

# **THE MOVING IMAGE: CONTEMPORARY FILM ANALYSIS AND ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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## ABSTRACT

The cinematic experience is often an emotional or 'felt' experience. In the aftermath of the film, it is challenging to indicate precisely how I was guided to react emotionally to the film. This study presents an investigation of the emotional cinematic experience from a Jungian critical reading.

Jungian theory introduces a model of the psyche as consisting of, amongst other constructs, the collective unconscious and the archetypes. These archetypal contents manifest visually as symbols. These symbols guide the reader of the filmic text towards an emotional cinematic experience by activating, in particular, the archetype of the Self. Based on a review of the available scholarship in Jungian theory and film, this dissertation develops a Jungian conceptual framework consisting of notions and concepts that can describe, articulate and examine the psychological dynamics of an emotional cinematic experience.

In a demonstration of how a Jungian approach to the text can highlight the dynamics of the emotional cinematic experience, the study presents a critical reading of M. Night Shyamalan's films *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable* and *Signs*. Using the Jungian practice of amplification, the study focuses on notions of the archetypal (contents and manifestations, particularly the archetype of the Self); individuation motifs; notions of the Apocalypse; and alchemical symbolism, all framed within an approach proposed by Jungian dream analysis. The symbolic aspect of film imagery is constructed by archetypal contents and individuation motifs that emphasise the emotional cinematic experience

Based on the critical reading of Shyamalan's film, this dissertation concludes that the emotional cinematic experience can be examined with specific reference to the emotional cinematic experience as 'guided' by the filmic images' symbolic aspect. The Jungian framework developed by this study can be used to effectively investigate and articulate the emotional cinematic experience.

**Key concepts**

Alchemy

Apocalypse

Archetype

Emotion

Hero

Individuation

Myth

Self

Shadow

Unconscious

**Sleutelkonsepte**

Alchemie

Apokalips

Argetipe

Emosie

Held

Individuasie

Mite

Self

Skadu

Onbewuste

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Contextualisation and aims of the study

In this study, I argue that the CG Jung's analytical psychology presents an approach to investigate the emotional cinematic experience. This Jungian conceptual framework consists of notions and ideas that can describe, articulate and examine the psychological dynamics underlying an emotional cinematic experience (in which the roles of the symbolic and archetypal are emphasised). Jung (and the Jungian approach) provides "not a philosophy, but techniques enabling individuals to achieve the perception of meaning" (Stevens 1982:35). It is this perception or rather construction of meaning and how it links with notions of the symbolic that motivate this study of the moving image.

Roger Ebert (2000:vii) argues that the role of a film critic is to "encourage good films and discourage bad ones". Monaco (1981:310-312) states that the critic's function is to describe and evaluate a film. Since my position contributes to my construction of a critical reading of a filmic text, critical reading involves the making of meaning, and includes, as this study does, examining the psychological dynamics underlying the emotional cinematic experience. Prince (in Bordwell & Carroll 1996:71) elaborates: "The finished product [the review] can become a stimulating supplement to the films themselves, deepening the viewer's appreciation of them." This "deepening of (...) appreciation" may occur through a psychological reading of the text; that is, by applying a Jungian approach in the critical reading of the text. Interpretation is "an intentional explanation" (Currie 1995:226), since interpretation is to "hypothesize about the intentional causes of whatever it is that's being interpreted – a temple, a text, a picture, the sequence of moving pictures and accompanying sounds that constitute a movie." This study proposes, however, that the term 'interpretation' may be misleading as it has the potential of leading one to think that a Jungian



approach presents an explanation of “intentional causes” as stated in the above quote. An interpretation seems, problematically, to causally explain an event as coming from a single origin, which renders a single meaning. My role as critical reader is, however, one of making meaning and not of ‘explaining’ or ‘revealing’ it, thus encouraging a polysemic approach to the text. A Jungian approach encourages the creation of numerous meanings. The Jungian critical reader in some ways resembles the figure of the shaman found in various communities. Shamanism focuses on the healing and growth of the psyche as found in psychological growth<sup>1</sup> (Sandner 1997:3). Sandner (1997:5) explains that the shamans “seek direct experience [encounters] with an inner world [the collective unconscious] by encountering imaginary inner beings [archetypal figures] that are regarded as subjectively real,” much like the critic encounters subjectively real archetypal figures in film. Furthermore, the shamanic trance is a state that exists in ‘another reality’ outside external time and space (1997:4). This trance is much like the practice of active imagination (discussed later with dream analysis) during which the individual concentrates on an image from his/her psyche; “this image may move or become part of a scene (...) [the shaman] must give it some form of creative expression: recording it, painting it, sculpting it.” The conceptualisation of the role and function of the shaman links with a Jungian emphasis on the subjective experience of the symbolic, wherein I am in a heightened state of emotional ‘awareness’. This ‘awareness’ is elicited by ‘emotionally charged’ imagery that focuses my attention on notions of symbolic. Working from a Jungian frame, I pay particular attention to emotional imagery and its potential symbolism. I thus perceive material as symbolic in my reading, which helps to facilitate an emotional experience<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This psychological growth, or individuation, is discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>2</sup> I agree with notions of the symbol as social construct as being shaped by labour and imposed perceptions. However, this study will construct an additional, non-exclusive notion of symbol as an emotion-guiding psychological visibility. This notion is developed in Chapter Four.

Much of the relationship between film and subject (critic) can be developed by some reflection on the analyst-analysand relationship<sup>3</sup>. “The analyst,” writes Hall (1983:78), referring to a Jungian therapist, is “only able to interpret those archetypal images that can be identified as such. This depends largely upon a broad familiarity with mythology, folklore and religion.” Film analysis could then be influenced by therapeutic psychology as discussed by Cox (1975:12), where the analyst encounters the analysand. Analyst is to analysand as critic is to film.

In analysis, a detached attitude is discouraged, while the relationship between analyst and analysand needs to be open (Cox 1975:172). The critic actively engages the text as the therapist a patient, entering a ‘dialogue’ existing between reader and text, the reading of which is open to various interpretations. “The work involved in analytical treatment gives rise to experiences of an archetypal nature which require to be expressed and shaped” (Jung 1966:78), and consequently investigated by the critic wielding his/her knowledge of analytical psychology. Edinger (1984:91) says with reference to the individual (the critic, in this instance) and psychology: “man [sic] cannot get outside his own psyche. All experience is therefore psychic experience.” Such a Jungian approach to film proposes inclusivity, covering themes such as myth and dream analysis, which may aid the critic in his/her reading of the filmic text to articulate a (personal) understanding of the affective imagery or impact of the film. A Jungian approach provides a conceptual framework and vocabulary to articulate the role of psychological processes in the emotional cinematic experience in an interconnected way by using “Jungian tools of analysis” such as amplification, individuation and archetypal analysis (to be discussed in Chapter Three).

For the purposes of this study, I position myself as a critical reader, who, much like the shaman and analyst, investigates the emotional cinematic experience by highlighting the underlying psychological processes of the filmic encounter from a

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<sup>3</sup> It is potentially impossible to assess the emotional impact of a film on a critic; this study posits the critic as construct that could react to certain visual stimuli in particularly emotional ways.

Jungian approach. Positioning myself as critical reader, I consider the influence of unconscious factors in the critical reading of the filmic text, recognising the differentiation between personal and impersonal contents. This study does not aim to construct or investigate the relationship between the critic and his/her readers; I only mention audiences in relation to the function of the critic, and to put the critic in context as a critical reader of film as text. In this study, I am the critic and I give a reading speaking for myself when I write.

Belief systems, values and ideology are important in the critic's psychological approach to the text. In reading the text, I bring myself personally, culturally, and socially to a film, and could in turn be affected by the film on one or more of these levels. I focus on the psychological dimension of the emotional cinematic experience, with specific focus on the role of the unconscious. With reference to the articulation of emotional experience, Jungian critic Don Fredericksen (2001:17) states in his study in *Jung & Film* (Hauke & Alister 2001) that many people struggle to "satisfactorily articulate the meanings of some very meaningful works". Although I cannot speak for Fredericksen regarding the criteria that he uses in judging artefacts as "very meaningful works", it is my opinion that such works are assessed on a highly subjective level, depending on the emotional resonance felt by the critic as part of the cinematic experience. These "very meaningful works" (Fredericksen 2001:17), often eliciting emotional responses, relate to Fredericksen's subjective assessment of selected films that he himself considers important. In this regard, the "works" or films are perceived as potentially meaningful. In his humorous account of the history of the science fiction film, John Brosnan (1995:144) elaborates on the impact the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick 1968) had on science fiction filmmaking. Brosnan admits that the film did not particularly impress him at first, although he did recognise that the film, for all its apparent shortcomings, was a work of considerable merit. "I didn't understand it, mind, but I liked it. (...) And I recognised that it was a landmark movie." Brosnan clearly admired the film, although he could not exactly articulate why he did. This is the kind of "inability"

to sufficiently explain the impact of a film that Fredericksen (2001:17) refers to and that this study addresses by applying a Jungian analysis to Shyamalan's films. What does stand out from Brosnan's and Fredericksen's accounts is that the films in question stimulated affective responses.

Based on the above, I employ analytical psychology as an inclusive tool (in both an affective and cognitive manner) and framework for film analysis. A Jungian reading provides me with functional tools to analyse film on a multi-dimensional level or unravel layers of potential meaning in describing and discussing the emotional experience by examining the underlying psychological dynamics of this experience. As mentioned previously, Fredericksen (2001:17) claims that his Jungian study of film grew out of his failure to "account for the felt [emotional] power of certain films, film images and film-makers". In this single sentence, he mentions three aspects of film analysis from a Jungian perspective: the emotional power of film, the analysis of the film as a whole, and the analysis of specific images<sup>4</sup>. Philipson (in Sugg 1992:227) emphasises the significance of the notion of the symbolic. After Freud, Jung was one of the first psychologists to investigate the (symbolic) manifestations of the structures of the psyche. It is important to consider the symbolic as symbols stimulate emotion (as I argue in Chapters Three and Four). I aim to highlight the psychological insights I experienced through the emotional filmic experience of these images, and investigate how the film accomplishes this feat. For the purposes of this study, I, as 'the critic', am an investigator and critical reader like any audience member<sup>5</sup> can be.

Jung takes his place mainly alongside Freud in their respective branches of depth psychology<sup>6</sup>. It is of note that both film and depth psychology originated as

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<sup>4</sup> The study will investigate two of these three aspects in depth in an analysis of M. Night Shyamalan's "Everyday Hero" trilogy. These three feature films will constitute my case studies.

<sup>5</sup> As Jung (1950:282) eloquently states, "Whoever wishes to educate must himself be educated."

<sup>6</sup> Depth psychology encompassed non-behaviourist psychological movements, such as psychoanalysis, analytical psychology and Adler's individual psychology (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:45-51).

the nineteenth century drew to a close (Berry 2001:70). The development of film-specific technological innovation occurred as psychologists such as Freud and Jung explored the notion of the unconscious and its perceived impact on conscious existence. As film theory developed from focusing on editing styles to auteur theory, psychoanalysis<sup>7</sup> and semiotics, it became clear that “a single theory would never be sufficient to explain and analyse film” (Hayward 2001:387-388). No more is there a grand theory or grand narrative. With this in mind, Jungian film theory would be located alongside theories of genre and gender in an approach to film, placing an additional emphasis on the psychological dimension of the filmic experience. For the purposes of this study, I position Jungian theory as a contributing approach to film analysis that could function in conjunction with other approaches. The inclusion of Jungian psychology into film theory would complexify the discourse around film analysis. Such a Jungian film theory aligns with the notion of film as open text, that a text – anything that can be read – is open to multiple meanings and therefore resists a master reading directed by some kind of a grand theory. This notion motivates the making of multiple meanings in and with a film and results in what I refer to (within this study’s context) as a “Jungian critical reading”.

A Jungian approach, as will be shown, encourages a postmodernist approach to analysis. In the words of Hauke (2001:4), “[w]hat Jung points out is that the meaning we make [...] rests on a base more profound than modernity ordinarily allows or recognises.” Whereas a traditional absolutist approach could refer to notions of Truth, God, Nation, Rationality and the Objective, a postmodernist approach promotes multiple perspectives, “gods” (instead of a single capital “God”), notions of the multi-national and multi-cultural, various rationalities and the subjective (Hauke 2001:30). Hauke (2001:57) further argues that “what we find in Jung is a critical attitude to modernity and modern consciousness” and asserts that “I am quite in agreement with [the] view that sees Jung’s overall

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<sup>7</sup> In terms of film theory, Freudian psychoanalysis enjoys more attention than Jungian depth psychology (see Chapter Two for more detail).

project as one of *deconstructing modern consciousness*" (my italics) (2001:198). From what has been said, Jungian theory can be positioned as an approach to the filmic text that complements contemporary thinking (such as cognitivism), specifically in terms of the emotional cinematic experience.

The link between emotion and film will become clear as this study progresses. Berry (2001:71) calls film "modern consciousness", and argues that what a film represents, corresponds with changes in what Jung refers to as the collective psyche (this notion will be explored in Chapter Three); these changes are consequently reflected in film. (The above also refers to the compensatory function of both the psyche and film; both are investigated in Chapters Three and Four). As Keyes (1995:1) states: "The creative genius of other men's work illuminates the individual's situation, mirrors and deepens his [sic]<sup>8</sup> questions." Rushing and Frenz (1995:47), too, are of the opinion that "films are to the cultural psyche what dreams are to the individual psyche." Film (a collection of images or a specific scene) often presents me with previously unconscious contents and symbols that may demand conscious interrogation. A Jungian critical reading emphasises the role of the psyche and emotion in reading the film, even though Jungian film theory has apparently received limited attention in terms of film analysis.

Until the publication of *Jung & Film* (Hauke & Alister 2001), little had been written on the relationship between the Jung's analytical psychology and film. In relation to this 'non-presence' of what I refer to as Jungian film theory, John Izod (1992:1) says:

Media Studies theorists have not given the writings of CG Jung a hundredth part of the attention they have devoted to his mentor, Sigmund Freud. This indifference (...) can readily be understood

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<sup>8</sup> I am conscious of the use of s/he and him/her to comply with representational gender equality. Wherever possible I attempted to follow this line of representation; any indications of patriarchal suggestions in my writing are purely incidental.

given the supremacy of rationalist theories in academic studies of film since the late 1960's.

What Izod suggests is that during the time period indicated, positivist and empiricist studies left little space for those schools of thought that were considered 'irrational', and its subject immeasurable. Furthermore, Martin (in Martin & Ostwalt 1995:2) points out that in general, "Freudian terms abound (...) as do key words from the theoretical lexicons of Lacan, Derrida, Kristeva and Saussure. But religion, with its regular use of emotionally charged rituals, is not listed; nor is myth or ritual (...) or theology". Scholars functioning as film critics have very little to say about religion – likewise, scholars of religion have "almost nothing to say about Hollywood film" (Martin & Ostwalt 1995:2). A Jungian approach, which often relies on mythology in terms of symbolism and meaning making, aims to change this state of exclusion. A Jungian critical reading offers ways in which the mytho-religious aspects of film to the visual text can be discussed, as such a reading highlights a connection between symbolism and myth and religion. Consequently, I might consider investigating how the particular filmic experience could be emotionally meaningful. The term 'affect' means to "move emotionally" (Elliot 1997:14) and refers to "strong instinctive feeling" (1997:242).

For the purposes of this study, the above is a fitting description, but to avoid any terminological conflict with psychological discourse, I will refer to 'emotion' and 'emotional experience' throughout as opposed to using the word 'affect'. Whereas Lacan emphasised the use of language in articulating emotion, Jung emphasises a more intuitive or 'felt' relation to emotion. Indeed, the online resource Answers ([sa]:[sp]) states that emotion implies intuitive cognition; it defines emotion as a "complex, usually strong subjective response" that occurs spontaneously, not through conscious effort. The site directly relates emotion to feeling, which is an "affective state of consciousness" and has the ability to prime the individual to "experience higher emotions" (Answers [sa]:[sp]), or what I refer to as the numinous. Significantly, the Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia

(2004:[sp]) mentions that emotion “in itself *motivates the individual towards further activity*” (my italics). I will refer to an experience as emotional whenever the experience evokes feelings of numinosity and guides me towards greater consciousness (“further activity”) through symbolic imagery<sup>9</sup>.

For the purposes of this study, I also need to construct an operational definition for what I have termed the ‘emotional cinematic experience’: it is a ‘felt’ experience that manifests at the intersection of various psychological (mainly archetypal) processes from the collective unconscious that construct numinous feelings. It is a collective experience in the sense that all film viewers have the potential to experience feelings of numinosity, not that all viewers will have the same numinous responses to the same visual stimuli. The emotional cinematic experience can be related to characters in films. To paraphrase Lennihan (2001:62), film characters can experience the numinous, an experience akin to a ‘spiritual awakening’. I am also invited to experience the numinous in the emotional cinematic experience. In his analysis of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick 1968), Izod (2001a:149) makes it clear that cinematic numinous experiences can enhance my consciousness of the unconscious (the “further activity” mentioned above). Note how the mere *consciousness* of the unconscious is sufficient to evoke feelings of numinosity. This study examines the numinous experiences of film characters to demonstrate how I also undergo emotional experiences while watching a film.

