} hates Lisette, Adam's lover, because Lisette represents all the qualities Evelyn-Tashi has destroyed in herself with her adult circumcision. Later Evelyn-Tashi will seek Lisette's forgiveness, as she comes to realize the role Lisette played

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 176.

\textsuperscript{38}Cederstrom, 52.

\textsuperscript{39}Jung, 168.
in Evelyn-Tashi's mental and emotional healing.

The shadow often reveals an inability to confront the painful conflict between sexual needs and the demands of motherhood.\textsuperscript{40} This conflict is shown in two of Walker's novels. In \textit{Meridian} the main character must face the rigors of caring for a child.

It took everything she had to tend to the child, and she had to do it, her body prompted not by her own desires, but by her son's cries. So this, she mumbled, lurching toward his crib in the middle of the night, is what slavery is like. Rebelling, she began to dream each night, just before her baby sent out his cries, of ways to murder him.\textsuperscript{41}

In \textit{The Temple of My Familiar}, Walker presents this conflict, only this time the male becomes the child care giver because of the ambivalence of Lissie, the mother. Mr. Hal says,

\begin{quote}
All the passion I'd had for her mother went into my love of Lulu, and from a little teeny baby she could wrap me around her finger. . . . [Lissie] didn't seem to be present for the child. Always off somewhere roaming through the ages. . . . [And] I eventually understood that God had managed, with photography, to show Lissie she was right to think she was as many women as she thought she was. It was a big load off her mind to know she wasn't crazy.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

Through their shadows, \textit{Meridian} and Miss Lissie come to understand those qualities that have led them into dependent

\textsuperscript{40}Cederstrom, 52.


\textsuperscript{42}Walker, \textit{The Temple of My Familiar}, 114.
relationships, and they learn to express their sexual needs instead of continuing to allow their needs to be defined by the men around them. Meridian finally casts off the family that she had had when she was too young to know better. "When she gave him away she did so with a light heart. She did not look back, believing she had saved a small person's life."43 She then sets out to make herself whole. Miss Lissie flaunts society as she lives her life with the two men she loves and with the familiars that she feels represent her past lives. When Suwelo receives paintings from Mr. Hal and Miss Lissie, he comes to realize how at one the two were.

Wonderingly, Suwelo turned the paintings over, as if that infinite space might have leaked through to the other side. What he saw made him smile and hug the paintings to his heart, as the train shot through a long gray tunnel into an even blacker dark. On the back of Lissie Lyles's self-portrait were the words, in emerald lettering, "Painted by Hal Jenkins." On Hal's self-portrait, in bright red, were the words "Painted by Lissie Lyles."44

When the shadow projects a positive image, this image is called the alter ego. Often the person doing the projecting does not know that she also possesses the qualities that she sees only in others or in a particular other. In The Color Purple, Shug becomes Celie's alter ego.

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43 Walker, Meridian, 90-91.

talent, and sass that Celie admires and does not know she can possess herself. Eventually Shug shows Celie how to be what she wants to be and how not to fear what men might want her to be.

Still, it like Shug say, You have to git man off your eyeball, before you can see anything a'tall. Man corrupt everything, say Shug. . . . He try to make you think he everywhere. Soon as you think he everywhere, you think he God. But he ain't. Wherever you trying to pray, and man plop himself on the other end of it, tell him to git lost, say Shug. Conjure up flowers, wind, water, a big rock.45

Celie finds the first steps toward liberation very difficult, but eventually she is able to throw off the domination that has tied her down.

But this hard work, let me tell you. He been there so long, he don't want to budge. . . . Every time I conjure up a rock, I throw it.46

Another important part of the shadow is the dwarf, which touches on the deepest and most serious level of the shadow. The complacency of the ego just before confrontation with the shadow is shattered when the shadow reveals the evil of its dark face, or the dwarf, as a mirror reflection of the known face, and this evil is recognized as part of one's personality.47 Walker uses this archetype in Possessing the Secret of Joy. Evelyn-Tashi confronts the

45Walker, The Color Purple, 179.
46Ibid.
47Cederstrom, 55.
I told [Olivia] I did not kill the tsunga M'Lissa. I killed her all right. I placed a pillow over her face and lay across it for an hour... She had told me it was traditional for a well-appreciated tsunga to be murdered by someone she circumcised, then burned. I carried out what was expected of me.\textsuperscript{48}

Meridian faced and killed her mother in a different way.

Still, it is death not to love one's mother. Or so it seemed to Meridian, and so, understanding her mother as a willing know-nothing, a woman of ignorance and--in her ignorance--of cruelty, she loved her more than anything... Her mother's love was gone, withdrawn, and there were conditions to be met before it would be returned. Conditions Meridian was never able to meet.\textsuperscript{49}

The ego is the part of the personality that protects and adapts to the outer world such feelings as difference, uniqueness, loneliness, imperfections of world, evil within oneself, and evil in the world. The ego must cope with the urgent, but not yet understood, inner impulses as well as the demands of the outer world.\textsuperscript{50} In both of these cases, the ego protected Evelyn-Tashi and meridian and allowed them to face the demands of the world and attempt the quest for a fulfilling existence.

\textbf{Attempting the Quest, or the Rite of Passage}

The quest, or rite of passage, occurs when the

\textsuperscript{48}Walker, Possessing the Secret of Joy, 274.

\textsuperscript{49}Walker, Meridian, 30.

\textsuperscript{50}Jung, 165-66.
protagonist undergoes a process of psychological development that begins with the breakdown of her defenses against certain frightening realizations. All of the steps discussed so far are steps on this journey of unifying all of the parts of the self. Sometimes an analyst must take part in the unifying process to tap into the creativity and worth that a person has denied having within. Evelyn-Tashi in Possessing the Secret of Joy consults a Jungian analyst in Zurich, whom she calls The Old Man. As he taps into her unconscious, he frees a frenzy of creativity as Evelyn-Tashi creates a monstrous painting of a cock that she calls "The Beast."

And then one day, into the corner of my painting, there appeared, I drew, a foot. Sweating and shivering as I did so. Because I suddenly realized there was something, some small thing the foot was holding between its toes. It was for this small thing that the giant cock waited, crowing impatiently, extending its neck, ruffling its feathers, and strutting about.

Now Evelyn-Tashi faces the truth that the foot belongs to M'Lissa and that what she carries between her toes is the skin from the female circumcision of Dura, Evelyn-Tashi's sister. Because Dura died in this procedure, Evelyn-Tashi's mother had kept Evelyn-Tashi from being circumcised. When she returned to do it as an adult as a way of showing solidarity with the Olinka, Evelyn-Tashi finds her psyche

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51 Cederstrom, 50.

52 Walker, Possessing the Secret of Joy, 71.
crushed and has to experience a rebuilding of self. Of course, by the time she realizes and reconciles the parts of her self, she has been convicted of murdering M'Lissa and must die physically. However, the creativity she experiences as she faces her ego and unites the parts of her self provides the truth she needs to continue her quest for individuation.

Sometimes the unifying of one's personality requires magic or a talisman. In myths, the magic or talisman can cure the misfortune of the king or his country, or it can possess the secret to drive the evil away. Jessie L. Weston writes that the misfortune comes from the myths and accounts surrounding the Grail legend:

[The] wound of the King was a punishment for sin; he had conceived a passion for a Pagan princess.

... [His] strength and vitality [were] restored... by the appointed Healer.53

Whatever the need, the magic or talisman is always unique and hard to find.54 In another part of Weston's study, she explains in mythological and ritualistic terms what Jung and others explain in literary terms:

The enchantment [of the Perilous Chapel] can only be put an end to if a valiant knight will fight the Black Hand, and taking a veil kept in the Chapel, will dip it in holy water, and sprinkle


54Jung, 167.
the walls, after which the enchantment will cease.\textsuperscript{55}

In literary situations, the individual must face both the darkness (crisis) and bitter personal truths. The magic or talisman then lifts the darkness.\textsuperscript{56} Evelyn-Tashi learns the truth about female circumcision from Pierre's studies. Female circumcision or, in actuality, female genital mutilation is meant as a way of controlling women. As Evelyn-Tashi is escorted to her death, the magic is revealed.

The women along the way have been warned they must not sing. Rockjawed men with machine guns stand facing them. But women will be women. Each woman standing beside the path holds a red-beribboned, closely swaddled baby in her arms, and as I pass, the bottom wrappings fall. . . . It is a protest and celebration the men threatening them do not even recognize. . . . Mbati is unfurling a banner, quickly, before the soldiers can stop her. . . . \textsc{Resistance is the Secret of Joy!} There is a roar as if the world cracked open and I flew inside. I am no more. And satisfied.\textsuperscript{57}

The magic of resistance came too late to save Evelyn-Tashi's life, but it comes as a legacy for the future women who might be spared the trauma of genital mutilation. It helps to lift the evil that haunted the Olinka and Evelyn-Tashi. Carol S. Pearson, a psychologist and critic, believes that each person becomes his or her own magician.

\textsuperscript{55}Weston, 177.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57}Walker, \textit{Possessing the Secret of Joy}, 278-79.
when the person realizes that he or she is not life's victim.

This means, however, giving up the illusion that we can force life to fit our scripts, that we can shape up other people to match our idea of the perfect mate or friend or employee, or even that we can make ourselves fit our own images of what we should be. For Magicians... life is an adventure of discovery. But Magicians take responsibility for the world they make, even inadvertently, blindly, by simply living their lives.  

That is exactly what is seen in the way that Evelyn-Tashi faces the situation she has created for herself; however, she now feels that even through her death she is helping someone else live.

**Achieving a Unified Self**

The development of a unified psyche through the creation of a link between one's conscious life—the world of the ego and the persona—and the darker shadows of the unconscious has as its goal to develop an "archetypal self." Women may fight both a personal and a political battle in a search for wholeness. Through great effort of will and divisions of herself into modes of perception, a woman attempts to shore herself up against the immanent flooding of her conscious personality by that which she most

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59 Cederstrom, 50.
fears—chaos and an anarchic will to destruction.\textsuperscript{60} In developing the self, the woman must confront and assimilate positions within the psyche so that the self becomes a bridge between the conscious world with its social imperatives and the deepest needs of the unconscious.\textsuperscript{61} Maud Bodkin, one of the earliest critics to apply archetypes to literature, states the following:

> It is especially at times when barriers of personal repression are removed and images of "cosmic" character are arising freely, that the fantasy figure may appear of some great prophet or hero who tends to assume control of the personality. If the conscious or practical personality is poorly developed there is the greater likelihood that it will be overwhelmed when such powerful images rise from the unconscious.\textsuperscript{62}

However, if the self is strong enough, "such fantasy can become instrumental to the purging of the individual will and its reconciliation with itself."\textsuperscript{63} This unified self is evident in several places in Walker's writings. In Meridian Walker writes the following:

> [There] was in Meridian's chest a breaking as if a tight string binding her lungs had given way, allowing her to breathe freely. For she understood, finally, that the respect she owed her life was to continue, against whatever obstacles

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., 19.
to live it, and not to give up any particle of it without a fight to the death, preferably not her own. And that this existence extended beyond herself to those around her because, in fact, the years in America had created them One Life.\textsuperscript{64}

Edward Edinger, Jungian psychologist and author, describes the self as "the ordering and unifying center of the total psyche (both conscious and unconscious) just as the ego is the center of the conscious personality."\textsuperscript{65} Meridian seeks and finally develops an integrated, functioning self. However, before this occurs, she searches for wholeness through social relationships with Truman, a self-destructive affair because he is even more divided than Meridian is. Hoping to make a difference in the world, Meridian works for the civil rights movement of the 1960s but eventually finds political activities increasingly irrelevant. She must confront Truman, her lover, and Lynne, his wife, in order to stop the fragmentation and despair she has found in both personal and political relationships.

The process of individuation occurs when the protagonist develops a unified psyche through a link between the conscious life of the ego and persona and the unconscious life of the shadow and anima/animus.\textsuperscript{66} Cederstrom observes that "the protagonist must realize that

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\textsuperscript{64}Walker, Meridian, 200.

\textsuperscript{65}Edward Edinger, Ego and Archetype (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973), 3.

\textsuperscript{66}Jung, 161.
her experiences are not unique, but they are archetypal patterns that remain at the mercy of her deepest fears." Walker has each of her main characters confront and assimilate her deepest fears to become the "self" that each character is capable of becoming. In this area, Walker departs from the pattern that faces women in most fiction. Usually the woman protagonist, especially in white womanist fiction, is defeated by the patriarchal society, and no matter what strength and inner courage she finds in her anima and/or shadow, she finds death through suicide as her only way to triumph. Walker does not see this action as a viable end for her protagonists.

Celie manages her inner strength to create a business, maintain a healthy friendship with the man who now wants to marry her for love, sustain her family, and face the future with determination.

Meridian refuses to become property. In the end she stays with Truman, not as a possession, but as a free and unified woman. She sleeps in Truman’s arms because she chooses to; and she writes,

\[\text{there is water in the world for us}
\text{brought by our friends}
\text{though the rock of mother and god}
\text{vanishes into sand}
\text{and we, cast out alone}\]

\[Cederstrom, 51.\]
to heal
and re-create
ourselves.⁶⁸

Only Evelyn-Tashi in Possessing the Secret of Joy allows the events of society to overwhelm her. Through her death she finally assimilates the parts of her personality in a way similar to the ways authors of novels with white women as the protagonist allow their women characters to find and integrate the parts of the self into a whole. Death becomes the symbolic unifying of the self.

⁶⁸Walker, Meridian, 213.
CHAPTER IV

FEMININE ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS FROM PRATT IN WALKER'S WRITINGS

Not only should the undergraduate be exposed to Carl Jung's archetypal patterns, which many feminists criticize, in Alice Walker's writings, but the feminine archetypal patterns of Annis Pratt, which many feminist thinkers have contributed to, should also be presented. These two differing but still similar approaches provide useful analytical tools for the undergraduate in the literature or psychology classroom. Being aware of the similarities and differences gives an enrichment and an awareness of controversy in psychology and feminism that cannot be found in a cursory reading of much of modern literature.

On the "Women and Psychology" panel at the University of Notre Dame's annual C. G. Jung Conference in 1976, Naomi Goldenberg issued the following challenge, which she later repeated in an essay in *Signs*:

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

In an apparent response to this challenge, Annis Pratt, in her Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction, presents archetypal principles that heroes of women's fiction follow in the writings "delineating the world of women's fiction."² For the most part, Pratt uses white womanist fiction in determining the patterns that emerge. However, a study of Alice Walker's writings indicates that the major patterns of green world, rape trauma, green world guide or lover, enclosure, confrontation with parental figures, and rebirth are present in Walker's writings as well.

Experiencing the Beauty and Pleasure of the Green World

A woman, about to be overpowered by the patriarchal society, exists for a few years in the beauty and pleasure of nature, the green world. Pratt says that most authors depict the green world of the woman hero as a place "from which she sets forth and a memory to which she returns for renewal."³ Celie, the hero in Walker's The Color Purple,


³Ibid., 17.
existed for her early years in a green world, which is shattered when she is raped by her father. Later, she experiences another green world when her sister Nettie comes to live with her at Mr. _____'s; however, this time is also shattered by the intrusion of the patriarchy when Mr. _____, after being rebuffed by Nettie, forces her from the house and from Celie's life. In midlife, after learning to love herself, Celie returns to her green world and sees the world in even more vivid colors than what she had remembered from her youth.

[The] first thing us notice soon as we turn into the lane is how green everything is. . . . It all so different from the rest of the country us drive through, it make us real quiet. I know this sound funny, Nettie, but even the sun seemed to stand a little longer over our heads."

In Possessing the Secret of Joy, Walker expands on a character previously introduced in The Color Purple. Tashi leaves her green world in Africa for a green world in America with Celie's family. The character is only introduced in The Color Purple, but we find her real story with all of the archetypal patterns in Possessing the Secret of Joy. Tashi is remembered by Adam, her lover and future husband, as "always laughing, and making up stories, or flitting cheerfully about the place on errands for her

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mother."5 Tashi expands her green world with experiences in America, where she is called Evelyn. However, the more separated she is from Africa, the more compelled she is to have the initiation ceremonies that she missed in her childhood. Olivia, Tashi's sister-in-law and best friend, tells Adam:

[When] we left, she was planning to scar her face. . . . It is a way the Olinka can show they still have their own ways. . . . Tashi didn't want to do it, but to make her people feel better, she's resigned. She's going to have the female initiation ceremony too. . . . She should have had it when she was eleven, if she was going to have it. . . . Tashi was happy that the initiation ceremony isn't done in Europe or America. . . . That makes it even more valuable to her.6

This initiation ceremony, which Tashi thinks of as a means to restore her green world, actually destroys her, both mentally and physically.