Many films have an overwhelming perceived numinosity, or an “experience of the Divine”, as Stevens (1982:299) puts it. Such a numinous experience is characterised by feelings of ‘belonging’, of being part of something larger than oneself, being part of some kind of ‘eternal’ or ‘infinite’. Edinger (2002:195) explains ‘numinous’ as follows: “Something ‘numinous’ is ‘full of the divine’, fraught with the awareness and feeling of being in the presence of sacred reality.” The numinous provides a cornerstone for this study, and I will refer to it continuously in relation to the emotional cinematic experience. The numinous,

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<sup>9</sup> As *Signs* (Shyamalan 2002) does – see Chapter Four



evoking feeling of awe, is always a ‘felt’, emotional experience. Where I refer to an emotional experience, the presence of the numinous is implied. Such numinous reaction to visual stimuli contributes to a film’s strong emotional influence on the reader: it carries with it heightened emotions or having access to ‘something greater’, part of what I have referred to as transformative and compensatory experiences. This experience could be referred to as ‘numinous’. In this sense, a Jungian approach could support the notion that film has what analytical psychology refers to as a transcendent function. When I speak of the transcendent function, I relate it to the psyche, referring to the use of “conscious and unconscious data in shaping symbolic images that could not be achieved by consciousness alone” as discussed by Keyes (1995:103). It will become evident why the symbolic is important to the critic who wishes to utilise a Jungian approach to the filmic text in an investigation of the emotional cinematic experience.

Martin (1990:175) refers to many films as contributing to “the *felt experience* of a connection to the larger background of human existence [which could refer to Jung’s notion of the collective unconscious] that integrates one’s uniqueness and personal identity, a sense of belonging to a greater whole, and an appreciation of life’s *numinosity* and mystery” (my italics). In my view, making meaning includes three main parts: the personal, the cultural and the archetypal. These three ‘strands of meaning’ describe the basic shape of the whole as having both a collective cultural context and an autobiographical context, but also a mythic context. Some environmental or situational conditions might prove highly formative, the same way a great disaster (such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001) can impact on the production of art and the subsequent critical readings<sup>10</sup>. The autobiographical context spoken of refers to the individual artist within the bounds of his/her family – all his/her personal associations. The mythic context, on the other hand, refers to the archetype as

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<sup>10</sup> In fact, Steven Spielberg’s *War of the Worlds* (2005) could be read against the backdrop of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent ‘war on terrorism’.

“collective formative pattern” (Martin 1990:177), and the reader (thus, the critic) might be inclined to ask: What particular archetypal pattern or story underlies this work’s content? From this mythic frame, the critic can assess how the artwork in some way serves to counter an imbalance of some form of perceived cultural ‘narrow-mindedness’ or (f)rigidity. The mythic position addresses this by analysing the artwork from a psychological point of view that allows insight into how meaning is constructed (1990:178).

A ‘felt’ or emotional experience is associated with the notion of psychological transformation. Such transformation may occur through the critic vicariously ‘being someone else’, that is, through the filmic experience of ‘living through’ on-screen characters and situations (Berry 2001:78) representative of archetypal contents. Film potentially presents the individual with the opportunity to ‘enter’ the world and existence of others. These ‘transformative experiences’ could guide the reader into certain analytical procedures in attempt to account for emotional cinematic experience. In as far as the cinematic experience is occasionally emotional, it can also have ‘transformatory’ and ‘compensatory’ functions. Film may serve as the channel for transformation in terms of compensating for “a culture’s [perceived] one-sidedness” (Martin 1990:174) or a perceived insularity; this compensation occurs on a psychological level. The Jungian critical reading may disclose what it is that a film compensates for (which is one of the aspects that is addressed in my discussion of Shyamalan’s *Signs* [2002]).

I put forth the following ideas based in Jungian thought: a Jungian approach to film could be beneficial in that it complexifies the discourse around film. Such a Jungian approach fits with contemporary thinking since it promotes notions of open texts and the plurality of meaning. Specifically, such an approach would promote critical reading in an attempt to investigate the emotional experience associated with film as a whole, considering the archetypal associations elicited by the film as well as film’s transformative and compensatory functions. In

addition, film images are often read as symbolic. The effect of a film could be emotionally meaningful as achieved through archetypal and symbolic imagery.

In light of the above, the following three films made by writer-director M. Night Shyamalan constitute my case study. In order of public release, these films are: *The Sixth Sense* (a contemporary ghost story), *Unbreakable* (a superhero film) and *Signs* (an alien invasion). These three films feature in the penultimate chapter where Jungian analytical psychology's efficacy as a tool for analysis is demonstrated.

In Chapter One I propose Jungian theory to analyse the emotional effects of Shyamalan's films on me. This approach argues that it is emotionally meaningful to perceive film images as symbolic. The application of Jungian principles may accommodate my search for meaning 'in' texts. If a film or series of filmic images affect me in an emotional way, possibly via mythic, religious or otherwise symbolic imagery, I may consider employing a Jungian frame for analysis in an attempt to investigate the possibly unknown (unconscious) element that caused this emotional reaction. Chapter Two posits why a Jungian approach is accommodating in this regard: this Jungian position considers the psychological and image-based feedback between the reader and the text.

A Jungian approach uses amplification to investigate the emotional effects of film on readers. Amplification is a Jungian tool used in dream and fairy tale analysis to investigate the potential meanings of certain images. "Inviting mysteries of symbolic art," argues Izod (2001b:6), are well read "via the Jungian hermeneutic of amplification," to be investigated in Chapter Three. Amplification then is an instrument in the interrogation of the visual text. The filmic text, which is perceived or read as symbolic, is amplified in a Jungian approach, contributing a "wealth of personal and collective historical and cultural analogies,

correspondences and parallels” (Barnaby & D’Arcino 1990:xvii)<sup>11</sup>, thereby ascribing and deferring meaning by association.

For instance, what does Stephen Daldry’s *The Hours* (2002) tell us of life and death, not only through dialogue but images? What does Shekhar Kapur’s historical drama *The Four Feathers* (2002) comment about self-actualisation? Through a Jungian reading I may suggest how *The Hours* demonstrates the recurrent manifestation and influence of an archetype<sup>12</sup> on three different characters, including Virginia Woolf. *The Four Feathers* tells of a young British soldier who is given three feathers (and later a fourth) to represent his cowardice in the face of violent conflict. Von Franz (1988:113) informs us that in Jungian thought, the notion of the quaternity (three feathers plus one added later equals four feathers) represents the inherent drive toward psychological completeness as the number four stands for ‘totality’ (individuation – see Chapter Three) in every person, the number four signifying wholeness. Indeed, the main character is propelled to confront his own personal shadow (guilt and inferiority) as he confronts the British collective shadow (‘dark’ Africa), disposing of self-centeredness in favour of psychological maturation.

I have briefly outlined the background to this study and thereby provided an introduction to the issues that motivate this study. In the following section, the study elaborates on film criticism. I discuss the role and function of the film critic and describe what one could view as a “Jungian critic”<sup>13</sup>. The following section frames me as critical reader with regard to notions of the shaman and analyst-analysand within a Jungian approach. This is done to create a frame of reference for those occurrences when I refer to the “Jungian critic” and what this implies. It is a matter of some importance that Jung never designed his own system of

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<sup>11</sup> I do not force parallels from mythology onto a film, but rather react to guiding associative links that promote a psychological reading of the film and its effect on the subject.

<sup>12</sup> In its original Greek, “archetype” means “prime imprinter”, that is, an original manuscript from which copies were made (Stevens 1982:47). This concept will be fully discussed in the third chapter.

<sup>13</sup> A critic, such as myself, working from within the selected Jungian approach to film.

analysis, nor did he adhere to a strict, prescribed and detailed method when in analysis with a patient (Cox 1975:184)<sup>14</sup>. This study aims to present a critical reading that integrates the different Jungian ideas and concepts in a functional way.

I propose that analytical psychology, as defined by Jung, tends towards a holistic<sup>15</sup> understanding of the filmic text. For this purpose, I might consider equipping myself with knowledge of and insight into subjective (psychic) realities such as archetypes, dreams and other relevant aspects of the unconscious. The key is that a Jungian, analytical approach may be used as central to my construction of a film's potential meaning(s) as I attempt to articulate the emotional impact of the film. Depending on the subjectively perceived ('felt') emotional impact of a film, I might see a film as being psychologically compensatory in a collective way (see in Chapter Four).

Having presented and considered the significance of a Jungian approach to the filmic text in film criticism as well as introducing related issues and having positioned myself as Jungian critical reader within a Jungian context, I propose the resultant problem statement, thesis statement and research approach.

## 1.2 Problem statement

It would seem that most scholarship on film and emotion are either medical (Goldin, Hutcherson, Ochsner, Glover, Gabrieli & Gross 2005; Lischetzke, Cuccodoro, Gauger, Todeschini & Eid 2005; Britton, Taylor, Berridge, Mikels & Liberzon 2006) or behavioural (Charles 2005) in approach. Those studies that use a psychological approach are mainly psychoanalytic (Davis 2005) or

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<sup>14</sup> By this, I mean to highlight that Jung did not consider himself an 'educated expert'.

<sup>15</sup> Holism refers to the understanding of a phenomenon as a "complex system that is more than the sum of its parts" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:43). Relationships are not reduced to simple matters of cause and effect, and the psyche is treated and regarded as 'whole'.

predominantly cognitive (Choi 2003)<sup>16</sup>. Choi's (2003:308–321) study on film and emotion emphasises conscious cognitive abilities such as the use of reason to judge whether or not an emotional response to film is “warranted” (2003:308). In contrast to schools of thought that emphasise conscious cognitive processes in emotional responses to film, a Jungian approach shifts the emphasis to unconscious factors that influence consciousness.

Scholarship in film theory tends to neglect how a Jungian approach frames the emotional cinematic experience (in particular, how Jungians would address the psychological processes underlying such an experience). The question arises as to how a Jungian, analytical approach to film contributes to my reading of the symbolic components (manifesting from the realm of the unconscious) of the filmic text in investigating specifically the emotional cinematic experience. The Jungian reading that I propose, presents a multi-dimensional and holistic approach to the filmic text, which illuminates the reader's emotional cinematic experience as guided by the symbolic text. In Chapter Four, I examine my emotional cinematic experience as guided by the “Everyday Hero” trilogy by M. Night Shyamalan.

### 1.3 Thesis statement

A Jungian critical reading aids the articulation of the filmic experience, with specific reference to the emotional cinematic experience as ‘guided’ by the filmic images’ symbolic content. This symbolic content is constituted by archetypal contents and individuation motifs that emphasise the emotional cinematic experience. In this, I propose an approach to film that aids me in articulating my emotional reaction to the text. This approach is based on Jungian

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<sup>16</sup> One potentially major source, *Emotion and Film Theory* (Norbert 2003) was inaccessible at the time of writing this dissertation.

conceptualisations of unconscious<sup>17</sup>, the archetypes, notions of the symbolic, the process of individuation, alchemy and dream analysis.

#### 1.4 Research approach and aims

The main aim of this qualitative study is to investigate and use Jungian concepts and ideas in a reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy by M. Night Shyamalan that highlight the psychological dynamics underlying the emotional cinematic experience. This is done through a review of scholarship that highlights notions and processes that I argue are important to a Jungian approach to articulate the emotional cinematic experience.

A Jungian critical reading advances a frame for analysis and evaluation which, in the construction of the argument of this thesis, also addresses the following sub-aims:

- An analysis of the film as a complete, self-contained narrative, composed of ‘chains’ of scenes or a series of scenes;
- The analysis of the films as a series.

In this study, I consider Shyamalan’s films individually, as well as the position of each film within the context of the trilogy. For my analysis, I will use Jung’s structure of the psyche (the unconscious and the archetypes), basic notions of mythology, alchemical symbolism, principles of dream analysis, and notions of individuation and amplification to construct a critical reading of Shyamalan’s films. This critical reading will highlight the constructs that are relevant to the constitution of the emotional cinematic experience.

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<sup>17</sup> At this point, I reiterate that the term ‘unconscious’ used throughout the study and this proposal always refers to this Jungian definition, unless otherwise specified.

## 1.5 Outline of chapters

### Chapter One

#### Introduction

I present a general preface with a brief discussion of chapters and clarification of concepts. This chapter sets out the rationale, research problem and research approach, while also providing a background to the main ideas that this thesis explores and contextualises.

### Chapter Two

#### Review of prior scholarship

Chapter Two positions this study within the existing scholarship, thereby providing an overview of the existing literature available in English and Afrikaans and available in print related to the topic of this study. It also serves to motivate the study in that it is not a mere duplication of the existing scholarship.

### Chapter Three

This third chapter details the thought and ideas of Jung that are especially relevant for my filmic reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy. A brief outline of Jung’s historical environment is provided before the chapter investigates relevant notions including the unconscious, archetypes, Jung’s conceptualisation of psyche, alchemy and dream analysis, as well as how these notions could benefit film studies.

#### Swimming in the Unconscious: Archetypes and mythology

This first section investigates Jung’s concept of the unconscious (personal and collective) and archetypes, as well as how they can affect reaction to and interpretation of a film. It also addresses the process of projection. This section also introduces mythology and how it links with film, since myths respond to the collective unconscious (what Jung [1964:10] poetically referred to as the “eternal well of shared memories”), and I involve mythological and archetypal motifs,



particularly pertaining to notions of the symbolic, in my reading of Shyamalan’s films.

The Alchemical Quest: the Individuation motif in film.

The discussion of alchemy provides a background and introduction to a section on individuation and its potential for film and emotion.

Applying dream analysis to film.

Analytical psychology has asserted repeatedly that “the dream is the theatre where the dreamer is at once (...) actor, stage manager, author, (...) and critic” (Jacobi 1953:58). This chapter illustrates how the principles of dream analysis can be applied to film and also contains a brief section on the relevance of active imagination.

I use specific Jungian notions in my reading of Shyamalan’s films. These Jungian ‘tools’ for film analysis (see section 1.4 above) include the following:

- Archetypal and mythological analysis;
- The function of the individuation motif in the films;
- Dream analysis as a basis for film analysis; and
- Amplification of narrative patterns and symbols.

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the above points:

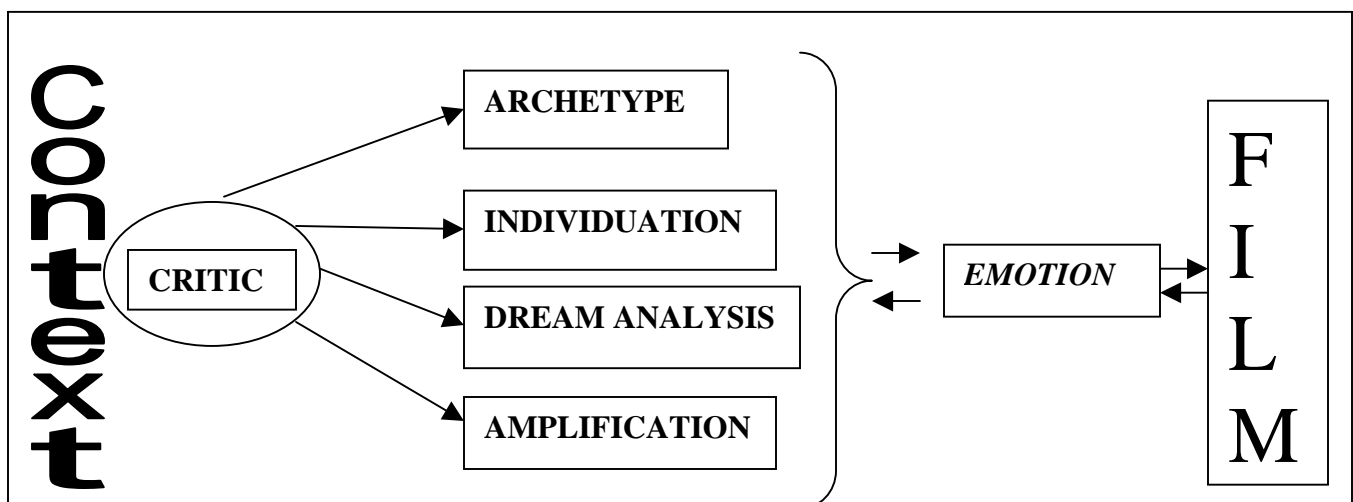


Figure 1: Elements of a Jungian approach.

## Chapter Four

Jung and film: an application of theory.

A film may be assessed in terms of a Jungian approach that illuminates the psychological dynamics underlying the emotional cinematic experience. In this light, the “Everyday Hero” trilogy of M. Night Shyamalan is analysed as a unit that reflects parallel psychological and mythic themes. In this chapter, the content of the previous three chapters is consolidated and applied to three films by Indian-American filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan: *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *Unbreakable* (2000) and *Signs* (2002). The analysis of these three films according to Jungian analytical principles illustrates the functionality and applicability of a Jungian approach to film. These films were selected because of their mass appeal and critical acclaim (Box Office Mojo 2004:[sp]) and their shared archetypal overtones which invite a Jungian critical reading.