In Walker's novel Meridian, the green world is introduced to the main character, after she has suffered poverty and neglect, when she arrives on the Saxon College campus.

A dampness peculiar to the climate was turned lightly warm by the clear sunshine, and blossoms on apple and pear and cherry trees lifted the skeptical eye in wonder and peace. Running through so much green the road was as white as an egg, as if freshly scrubbed, and the red brick


6Ibid., ix-x.
buildings, older than anyone still alive, sparkled in the sun.  

When Anne-Marion, a new friend at the college, unaware and unmoved by the green world scene, said that she would like to wreck the place, Meridian replies, "'You'd have to wreck me first.' . . . She needed this clean, if artificial, air to breathe."  

Not only does this novel convey Meridian's growth to self-actualization, it also chronicles this growth in some of Meridian's female ancestors. Feather Mae, Meridian's great-grandmother, experienced a similar green world experience when she explored what later became Sacred Serpent Park:

When she stood in the center of the pit, with the sun blazing down directly over her, something extraordinary happened to her. She felt as if she had stepped into another world, into a different kind of air. The green walls began to spin, and her feeling rose to such a high pitch the next thing she knew she was getting up off the ground. She knew she had fainted, but she felt neither weakened nor ill. She felt renewed, as from some strange spiritual intoxication. Her blood made warm explosions through her body, and her eyelids stung and tingled.  

Submiting to Rape Trauma, Marriage, and Enclosure  

In feminine archetypes in fiction, the green world is

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8Ibid., 42.
9Ibid., 57.
usually shattered by the rape trauma and/or the enclosure of marriage. In the classical myth from which this archetype is taken, Persephone is kidnapped by Hades from the green world she shared with her mother, Demeter. In The Color Purple similar events take place. Celie experiences her green world for only a short time before she is the victim of continual rape from the one who should be her protector, her father. To further compound the loss of self caused by the rapes, Celie also loses the two children who result from the rapes. Her world becomes narrower and narrower as she is closed off from school and nature, where she would have developed. Pratt's analysis coincides with Celie's experience.

The young girl, who derives a sense of power from the green world, . . . is drawn into the enclosure, her mood shifting from happiness to terror as she submits to marriage and atrophy.¹⁰

Celie's marriage is also part of the rape trauma/enclosure archetype. The marriage is negotiated by her father and Mr. . . . . She has no say in the outcome. She is then taken away from the life she has known—even though it contained rape trauma—to a life, repressive and enclosed, that she does not know. Celie is trapped in an early arranged marriage in which she is looked on as property. She has no intrinsic value; her value comes in doing the housework, cooking, caring for the children,

¹⁰Pratt, 168.
working in the fields, and satisfying male sexual needs. She is treated like another commodity that the patriarch buys and uses as he sees fit. Later, as Nettie is being forced by Mr. ____ to leave, she says to Celie,

"I sure hate to leave you here with these rotten children, she say. Not to mention with Mr. ____. It's like seeing you buried, she say. It's worse than that, [Celie] think. If I was buried, I wouldn't have to work."  

Celie's repressive life makes her a person without hope, without feeling, and without any possible way of escape. Death would be a welcomed relief. 

The rape trauma and enclosure also are illustrated in *The Temple of My Familiar* with one very vivid example. When Zedé was held captive in the Central American jungles by rebels, Jesús, another captive, becomes her lover and the father of Carlotta. On the night Zedé and Jesús make love for the last time, the guard who had claimed her as his own discovers them together. Zedé tells the story in this way:

That night the other men, the guards, one after the other came to the little hut in the forest in which they placed me. While this was happening to me, they killed Jesús. At dawn, as I lay bleeding, they brought his body and threw it in with me. Then they nailed shut the door, which was the only opening. Jesús' throat had been cut. They had also removed his genitals. ... Days and nights went by. ... I beat on the door until my hands, covered with flies, also, were dripping blood. I screamed. ... I had nightmares, when I could sleep.  

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The rape trauma is compounded by the literal enclosure of the jungle hut. Later Zedé is rescued, first by Jesús' fellow tribesman and then by a North American named Mary Ann. Mary Ann has a yacht, the "Recuerdo," which she uses to get Zedé and Carlotta to California. However, the rape trauma and the enclosure haunt Zedé until she falls in love with Arveyda, her son-in-law. She eventually returns to her homeland and sends Arveyda back to Carlotta. Despite his knowledge that he is destroying his home and family with this relationship, Arveyda still sings about Zedé: 

He sang of the danger the mother was in now in her old country because, working with the gringo movie-production crew as a front, she was trying to find her own mother, whom she had not seen since the soldiers came to her poor little escuela de los indios many, many years ago and dragged her away. . . . He sang of Zedé's courage, of her pride in not burdening her child with an unbearable history. He sang of her true humbleness. He sang until Zedé, small and tentative, was visible, a wisp, before her daughter.¹³

In Possessing the Secret of Joy, Walker explores the rape trauma and enclosure that men often inflict on women because of their physical bodies. The novel explores the trauma of sexual mutilation placed on women in some African cultures as a way of controlling them and making them pleasurable to men, even if this sexual act is unbearably painful and degrading to women. This control then becomes an enclosure from which women cannot escape. Their bodies

¹³Ibid., 126.
become a constant reminder of the control that men possess over them. The importance of this control over women is illustrated in a story that Lisette tells her son Pierre about her meeting Adam, Pierre's father. Adam's father had assigned Adam to care for Torabe, an elderly tribesman who was forced to live alone because he could not control one of his wives. Lisette told the story of this wife who drowned herself in knee-deep water rather than return to Torabe:

She'd gone to her parents and asked them how they expected her to endure the torture: he had cut her open with a hunting knife on their wedding night, and gave her no opportunity to heal. She hated him.¹⁴

Lisette continues this story by telling that the father instructed his wife to make their daughter return to her husband. No matter what the husband did, the father saw it as her duty to stay. Her mother was sympathetic to her daughter's plight. She herself had bled for a year after she married and experienced her first painful sexual intercourse during which she had to be cut open in order for her husband to enter. However, she wants grandchildren so she counsels her daughter to return. The passage concludes with the following:

Torabe was thrown out of the village because he lost control of his wife, a very evil thing to do in that society because it threatened the fabric of the web of life.¹⁵


¹⁵Ibid., 136-37.
Lisette continues her conversation about the enclosure and sexual mutilation of women:

It was about how, at last, I recognized the connection between mutilation and enslavement that is at the root of the domination of women in the world.\(^\text{16}\)

As Pierre listens, Lisette makes a connection between the actual sexual mutilation that enslaves many women, especially women in Africa, and the terrorization of women in other parts of the world. Pierre recounts what his mother said:

My mother suddenly shuddered, as though watching a frightful scene. It's in all the movies that terrorize women, she said, only masked. The man who breaks in. The man with the knife. Well, she said, he has already come. She sighed. But those of us whose chastity belt was made of leather, or of silk and diamonds, or of fear and not of our own flesh . . . we worry. We are the perfect audience, mesmerized by our unconscious knowledge of what men, with the collaboration of our mothers, do to us.\(^\text{17}\)

In this instance, Walker seems to blame women for allowing women to be enclosed. From one generation to the next, women long for grandchildren and allow their daughters to continue to suffer under society's demands in order to fulfill this selfish need.

In Meridian the rape trauma is also illustrated with several examples. Walker intersperses Meridian's story with stories of her ancestors, both direct and indirect. One

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 137.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 137-38.
such ancestor is Louvinie, a slave on the Saxon Plantation, which became the Saxon College that Meridian attended in Georgia. Louvinie had the gift of storytelling, a talent that made her popular with the children; but, supposedly, one of Louvinie's stories had frightened the only Saxon son—a seven-year-old child with a weak heart—to death. As punishment for this deed,

Louvinie's tongue was clipped at the root. Choking on blood, she saw her tongue ground under the heel of Master Saxon. Mutely, she pleaded for it, because she knew the curse of her native land: Without one's tongue in one's mouth or in a special spot of one's own choosing, the singer in one's soul was lost forever to grunt and snort through eternity like a pig.18

The legend says that Louvinie's tongue was buried at the spot where the giant tree--The Sojourner--grew on the Saxon College campus.

As can be seen, the rape trauma and the enclosure of marriage are strong elements in Walker's writings.

Being Rescued by the Green World Lover

Just as the green world, the rape trauma, and the enclosure are present in these writings, so is the green world lover or guide. Pratt defines the green world lover as a vision of an ideal lover that the woman calls up from the unconscious and which almost always includes a rejection

18Walker, Meridian, 44.
of social expectations concerning engagement and marriage. The green world lover "seems related to the dying god in the stories of Aphrodite and Adonis, Ishtar and Tammuz, Isis and Osiris. These goddesses have lovers who die and whom they restore to life."20

In *The Color Purple*, Celie finds her green world lover in her lesbian relationship with Shug Avery. Shug is brought to Celie's house by Mr. _____, who has always been in love with the beautiful and willful Shug himself. He does not think about how the arrival of an old girlfriend will make Celie feel because he views Celie as property. Shug is sick and dying on her arrival, and Celie restores her to health; in return, Shug opens Celie up to her own value. Shug is instrumental in Celie's sexual, religious, and economic awakenings.

*Here's the thing, say Shug. The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for.*21

In past sexual encounters, Celie has always been the helpless, passive victim. With Shug, Celie responds to feelings and emotions that she did not know she had.

*In The Temple of My Familiar*, Zedé finds her green

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19Pratt, 22-23.

20Ibid., 172.

world lover in her relationship with Arveyda, her son-in-law. Zedé and Carlotta have been through the jungles of Central America and through the hardships of poverty in America. When Carlotta meets and eventually marries Arveyda, an artist and musician, she brings her mother into her home. What Carlotta does not realize is the possibility that her husband and her mother are soulmates who cannot resist each other even though they realize the harm and hurt they will bring into the family: "Taking her children away from Arveyda and Zedé was the only way she could make them hurt as she was hurting." In a quest for wholeness and a desire to be green world lovers, Zedé and Arveyda travel to Mexico and to Central and South America.

Arveyda and Zedé traveled through countries of incredible natural lushness. Zedé had never seen such rivers, such fish . . . there was a fish that mated for life, she wrote; when they caught one from the boat and prepared it for dinner, its mate swam furiously around and around the boat and actually followed it for miles . . . such trees, fruits, birds, and sky.

Through the letters that Zedé writes and, finally, Carlotta opens, Carlotta comes to realize that Zedé needed Arveyda more than Carlotta did: "She realized she had never known Zedé at peace. Always, she had been anxious, worried,

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23 Ibid., 21.
frantic over the requirements of life for the two of them."\(^{24}\)

Now, shifting to Zédé's point of view, the story reveals the intensity as well as the happenstance of the green world lover that Zédé has found in Arveyda.

Zédé had made love only twice before in her life. Until she met Arveyda she hadn't thought about sex... Now it was as if she had a new body. Arveyda was kissing all of it... Under his lips she felt the flowering of her shriveled womb and under his tongue her folded sex came alive. The hairs on her body stood like trees. In truth, the light that she felt inside her in womb and heart now seemed to cover all of her; she felt herself dissolve into the light.\(^{25}\)

Pratt writes that the "feminine eroticism evident in the cults of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Dionysus provide women with a chance to celebrate with each other a licensed rebellion against marital fidelity."\(^{26}\)

As Celie comes to believe the feelings she has repressed and to rebel against the sexual demands of a loveless marriage, she is open to an emotional awakening about God and a sexual awakening with Shug. Shug leads Celie to believe God "wants admiration,"\(^{27}\) and he wants that admiration from such a worthy person as Celie.

God love all them feelings. That's some of the

\(^{24}\)Ibid.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., 23.

\(^{26}\)Pratt, 173.

\(^{27}\)Walker, The Color Purple, 178.
best stuff God did. And when you know God loves 'em you enjoys 'em a lot more. . . . God love everything you love--and a mess of stuff you don't. . . . I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it.28

In line with these emotional responses, Shug also helps Celie see value in herself, and, to implement that value, Shug helps Celie become financially independent by using her creative talents to design and make pants. Once Celie accepts the value of her emotions and contributions, she comes into her own self. Later, when Shug leaves and then writes Celie that she is coming home, Celie is able to say, "If she come, I be happy. If she don't, I be content."29 Celie no longer needs Shug or anyone else to be happy. She has learned to love and accept herself and her value so much that she no longer needs her green world lover. She is able to say,

Just cause I love her don't take away none of her rights. . . . She bound to live her life and be herself no matter what.30

Shug has served her purpose as a guide for Celie to plunge into life and live for her own self.

Just as Shug serves a purpose in Celie's life, so Arveyda serves a purpose in Zedé's life. Zedé stays behind in Central America in a search for her mother and her

28Ibid.
29Ibid., 247.
30Ibid., 236.
family. She also takes part in an American movie being made in her village. Arveyda returns to America. He has served his purpose of giving Zedé an inner strength that she did not know she had. As her green world lover, he has helped her on the "first aspect of the journey inwards." As Pratt states,

> Such a figure, it is important to note, is less likely to dominate the hero than to constitute a phase through which she must pass.\(^3\)

Zedé now turns "away from societal norms that the author graphically and specifically details."\(^3\) She has taken an "inward plunge away from patriarchal experience,"\(^3\) a plunge that she would not, or could not have taken without the guidance of an "ideal, nonpatriarchal lover,"\(^3\) a lover she found in Arveyda.

M. Esther Harding in *Woman's Mysteries, Ancient and Modern* suggests that the best love takes place between persons who have passed through and beyond gender to an androgynous interchange. This type of love creates chaos and confusion in the patriarchal society that simply demands that a woman completes her partner's "masculinity" by being

\(^{31}\text{Pratt, 139.}\)

\(^{32}\text{Ibid., 140.}\)

\(^{33}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{34}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{35}\text{Ibid., 140.}\)
totally "feminine." Both Celie and Zedé successfully experience the androgynous love that prepares them to confront authority and come into their own selves.

Confronting Authority

In addition to these feminine archetypes, in womanist literature the hero must confront parental or authority figures to make the first steps into selfhood. Pratt states,

Even if the older woman hero has turned away from society because of disenchantment with her past, she must come to terms once more with the father and mother figures resident in her subconscious, her repository of personal memories.  

Celie makes the break when Shug announces at the dinner table that she and Celie are going to Memphis. When Mr. _____ says that Celie will leave over his dead body, for the first time Celie fights back and speaks up for herself. You a lowdown dog is what's wrong, I say. It's time to leave you and enter into Creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need.  

Celie confronts him with all the knowledge she has gained from her experiences with Shug and from Nettie's letters that he has kept hidden from Celie for all the years since

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36 M. Esther Harding, Woman's Mysteries, Ancient and Modern (Bantam, 1973), 8, 123.

37 Pratt, 140.

Nettie left. Celie now knows that Nettie loves her, that her children are alive and learning their heritage in Africa, and that the man she called Pa is not her biological father. This last bit of knowledge relieves her of the immense guilt that her children, if alive, might be retarded, and she can now make an economically independent life for herself. Later she will return to her homeplace with the knowledge that she doesn't need Shug either. She can survive on her own.

In Possessing the Secret of Joy, Evelyn-Tashi must confront both M'Lissa and the mother image that M'Lissa represents. As Evelyn-Tashi stays with M'Lissa, trying to find the best time to kill her, she learns how M'Lissa became a tsungaa and how M'Lissa became a cripple. The tsungaa is a hereditary role that M'Lissa's mother and grandmother passed to her. When the time came for M'Lissa's own circumcision, her mother had tried to cut her lightly. However, when the other women saw that M'Lissa had been treated differently, they called in the witch doctor, who finished what M'Lissa's mother had started.