## Chapter Five

Conclusions and suggestions for further research.

In the concluding chapter, the findings are summarised and assessed, limitations of the study are examined and ideas for future research are presented.

### 1.6 Clarification of concepts<sup>18</sup>

1.6.1 **Alchemy**: “is both a philosophy and an experimental science”, writes H.S. Redgrove (1911:2) concerning the old tradition of attempting to turn lead into gold. Alchemy has a vital psychological component: the alchemist’s search for gold is read as humankind’s search for **Self**. This process has the purpose of fulfilling the individual’s inner potential and promise. This fulfillment requires an

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<sup>18</sup> The clarification of concepts is presented here, close to the start of the study, for the purpose of quick reference. Although these terms are only elaborated upon in Chapter Three, many of them have already been mentioned.

integration or interplay of opposites, “a mystical union between two cosmological principles” (Eliade 1962:151). This is the *coniunctio*, represented in alchemy by the union of sulphur and mercury (Lennihan 2001:66). There is also the *lapis filosoforum* or “Philosopher’s Stone” (Hyde & McGuinness 1999:130) which is used to transform matter into gold. According to Izod (2001b:218), Jung interpreted the *lapis* as an image of the **Self**. Often, the image of the *ouroboros* is used as a symbol representative of the alchemist’s work as a circular, self-contained process (Von Franz 1980:41). It depicts the serpent that slays itself, and then brings itself back to life (Jung 1967:104), presented visually as a snake biting its own tail.

1.6.2 **Amplification**: a Jungian process of making meaning of, for example, a dream or film image by way of relating “linked images and association” (Hauke & Alister 2001:243) to the original image. Amplification involves both the personal context of the person performing the amplification as well as mythological (archetypal) motifs of the collective unconscious.

1.6.3 **Archetypes**: forms and patterns (that are biologically and culturally influenced and shaped) that are inherited from previous generations. These archetypes “soak up” personal experience to provide the content to the archetypal form or template (Jacobi 1953:36). Van Rensburg (2000:153) refers to the above occurrence in the following manner: the archetype is like a dry riverbed waiting to fill up with water when the rains come down. Slowly and suddenly, the water flows and fills up the riverbed; the archetype has been activated. The form was there, and now the content merely “flows into place.” To be precise, Samuels (in Sugg 1991:188-189) quotes from the *Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (1986): “The archetype is a psychosomatic concept linking body and psyche, instinct and image.” These archetypes are only recognisable in our outer behaviour, and cannot be readily accessed or observed since they reside in the unconscious, which by its nature is not knowable by conscious investigation.

1.6.4 **Apotheosis**: the elevation of a mortal, human individual to the level of a god (Izod 2001a:146).

1.6.5 **Collective Unconscious**: a blueprint of universals in everybody inherited from previous generations since earliest times (Meyer *et al.* 1997:112); the collective unconscious houses the instincts and **archetypes**.

1.6.6 **Complex**: “Groupings of related images held together by a common emotional tone” (Hall 1983:10); that is, a “cluster around certain themes” based on association, arising from the **personal unconscious** (Izod 2001b:215).

1.6.7 **Ego**: individual consciousness. Izod (2001b:216) refers specifically to the ego-complex as the “centre of consciousness (...) the feeling-toned complex that consists of representations of oneself.” It is the ego that interacts with people in social interaction.

1.6.8 **Enantiodromia**: the tendency of psychological motifs/symbols/themes to run to their opposites (Izod 1992:5). To be precise, “every psychological extreme (...) contain[s] its own opposite and (...) run[s] towards it” (Izod 2001b:216).

1.6.9 **Individuation**: “The process in which a person (...) consciously attempts to understand and develop the innate individual potentialities of his or her psyche” (Hall 1983:19).

1.6.10 **Libido**: psychic energy, or as described by Izod (1992:255): “Desire and appetite in their natural state, unchecked by any kind of authority.”

1.6.11 **Mythology**: “(...) the language or images that a myth assumes” (Hockley 2001:178), the ‘personifications’ and visual manifestations of the psychological meaning(s) of the myth. A related notion is the mythologem, “the central or

unifying theme of a myth” (Hockley 2001:178), which provides the mythological narrative with a psychological ‘essence’ embodied as theme.

1.6.12 **Numinous**: the “experience of the Divine” (Stevens 1982:299). A numinous experience is characterised by the individual perception that a person is part of something larger than her-/himself, something ‘eternal’, ‘infinite’ and ‘awesome’.

1.6.13 **Personal Unconscious**: the container of personal contents that are unconscious because they are repressed or have lost their original intensity; the personal unconscious contains complexes (Meyer *et al.* 1997:111).

1.6.14 **Projection**: the “unconscious displacement of psychic contents onto other people or objects” (Hyde & McGuinness 1999:173). The archetypes most often projected are the anima, animus and shadow.

1.6.15 **Self**: the mediating and uniting symbol gaining its harmony from a tension of opposites (Jung 1964:410). It is the God-image in the psyche (Edinger 1984:91) that is present in everyone and plays a vital role in the process of psychological growth (**individuation**).

1.6.16 **Symbol**: the “expression of an intuitive idea that cannot yet be formulated in any other way” (Izod 1992:257). The function of the symbol is a compensatory one in that it mediates and rebalances conscious and unconscious (Izod 2001b:220).

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

The main aim of this review of scholarship is to discuss the relevant available scholarship in an attempt to bring together the fields of Jungian analytical psychology and film, to locate the problem area and to establish an appropriate context for the study. As the review of scholarship develops, it will become clear that there is a paucity of material on the emotional-psychological experience of film. Additionally, the contribution of available research to the above will be highlighted. The available research will aid in outlining specific details related to various components related to this study.

Figure 2.1 serves to illustrate the aims of this review of scholarship:

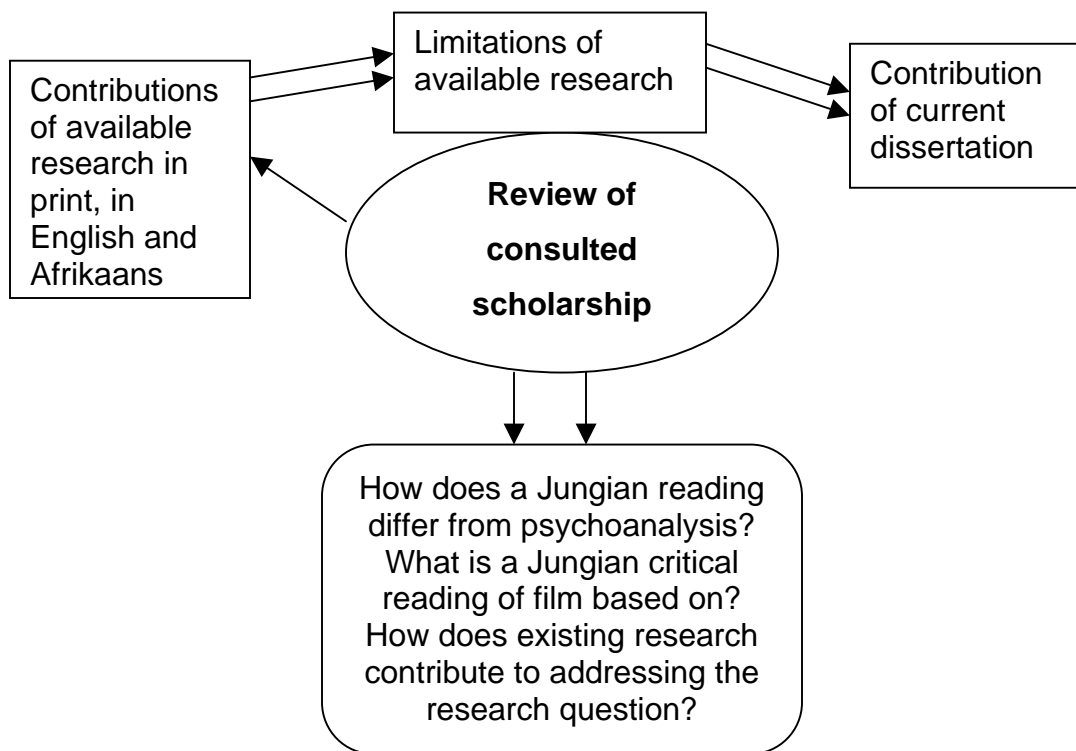


Figure 2.1: Aims of the review of scholarship.

In this chapter, I present an overview of research that aids me in locating Jung and his psychology. As part of this discussion, the study briefly addresses the

contemporary position of Jungian psychology<sup>19</sup>. Additionally, Jungian analytical psychology is compared and contrasted with Freudian psychoanalysis<sup>20</sup>.

## 2.1 Locating Jung: the man, the time and his thought

It is necessary to briefly locate Jung within his socio-temporal context to discover where much of his thought originated. Jung's personal context gave rise to many of his most prominent thoughts and writings. It is important to highlight this as I intend to use these overtly Western, Judaeo-Christian notions and sources in my study. Jung was raised in a Judaic-Christian household and had a minister for a father. Although never a Christian in the sense that he accepted the Christian doctrine of Jesus as Saviour of humankind, Jung was interested in the "spiritual life of the individual<sup>21</sup>" which was "ignored by the Church" (Clift 1983:ix). Jung also investigated Eastern religions, which according to Clarke (1994:4) added to the accusations of New Age-ism aimed at Jung. Nonetheless, Jung's study of Eastern religion led the psychologist to assimilate many principles of Eastern philosophy into his psychological thought. These principles include the reality of psychical experience and the attainment of psychological wholeness through the Self (Clarke 1994:5-6). Jung's education in both Western and Eastern religion and philosophy presented him with an understanding of psychological phenomena that accommodated, in my view, a psychologically integrated perspective on human experience. In accordance with a postmodernist line of reasoning, Hauke (2001:57) refers to Jungian thought as pertaining to a theory of complexity in the following quote: "Jung emphasised that by no means does the collective unconscious manifest itself in its entirety, *but only insofar as historical, cultural and personal conditions will permit*" (my italics). This is an important notion, since the activity of the collective unconscious cannot be distanced from

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<sup>19</sup> Chapter One already addressed the issue of using Jung in postmodern thinking by introducing notions of the open text and polysemy.

<sup>20</sup> Since psychoanalysis is in my view still the most prominent psychological approach to the filmic text, I believe that it is necessary to compare it to a Jungian approach, which is a theoretical complement to psychoanalysis and vice versa.

<sup>21</sup> Jung published *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) about the psycho-spiritual problems that, in his view, plagued the Christian Church and theology.

my immediate context<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, I can never be conscious of the collective unconscious in its entirety, as the unconscious manifests only in smaller parts in media such as film. Indeed, there is a distinct lack of Jungian theory in film theory.

Hockley (2001:3-4) addresses the issue of why there is not more Jungian involvement in the field of film studies. Firstly, “Jungian ideas are polyvalent and intrinsically subtle in their distinctions between form, content, metaphor and fantasy.” Secondly, “political, sexual and racial issues” could cloud some readers’ reading of Jung’s work as Jung has been categorised as sexist and racist by some critics (Hyde & McGuinness 2001:170-171). Thirdly, there is the mistaken belief that Jungian thought in practice has no political range or that it cannot be used in conjunction with movements such as feminism, nor within a postmodern context. To inspect these claims and their arguments the reader is again referred to Christopher Hauke’s *Jung and the Postmodern* (2000) regarding Jung’s compatibility with contemporary postmodern thought. In my view, Hauke (2000) effectively argues that Jungian thought is compatible with postmodern thinking, and that an integration of Jungian thought into postmodern thinking is constructive. Hauke (2000:1) sees Jungian psychology as a reaction to modernity and he relates Jung’s ideas to notions of simulacra, hyperspace and mass media (2000:19). Hauke (2000:35) notes that Jung argued for the end of master-narratives, as Lyotard would do 50 years later. According to Hauke (2000:42), Jungian theory criticises contemporary values in a way that is “*deconstructive*, not leading to death but to *rebirth*, not the loss of values but the *revaluation of all values*” (author’s italics). Jungian thought presents an opportunity to interrogate and deconstruct ideas, values and theories in a postmodern context that requires a non-complacent, critical view of issues.

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<sup>22</sup> The implication is that when I provide my reading of Shyamalan’s “Everyday Hero” trilogy in Chapter Four, I must admit to certain biases – I am white, male, middle class, educated, and raised in a distinctly Western and Calvinist context. I cannot distance myself from these variables.



For the purposes of this study, I use Eagleton's (2003:13) description of "postmodern":

By 'postmodern', I mean, roughly speaking, the contemporary movement of thought which rejects totalities, universal values, grand historical narratives, solid foundations to human existence and the possibility of objective knowledge.

Also:

Postmodernism is skeptical of truth, (...) opposes what it sees as elitism in culture, tends towards cultural relativism, and celebrates pluralism, discontinuity and heterogeneity.

Authors in Jungian scholarship, particularly those titles published between the 1950s and 1970s, seem to be fond of notions such as 'universal', 'timeless' and 'primitive', betraying a specific ideological position. The apparent non-critical use of words such as these betrays a position of self-serving European superiority and scientific reductionism shaped in and by modernist thought. These words are particularly problematic in a postmodern context. For the purposes of this study, I argue that words such as those listed above are constructive still, albeit in a different way than if read as promoting notions of modernist and even colonialist authority. Words such as 'universal' and 'timeless', which one often comes across in more dated Jungian scholarship, seem to endorse absolutism. Both 'universal' and 'timeless' promote a type of 'truth' that should be or is assumed to be 'common' in every individual. Dismayingly, this view disregards socio-cultural and historical influences.

For this study, however, 'universal' and 'timeless' are descriptive<sup>23</sup> of an experience, in that they serve to inform one about an individual's subjective experience of film that could also be described as 'larger than life', or 'divine'. As feeling-toned descriptions of the emotional-filmic experience – or of any experience that could be described as 'holy' or 'numinous' – this study retains these words while very aware of their negative connotations to modernist superiority. One should therefore be cautious not to comfortably read Jungians'

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<sup>23</sup> Unless indicated otherwise.

use of the term ‘universal’ as disregarding factors such as age and sexual preference. It refers to observable patterns of human behaviour that are perceived to manifest in a variety of cultures in various forms.

The word ‘primitive’, particularly problematic for its connotations with colonialism, conjures up connotations of economic, technological, physical, psychological, or intellectual inferiority and exploitation. The speaker of this word seems to consciously accept that s/he is more advanced in the above ways than his/her subject is, maybe because the speaker measures development in an openly Western, materialistic way. For present purposes, I will limit the use of ‘primitive’ to direct quotes. Even then, the reader should be aware, as I am, of the suggestions of crudeness and backwardness that ‘primitive’ connotes. Furthermore, any suggestions of determinism should be disregarded. For the most part, I use ‘primitive’ only if it appears in quotes. Should I use the word ‘primitive’ elsewhere, it is to refer to a culture that is different from mainstream Western culture; it is not a judgment to position the non-Western culture as ‘barbaric’ or ‘uncivilised’ due to a lack of material goods or moral and intellectual capabilities that differ from any Western notions (and is therefore ‘lesser’ than that which is overtly Western).

For the purposes of this study, I use potentially problematic terminology to describe emotional experiences, or ‘felt’ experiences, since the emotional cinematic experience is related – as this study will show – to notions of the omnipotent and divine. These notions should be regarded as descriptive of the numinous nature of the emotional cinematic experience, and not as absolutes. These notions are thus specifically contextualised to serve a particular purpose in a psychologically inclusive reading of the text.

Having clarified my position towards contentious notions, I now present an overview of psychoanalysis and Jungian theory. I do this to emphasise the similarities and differences between the two schools of thought and position them

as complementary to each other, not to construct a hierarchy in which Jungian theory is 'better' than psychoanalytic theory. This section will show how a Jungian approach to the text is useful to investigating the emotional cinematic experience. Psychoanalysis tends to neglect the emotional aspect of film, while cognitive film studies focus on the neurological aspect of the emotional cinematic experience.

## 2.2 Sleeping with the enemy: Jungian analytical psychology and psychoanalysis

By discussing psychoanalysis and how it has been used in film analysis, the study will argue that a Jungian analytical approach to film could also be constructive and complementary to a critical reading, alongside other approaches such as psychoanalysis. The discussion of psychoanalysis helps the individual to locate Jungian psychology in a field already dominated by other psychological schools of thought, most prominently psychoanalysis<sup>24</sup>. It is not intended to be a concrete discussion of psychoanalysis, but only to provide an idea of some contentious claims by psychoanalysis and the relevant criticism against this movement, thereby outlining a lack that a Jungian approach could address.