He showed no mercy. In fright and unbearable pain my body bucked under the razor-sharp stone he was cutting me with . . . I could never again see myself, for the child that finally rose from the mat three months later, and dragged herself out of the initiation hut and finally home, was not the child who had been taken there. I was never to see that child again.39

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For a brief time, Evelyn-Tashi feels compassion for what has happened to M'Lissa. M'Lissa then begins to tell Evelyn-Tashi what would happened to the tsunga:

One day, as I was washing carefully between her clawlike toes, she informed me blandly that it was only the murder of the tsunga, the circumciser, by one of those whom she has circumcised that proves her (the circumciser's) value to her tribe. Her own death, she declared, had been ordained. It would elevate her to the position of saint.40

Evelyn-Tashi says, "This confession, or lie, stayed my hand for many a day."41 However, she finally brings herself to confront the evil embodied in M'Lissa and kills her. Olivia, trying to stop Evelyn-Tashi from confessing to what she has done, is finally made aware of Evelyn-Tashi's depth of feeling:

Because when I disobey you, the outsider, even if it is wrong, I am being what is left of myself. And that sliver of myself is all I now have left.42

As Olivia is convinced that Evelyn-Tashi did not actually kill M'Lissa but is only taking the blame for some obscure reason, Evelyn-Tashi reveals that although she didn't actually kill M'Lissa, she does not want it told:

Hers was an evil power, barely acquainted, any longer, with good. It is for not killing her--in the name of the suffering she caused--that I am

40Ibid., 204.
41Ibid.
42Ibid., 251.
guilty. . . . Women are cowards, and do not need to be reminded that we are.\textsuperscript{43}

In the end Evelyn-Tashi confronts the authority figure; and, although she will die for the murder of M'Lissa, she feels she has not behaved in a cowardly way, and she has come to terms with her painful past.

**Experiencing Rebirth**

Walker has created black womanist fiction that utilizes the archetypal patterns of rape trauma, green world, green world lover, enclosure, confrontation, and finally rebirth. In these ways her black womanist writings follow very much the patterns that Pratt analyzes for white womanist fiction. However, white womanist fiction, such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* or Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, often find the hero in despair or near insanity at the end of the novel. Pratt writes,

\begin{quote}
In far more novels than otherwise . . . a [full development] is blocked by the hero's inability to come to terms with her feelings about the authority figure; this fact may account for the greater number of novels in which women are done to death or driven mad . . . than of novels in which they achieve rebirth.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

The usual hero of womanist fiction finds death as her only escape because she is unable to be in control of her own life in the face of the patriarchal system she must exist

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 250-51.

\textsuperscript{44}Pratt, 142.
in. In *Meridian*, Walker seems aware of this end for female characters. In this novel, which is one of her earliest published works, Walker has Meridian dreaming of her death as a way out of the life she leads.

She dreamed she was a character in a novel and that her existence presented an insoluble problem, one that would be solved only by her death at the end. Even when she gave up reading novels that encouraged such a solution—and nearly all of them did—the dream did not cease.\(^{45}\)

Later through the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Meridian finds a reason to live that will ease her desire to escape this life. Her brief thoughts about death as an escape mirror white womanist fiction, but with one glaring difference: The black woman only thinks about suicide.

This idea of survival is a vital part of the black womanist novel. In her works, Walker makes a strong statement for this idea of survival, this difference from white womanist fiction. Celie gains an equality with and an admiration from Albert, who now has a name rather than the anonymous Mr. ____ from earlier in the novel.

I know I can live content without Shug. . . . [Albert] done ast me to marry him again, this time in the spirit as well as in the flesh, and . . . I say Naw, I still don't like frogs, but let's us be friends.\(^{46}\)

Albert learns to treat Celie as an equal as he learns to sew the pants that she designs. Celie can live and love herself


as she becomes a part of a timeless consciousness of her own creation, an "alinear, cyclical, timeless consciousness . . . suspended in several time periods at once, . . . a spaceless world appropriate to rebellion against placelessness in the patriarchy."  

Celie's children, her sister, her lover, her husband and friend, her son and daughter-in-law and their lovers all make up her family in her cyclical world on the farm that finally belongs to Celie and Nettie. Celie says,

I feel a little peculiar round the children. For one thing they grown. And I see they think me and Nettie and Shug and Albert and Samuel and Harpo and Sofia and Jack and Odessa real old and don't know much what going on. But I don't think us feel old at all. And us so happy. Matter of fact, I think this the youngest us ever felt.

In reality and symbolically, Celie emerges with a victory over the patriarchal obstacles placed in her way.

In her Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction, Pratt presents another concept concerning rebirth that needs closer examination:

[Blacks have] evidence of a matrilinear inheritance passed down from an African culture that has a more coherently formulated and positive attitude toward "womanhood" than does the American patriarchy.

Walker illustrates this idea in "Everyday Use," a short

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47Pratt, 169.


49Pratt, 33.
story in her collection *In Love and Trouble*. Mama and Maggie await the arrival of Dee, daughter and sister, who has gone to the city to escape the rural life that Maggie has accepted. After an awkward welcome and dinner, Mama says,

Dee went to the trunk at the foot of my bed and started rifling through it. Maggie hung back in the kitchen over the dishpan. Out came Wangero with two quilts.50

Wangero, as Dee now calls herself in an attempt to recreate her African roots, is one of two sisters who have traveled very different paths in their lives. Wangero has moved to the city where she has learned a snobbish appreciation for her African heritage. She has even taken on the affectation of her idea of a traditional African name. When she comes home, she begins to search for those things, such as quilts and a butter churn, that she now values as art rather than for practical use.

They [the quilts] had been pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them. One was in the Lone Star pattern. The other was Walk Around the Mountain. In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War.51


51 Ibid.
Walker concludes this story with Wangero asking for the quilts, saying she would "'hang them.' As if that were the only thing you could do with quilts."\textsuperscript{52} But Mama reminds Wangero that the so-called "priceless" quilts belong to Maggie. "'Maggie can't appreciate these quilts!' [Wangero] said. 'She'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use.'"\textsuperscript{53}

Walker leaves the reader with a feeling of satisfaction that everyday use is exactly what these quilts and other relics of the past need. A sense of importance and elegance is exactly what permeates these crafts that should not be relegated to a museum or living room wall. So Walker has great praise and respect for the women who possess and pass on these skills.

Even though Walker admires the fact that some of the skills of herbal lore, healing, cooking, and quilting may be passed down, she also finds women at fault for perpetuating practices that keep women enslaved and unable to experience life, much less search for happiness and self. In *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Walker harshly chastises the role women play in perpetuating the genital mutilation forced on young girls. As Evelyn-Tashi searches for the reasons for her need as an adult to experience the

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 58.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., 57.
circumcision that killed her older sister in childhood, she confronts M'Lissa, the *tsunga*. M'Lissa angrily lays the blame on Evelyn-Tashi's mother for continuing the practice.

The death of your sister—what was her name?—was your stupid mother Nafa's fault. It was not absolutely sure the chief would make us return to circumcision. After all, he was always grinning into the faces of the white missionaries and telling them he was a modern man. Not a barbarian, which he could have been, for they called the "bath" barbaric. He was chief, they said, he could stop it.54

Because Evelyn-Tashi's mother was a victim of the society, she feared not following custom. "If Dura is not bathed, she said, no one will marry her."55 M'Lissa continued telling Evelyn-Tashi the story that showed the part her mother played in the death of her sister and the continuation of the genital mutilation custom.

As soon as she heard the new missionaries were black, she felt certain the village would be returned to all its former ways and uncircumcised girls would be punished. . . . She was the kind of woman who jumps even before the man says boo. Your mother helped me hold your sister down.56

In *Meridian* Walker examines another fault that women perpetuate. In this novel she explores the sexual temptation and dangers that women and especially black women face. Meridian had been told nothing about sex. After

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55 Ibid., 253.

56 Ibid.
experiencing sex and then having a child, Meridian recounts the coded messages her mother gave her.

Her mother never even used the word, and her lack of information on the subject of sex was accompanied by a seeming lack of concern about her daughter's morals. Having told her absolutely nothing, she had expected her to do nothing. . . . Her mother only cautioned her to "be sweet." She did not realize that this was a euphemism for "Keep your panties up and your dress down."  

Now Meridian understands the message, but the message originally came in such cryptic language that she did not know what she had been told. Walker, through Meridian, seems to cry out against the reticence that keeps women from telling their daughters and sisters about the dangers and pitfalls of early sexual encounters and pregnancies.  