Throughout the following section on the similarities and differences between the Jungian and Freudian frame, it is important to remember that the criticisms regarding psychoanalysis is not intended to make psychoanalysis seem redundant but rather 'incomplete' as a theory; notably, a Jungian approach is not 'complete' by and in itself. Also, the proposed Jungian approach is by no means 'more advanced' than a Freudian, psychoanalytic approach. Jungian theory is an

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<sup>24</sup> Jung's ideas and thought have exerted a considerable influence on psychological theory (Young-Eisendrath & Hall 1991:9). Later object relation theorists drew much upon his work, including prominent post-Freudians such as Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion. Furthermore, Samuels (cited in Young-Eisendrath & Hall 1991:19) shows that numerous Jungian contributions to psychology have been 'rediscovered', so to speak, "by psychoanalytic thinkers who give no credit to Jung."

alternative approach emphasising different psychological constructs and dimensions than, for instance, psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis seems to be a suitable theoretical frame for certain genres, specifically the thriller and the horror genres, as demonstrated by Freeland, Williams and Creed. Freeland (in Bordwell & Carroll 1996:195-196), working specifically within the horror genre (where psychoanalysis and feminism seem to form a potent combination for the investigation of the filmic text as well as the position of the male spectator), says that psychoanalysis “suggests that there are particularly ‘male’ motivations for making, watching and enjoying horror films.” Freeland (1996:199-200) raises the important point that the fears represented in the horror film are somehow always reduced to the fear (some form of neurosis or pathology) of the primal mother. This application of Freudian theory seems to indicate a degree of psychological reductionism.

Sigmund Freud ‘fathered’ psychoanalysis in the early 1900s, at a time where many topics (including sexuality) were not socially and morally accepted in general middle-class conversation. In the Victorian era, issues regarding sexuality were often repressed and much of psychoanalysis’s theoretical foundations and case studies consequently came from human repressed sexuality. Prince (cited in Bordwell & Carroll 1996:75) points out that Freud used only a handful of patients to form the bases of his assumptions. The main proponent of psychoanalysis thus developed his theories from a limited number of cases. Importantly, the author points out, there is also the psychoanalytic tendency to reduce individual responses to various stimuli to associated childhood traumas. This regression to infantile issues could negate the role of the individual’s current context. Despite this shortcoming, psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the repressed contents of the unconscious, led early surrealist artists to draw inspiration from Freud’s theory; a few artists did refer to Jung’s thought and especially his theory on the archetypes (Creed, in Hill & Gibson 1998:78). Clearly, much has been written on film from a psychoanalytic perspective. Although the Jungian approach to film has not been dealt with in

nearly as much writing, authors are at least aware of its absence. The apparent lack of Jungian film theory (identified in Chapter One), according to Creed (in Hill & Gibson 1998:78), occurred because the artists “perceived (...) an underlying essentialism in Jungian theory, that is, a tendency to explain subjectivity in unchanging, universal terms.”

According to Rivkin and Ryan (1998:120), Freud discovered the unconscious<sup>25</sup>. Freud accentuated the determinism of the psyche by these repressed contents. This resulted in a conflicted psyche, where the psychic structures – ego, id and superego – were in constant tension. Regarding dreams, it was Freud’s opinion that dreams and dream analysis (performed as word association) lead the subject to the unconscious. In contrast, Jung states that one cannot ‘know’ the unconscious because it is unconscious; his view of dreams is that they lead away from the dream to guide the subject forward, instead of back to where s/he was. This point stresses that Jung conceptualised the psyche as dynamically developmental, as the individual is not restricted in its development by Freud’s notion of psychological determinism. Furthermore, the psychological structures conceptualised by Jung form a dialogue between ego and Self<sup>26</sup>. For Freud the unconscious arose out of the conscious, while Jung vehemently opposed that idea with his own proposition that consciousness originated from the unconscious (Palmer 1997:95). Jung asserted that the unconscious has its own autonomous development independent of the ego; indeed, it is the unconscious that is complementary to the conscious (Ellenberger 1994:705).

Regarding the prominence of the unconscious, Selden (1988:224) affirms that Jung refused to treat literature as some ‘neurotic’ expression of the author’s unconscious mind. “All attempts at interpretation which try to dissect works of

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<sup>25</sup> Whitlock (1990:101) explains that Freud did not discover the unconscious – “evidence of its existence was long known. What he did was to construct a particular model of it,” just as Jung developed his own model of the psyche that proposed the collective and personal levels of the unconscious.

<sup>26</sup> As mentioned in my chapter outline in Chapter One, Jungian terminology and notions mentioned during this chapter are fully explicated in Chapter Three.

literature on the basis of their author's personal difficulties reduce the work to a demonstration of symptoms," argues Jacoby (in Sugg 1992:67), in criticism that may be applicable to psychoanalysis. Also, Stevens (1982:33) argues that "unlike Freud, Jung was not so much interested in signs and symptoms as in meanings and symbols." The symbolic is important to Jung; the symptomatic is important to Freud. And "unlike Freud, Jung conceived the essence of ego-consciousness as limitation" (1982:258). Jung was certain that ego-consciousness could not inform the individual about all dimensions of psychological existence; merely by being conscious, ego-consciousness is limited to a certain sphere of conscious investigation.

As discussed by Wright (1989:37), the work of art is "the secret embodiment of its creator's unconscious desire" in psychoanalysis. Of this desire, or wish<sup>27</sup>, Lebeau (2001:9) says:

(...) the wish is tied to the domain of representation in a way that will open the door to a psychoanalytic interpretation of the meaning of narratives and images. The idea of a wish, struggling to find expression – in distorted, bizarre form – will become one of the basic assumptions of psychoanalytic interpretations of cinema, its role in the anxieties, and pleasures, of everyday life.

In Lebeau's view, 'the wish' plays an important role in making meaning in cinema, as it is a central notion in mainstream psychoanalytic thought. This wish might relate to a childhood experience, often a traumatic event. An explicit example of the impact of childhood trauma can be seen in *Lolita* (Lyne 1998), where an adult male character becomes infatuated with a 12-year old girl. This young female becomes a substitute for a girl he had met as a young boy, but who died – he was unable to experience a relationship with her and now picks it up with *Lolita*. Here, an adult character is traumatised and fixated by a childhood

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<sup>27</sup> According to Lebeau (2001:30-31), psychoanalytic film theory aims to identify the work of wishes in film, and sees the analogy between dream and film as a "founding metaphor." Jungians often agree that there is a definite comparison between film and dream, but only to a certain degree. This issue is further investigated in Chapter Three.

moment. It seems to be typical of psychoanalysis to focus on interpretations of childhood experiences. Traditional psychoanalytic criticism investigates childhood experiences, partly by analysing the relevant fictional characters of a play, for example. Sometimes, argues Izod (2001b:3), “the predicaments of adulthood are better understood through the constructive methods Jung advocates” rather than childhood trauma. Here, Izod demonstrates how a Jungian reading of a film not only complements psychoanalysis, but also that Jungian theory is indeed constructive. The character’s main predicament could be the process of individuation – either in process or arrested – as read in the film. This pertains to individuation as a confrontation with the archetypes as opposed to interpretations of childhood trauma.

As psychoanalytic theory developed, Jacques Lacan became a popular figure in literary theory and structuralism. Bragher (1993:11) argues that Lacanian theory is of use especially in cultural criticism, since Lacanian thought can sufficiently explain “how cultural artifacts [such as film] affect people,” specifically how “linguistic and discursive phenomena affect specific elements of subjectivity and thus *move* people” (my italics) (1993:12). Significantly, Lacan later proclaimed the importance of instinct and the unconscious over the ego; “Lacanian criticism (...) sees it [language] and the unconscious as almost identical” (1998:126). Lacan’s notions of the symbolic order, language as the symbolic, the Law of the Father and numerous other ideas deserve more attention than I can provide within the confines of this thesis; Susan Hayward (2000:291-293, 295) provides a brief, effective description of Lacanian fundamentals which fall beyond the scope of this current study.

Izod (2001b:5) says that according to Lacan, the unconscious is mainly language. Argues Izod:

It is a feature of Freudian and Lacanian film theory that the unconscious is not conceived as having the power to overthrow or remake elements of the symbolic order and rewrite cinematic and

spoken language to meet the insistence of hitherto unvoiced desires<sup>28</sup> (Izod 2001b:6).

In opposition to what is stated in this quote (where Izod suggests that psychoanalysis ‘underestimates’ or ‘undervalues’ the power of the unconscious), a Jungian approach indeed proposes the unconscious as possessing “just such potential energy.” The Jungian approach embraces the idea of the unconscious as a powerful, dominant force capable of symbolic renewal and numinous symbolic experiences. Further regarding the alleged ‘imperfections’ of psychoanalytic theory, the “rebarbative jargon of high theory” associated with Freudian and Lacanian theory “marks out its users as an elite.” Worse than this, says Izod (2001b:6), is that “it [psychoanalysis] distances itself from the *feel* of the remembered film text” (my italics), emphasising that psychoanalysis does not address the emotional cinematic experience. Jungian screen analysis, to use Izod’s (2001b:7) apt phrase, must deliver the analytic evidence and intuitions to the reader in terms aimed at engaging the reader, not alienating him/her, and should therefore “speak as plainly as it can.” A Jungian approach relies on the image. It supports the idea of placing greater emphasis on the unconscious as a dominant force in psychological life.

Before I introduce cognitivism as a complementary approach to Jungian theory, Hockley (2001:4-5) contrasts the essentials of Jungian and Freudian thought, and I have drawn up the following table to convey this information:

#### FREUDIAN

- The psyche consists of repressed material;
- The psyche is conflicted;
- “Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious.”

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<sup>28</sup> Izod (2001b:3) refers to both Freudian and Lacanian theories as “at best rather limited, and at worst cock-handed implements.” Harsh as these comments are, they are at least indicative of how some Jungian analysts perceive the psychoanalytic method as limited.



## JUNGIAN

- The psyche is developmental;
- There is 'discourse' between ego and Self;
- Dreams are the royal road *from* the unconscious to the future (which marks the process of individuation).

Based on the above, one can deduce that Jung perceived psychological growth where Freud would perceive psychological arrested development; by focusing on the dynamic relationship between the unconscious and conscious existence, Jung saw significance where Freud saw inconsequentiality. As phrased by Zizek (1992:193):

[T]he fundamental premise of Freud's 'Civilization and its Discontents' is that the universe is utterly meaningless (...) whereas Jung reinscribes a psychoanalytical problematic into the frame of 'cosmic principles' which guarantee correspondences between human life and the universe at large (*yin* and *yang* as psychic and cosmic principles, etc).

Here we can see how Jung links human existence with being part of 'something greater', something cosmological, while Freud's view on existence is more nihilistic. Jung encourages the individual to make meaning.

Whitlock (1990:100-101) discusses the fallacies of the psychoanalytic approach with specific reference to dream analysis. He states that "in the Freudian account, causal and intentional terms are inextricably muddled together, and the result is a terrible hodgepodge." In this vague statement, Whitlock asserts that psychoanalysis, growing from Freud's attempts to investigate neuroses, became irrevocably tainted by "a sense of malaise and irrationality." Whitlock further questions the speculated role of the unconscious in the creation of metaphors; if the unconscious is readily active in the creation of metaphors, it means that "metaphorical conjunctions and the ensuing meanings are against reason." This criticism may also be aimed at a Jungian approach; however, a Jungian

approach acknowledges that the unconscious can never directly be explored, and its potential meaning(s) can never be fixed. (This position is echoed in Chapter Four.)

With regard to critical readings of film, prominent cognivists articulate their own disparagement with psychoanalysis. Cognitivist theorists do not see psychoanalysis as a viable approach to specifically address the issue of emotion and film, a gap that Jungian theory addresses. Tan (1996:20), for example, emphasises the following in his cognitive-based critique of psychoanalysis:

The application of psychoanalytic concepts, notably those borrowed from Lacan, to the experience of the film viewer has met with scathing scientific criticism and rightly so [...] The ontological status of the concepts is unclear, the logical consisting of ideas leaves something to be desired, and the frugality requirement seems to have been reversed.

Tan is of the opinion that psychoanalytic ideas do not develop logically and that their theoretical foundations are often unclear. He notes, for example, how Lacanian theory has been severely criticized. In addition, Smith's (2003:5) criticism states that the post-Freudians' use of terms such as "pleasure", "displeasure" and "desire" are too open to "provide specific insight into how a particular film makes its emotional appeal." In applying these psychoanalytic terms – frequently used by Metz – you "lose the flavour of the individual texts." A Jungian approach emphasises the importance of the individual text (film) that requires a unique approach in opposition to merely taking specific terms and applying it consistently to texts. If the text does not 'invite' me to perform a specific reading, a particular preferred reading should not be imposed on the text.

Smith (2003:174-178), moreover, referring to the affective component of film, argues, "If our desiderata [desirable criteria for a coherent theory of film and emotion] call for an approach rooted in a coherent theory of *emotion*, psychologists would generally agree that Freud would make a poor choice." This is because psychoanalysis replaces "emotion" with words like "pleasure" and

“desire”. Also, psychoanalysts mistakenly assume that the “emotional nature of Freud’s data”, drawn from dreams and hysteria, forms “a coherent theory of emotion” because the terms ‘pleasure’ and ‘desire’ are included. From the above, I conclude that neither Smith (2003) nor Tan (1996) view psychoanalysis as a functional approach to the filmic text, especially where the emotional component of the filmic experience is concerned. It is this gap – or lack – that the proposed Jungian approach addresses, as will be elaborated upon in Chapters Three and Four. Focusing on the role of the unconscious, archetypes and the symbolic, Jungian theory constructs a well-articulated and described framework to investigate this aspect of film experience. This section has discussed the contributions and limitations of psychoanalytic film reading and proposed the advantages of Jungian film readings. Cognitivist authors agree that, specifically, psychoanalytic theory presents an insufficient examination and explanation of the emotional cinematic experience; this is the lack that this study aims to address from a Jungian approach.

Having positioned Jungian theory within contemporary thinking, the study now presents a review of scholarship of both primary and secondary sources.

### 2.3 Primary sources

I am aware of the importance attached to the presentation of current and recent research – especially with regard to journals and articles. However, the limited number of titles discussed here constitutes the texts available in English and Afrikaans and/or in print in this particular field of study (as concluded from the results of numerous searches; no claim is made that every possible related book has been located) at the time of completion. Consequently, many of the titles discussed in the following sections come from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The subject of inquiry of this study promotes a critical investigation of Jungian theory and film. Keyword and subject searches consistently present two titles that

deal directly with Jungian theory and film: *Cinematic Projections: the analytical psychology of Jung and film theory* (Hockley 2001) and *Jung & Film: post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image* (Hauke & Alister 2002).

I address the relevant sources that link film with Jungian theory. Luke Hockley's *Cinematic Projections: the analytical psychology of Jung and film theory* (2001) is a treatise on how Jungians may approach film. The author makes particular reference to detective films such as Clint Eastwood's *Tightrope* (1985). The Jungian dream analysis technique, amplification, is applied to the filmic text and brings Hockley (2001:159-160) to elaborate upon the mythology of Atlantis and the myth of the Labyrinth to illuminate the meaning in his reading of Eastwood's film. By considering parallels between these myths and the film, Hockley makes meaning of the film and its images. This meaning is subjectively constructed. Hockley's text presents a foundation for how Jungians may conceptualise the function of the filmic image, why there is a lack of Jungian film study, and how Jungians may perceive the symbolic in film. For these purposes, the text is important in framing important concepts such as 'image' and 'symbol' with reference to a Jungian perspective in the form of amplification. Notions of the symbolic are particularly important when investigating cinematic experiences characterised by emotional responses and processes.

*Jung & Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image* (2002), edited by Hauke and Alister, is a comprehensive text on Jungian film studies. The book contains a variety of essays by various authors on diverse topics regarding key Jungian concepts and how these concepts might be used in analysing the filmic text.

Don Fredericksen's essay "Jung/sign/symbol/film" validates a Jungian approach to film and highlights some of the characteristics of this approach. The author uses the silent film *Song for Ceylon* to demonstrate the functionality of a Jungian reading, differentiating between conceptualisations of sign and symbol, notions to which I refer in Chapter Four. Lydia Lennihan's (2001:56) "The Alchemy of Pulp

Fiction” effectively illustrates how a filmic text can be read utilising alchemical principles. This chapter suggests that alchemy<sup>29</sup> is important to film analysis from a Jungian point of view. Pat Berry’s “Image in Motion” illustrates in what way film constitutes a parallel to psychotherapy (which is helpful in my discussion of active imagination and film in Chapter Three) and how seemingly ‘simple’ films present viewers with an opportunity to experience archetypal phenomena.

In the same volume, “‘Let’s go back to finding out who we are’: Men, Unheimlich and returning home in the films of Steven Spielberg” by Christopher Hauke presents an intriguing review of some of Spielberg’s films which share common themes. Hauke (2001:166) details the thematic progression in Spielberg’s films up until *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). I aim to present a similar review in my discussion of Shyamalan’s “Everyday Hero” trilogy. In my study, I follow, in part, the same approach as I discuss Shyamalan’s films and their sequential thematic development. The relevance of these above writings resides in their references to and investigations of their film-specific conceptualisations and applications. I will, however, place greater emphasis on the principles of dream analysis in application to film, in conjunction with the process of active imagination<sup>30</sup> and alchemical symbolism. In addition, I will emphasise the constructive functionality of a critical reading of film using a Jungian approach. Although the contributors to *Jung & Film* all touch on the emotional cinematic experience, none presents a investigation of how such an emotional experience may occur. Although the relation between the symbol and the emotional experience is mentioned, it is not examined in depth. Importantly, the current study will investigate the emotional component of the filmic experience by considering the relationship between the emotional cinematic experience and the symbolic, which has its foundation in the archetypal.