Aside from the physical dangers of early sexual encounters and pregnancies, the idea of morality that is pushed onto women is another legacy from the patriarchy. Merlin Stone in *When God Was a Woman* presents documentary evidence from Sumer, Babylon, Canaan, Cyprus, Greece, and the Bible that reveals the following:

In the worship of the female deity, sex was Her gift to humanity. It was sacred and holy. . . . Despite the fact that the concept of marriage was known in the earliest written records, married women, as well as single, continued to live for periods of time within the temple complex and to follow the ancient sexual customs of the Goddess. The Bible itself reveals that these women were free to come and go as they pleased. . . . In earliest historic times, never was the question or even the concept of respectability or propriety

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raised—it was later invented as the new morality. . . . It was probably developed and propagated for purely political motives, aiming at goals that would allow the invading patrilocal Hebrews greater access to land and governmental control by destroying the ancient matrilineal system.\textsuperscript{58}

Walker has Meridian confront the double alienation for the black hero that Pratt mentions:

The young Black hero faces a double alienation, urged to adhere to the "nice-girl" standards of white femininity while daily recognizing that, from the point of view of the white race, she is inherently "not nice."\textsuperscript{59}

Later, when Meridian finds a place for herself at Saxon College, she is confronted with the dilemma of her life. Walker writes,

Of course it was kept secret from everyone that Meridian had been married and divorced and had had a child. It was assumed that Saxon young ladies were, by definition, virgins. They were treated always as if they were thirteen years old.\textsuperscript{60}

While at Saxon, Meridian must deal with this conflict once more. Each of the Saxon girls is expected to stand before the chapel congregation and before God and tell of some way she has resisted temptation.

Meridian could not recall any temptation that she had resisted, and whether she had resisted temptation or not, she did not believe she now stood even in the vicinity of God. In fact, Meridian was not sure there was a God, and when her turn came, she said so. . . . When her fellow

\textsuperscript{58}Merlin Stone, \textit{When God Was a Woman} (New York: Dorset Press, 1976), 154-56.

\textsuperscript{59}Pratt, 32.

\textsuperscript{60}Walker, \textit{Meridian}, 94.
students found themselves near her afterward they would look about as if they expected lightning to strike, and her teachers let her know she was a willful, sinful girl.61

The writings by women such as Walker have strong undercurrents of warning against the patriarchal society that enslaves and thwarts women, especially women of color. Pratt concludes her study by saying what the woman novelist or short story writer has done:

[They] have made of the woman's novel a pathway to the authentic self, to the roots of our selves beneath consciousness of self, and to our innermost being.62

61Ibid.

62Pratt, 178.
CHAPTER V

METHODS FOR TEACHING ARCHETYPES IN THE
UNDERGRADUATE CLASSROOM

Gilbert Highet argues in The Art of Teaching that "bad
teaching wastes a great deal of effort, and spoils many
lives which might have been full of energy and happiness"
simply because teachers "have not thought about [their
work]." 1 An indictment of the teaching profession lies
heavy on those who hold positions but do not accept the
challenge and opportunity of good teaching.

Teaching archetypal patterns to undergraduates presents
both a challenge and an opportunity. Students must be
challenged to read some of the great literature with a view
toward a new interpretation. Sometimes even authors are
unaware of the unconscious archetypal patterns that permeate
their works. The opportunity comes in widening students'
reading material. Sometimes students are not aware that
writings can encompass more than a narrative plotline.

Every educated person wants to be an expert
reader. . . . Literature is filled with the power
of language, and our connection with that power is
pleasure. So the first step is to give ourselves

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1Gilbert Highet, The Art of Teaching (London: Oxford
University Press, 1950; reprint, New York: Alfred A. Knopf,
1951), 6 (page references are to reprint edition).
permission to read with pleasure. The response of pleasure leads us to the center of the work.²

An instructor may also have to teach undergraduates how to write essays to express the core of the work the students are reading. Rosemary Deen and Marie Ponsot divide the work of reading and writing about literature into three stages: (1) learning to read the language of the work during which the imaginative synthesis of the work takes place with an emphasis on the personal; (2) learning the language of literary description takes place as the reader forms an assertion about what pattern is noticed in the work and about what hypothesis can be stated; (3) and learning to "speak" the language of the work and of literary analysis where the reader synthesizes the work and literary description into analysis and response.³

In teaching literature, the instructor has several options. This chapter indicates several ways in which Alice Walker's writings can be integrated into the undergraduate classroom. Three basic approaches to teaching literature, particularly selected writings by Alice Walker, include the ostensive, the intrinsic, and the extrinsic.


Using the Ostensive Approach

In the ostensive approach, emphasis is placed on the subject matter and the intellectual frame of reference to which the specific substance refers. This approach covers what (subject or theme) the work is about over the specific content (distinctive events within the work). For example, Walker's Meridian is a "coming of age" story for a black American woman during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The story begins with a history of Meridian's early life in poverty, of the hopelessness of her marriage, of the opportunity for education, and finally of the challenge of change through the fight for civil rights. Even though the story encompasses the details of Meridian's life, Walker also incorporates the history of the African-American through side stories about slaves and Indians in the United States. However, the overriding theme concerns the quest for an ideal society and the search for enduring love. The story reveals the love and the loss of love that Truman, Lynne, and Meridian share throughout the civil rights movement. Ostensive approach questions about Meridian might be as follows:

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*Bruce E. Miller, Teaching the Art of Literature (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980), 26.*
1. In loving and pursuing an ideal, is it necessarily true that men and women lose the love of other humans?

2. How can education change people's lives?

The answers to such questions might just as easily apply to another book or to a real life.

**Using the Intrinsic Approach**

The second approach to reading and teaching literature is the intrinsic approach which is a response to the literary work solely as an object complete in and of itself. This approach is the principle of New Criticism that a work stands on its own much as art or music is evaluated. This response ignores the author's life and times as well as literary and artistic concerns. What is left is "irreducible literary," or exactly the work and nothing else. For example, Walker uses the letter format in *The Color Purple*, but knowing the history of epistolary literature is of little value in understanding the main character of Celie. Intrinsic approach questions about *The Color Purple* might be as follows:

1. Who is the woman whom Mr. _____ brings home, and how does Celie treat her?

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5Ibid., 28

6Ibid., 27.
2. How does Celie change in her actions during the course of the novel?

Using the Extrinsic Approach

Although the ostensive and intrinsic approaches are the usual ways that literary works are analyzed in the undergraduate classroom, the third approach that might be used in discussing and analyzing Walker's novels is called the extrinsic approach. This response goes outside the work to get the facts that will help get an accurate reading of a written work. Terry Eagleton calls these aspects of a writing a "sub-text."

[This is] a text which runs within it, visible at certain "symptomatic" points of ambiguity, evasion or overemphasis, and which we as readers are able to "write" even if the novel itself does not. All literary works contain one or more such sub-texts, and there is a sense in which they may be spoken of as the "unconscious" of the work itself. The work's insights, as with all writing, are deeply related to its blindnesses: what it does not say, and how it does not say it, may be as important as what it articulates; what seems absent, marginal or ambivalent about it may provide a central clue to its meanings.7

This response takes facts or ideas that are not themselves literary, such as history, mythology, religion, or psychology, and applies them to a work so as to "illuminate" a reader's understanding of the novel, poem, or short

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7Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 178.
Reading with the extrinsic approach opens the work to ideas that perhaps were even unconscious to the author. The historical extrinsic approach would read *Meridian* in light of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Extrinsic questions posed by the instructor might be such as the following:

1. How did the civil rights movement affect Americans?
2. How important was the civil rights movement to the African-American?
3. What was gained (or lost) by the civil rights movement?

In the extrinsic approach, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* would demand a historical knowledge of the ritual circumcision of females in some African tribes. One historical question might be as follows:

1. What tribal customs make female circumcision a rite of passage in some African societies?
2. How widespread is the custom of female circumcision in modern societies?