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<sup>29</sup> Alchemy concerns the chemical experimentation related to attempts to turn base metals into gold. This process, said Jung, reflects the potential psychological growth and development within individuals (Hauke & Alister 2001:243). Alchemy is explored in Chapter Three.

<sup>30</sup> Active imagination concerns the “lowering of the threshold of consciousness so that a state similar to dreaming is achieved, but one in which conscious ego-control is still present” (Hauke & Alister 2001:243). Active imagination is regularly used in dream interpretation, to be investigated in Chapter Three (although active imagination itself falls beyond the scope of the current study).

In conjunction with notions of the symbolic and emotional experience, the Hero's Journey is an important aspect of this study, as will be illustrated in Chapter Four. Also in *Jung & Film*, three authors write on different aspects of the Hero's Journey. The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell and based on Jungian theory, becomes important for this present study in especially Chapter Four, where the Hero's Journey is used to approach generic narrative structures in film. Jane Ryan discusses *Dark City* (Proyas 1998), which she refers to as "a simple and eloquent modern retelling of the journey of the Hero" (Ryan 2001:108). Jung himself discusses the Hero's Journey in John Beebe's collection *Aspects of the Masculine* (1989) and Joseph Campbell elaborates upon the theme in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1988). On a broader scale, John Izod's reading of *2001: A Space Odyssey* provides the reader with comments on both personal and collective journeys as experienced in Kubrick's film.

This dual journey is also manifested in Shyamalan's films, which constitute my case study in Chapter Four. Mackey-Kallis discusses the Hero's Journey, as it is perceived in American film in *The Hero and the Perennial Journey Home* (2001). The author, who refers to herself as a "psychomythological critic", takes to heart Jung's notion that art should "continually offer new interpretations of the archetypes of the collective unconscious", which is what this current study attempts: archetypal manifestations such as the Hero should be reinterpreted within different contexts, thereby promoting the psychological relevance of a Jungian reading of the text. This notion is important for Mackey-Kallis (2001:20) (and supported by this study) who claims that film "can be a powerful conduit for archetypal material". In addition, Mackey-Kallis highlights the role of the child archetype in individuation, as the archetype could function to spur another individual to psychological growth, an occurrence that I argue takes place in Shyamalan's films.

Also with regard to the Hero's Journey, Hollywood script supervisor Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey* (1998) discusses the dramatic function of the

Hero, which is relevant to this study (Chapter Four). Voytilla's *Myth and the Movies* (1999), influenced by the writings of Christopher Vogler, uses Joseph Campbell's outline for the Hero's Journey as provided in *Hero with a Thousand Faces* to analyse 50 diverse films, sorted by genre. Although the Hero's Journey is not discussed in detail in this current study, it does provide an angle from which to approach the filmic text. This notion will be demonstrated in Chapter Four. Voytilla's use of archetypal 'labels' such as "shadow" and "trickster" do not, however, reflect the psychological dimension of a more 'traditional' Jungian enterprise. That Voytilla has appropriated Jungian terminology for reductionist readings is not by default negative, but for the Jungian critic, such potential reductionism should be cautioned against. In his analysis of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg 1981), Voytilla (1999:30-34) labels the character Belloq as the shadow seemingly because the narrative simply indicates Belloq as the film's villain. The same reductionistic analysis is valid for the discussion of *Die Hard* (McTiernan 1988) (1999:35-40). It is as if the plot drives the Hero's Journey, instead of the psychological growth of the Hero providing the dynamism for the film's narrative progression.

Having studied *Jung & Film*, I found it necessary to consult literature by Jung himself, post-Jungians, and other authorities who are not 'strictly Jungian' but whose work contribute to Jungian thought and its application. *CG Jung and the Humanities* (Barnaby & D'Arcino 1990) presents numerous essays on the role of Jung in contemporary thought. The "Popular Culture Symposium", for example, has three speakers debating the application of Jungian theory to popular culture as well as the importance of myth to pop art (Barnaby & D'Arcino 1990:84). Myth, as I will show in Chapter Three, is important to both dreams and film.

Regarding Jungian dream theory, the contributions of Hillman and Hall are central to this study. First, post-Jungian and archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1979:51) presents his own "method" to suggest how one should approach dream analysis, emphasising the "right" approach (in his opinion) to the



dream image. I do not promote a “right” approach to dream analysis, but an approach to film based on traditional Jungian approaches to dream analysis. Hillman (1979:154) also discusses selected dream motifs encountered in dreams, such as “roundness”, which also feature in film. These objects of “roundness” manifest as mandalas<sup>31</sup> and their symbolism is vital to my discussion of the Shyamalan films in terms of these symbols’ relation to the archetype of the Self. Based on Chapter Four’s elaboration on mandala-motifs and the archetype of the Self, Jung’s (1964c) own *Civilisation in Transition* proves valuable as a study on the role of the unconscious and what Jung calls the “Undiscovered Self”. The text contains Jung’s reflections on UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) sightings and the mythology of beings from outer space (1964c:314), which are especially relevant to my reading of Shyamalan’s *Signs*. Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997:133) note that some authors accused Jung of placing too much emphasis on the irrational, while others labeled him as being self-contradictory in that Jung’s writing is sometimes too allegorical or metaphorical and ambiguous. Despite these claims, Jung’s writing in *Civilisation in Transition* (1964) is clear and to the point on the role of UFOs in psychological development.

Second, James Hall’s (1983) *Jungian Dream Interpretation* provides a solid discussion of relevant, basic Jungian concepts, such as the archetypes and individuation, while also presenting some dream motifs such as “mourning” and “death”. Both these motifs are prominent in the “Everyday Hero” trilogy and are discussed in Chapter Four. Hall’s discussions of Jungian dream analysis as well as the influence of the unconscious and the archetypes are relevant to the current study, since I position dream analysis as a ‘critical angle’ to a critical reading of film. Moreover, I utilise the Jungian approach to dreams by often reading a character as an archetypal figure.

Related to Jungian dream theory is the practice of active imagination. The *Journal of Analytical Psychology* published John Izod’s “Active imagination and

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<sup>31</sup> Notions of the mandala are investigated in Chapter Three.



the analysis of film”. In his article, Izod (2000:278) elaborates on the practice of amplification and its application to different filmic texts. In my view, Izod effectively uses amplification to construct a critical reading of the filmic text, which includes a mythic-archetypal dimension to ‘make meaning’ of the film.

Izod’s contribution to Jungian film theory is important in furthering an awareness of the usefulness of a Jungian critical reading. In *Myth, Mind and the Screen*, Izod (2001) writes about amplification, the importance of archetypal manifestations (such as the Hero) and, significantly for this study, the emotional experience of (a) film. Izod suggests that a film, with its “images and stories”, presents me, as the critic, with visual material (stimuli) that are “potent symbols” (2001:20), a notion that is explored and argued in Chapter Four. The emphasis on the symbolic in the emotional experience of film is what this study investigates, and Izod’s writings provide material in favour of a Jungian approach. At this point I have to make clear that for visual material to be “potent symbols”, it has to be approached with an attitude that is open to a symbolic approach to images. Within this context, I read an image as being symbolic; it is a ‘value’ assigned to the image based on the emotional experience that it is part of; an image is not by default a symbol. If I perceive the image to be symbolic, then it is symbolic.

Izod’s discussion of the symbol is important for this study in its focus on the emotional experience of film. In Izod’s (2001:24) own words: “When scholars succeed in analysing a film while feeling and relishing the impact of its symbolism’s energy upon their minds, they are more likely to be able to convey to their readers a sense of its numinosity.” Although this study does not address issues of audience reception and reader theory (due to time and space constraints), the relevance of Izod’s words is that the critic can be aided in the articulation of the emotional and numinous experience, by interrogating the symbolic. Often, the symbols encountered in a text refer, from a Jungian perspective, to individuation.

The idea of psychological growth, or individuation<sup>32</sup> in Jungian terms – which is often symbolically depicted in film, as Chapter Four will illustrate – is pivotal to Jungian theory, and forms an important part of this current study. *The Way of Individuation* (1965), by post-Jungian scholar Jolande Jacobi, provides a detailed exploration of the process of individuation. In a Jungian approach to film analysis one finds individuation not only in the onscreen characters, but also in the director and his/her films. Jacobi's discussion of individuation, which is psychologically linked with alchemy, illustrates the various archetypal forces in a person's life that one also encounters in film; the author pays particular attention to how the Self reacts to these archetypal influences and figures, a significant investigation relevant to the research question, as will be shown in Chapter Four.

The text further elaborates upon the Nekyia (night journey, or journey to the underworld (Jacobi 1965:65)), which links with the journey the Hero needs to undertake. The application of Jungian theory to Shyamalan's trilogy interrogates the psychological significance of the three heroes' quests. Research has shown that there are instances where Jungian theory has been applied in the analysis of literature, as in Joyce Jones's (1979) *Jungian Psychology in Literary Analysis*, in which she uses the poems of TS Eliot to demonstrate the functionality of Jungian theory in literary analysis. Indeed, Jones (1979:21) refers to her method of Jungian interpretation as the "individuation approach", a potentially useful idea that I involve in my study. I will, for example, employ principles of the process of individuation to detail the psychological development in characters in Shyamalan's film. As I will show, the symbols used to encode this process results in an emotional experience for the viewer.

Directly related to individuation is alchemy, particularly its symbolism. Marie-Louise von Franz, a direct disciple of Jung, presents *Alchemy: an Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology* (Von Franz 1980). This title is relevant to my

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<sup>32</sup> Individuation is the development of innate possibilities in each individual's quest toward psychological wholeness (Jacobi 1965:13).

discussion of the alchemical dimension that I relate to film. The book focuses on the symbolic and the psychological in relation to alchemical processes and principles, and encourages both important aspects in a Jungian approach to film. The text provides a theoretical framework regarding the practice of alchemy that I argue also comes into play in a critical reading of the text, following a Jungian approach. Alchemical principles, such as those also discussed in detail by Edinger (1985) – *solutio*, *nigredo* and transformation – are incorporated into my study in Chapter Four. These and other alchemical principles and processes are included to make meaning of Shyamalan’s films to see how these films’ visual content might contribute to my emotional experience while watching.

The above writings on dreams and alchemy serve to propose a theory that will address the emotional cinematic experience. A relatively recent development in film theory, cognitivism, addresses just this emotional aspect of the film experience. Cognitivism asserts that a viewer’s response to a film is “a rationally motivated and informed attempt to make meaning of art on various levels” (Currie 2004:106). Furthermore, cognitivism “emphasises ways in which our experience of cinematic images and cinematic narrative resemble our experience of seeing and comprehending events and processes in reality” (2004:106). Cognitivism also relates to ego-consciousness (which is “rational”, “comprehending” and relates to ‘reality’), which exists without its unconscious complement. There is a parallel between cognitivist author Grodal’s thought and Jungian theory in the notion that “the meanings of a given phenomenon” depends on “[their] relations to a web-like structure of associations” (Grodal 1999:62). Grodal (1999:63) says: “‘Association’ is a fundamental mental phenomenon implying that phenomenon A is somehow linked with phenomenon B, so that an activation of A is related to an activation of B.” Grodal’s notion here reads like conscious, directed Jungian amplification that is based on association, with an underlying neurological and psychological foundation. This may guide a critical reading of archetypal activation stimulated by filmic images. From the field of cognitivist film studies,

Grodal (1999) investigates the relationship between cognition and emotion pertaining to the filmic experience.

Significantly, Grodal (1999:6) adopts the following position:

Visual fiction is viewed in a conscious state (...) The viewer's response and the phenomena experienced often demand explanations that imply non-conscious activities; but the emotions and cognitions must be explained in relation to the conscious mental states and processes (...) The consciously felt experience during film-viewing has to be described, explained and analysed.

Like Fredericksen earlier, Grodal identifies the need that a critic may have to articulate the affective filmic experience. The symbolic is important to Grodal. Importantly, Grodal (1999:40-59) explores the relations between emotion and neurology (brain structure and functioning). I am aware of the biological constructs underlying emotional responses, but the emotions addressed in this study have to do with the numinous and the transcendent. While Grodal's study is in my view theoretically sound, for the purposes of this study, I focus on the symbolic rather than the neurological. For this study, emotion (a component of affect) is characterised by its numinous quality, which is investigated through a Jungian approach that examines the visual material's symbolic content. This is complementary to cognitivism's ego-approach to film and emotion.

Another prominent cognitivist theorist is Tan, who in *Emotion and the Narrative Structure of Narrative Film* (1996) states that "one of the major incentives for watching feature films is the emotional experience they offer" (1996:41). Tan's (1996:251) assertion is that "the traditional feature film is an (...) emotion machine", a notion supported by the proposed Jungian approach, although for the purposes and context of this study, I would rephrase Tan's sentence to read: "The unconscious, accessed through associations relating to the archetypal contents within the unconscious, presents the human being as an emotion-prone entity." Humans, it seems, are psychologically 'wired' to readily experience emotion. The individual is invited to experience emotion through the activation of

archetypal content, an idea that Chapter Four further explores. Furthermore, Smith (2003:4) proposes in *Film Structure and the Emotion System* that the cinema is the site where contemporary societies “gather to express and experience emotion<sup>33</sup>”. If Smith’s statement is taken into account, the potential of an emotional experience could be a primary motivation for going to the movies, an idea that echoes Tan. A film might present the cinemagoer with an emotional ‘payoff’, and the proposed Jungian study suggests itself as a functional frame for critically assessing this potentially emotional experience by making meaning of visual material.

Smith (2003:7-8) presents his criteria for what he believes constitutes a ‘good’ combination theory (Smith’s words) for the investigation of film and emotion. The purpose of including Smith’s criteria is to assess how cognitivism might perceive a Jungian approach to ‘measure up’ to what Smith views as a ‘good’ theory. For the reader potentially selecting a Jungian ‘frame of reference’ for film, these criteria could be important, since the criteria provide something against which the proposed framework can be measured. If Smith (2003:151-165) discusses *Casablanca* and asks “What makes audiences return to this filmic text again and again?” in terms of the film’s emotional ‘payoff’, the proposed theory should ideally be qualified to answer this question in adequate explanatory detail.

A ‘good’ theory on film and emotion should avoid generalisation (or, for current purposes, archetypal reductionism) and explain emotional phenomena on both a “local” and “global” level. These two levels can be related to the Jungian notions of the personal and collective unconscious (investigated in Chapter Three), which are important for critical discussions of film and emotion.

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<sup>33</sup> In his study, Smith investigates the emotional structures of diverse films ranging from Eisenstein’s *Strike!* (1925) and *The Joy Luck Club* (Wang 1994).

## 2.5 Secondary sources

For the purposes of this study, I consider all sources that are complementary to the more directly relevant sources, as secondary. These sources elaborate on and discuss themes referred to in the previous section, such as alchemy and individuation. Wherever possible I consult the work by Jung himself before moving on to post-Jungian literature. This is why many important contributions to my study are books written by CG Jung. For example, *Psychology and Education* (Jung 1954) highlights the importance of the unconscious and dreams in adult life.

Additionally, *Essays on a Science of Mythology* (Jung & Kerenyi 1963) establishes mythology as a narrative constant in life. *Alchemical Studies* (Jung 1967) is Jung's own research in the field of alchemy that provides the basic principles of the practice that we find reflected in art (including film). All these titles contribute in various ways to the body of the study in support of the overall argument, which has to do with Jungian psychological theory and film. Still regarding alchemy, Eliade and Edinger's insights are important as the symbolic significance attributed to alchemical motifs and images is important to this study. Eliade's research in alchemy, particularly *The Forge and the Crucible* (1971), is important for this current study due to the information that it presents on the origins and structures of alchemy. Edinger's *Anatomy of the Psyche: alchemical symbolism in psychotherapy* (1985) presents a discussion of the meaning and symbolism related to the stages of the alchemical process. In my discussion of Shyamalan's films, the use of alchemical principles in explaining visual imagery becomes prominent.

As will be explained in Chapter Three, Jung noted a parallel between alchemy and his notion of individuation. Among recent writers, Raff and Kenevan provide significant contributions in discussions on individuation, particularly Kenevan, who explicitly links individuation with film. Raff's *Jung and the Alchemical*

*Imagination* (2000) is a useful source for alchemy and psychology, with specific reference to the self and the related concept of the transcendent function. “Alchemy,” explains Raff (2000:37), “is concerned with the self and with its creation, and its symbols depict the experience of active imagination and the transcendent function.” Alchemy is important for this study, since this thesis values the individuation motif that could manifest in certain films as it manifests in alchemy; “Jung saw in alchemy a map for the process of individuation and psychic growth.” As Chapters Three and Four will demonstrate, individuation is integral for a Jungian approach to the filmic text.

*Paths of Individuation in Literature and Film: a Jungian approach* (Kenevan 1999) demonstrates how various Jungian ideas, specifically those ideas related to the process of individuation, can be applied in an analysis of classic works of literature and certain films. Kenevan (1999:50) details the paths of wholeness for various characters; development is seen in relation to women (*The House of the Spirits*), and the author discusses archetypes such as the Rainmaker archetype (*Baghdad Café*). Other titles involved in Kenevan’s study include *Zorba the Greek* and *Crime and Punishment*, all works regarded by most to fit under the term ‘classic’.

Often, dream symbols are read as individuation motifs. In Jungian dream analysis, the practice of amplification directs the conscious investigation of potential archetypal contents perceived as part of the dream. Hippard (2003) demonstrates the productive amplification of the filmic text. A further example of amplification of the filmic text – effectively, in my view, employing the technique to bring subjective meaning(s) to the analysis – is Hewison’s (2003) analysis of *American Beauty* (Mendes 1999). In the amplification, Hewison brings the “Rosarium Philosophorum”, an alchemical document, and William Blake’s “The Sick Rose” to the filmic text to construct psychological meaning. Through amplification, Hewison provides a detailed discussion of the individuation motif in the film. Bolen (1993) dedicates a whole book to amplifying Wagner’s



*Niebelungen*, looking for what “rings true psychologically” – that is, ‘detecting’ what I perceive as being subjectively meaningful. Henderson furthermore accentuates the significance of amplification for the archetypal self in *Cultural Attitudes in Psychological Perspective* (1984). As Chapters Three and Four will explicate, the archetypal self is of great relevance for this study. This archetype manifests, like all other archetypes, in symbolic form. This symbolic manifestation is what often prompts investigation. In *Jung’s Hermeneutic of Doctrine* (1981), Brown discusses Jung’s notion of ‘symbol’ in detail, as well as how humans engage the symbolic in dreams. Where this study compares films to dreams, suggesting similar ‘guidelines’ for analysis, Brown’s information on the symbolic is also applicable since this current study bases part of its theory on dreams and how individuals can approach it.

In *Psychological Reflections on Cinematic Terror* (1994), author James Iaccino describes how Jungian archetypes manifested in film, particularly within the horror genre. Iaccino’s suggestions on how the archetypes may manifest in the horror films of the future is of specific relevance to the proposed study. He mentions the likely proliferation of “television terrors” (maybe along the lines of the films *Poltergeist* [Hooper 1985] and the more recent *The Ring* [Verbinski 2002]) and “extraterrestrial cursed wanderers.” Iaccino (1994:ix) refers specifically to archetypal analysis; he suggests that in future horror (analysis), we will come to see more of so-called techno-mythic archetypes (“reflecting the technological advances that our society has attained and will, no doubt, continue to pursue in the upcoming century” [1994:181]). It must be noted that Izod (2001) has accused Iaccino of being reductionistic in his application of archetypal analysis, an allegation I agree with. Still, Iaccino’s outlines of archetypal figures seem to be functional, and at the very least, his study serves as a warning to those practising Jungian film analysis to not heedlessly latch onto an archetype and reduce any possibly relevant visual material to this archetype. Then, directly relating Jungian theory to film, Henderson (1990:290-294) points to the presence of archetypal material in films in *Shadow and Self*. For the purposes of this study,



Henderson's (1992:304) writing on UFO images are relevant to my study in Chapter Four, which deals with very similar images. Additionally, Maude Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1951) employs a Jungian approach in an analysis of "The Ancient Mariner".

Prominent post-Jungian author Edinger writes about the psychological (archetypal) meaning of the apocalypse in *The Archetype of the Apocalypse* (2002)<sup>34</sup>. Much like Jung wrote that humanity is caught in the grip of a psychological emptiness, Edinger (2002:172) expresses a similar conviction decades after Jung, "that we are at the threshold of a time of trouble of immense proportion", where 'trouble' refers to a collective psychological dilemma much like Jung used to describe. Although he spends much time on amplifying the Book of Revelations, Edinger's work is valuable to the current study in two ways. Firstly, Edinger provides a detailed account of archetypes in general. Secondly, his discussion of specifically the archetype of the apocalypse is directly relevant for my amplification of Shyamalan's *Signs* (2002), which I posit as a retelling of an apocalypse myth. As I will show, this archetypal manifestation is particularly 'emotionally charged' as it deals with the theme of the catastrophic end of the world.

The title of Mayo's *Jung and the Aesthetic Experience: the Unconscious as Source of Artistic Inspirations* (1995) evokes the problematic notion of the artist as 'mouthpiece' for unconscious contents that 'spill' out into the author's artwork<sup>35</sup>. Mayo (1995:61) additionally says that the archetype is not understandable as "our thought did not invent them," a conviction shared by other Jungians such as Anthony Stevens (1982:52) in *Archetype*. This should not be seen as a central assumption on which this study is based; this study aims to appropriate the notion of the archetype in an exploration of the subjectively

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<sup>34</sup> Significantly, American film regularly constructs the end of the world on celluloid. I refer to this idea in Chapter Four when I discuss apocalyptic motifs in American film.

<sup>35</sup> Mayo (1995:82) reports that "Jung believes [that] little can be discovered about the artist" by looking at the artist's artworks.

emotional experience related to film. Mayo's study does present relevant information on the Self and the symbolic. Also, Mayo (1995:115) summarises an important view that the critic operating from a Jungian frame might want to consider during film analysis: "The task of Jungian criticism is to interpret art psychologically." Although this study encourages a critical reading rather than an interpretation, the psychological dimension to this reading motivates this study since Jungian psychological constructs elicits the emotional cinematic experience.

From the available consulted scholarship, Jungian theory is not without its problems. It should be noted that Jung has been criticized for his "unfortunate style" (Palmer 1997:101), which occasionally is poetic and ambiguous at times; his written work is therefore beautiful to read, but perceived to not be logically argued. Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1991:xiii-xiv) identify further obstacles to accepting Jung's ideas. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it might be that Jung's ideas could be seen as being foundationalist, that is, "in pursuit of given principles" (universals, absolutes). Also, Jung's regular references to texts that are rather old or obscure, such as his references to alchemical texts, might seem to be irrelevant and redundant. Palmer (1997:166) reports that it has occurred that a label of elitism has been attached to Jung's work, since his thought is mistakenly perceived to be a psychology only for the 'intellectual' that can afford an education in mythology and alchemy.

In addition to the above criticisms, I now point to two limitations of a Jungian approach to the filmic text, with specific consideration of the archetypal. These limitations were highlighted from an investigation of the above scholarship. Both limitations have to do with one's 'understanding' of film and the archetypes. First, the meaning of the archetypes "cannot be fully encompassed by language and rational forms of thought" (Young-Eisendrath & Hall 1991:2). According to Young-Eisendrath and Hall, then, making meaning of the archetypes does not necessarily follow a process of clear-cut rational thinking; the process of making

meaning is affected by the possible emotional experience that accompanies the archetypal. It is my emotional experience related to the archetypal that is considered. Second, film is not in any way an instrument for understanding the collective unconscious; it is the archetypes within the psyche that aid the critical reading by acknowledging and including a psychological assessment of the film<sup>36</sup>.

From what has been discussed, a Jungian perspective has much to contribute to one's critical reading of the text, employing notions of the archetypal and symbolic to aid in the articulation of the emotional cinematic experience. This Jungian approach to the text will be especially constructive where the emotional component of the film experience is discussed, as (1) psychoanalysis seems to be perceived as restricted to determinism, desire and childhood trauma where emotion is related to past experiences while (2) cognitive film studies focus on the neurological aspect of the emotional cine-experience. To make meaning of one's emotional response to film, then, a Jungian reading of the text – using amplification and principles of dream analysis, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four – provides the psychological approach to the emotional cinematic experience. This experience is founded in the archetypal and symbolic, that neither psychoanalysis nor cognitivism seems to supply on its own.

This review of scholarship has indicated the limitations of available research such as psychoanalysis's over-reliance on Freudian notions of sexuality and cognitivism's empirical approach, thereby demonstrating gaps where there has been little work done on the emotional cinematic experience. I showed how a Jungian approach is complementary to the above approaches. I also referred to how the available information on notions of archetypes, alchemy and the symbolic will fit into this study. Regarding the use of Jungian thought in reading

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<sup>36</sup> Hockley (2001:31) reminds us, "films will tell us little about archetypes." This notion is directly related to the idea that one is unable to 'know' the unconscious precisely because the unconscious is unconscious. It is only in the collective unconscious's archetypal manifestations in, for instance, cultural artifacts, that one has 'clues' as to the contents of the collective unconscious.

various kinds of texts, Jung's 'teachings' have been potently effective in "explanations (sic) for many contemporary phenomena from the 'Women's Lib' movement to the youth's discovery of Eastern religions and drugs," according to David Elkind (cited in Barnaby & D'Arcino 1990:xxvii). Therefore, Jungian film theory should not be neglected any longer. By focusing its attention on exactly the role and function of the total psyche, a Jungian approach aids me in my understanding of the emotional response to visual material (the filmic text). Having articulated the constructive aspects of a Jungian approach to the text, the study subsequently deals with important Jungian notions and conceptualisations. Chapter Three provides an overview of these notions briefly referred to in Chapters One and Two (including archetypes, alchemy and dream analysis) that are directly related to this study. The following chapter establishes the foundation for the discussion of the emotional experience of film, which is addressed in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER THREE

### JUNG

The previous chapter identified the paucity of research regarding the critical reading of the emotional cinematic experience. It is necessary to elaborate upon Jung's central conceptualisations and ideas before commencing with the analysis of the "Everyday Hero" trilogy. This chapter serves to establish a theoretical foundation for the Jungian analysis that follows in Chapter Four. This current chapter examines Jungian thought and explores how these ideas could be articulated and used in reading the filmic text. The first part of this chapter focuses on Jung's conceptualisation of the unconscious and the archetypes. The second part places alchemy and the process of individuation under investigation, while the third part examines Jungian theories and techniques of dream analysis. The potential usefulness of these theories for film analysis will be elaborated upon and demonstrated in Chapter Four.

The aim of the following chapter is to present the reader with the Jungian theory relevant to this study. This section explores Jung's understanding of the psyche and how the archetypes fit into his conceptualisation of the psyche. The purpose of this is not to simply repeat information that has already been dealt with in numerous other publications, but to emphasise certain notions and concepts that are specific to this study and need to be discussed before this thesis can progress to the case study.

#### 3.1 The unconscious and the archetypes

In devising his model of the psyche, Jung called attention to the role and psychological importance of the unconscious. In particular, Jung emphasised the collective and personal unconscious as well as the archetypes, all of which constitute (in part) the psyche.

### 3.1.1 The realm of the psyche

The unconscious consists of two main parts: the personal and the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious consists of material that can never be made fully conscious, whereas the personal unconscious consists of personal memories and repressed material. Henderson (1964:247) quotes Jung as saying that “the psyche is not of today; its ancestry goes back many millions of years (...) individual consciousness is only the flower and the fruit of the season.” This statement, typical of occasional Jungian metaphorical indulgence, illustrates how serious Jung’s opinion was regarding the prominence of the unconscious, specifically the collective psyche, which ‘predates’ that of the individual, personal psyche. The personal unconscious is made up of contents taken from the individual’s day-to-day existence (Jung 1964b:9), while Jung (1964b:11) describes the collective unconscious as “the dark background against which the adaptive function of consciousness stands out in sharp relief”. This somewhat vague remark serves, at least, to indicate to what extent in Jung’s view the collective unconscious differs from the ego (personal consciousness). Having distinguished between the personal and the collective unconscious, it is necessary to investigate the concept of the unconscious psyche in more detail.

In Jungian thought, the personal unconscious is the space of repressed contents, of contents the individual has ignored or devalued. These contents amass and in so doing become influential enough to impact on consciousness (Jung 1964b:18). Jung (1969:41) draws the following analogy regarding the collective unconscious: “[the] unconscious is like the sea, with consciousness rising like an island out of its midst.” The unconscious is indeed vast and unexplored, while the little that one ‘knows’ and is ‘aware of’ is contained in the ego (consciousness). The unconscious is the dynamic force that interferes with conscious development in everyday life (Cox 1975:49), and not necessarily in a negative way: the unconscious often instructs us to investigate certain aspects of our lives in an attempt to lead a psychologically integrated (individuated) existence.

Jung (1966:65) proceeds to mention two important observations related to the collective unconscious, which makes up the largest part of the unconscious. The first observation is that every single individual has “primordial images” within him/her that s/he has ‘inherited’ from the first human beings. The individual shares these images with others, as they reside in the collective unconscious. The human mind of the individual thinks from the day of birth to the present, but the unconscious exists prior to this consciousness (Jung 1950:13). Jung (1950:11) emphasises that the collective unconscious “thinks and behaves in terms of thousands of years,” referring to the collective unconscious as deep psychological structure and to consciousness as surface psychological structure. As possible evidence of this ‘pre-existence’ we see how, throughout myth and history, certain motifs repeat themselves. It is important to consider the psychological importance of these images constructed and subsequently read in film. Contents of the unconscious are not perceived because the ego has not ‘detected’ it (Izod 1992:11); that is, the individual has not yet become conscious of these contents. Therefore, film as a visual medium could guide a critical Jungian reading to delineate the possible unconscious contents in the visual material, which is what Fredericksen does with *Song from Ceylon* in *Jung & Film* (2001:34–51). These unconscious contents, I will argue, stimulate the cine-emotional experience.

The second observation is related to the occurrence of mental patients producing sketches, drawings and paintings that exhibit parallels with or links to mythology, legend and ancient texts. The collective unconscious overrides the ego in many so-called ‘disturbed’ individuals, and gives us images of archetypal prominence, which could be perceived as the manifestation of contents from the collective unconscious. In this regard, Jacobi (1944:34) writes: “The collective unconscious is the mighty spiritual inheritance of human development, reborn in every individual (...) constitution.” Herein we find the instincts and archetypes, to be discussed later in this chapter.

From what has been discussed, Jungian theory affirms that the unconscious regards most prominently the world of the past. Importantly, the collective unconscious, constructed by Jung as an *a-priori* psychological structure, has a compensatory – by which I mean restorative – function in relation to the conscious content at a given time (Jung 1964:15). Unconscious elements as well as contextual ones influence the reading of film. By compensatory, I mean that (a) film could express visually what is not expressed socially or culturally, what is repressed in a socio-cultural context. This ‘compensation’ includes Michael Moore emphasising ‘repressed contents’ in American society by highlighting the ‘hidden’ culture of violence and fear in the United States of America in *Bowling for Columbine* (2003). In another example, film gives visual form to repressed human anxieties about the apocalypse in *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg 2005). Not only do both films emphasise ideological conflict in America, but also shadow repression, as well as how this shadow repression is problematic for the American people (I will elaborate on this point in Chapter Four).

In its compensatory capacity, the unconscious creates symbols (1964:18) and this encourages a symbolic approach to the text. The relevant applicable attitude is significant in this regard; one needs to acknowledge that the unconscious has a symbol-creating function that often results in the production of subjectively meaningful symbols from the psyche. Significantly, then, the unconscious has a symbol-creating function when one acknowledges that the unconscious possesses a symbolic element (1964:23). From a Jungian perspective, symbols originate in the collective unconscious. One could thus suggest that symbols created by the psyche always refer to the psyche: “The meaning of psychic symbols presses beyond the realm of the personal” (Zabriskie 1990:3). Symbols can thus relate an individual’s story on two levels, the first regarding the activity of the ego, and the second on the subject of present archetypal associations (which are predominantly collective and mythological). Although this study is not an argument for the ‘reality’ of the unconscious, it is important to emphasise the unconscious as a construct that Jung (1964c:146) saw as empirically manifest:



When we compare the psychology of modern art with the findings of psychological research, and this again with the products of mythology and philosophy, we will discover irrefutable proofs [sic] of the existence of the collective unconscious factor.

If one substitutes “film” for “modern art” in the above quote, it is clear that a Jungian approach to the text invites a psychologically inclusive critical reading (an approach that, as Chapter Four will show, highlights the emotional cinematic experience). Admittedly, Jung presumably bases this conviction on his own psychological research, thereby ‘proving’ his thought with his own work, ostentatiously calling it ‘irrefutable’. For the purpose of the study, I propose that the collective unconscious could potentially play an important role in the life of an individual when it is perceived to be an important factor in one’s existence<sup>37</sup>. The “irrefutable proofs” above refer to the presence of archetypal (unconscious) contents. According to a Jungian point of view, investigations of cultural artefacts optimally occur on both an archetypal and personal level, something the Jungian critic has to keep in mind during the interrogation of the filmic text (more on this later in this chapter). The Jungian critic would then consider the psychologically collective aspects of film (or the filmic experience), which have to do with the unconscious and its archetypal content.

One might come to know the content attributed to the unconscious by its manifestations in film. In this regard, the unconscious produces symbols of the psyche<sup>38</sup>, which the individual may encounter in dreams and, as it will be argued in Chapter Four, in film. When considering the symbolic, the Jungian critic must differentiate the Jungian notion of ‘symbol’ from its general semiotic conceptualisation. “To symbolic thinking the world is not only ‘alive’ but also ‘open’: an object is never simply itself (...) it is also a sign of, or a repository for,

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<sup>37</sup> What is important here is perception. This idea links with Jung’s notion of synchronicity which refers to the simultaneous occurrence of meaningful but not necessarily causal events (Hyde & McGuinness 2001:159).