The extrinsic approach can also take on biographical overtones. For example, *Meridian* could be read as a fictionalized account of Alice Walker's experiences in the 1960s. In fact, a brief perusal of the facts of Walker's

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*Miller, 31.*
life upholds this approach. A biographical extrinsic approach question might be as follows:

1. What experiences in Meridian's life parallel Walker's own life?

A third extrinsic approach, one that has been developed extensively in preceding chapters of this study, is the archetypal approach. This approach demands a knowledge of archetypal and psychological patterns developed by such people as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Toni Wolff, and Annis Pratt. Archetypal questions about Walker's writings would demand that readers possess a particular knowledge of terms from psychology and archetypal studies, mythology, witchcraft, and feminism. A sample of archetypal extrinsic approach questions might be as follows:

1. How are the green world and green world guide evident in The Color Purple?

2. What parts do the anima/animus and shadow play in The Temple of My Familiar?

The ostensive, the intrinsic, and the extrinsic approaches all have merit for use in the literature or psychology classroom. In most cases, all three approaches should be incorporated to some degree into an undergraduate course.
CHAPTER VI

SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE COURSE
ON ARCHETYPES IN WALKER'S WRITINGS

The following is an example of a semester course of study for an undergraduate class on archetypal patterns in the writings of Alice Walker.

Macro Objectives

1. The student will learn to use ostensive, intrinsic, and extrinsic approaches in reading selected writings by Alice Walker.
2. The student will be able to define Jungian and feminine archetypal patterns.
3. The student will be able to read and analyze Alice Walker's writings for archetypal patterns.
4. The student will be able to apply archetypal patterns to writings by other authors.
5. The student will be able to write an essay on a specific aspect of the archetypal study.

Micro Objectives

1. The student will be able to define the following terms for feminine archetypal patterns:
green world, green world lover, rape trauma, enclosure, confrontation, and rebirth.

2. The student will be able to define the following terms from Jungian and/or Freudian archetypes: quest, or the rite of passage; process of individuation; self; wholeness; shadow; alter ego; persona; dwarf; ego; anima; animus; magic or talisman; great father; and mother.

3. The student will be able to locate passages in Alice Walker's writings that illustrate these archetypes.

4. The student will be able to create and answer questions in ostensive, intrinsic, and extrinsic approaches to Walker's writings.

5. The student will be able to write, present, and possibly publish an essay based on some aspect of archetypal patterns.

Rationale

The reading of literature has long been part of the core curriculum of universities. Students are exposed to themes, characters, and philosophies of varied cultures and viewpoints. The writings of Alice Walker are a modern example of literature that can enlighten.

Reading with the ostensive, intrinsic, and extrinsic approaches can change the views with which readers see an
author's work. Students must be made aware that writings can exist on many levels. A book can be read for plot and character at the intrinsic level; for theme and philosophy at the ostensive level; and for history, psychology, or archetypes at the extrinsic level. Reading at only one level omits both conscious and unconscious patterns created by the author.

This course is designed to aid the undergraduate in understanding three approaches to literature and the underlying archetypal patterns. Each approach will be discussed and applied to Walker's writings. Major archetypal patterns will be discussed, and examples will be located in selected writings by Walker.

At the end of the course, the undergraduate should be able to read any of Walker's writings with ostensive, intrinsic, or extrinsic approaches and should be able to recognize feminine and Jungian/Freudian archetypal patterns. The student should also be able to apply these patterns to other authors' works. The student should be able to synthesize the information into an essay that could be presented to the class and possibly published.
Syllabus

The following is a syllabus for a fifteen week semester course based on the archetypal patterns of Carl Jung and the feminine archetypal patterns of Annis Pratt.

Week 1  Read *The Color Purple*
Take notes on approaches to literature
Create at least one question in each literary approach for each of Walker's writings that are assigned. These questions are due on the day discussions for a particular writing begin.

Week 2  Begin notes on feminine archetypal patterns
Have group discussions on patterns in *The Color Purple*

Week 3  Present oral reports on feminine archetypal patterns (Choose from books in the bibliography)

Week 4  Begin research essay on feminine archetypal patterns in *The Color Purple*

Week 5  Take notes on Jungian archetypal patterns
Read *The Temple of My Familiar*

Week 6  Begin class discussions on *The Temple of My Familiar*
Read *Meridian*
Week 7  Present oral reports on Jungian archetypes
       (Choose from books in the bibliography)

Week 8  Take a mid-semester examination
       Have class discussions on Meridian

Week 9  Begin research essay on Jungian
       archetypal patterns in The Temple
       of My Familiar or Meridian

Week 10 Read Possessing the Secret of Joy
       Write a short essay comparing and contrasting
       archetypal patterns

Week 11 Discuss Possessing the Secret of Joy

Week 12 Choose one of Alice Walker’s short
       stories and analyze it in relation
       to archetypal patterns

Week 13 Present oral report on archetypal
       patterns in a selected short story
       or stories

Week 14 Complete research essay combining ideas
       from oral reports and earlier
       essays

Week 15 Have seminar presentations and publications
       Take a final examination
Weekly Evaluation

To make sure class discussions and activities stay relevant to the course and to the student, a weekly evaluation is a helpful tool. This evaluation can be copied or written on a student's own paper once the format is known. Weekly evaluations also present an opportunity for students to ask questions that they might be too shy or embarrassed to ask in the open classroom. The following page is an example of a weekly evaluation form adapted from a course on teaching in the college classroom.
Weekly Evaluation

Date: __________________________________________

Social Security No.________________________________

Topic Covered This Week:__________________________

1. Before this week, to what extent were you already familiar with the topic covered in class?
   _____Totally _____Somewhat _____Not at all

2. How much do you think you learned about the topic covered in class this week?
   _____Very much _____Quite a bit _____A little _____Nothing

3. The amount of material covered in class this week was
   _____Too much _____About right _____Insufficient

4. To what extent did you enjoy this week's treatment of the topic covered?
   __________Enjoyable __________Enjoyable __________Ho-hum __________Unenjoyable

5. What are your suggestions for improvement of the coverage of this topic in the future?

6. What points would you like clarified, or what questions would you like answered?

1Adapted from D. Barry Lumsden, class lecture on "Assessment," University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, 6 October, 1987.
Methods of Publication

In addition to reading, evaluating, and writing, the undergraduate needs the opportunity of publishing. Publication in its simplest terms is the opportunity to share a draft of one's writing with more than one reader. Publication in an undergraduate classroom can mean simply reading one's paper to a large or small group. The instructor should provide this opportunity to students as a way to share their research, to be aware of an audience and a purpose in their writings, and to engage them in meaningful and intelligent dialogue.

One way for the class to share in each other's success is to have students make copies of their best work or final work and distribute these copies to other class members. Usually the students pay for the copies of their own work for the class. Not all publishing will require copies of the student's work. Some instructors publish by using the overhead projector and allowing corrections and suggestions from the class. Instructors usually use one of their own papers for this method first.

Another way of publishing is that of simply letting the students read their papers aloud in front of the whole class or with their peer editing group. In this way, the

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intrusive errors of punctuation, spelling, or poor handwriting of a first or early draft do not take away from the persona of the paper.

A fourth way of publishing is one that has been used for years in elementary and some secondary schools. This method involves the posting of papers on a class bulletin board. Of course, this method requires a room that is used just for this purpose. Sometimes, as an alternative, a hall case can be used for display of papers. Although this idea may seem childish on the surface, it works well because everyone likes to be noticed and appreciated for some accomplishment.

A fifth way of publishing is that of actually publishing a book of student writings and making copies for each student. Students can design the cover, name the publication, and edit the papers. Even the most cynical students often find joy in seeing their best work included in a class project.

The best work could be submitted to conferences that solicit student writing and research. Students could then be introduced to an academic world where people are interested in their thoughts and ideas. Sometimes this training is an awakening to students who have never experienced having their writings critiqued by anyone other than an instructor. Often conferences print the best of the conference presenters' writings in a bulletin. In addition
to conferences, there are many journals and literary magazines that also solicit student writings. Everyone--beginning and professional writers--likes to see his or her works published and likes to know that others may be reading and enjoying what has been written. As a precautionary measure, students may wish to copyright their writings to protect themselves from plagiarism.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1. Significant passages and themes in the works of Alice Walker that give evidence of archetypal patterns can be identified.

2. General characteristics of archetypal patterns as they apply to the writings of Alice Walker can be described.

3. An analysis of the effects of archetypal patterns on the overall structure and themes of Walker's writings can be made.

4. A variety of methods for including archetypal patterns in the undergraduate classroom can be identified.

Implications

The following implications for using Alice Walker's writings and archetypal patterns in the undergraduate classroom can be made:

1. Archetypal patterns can influence the total
2. Archetypal patterns can effectively be presented in the undergraduate classroom.