<sup>38</sup> The unconscious is regularly represented in dreams by mazes and labyrinths, by networks and passages (Von Franz 1964:176). This complex representation alludes to the practically unexplorable nature of the unconscious.

something else” (Eliade 1962:144). A symbol is never a sign that reproduces reality (Zabriskie 1990:3-5). Furthermore, Jung’s approach to these symbolic manifestations rejects a simple ‘this-means-that’ method in which a symbol means one thing and another symbol something else. Frye (1957:72), more in line with postmodern thought, emphasises that the symbol adheres to the principle of polysemic meaning. The meaning of a symbol is always ambiguous (Hockley 2001:147). There is no single correct interpretation of a symbol. Palmer (1997:130) effectively illustrates Jung’s explanation for the symbol<sup>39</sup>. A symbol is transcendent. Symbols often lose their power to inspire or mystify. When that happens, the unconscious produces new symbols. It is also important to note that something will be considered symbolic when it is interpreted and experienced from a frame of symbolism.

In attempt to define ‘symbol’ from a Jungian’s point of view and purpose, Hockley (2001:36) states that “symbols can be aspects from images that control and give order to human life, and the source can be traced to the archetypes, from which symbols derive their meaning.” Symbols provide the film with a mythical connection (2001:37). According to Hockley (2001:179), a symbol is “a numinous representation produced by and of the objective [collective] psyche, which seeks to unify and overcome opposition” (Hockley 2001:179). Philipson (1963:18) quotes Jung: “the symbol is evaluated not semiotically, but symbolically,” meaning that the symbol needs to be read as a communication from the unconscious. Whereas the semiotic symbol is culturally learned, the symbol stimulates (“to new knowledge and new values”). Symbols “embody an excess of libido over and above that necessary to the natural system” (Philipson 1963:21). Put another way, symbols are “experiences of a dysfunction in the natural system (...) Symbols (...) enable the individual or a society to turn excess psychological energy to ‘effective accomplishment’ (1963:23). Finally, “a symbol is a psychological suggestion of each power as to make actual that which is conceived as a

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<sup>39</sup> Stevens (1982:242-243) elaborates on the word “symbol,” which in its original Greek form refers to a token, which could be used as a verification of identity.

possibility” (1963:24). The symbol, according to Philipson (1963:24), “expresses a complex fact not yet clearly grasped by consciousness,” as opposed to the sign which is already conscious (see above). The Jungian notion of the symbol is then “a physical suggestion of such power as to make actual that which is conceived as a possibility” (1963:24).

In the proposed Jungian approach, symbols are “manifestations of the collective contents” of the unconscious, and are significant for the optimal development of the psyche. These manifestations are “revelations of our inner psychic life” (Palmer 1997:115)<sup>40</sup>. “The psychological symbol (...) is the unit of expression that communicates culture to human beings” and arises spontaneously in, for instance, dreams and paintings (Young-Eisendrath & Hall 1991:48). The symbol is an image that Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1991:49) describe as ‘alive’, an image that is psychologically motivational and generates new meaning(s). A symbol should be interpreted on a metaphorical level as it is related to mythic meanings.

Izod (1992:4) defines ‘symbol’ as that which conveys “to recipients an energy which activates their archetypal instincts.” He quotes Jung: “The symbols [the psyche creates] are always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are moulded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind.” Emblems, states Izod (1992:254), are what Jung called signs – referents to contents that are already conscious. Jacoby (in Sugg 1992:74) states that new symbols are constantly produced to guide the individual to greater consciousness. If an image is interpreted as a symbol and it brings about an increase in consciousness, then the image was a symbol (Philipson, in Sugg 1992:227). The ‘right’ interpretation brings about a feeling of wholeness; if not interpreted or read correctly, the symbol will remain an incomprehensible mystery

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<sup>40</sup> “The statement that symbols possess a transcendent function may sound both esoteric and disconcertingly Jungian,” he states. Neurological research since 1970 seems to indicate that this “transcendental function” is performed by “a great bundle of nerve fibres called the ‘corpus callosum’.”

that is not conscious. If my reading of Shyamalan's films is 'right' (which is not to say that the reading is exclusive), I will make meaning of the films' symbolic imagery to such an extent that I experience a feeling wholeness, which relates to an emotional experience of the divine or numinous. With regard to the 'right' interpretation or attitude towards the symbolic, Jung was interested in how the symbolic could be read as communication from the unconscious (Hockley 2001:36).

From the above, a symbol can be said to be firstly "a representation which is not logically equivalent to that which it represents" and secondly for which "the referent is not knowable except through the medium of some natural or artificial representation. It is not directly knowable (Philipson 1963:26). "The symbol," Philipson (1963:28) says further, "is part of an attempt to link a given known with an unknown." Philipson (1963:26-28) asserts that the symbol thirdly represents that which is not logically equivalent to that which is represented, and, lastly, that "the symbol is (...) part of an attempt to link a given known with an unknown"<sup>41</sup>; reading Philipson's comments, the symbol is read as metaphor.

It is this symbolic-archetypal dimension to film that I explore in investigating my emotional response to film images. I makes meaning through amplification. The method for interpreting symbolic film is amplification (Fredericksen 2001:33), which takes place on two levels: the personal and more importantly the transpersonal (collective) (2001:37). "The symbolic process is possible only when one allows the ego-consciousness to enter the image" (Jung 1950:90). Presently, the study focuses on the notion of psychic energy before considering the specific structures of the psyche as set out by Jung.

Having discussed the dynamic nature of the psyche and the significance of Jung's conceptualisation of the collective psyche, the study now calls attention to

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<sup>41</sup> This differs from the view of prominent Freudians (including Rank, Sachs, and Jones) who declare that symbols merely "disguise repressed material" (Philipson1963:30).

the manifestation of symbols and how the psyche, functioning on psychic<sup>42</sup> energy, manages to exist as an active, forceful entity. According to Frutiger (1989:235), symbolic content is that “indefinable capacity of a representation to make a statement.” In film, the symbolic content is of a mainly visual nature.

A single filmic image or sequence of images in a film (a ‘chain’ of images or a scene) can represent a specific theme. Ellenberger (1994:704) explains that the assimilation of a symbol is marked by the liberation of unconscious energy. Now that the energy has been liberated, I can use this energy consciously. The build-up of psychic energy within the individual after the assimilation of “symbolic power” (which is a ‘felt’ experience), elicits feelings of inspiration, greatness, and a gradually expanding understanding of a certain matter referenced or discussed in the film. This experience of inspiration is recognised by my heightened emotions related to the numinous. Rushing and Frenz (1995:33) further stress, “whereas the patterns underlying symbol formation in the psyche are the same everywhere, the images that express them vary from culture to culture.” Jung held the view that certain cultural motifs, those one would find in numerous cultures despite their never having had contact with each other, are consequently from the collective unconscious (Samuels 1986:24).

Moreover, notions of progression and regression are also important to a Jungian approach to the filmic text. Psychological progression (essentially forward movement) satisfies the needs of consciousness, meaning that the ego adapts successfully to the external environment. Psychological regression (thus backward movement) addresses the needs of the unconscious psyche (Palmer 1997:105), regarding the internal adaptation of the psyche (Meyer *et al.* 1997:119). More precisely, Palmer (1997:106) defines progression as how people adapt according to the requirements of an objective, external reality, while regression redresses the balance of the psyche by activating one function to

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<sup>42</sup> Whenever the word “psychic” is used, it implies “in or from the psyche”, and should not be linked to notions of paranormal mental activity.

compensate for the inadequacy of another (1997:107). Regression is responsible for revealing the possibilities for renewal and regeneration that lie within the individual (1997:106). In watching films, I am often confronted with characters that find themselves facing progression or regression; these principles may feature in a Jungian critical reading of, for example, P.T. Anderson's *Magnolia* (2000), where numerous characters are linked together by moments of psychological regression and progression. These themes are emphasised by the film's structure, as Anderson edited the film in such a way that progression and regression are continuously played off one another. By acknowledging these principles of progression and regression, I opt for the Jungian approach to produce a psychologically inclusive reading of the text in that this approach considers the whole of the psyche and its structures.

To further understand the workings of the unconscious, it is advantageous to also get a coherent picture of how, according to Jungian theory, the psyche operates and what its components are. The following section elaborates on the structures and functions of the psyche as posited by Jung and selected post-Jungians such as Jacobi, Jones and Cox. The psyche consists of four parts. These parts do not build upon each other, but rather exist around each other like larger circles around smaller ones, as Jacobi (1944:5) envisions it. The most important structure, particularly for this current study, is the Self. The Self serves as the regulating centre of the psyche, but can also be perceived as the psyche's ordering principle (Hyde & McGuinness 2001:173-174). In a Jungian reading of the *Star Wars* films, Hero Luke Skywalker's quest is about 'saving' himself by actively engaging with the Self, initiating individuation. In relation to the Self is the ego, which is the conscious 'I' that interacts with other people and external reality. Around the ego is the field of consciousness, around which is the personal unconscious and finally the collective unconscious.

In addition, every person has two psychological general attitudes and performs four basic psychological functions. The one attitude is that of the introvert, when

the individual is self-oriented. The other attitude is that of the extravert, when the individual is goal-oriented. The introvert is reflective on his/her actions and existence; s/he keeps to her-/himself and is generally reserved. The extravert is much more outgoing and adaptive, and more accommodating of others (Jung 1966:44). Each individual is both an introvert and an extravert, but due to inevitable individual, environmental and temporal influences, one attitude usually predominates (Jones 1979:3), causing individuals to be labelled “introverts” and “extraverts” in general interaction<sup>43</sup>. These terms may also be functional in describing the characters in a film; this notion is further applied in Chapter Four.

For the Jungian approach proposed by this study, it is important to take note of the following with regards to the psyche:

- The unconscious exists as a psychically valid, dynamic entity, one that ‘flows’ with psychic energy (Jung’s ‘libido’) which is governed by a tension between opposites (homeostasis);
- The unconscious has a compensatory function;
- The unconscious produces symbols;
- The ego (consciousness) can never fully understand or access the realm of the unconscious; however, one can work with what one is given, such as visual representations of archetypal/collective forces in film.

Having looked at Jung’s conceptualisation of the unconscious, it is necessary to look at unconscious contents, specifically archetypes.

### 3.1.2 The archetypes of the collective unconscious

Jungian thought views archetypes as an integral, critical dimension of psychological existence. The *Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Elliot 1997:34) defines “archetype,” from the Greek term meaning “first” (*arch*) and

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<sup>43</sup> Using only two terms to differentiate between people from various backgrounds and contexts runs the risk of labeling. Nevertheless, these ‘labels’ were accepted by the greater psychological community (Meyer *et al.* 1997:130).



“type” (*typos*), as “original model”, or “typical specimen.” Other words related to the notion of the archetype are “prototype” and “precursor.” The word “primordial” is linked with that which exists “from the beginning” (Elliot 1997:590), which positions the archetypal within the collective unconscious.

So important is the archetype for analytical psychology that Anthony Stevens (in Van Rensburg 2000:151) claims that the importance of the archetypes is as vital for psychology as quantum theory is for physics. For Jung’s colleague Jolande Jacobi (1944:42), the archetype is such a pivotal element of human existence that she terms it the “organs of the soul”<sup>44</sup>. Archetypes form the bases of not only mythology, but also the religions and philosophies that exert great control and influence over whole nations<sup>45</sup>. Once one is familiar with a Jungian theory of dreams and mythology, one could come to accept the archetype as foundational element in the psyche, and a primary conceptual construct beneficial to this study. Additionally, archetypes, writes Stevens (1982:39), transcend boundaries related to notions of race and time. Stevens seems to regrettably suggest an absolute, but Ferrell (2000:9) echoes Jung’s previous point and emphasises that “each culture, in its time, will develop its own version of these archetypal myths”. The archetypes might manifest in film, they are shaped and moulded by the context of the film. Featuring Death (specifically euthanasia) as an archetypal event, the French-Canadian *The Barbarian Invasions* (Arcand 2003) presents a different perspective to that of American-produced *Million Dollar Baby* (Eastwood 2004). Film can then serve as a conveyor of archetypal imagery. Arcand’s film presents the event of death as a natural development; indeed, the crisis is not for the dying but for those left behind to contend with spiritual and psychological

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<sup>44</sup> The concept of the archetype is a cornerstone of Jungian (analytical) psychology, and has met with considerable criticism. For example, Gannon (1999:[sp]) accuses Jung of psychological structuralism. In *The Symbolic Life*, Jung (1977:228) writes that his “views about the archaic remnants, which I’ve called archetypes or primordial images” are criticised by persons who, according to Jung, possess inadequate knowledge of the psychology of dreams and mythology. Although Jung seems to position himself as superior to those who critique his ideas, it remains significant that Jung read archetypal contents in dreams and myths.

<sup>45</sup> Consider as a case in point the rise of Nazi Germany, on which Jung elaborates with reference to the constellation of the Wotan archetype in *Essays on Contemporary Events* (1947). Here Jung illustrates the potential of the archetypal experience to affect masses of people.



problems, while Eastwood's film highlights the dynamics of human relationships in the context of competitive boxing. Here, death presents a natural progression not for the dying character, but for her companion.

Fiedler (in Carlin, Fiedler & Schechter 1990:77) is of the opinion that the traditional, orthodox definition of archetypes is not the optimal definition. The author states that archetypes change as the particular historical context does; the content of the archetypes do not remain the same across time. In addition, certain archetypes do not manifest across all cultures; as an example, Fiedler cites the example of the Bonding of Men in the Wilderness, which is a predominantly American phenomenon, as enacted by the characters in the film adaptation of Stephen King's *Dreamcatcher* (Kasdan 2003), where a group of male friends travel to a cabin in a woods as part of a ritual in strengthening the bonds of friendship and camaraderie between them. However, Ferrell (2000:8) contends that archetypal stories connect not only with each other but also with individuals "through the same instinctive nature that we, through the collective unconscious, share with those who originated them." Indeed, this study promotes the potential meaning(s) of the archetypal in film in a critical reading for the individual, rather than the view of a clear-cut single meaning.

Significantly, there is a connection between emotion and archetype. Frye (1957:1-2) echoes the idea of archetype as 'imprint' which "indicates a universal [sic] predisposition to construct an image, usually in an emotionally aroused state." An archetypal experience is an emotional one. Anthony Stevens (1982:16-18) moreover says that personal experience aids us as individuals to develop what is already there in the archetype, that is, the "actualisation of the archetypal potential, the development that is encoded" in each individual's genetic constitution. In my view, Stevens's approach to archetypes is mainly biological in that he emphasises the biological more than the cultural. He refers to the "archetype-an-sich", the archetype as such, as an "inherent neuropsychic system responsible for certain patterns of behaviour." Stevens is a Jungian author who is

seemingly convinced of the biological faculty of the archetype and surely there is room for this view; however, for present purposes, the neuropsychic existence of the archetype is not the issue. What is important from Stevens' assertion is that he also writes of archetypes as patterns that could be perceptible in numerous cultures and societies. From Frye and Stevens, I emphasise the emotional aspect of encountering archetypal contents (the activation of archetypal potential as guided by the image), as Chapter Four will demonstrate in greater detail.

From what has been said, the archetype can be understood as an inherited, innate (and potentially genetic) predisposition of the human mind to form representations of specific motifs that we encounter in mythology. These archetypal 'representations' can vary a lot between people and over time, yet never lose their basic pattern (Jung 1977:228). Notably, archetypes can attain meaning only in their relation to the individual (Stevens 1982:52, 67). It is due to the varied socio-cultural contexts that an image read as representing an archetype in an American film will differ from a Senegalese treatment of the same theme or narrative – yet the fundamental motif remains the same. It is in this sense that I might, as Izod (2001b: 56) does, consider film to be a “vehicle for the cultural unconscious,” visually presenting me with culturally clothed archetypal-mythical manifestations from the unconscious. This cultural influence can be seen in *Signs*, for example, in the film's appropriation of UFO's as mandalas.

Archetypes are further described as typical images, characters, narratives, designs and so forth (Ellen 2003). Jung (1966:110) goes on to say that there is an “indefinite number of archetypes representative of situations.” Archetypes manifest as archetypal figures, events or objects (Palmer 1997:116). The Hero is such an archetypal figure, where Marriage is an archetypal event and the Dragon an archetypal object. Other archetypal characters include Death (who attempts to sabotage the Hero's quest) and the Shadow (representing conflict within the Hero). Archetypal images occur due to the mind's tendency to express itself in

terms of underlying archetypes such as the anima, animus and shadow (Palmer 1997:120), discussed later in this chapter. Archetypal images, writes Hall (1983:10-11), “are discernible by their influence on the visible contents of the mind”. I consider that the archetype is not the image itself, but that these images are formed by the interaction between the collective unconscious (the archetypes themselves) and the personal unconscious (the individual psyche). Collective figures and situations might contain archetypal images without me being consciously aware of it (Hall 1983:11).