3. Undergraduates will benefit from learning about archetypal patterns as another way to enhance and broaden their understanding of literature.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made as a result of this study:

1. Further research should be done to identify archetypal patterns in other works by Alice Walker.

2. Further research should be done on the effectiveness of including archetypal patterns in the undergraduate classroom.

3. Further research should be done on understanding the effects that studying and identifying archetypal patterns, especially feminine archetypal patterns, have on undergraduates.

4. Further research should be done to measure the benefits on undergraduates from learning about archetypal patterns.

5. Further research should be done to see how typical archetypal patterns, especially feminine archetypal patterns, exist in the writings of
other African-American women. Because the study of archetypal patterns, particularly feminine archetypal patterns, and the influence this area of literature has on the undergraduate classroom is relatively new, much research can continue to add to the body of knowledge already available. Even newer is the application of archetypal patterns and feminine archetypal patterns to the writings of African-American women. A continued effort to broaden this field of study can only bring enhanced learning to the undergraduate classroom.
APPENDIX A

JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quest, or the rite of passage</td>
<td>The protagonist undergoes a process of psychological development that begins with the breakdown of her defenses against certain frightening realizations.¹</td>
<td>Meridian</td>
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Process of individuation</td>
<td>The protagonist develops a unified psyche through a link between the conscious life (world of ego and persona) and the darker shadow of the unconscious. The goal in Jungian terms is to develop an archetypal self.²</td>
<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPES</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>The psyche must confront and assimilate oppositions so that the self becomes a bridge between the conscious world and the deepest needs of the unconscious.³ The protagonist must realize that [her] experiences are not unique, but that they are archetypal patterns that remain at the mercy of [her] deepest fears.⁴</td>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
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<td>Meridian</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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³Ibid., 162.
⁴Cederstrom, 51.
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search for wholeness</td>
<td>This quest of unifying all parts of one's personality may be pursued through social relationships, relationships with men (often destructive with men who are even more divided in their personalities than the protagonist), or political activities.⁵</td>
<td>Meridian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possessing the Secret of Joy</td>
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⁵Ibid., 50-51.
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>The shadow represents the hidden side of one's personality that is projected onto a person of the same sex. The shadow may reappear several times but presents a slightly different emphasis each time it occurs. The shadow shows what people deny in themselves.</td>
<td>The Temple of My \nFamiliar Possessing the \nSecret of Joy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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6Ibid., 52.

7Ibid., 168.
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alter Ego</td>
<td>The alter ego projects a positive shadow.</td>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCHETYPE</td>
<td>MEANING</td>
<td>WALKER</td>
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</table>
| Persona   | The persona is the social personality that enables one to function in the world—the appearance, behavior, etc., that the protagonist wants the world to see. | Meridian  
The Color Purple  
The Temple of My Familiar |
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Dwarf</td>
<td>The dwarf touches on the deepest and most serious level of the shadow. The complacency of the ego just before confrontation with the shadow is shattered when the shadow reveals the evil of its dark face (dwarf) as a mirror reflection of the known face, and this evil is recognized as part of one's personality.(^8)</td>
<td>The Color Purple Possessing the Secret of Joy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARCHETYPE</td>
<td>MEANING</td>
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| Ego       | The ego is the part of personality that protects and adapts to the outer world (feelings of difference, uniqueness, loneliness, imperfections of world, evil within oneself, evil in the world). The ego must cope with urgent but not yet understood inner impulses as well as demands of outer world.⁹ | The Color Purple  
The Temple of My Familiar  
Possessing the Secret of Joy |

⁹Jung, 165-66.
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anima</td>
<td>Anima is another inner figure in addition to the shadow; often behind the shadow; personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings, moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feelings for nature, and relation to the unconscious.(^{10})</td>
<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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\(^{10}\) Ibid., 177.
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animus</td>
<td>The male personification of the unconscious in woman; exhibits both good and bad aspects; takes the form of hidden &quot;sacred&quot; convictions. &quot;One may suddenly find oneself up against something in a woman that is obstinate, cold, and completely inaccessible.&quot;</td>
<td>Meridian The Color Purple</td>
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\[11^{11}\] Ibid., 189.
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<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Magic or talisman</td>
<td>In myths, the magic or talisman can cure the misfortune of the king or his country; but it is always unique and hard to find. In literary situations, the same conditions apply: The person must face the darkness, and the magic lifts the evil.</td>
<td>Meridian Possessing the Secret of Joy The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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²²Ibid., 167.

²³Ibid., 167.
APPENDIX B

FEMININE ARCHETYPES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Green world</td>
<td>A woman, about to be overpowered by the patriarchal society, exists for a few years in the beauty and pleasure of nature. Pratt says that most authors depict the green world of the woman hero as a place &quot;from which she sets forth and a memory to which she returns for renewal.&quot;</td>
<td>The Color Purple, Meridian</td>
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rape trauma</td>
<td>The green world is usually shattered by the rape trauma. This archetype is taken from the classical myth in which Persephone is kidnapped by Hades from the green world she shared with her mother, Demeter.</td>
<td>The Color Purple Possessing the Secret of Joy</td>
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<td>ARCHETYPE</td>
<td>MEANING</td>
<td>WALKER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enclosure/</td>
<td>This archetype is also drawn from the Persephone myth. Hades has her for six months, and Demeter has her in the green world for six months. Pratt says, &quot;The young girl, who derives a sense of power from the green world, ... is drawn into the enclosure, her mood shifting from happiness ... as she submits to marriage and atrophy.&quot;^{15}</td>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meridian</td>
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^{15}Ibid., 168.
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>WALKER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green world lover/guide</td>
<td>Pratt defines the green world lover as a vision of an ideal lover that the woman calls up from the unconscious and almost always includes a rejection of social expectations concerning engagement and marriage.(^\text{16}) The green world lover &quot;provides a chance to celebrate . . . rebellion against marital fidelity.&quot;(^\text{17})</td>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Temple of My Familiar</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Possessing the Secret of Joy</td>
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\(^{16}\)Ibid., 22-23.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 172-73.
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
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<th>WALKER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parental/authority confrontation</td>
<td>The hero must confront parental or authority figures to take the first steps into selfhood. Pratt writes, &quot;Even if the older woman hero has turned away from society because of disenchantment with her past, she must come to terms once more with the father and mother figures resident in . . . her repository of personal memories.&quot;¹⁸</td>
<td>Meridian The Color Purple Possessing the Secret of Joy</td>
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¹⁸Ibid., 140.
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<th>ARCHETYPE</th>
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<th>WALKER</th>
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| Rebirth   | The character should be in control of her "self" at the point of rebirth. She should reach what is called self-actualization. However, in most white womanist fiction, the hero finds rebirth only through death because of despair or near insanity caused by the constraints of a patriarchal society. | Meridian  
The Color Purple  
Possessing the Secret of Joy |

\[^{19}\text{Ibid., 142.}\]
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<tr>
<th>APPROACH</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ostensive</td>
<td>In the ostensive approach, emphasis is placed on the subject matter and the intellectual frame of reference to which the specific substance refers: What the work is about (subject or theme) over specific content (distinctive events within the work).²⁰</td>
<td>Meridian is a &quot;coming of age&quot; story for a black American during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. An ostensive approach question about Meridian might be as follows: In loving and pursuing an ideal, is it necessarily true that men and women lose the love of other humans?</td>
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<tr>
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<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>This response is to the literary work solely as an object complete in itself. This is the New Criticism idea that a work stands on its own much as we evaluate art or music. This response ignores an author's life and times and literary and artistic concerns.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Even though The Color Purple uses the letter format, knowing the history of epistolary literature is of little value in understanding Celie. Intrinsic approach questions about The Color Purple might be as follows: Who is the woman that Mr. ____ brings home? How does Celie treat her?</td>
<td></td>
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21 Ibid., 28.

22 Ibid.
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<th>APPROACH</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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</table>
| Extrinsic  | This response goes outside the work to get facts that help us to read it accurately. This response takes facts or ideas that are not themselves literary, such as history, mythology, religion, or psychology, and applies them to a work so as to "illuminate" our understanding of it. | Historical: read Possessing the Secret of Joy with a knowledge of the ritual of genital mutilation.  
Biographical: read Meridian as a fictionalized account of Alice Walker's life.  
Archetypal: read The Color Purple with knowledge of archetypes. |

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\(^{23}\text{Ibid., 31.}\)
REFERENCE LIST