Regarding the relevance of Jungian theory for film analysis, Izod (1992:1) describes the usefulness of archetypes for film studies when he writes: “they [archetypes] are forms around which cluster images that demand the viewer’s attention through the emotional force with which they are perceived.” The archetype is then essentially a skeletal concept built upon and fleshed out with related motifs and ideas, or associations (Samuels 1986:25). Frye (1957:102) entertains the same notion of archetypes as associative clusters. The clusters in an individual’s life around which certain themes and images gather, are referred to as complexes. These complexes are known by their emotional tone. The image with its archetypal foundation thus activates, as it were, an emotional reaction to the visual material related to the archetypes. This affective component of the archetypal and complexes is explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Izod (1992:12) highlights that “the ego-consciousness of each spectator is (...) the target of the archetypal images that the films deploy. Through their potent symbolism they activate a process directly comparable with integration, when their formidable emotive power affects the responsive spectator.” Archetypal images in film ‘invite’ the ego to acknowledge and address them. I cannot deny the power of these images as they are emotionally toned; these archetypal images in

film strike an emotional chord with me<sup>46</sup>. The symbolism of this archetypal imagery has an emotional effect on me, which brings me to Hollwitz (in Alister & Hauke 2001:87), who emphasises that some films contain “archetypal images, which is to say images that provoke similar emotional reactions at a level deep enough to be considered numinous.” This numinous reaction, as has been established, is an emotional one. Some films may be read to present psychologically meaningful archetypal imagery potent enough that the experience thereof evokes a numinous experience due to the activation of archetypal energy, an experience described as akin to “being touched by the gods” (2001:87).

These images’ immediate source is the screen, and not the viewer’s unconscious. However, some images could come to dominate my mind and imagination. From a Jungian approach, these images are likely to be those images that connect psychologically and emotionally with a complex. The archetype is presented to the conscious mind as an image, since it is in this form that the ego can deal with the archetype<sup>47</sup>. It is this psycho-emotional archetypal element that may become activated while one watches a film, facilitating an emotional experience.

Based on the above discussion of the archetype and its traits, Figure 3.1 presents the most prominent notions associated with archetypes.

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<sup>46</sup> This is not to say that the images have agency, but to indicate that I have a ‘felt’ or emotional experience stimulated by the visual.

<sup>47</sup> Stevens (1982:293) writes that “archetypes cannot be described or written about, only experienced in the ideas, images and feelings they give rise to.” In my view, Stevens argues that due to the unconscious nature of the archetype, conscious investigation of the archetype *an sich* is apparently impossible; one can write and describe the archetypal in relation to the experience or manifestation thereof in images.

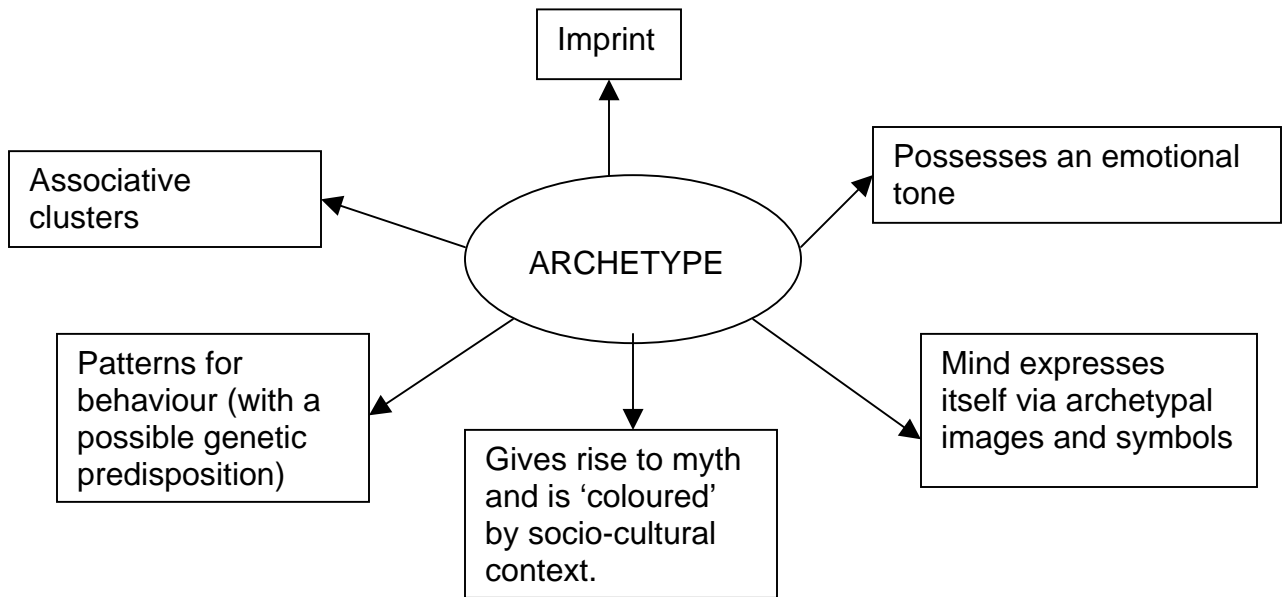


Figure 3.1: The archetype.

This study now briefly introduces a few of the more prominent archetypes mentioned in Jungian theory that are relevant to the study. The Hero, the Child, the Shadow and the Self are of particular importance to this study, although the anima, animus and Trickster are also acknowledged. In the critical reading of Shyamalan’s films, the manifestation of these archetypes will become apparent, and they are discussed here to lay a foundation for their application to the filmic text that is to follow in Chapter Four.

### 3.1.2.1 The Hero

The Hero is a prime example of an archetype. Indeed, Henderson (1964:101) states that the myth of the Hero is “the most common and best known myth in the world.” This ‘universal’ myth of the Hero – albeit within the trappings of the relevant culture and *zeitgeist* – contains the image of a powerful man (sic) (Jung [1977:228] even uses the word “god-man”) who battles and defeats what is perceived as an evil force, manifesting in many context-related ‘forms’ (such as what one might term ‘monsters’). These ‘monsters’ could vary from the slimy creatures spawned by the camp monster movies of the 1950s and 1960s to the

more recent technological enemies critics have come to reckon with in films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick 1968) and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (Cameron 1993). These myths pertaining to the Hero vary in specific detail over time and place, but can be perceived to be archetypally similar.

Ferrell (2000:59) confirms the recurrence of the Hero archetype. For him, the most familiar version is in the “Western novel or film as a form of the messianic hero myth.” The Western films starring Clint Eastwood as an anonymous, steely-eyed saviour come to mind, although it must be noted that the Western is an almost exclusively American genre. That said, the above statement holds true when one considers that many Japanese films have, in the past, focused on the exploits of a samurai-like liberator who comes to the aid of needy villagers, notably in Akira Kurosawa’s films like *The Seven Samurai* (1954). In essence, the Hero must come to realize that the shadow (investigated in section 3.1.2.3) holds great power, and that he can gain positive experience from it (Henderson 1964:112). The Hero must come to terms with the shadow’s capacity to devour and destroy if he aims to defeat the Dragon, or whatever it is that represents that final object or obstacle to overcome or defeat before the journey is over. Thus, the psychic integration of repressed materials (shadow) must occur before the individual can progress to a following level of consciousness, as motivated by the process of individuation.

The archetype of the Hero will be especially relevant for the discussion of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy as the Hero’s Journey is brought into frame, since these films vividly depict the Hero’s confrontation with the shadow. Brief examples of how film can present the conflict between Hero and Shadow could be read in *Hellboy* (Del Toro 2004), *Batman Begins* (Nolan 2005), and *Angel Heart* (Parker 1986). In the latter film, the Hero literally confronts the personification of the Christian shadow, Lucifer. In these films, the Hero is able to optimally fulfil his role once he has accepted and integrated his shadow. Often, the Hero could be

prompted to this inner growth and psychological integration by encounters with the Child archetype.

### 3.1.2.2 The Child

Another primary archetype is the Child archetype. Jung (1968:161) refers to the Child as a “wonder-child”, born and raised under extraordinary circumstances. He points out that this Child is not (necessarily) a human child, as seen in the film *A.I.* (Spielberg 2000). The function of the Child archetype is that it represents the past as well as the present. The Child reminds us that our development is not nearly complete or finished; the Child symbolises that which will grow into unity (Iaccino 1998:xiii), that the individual has the potential to grow into psychological fullness. Maduro and Wheelwright (in Sugg 1992:185) evidently emphasize the “future-oriented significance” of the Child archetype. In this sense, the archetype of the Child shows a similarity with the Shadow archetype, as both may incur psychological growth. In the film *Aliens* (Cameron 1985) the character of Newt, a young girl found in an alien-infested space station, serves to motivate Sigourney Weaver’s now iconic Ripley character to integrate a more feminine dimension to her very masculine persona. In this way the youth ‘inspires’ the adult to grow psychologically.

From the above, it is evident that the Child can “foreshadow or accompany forward movement and progression through creative regression leading to a symbolic death and renewal in the psyche” (Maduro & Wheelwright, in Sugg 1992:185). Interestingly, this death and renewal forms a thought-provoking theme for *Alien 3* (Fincher 1993) and *Alien Resurrection* (Jeunet 1999), where the Ripley character is killed off but resurrected as, quite literally, a newly integrated organism consisting of opposites (alien/human, killer/preserver). Shyamalan’s films all feature prominent child characters who play active roles in promoting the narrative and, more importantly, other characters’ psychological development. For present purposes, we leave the discussion of the *Alien* films at

that; these films serve to illustrate the presence of the archetypal in film, a notion this study argues for in greater detail in Chapter Four. In that chapter I will demonstrate the importance of the dynamics of not only the Hero and Child, but also the Shadow archetype.

### 3.1.2.3 The Shadow

Archetypal encounters in filmic imagery differ according to the individual critic performing the amplification of the text, but it remains that the shadow archetype is one of the archetypes to feature most prominently. When confronting the unconscious, the personal shadow is the first figure we meet (Von Franz 1974:7). Indeed, one might contemplate whether Hall's (1983:15) safe place to confront the Shadow could not indeed be film. According to Kenevan (1999:15), we can accept that opposite types in literature and film stand for shadow figures<sup>48</sup>.

In the view of Jungian critics such as Iaccino (1998:xiv), the shadow is the most psychologically powerful archetype. The shadow archetype consists of specific contents which one may consider as not part of oneself, that is, anything that opposes or conflicts with the ego (occasionally, this shadow may be referred to as inferior). The shadow often represents the opposite (Jacobi 1944:104) of the Hero in terms of psychological constitution<sup>49</sup>. Iaccino (1998:xvi) writes of "unacceptable impulses" that are contained within the shadow<sup>50</sup>. The shadow can therefore involve any qualities the individual would not usually want to associate with him-/herself. It represents qualities of the ego that are further considered 'unknown' (Von Franz 1964:174), or that which one is unaware of (Ellenberger 1994:40); the individual has not become conscious of the qualities and contents that constitute the shadow. The shadow archetype could be perceived to manifest in daily existence, coming from either the personal or collective

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<sup>48</sup> This statement cannot pass without criticism, as it hints at a form of reductionism that a detailed Jungian amplification attempts to avoid.

<sup>49</sup> For that matter, one could consider the Hero as the Shadow's Shadow.

<sup>50</sup> The concept of the Shadow should not be confused with Freud's notion of the id, which contains the repressed contents in an individual's psyche (Rycroft 1995:74-75).



unconscious. Rushing & Frenz (1995:39) state that “the shadow can be personal, cultural (what an entire society or community hides, hates, dislikes or disapproves of), or even archetypal (absolute evil, such as the Biblical notion of Satan as container or personification of pure evil)”. In this regard, a Jungian approach recognises the importance of socio-cultural context but suggests the incorporation of an archetypal approach to an interrogation of the text.

This ‘dark’ (mysterious, unacknowledged, repressed) aspect of the psyche can either be projected onto an object (Jacobi 1944:103) or, most likely, other individuals. The shadow is the “alter-ego image just below the surface of the personal unconscious” (Hall 1983:15). Engaging the shadow usually entails a compensatory function related to restoring the balance of the psyche (homeostasis). This compensation occurs on a level that may be personal or collective or both. Confronting the shadow is a necessary but daunting task of individuation<sup>51</sup>, a process of psychological growth and integration discussed in more detail in a forthcoming section but briefly touched upon here to illustrate the importance of the shadow for psychological maturation.

In this regard, Stevens (1982:217) accentuates the importance of the shadow archetype to develop: “The only alternative to global catastrophe can be a collective refusal to project Shadow qualities onto social systems, political institutions and each other, and an acceptance of full moral responsibility for them (shadow projections) in ourselves.” To avoid a “global catastrophe” or apocalypse (which is an archetypal event), shadow projections need to be integrated. Stevens accentuates how the archetypal shadow can influence human existence on a collective level, although the individual base is just as important. Jung (1947:xvii) states that it is advantageous to realise that one’s worst enemy is to be found in oneself (as Luke Skywalker does in *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) when he battles a formidable foe only to find out that he has literally

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<sup>51</sup> It is by no means easy to integrate the shadow into the Self (Von Franz 1964:176). This psychological integration forms an integral part of the individuation process that leads the individual to personal growth and psychic integration.

been fighting himself); that is, the notion of the archetypal shadow, a component of both the collective and individual psyche. In film, protagonists often come face to face with their shadows, such as Morgan Freeman's detective William Somerset and Brad Pitt's detective Mills hunting down a serial killer in *Seven* (Fincher 1997). One character manages to integrate the reality of society's shadow; the other fails to do so and figuratively kills himself when he literally murders the killer. In John Woo's *Face/Off* (1996), the Hero actually becomes his enemy by taking on his physical features, and vice versa.

Understanding how the shadow is significant for purposes of advancing psychological growth, the question might arise as to how one might come to recognise the shadow as the archetype manifests in life. When the shadow appears in a dream, it is of the same sex as the dreamer (Von Franz 1964:175). It often also appears as a dubious figure (Stevens 1982:215). If the shadow quality is not integrated, it functions in such a way that one is unaware of it, and discovers its activity only belatedly (Von Franz 1974:6). The collective shadow reveals itself in wars (Stevens' global catastrophe – see the previous paragraph) and in the destructive attitudes held by some nations toward others (1974:8)<sup>52</sup>.

I conclude that the shadow, despite the negative traits generally associated with the concept, plays an important role in the development of the individual on a psychological level – specifically with regard to the development of the Self. This process of growth is called “individuation” in Jungian thought, and the role of both Shadow and Self will be discussed in this regard later in this chapter, since the individuation motif is seminal to a Jungian critical reading of the text.

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<sup>52</sup> According to Jungian authors such as Von Franz (1974:7), no one culture can claim to not have a dark or repressed side, as “all civilizations (...) have their own shadow” which manifests in ways peculiar to the context the archetype is involved in. In South Africa, one might claim that the collective shadow casts its dark light from white to black in the prejudicial system of Apartheid, as demonstrated in films such as *A Dry White Season* (Palcy 1989) and *Mapantsula* (Schmitz 1988).

### 3.1.2.4 The Self

The Self exists in every human being as the “regulating center of the entire psyche” in relation to the ego, which serves as “the ordering center of the personal consciousness” (Hall 1983:11). Whenever one encounters or uses the term ‘Self’, one should keep in mind its three possible meanings: the Self as the psyche being a single functional entity, or as the central archetype of order, or as the archetypal basis of the ego. For present purposes, the Self refers to the latter two meanings presented. The archetype of the Self is of importance to the process of individuation. Rushing and Frenz (1995:42) explain: “The Self directs the (...) ego-consciousness of the critic toward textual meanings (...) that articulate (...) the insights the critic must assimilate into his or her consciousness if he or she is to live a more individuated life<sup>53</sup>.” The Self expresses itself in symbols, and symbols of the Self – as directing or directing forces of inner growth – may be perceived in various cultural artefacts such as film – as opposed to these symbols being ‘found’ in these artefacts because they were placed there by the unconscious. The importance of the Self as archetype becomes seminal to the discussion of the Jungian critic’s approach to the investigation of the affective experience in film, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Four. Visual manifestations and representations of the archetypal Self are perceived to occur in dreams and, as this study will show, in film.

Symbolically, then, the Self may be read as manifesting in symbols varying from divinity (God, the representations of heavenly bodies) to the nucleus of an atom. The individual reads a symbol as a symbol for the Self; that is, the individual critic attaches meaning that links the Self to a specific symbol. The individual reads the symbolic as being symbolic of the Self due to, as Hall (1983:11) highlights, the emotional tone of the activation of the archetype of the Self. This activation of the

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<sup>53</sup> This remark may seem to shift the focus to the idea of the ‘critic-in-analysis’, as Rushing and Frenz refer to the critic’s own individuated (subjectively meaningful) life. The statement is still significant for present purposes as it emphasises that the Self drives the individual to psychological maturation.

archetype within may cause me to consequently become fascinated with the specific symbol I am engaging with.

The Self as symbol may be perceived to appear as a mandala, which is a symbol of order. Mandalas appear in both Navaho and Aztec traditions (Campbell 1982:188-189), and Jung (1967:22) says that “If the (...) fantasies are drawn, symbols appear that are chiefly of the mandala type” that refers to a magic circle. The mandala is the actual blueprint for various structures in Italy and in Buddhist settlements (Jung & Kerenyi 1963:14). The relationship between notions of the mandala<sup>54</sup> and the Self is significant for the discussion of *Signs* in Chapter Four. Whenever the psychic balance within the individual is disturbed, the balance of opposites is threatened. Again the data brings to light the compensatory nature of the psyche that attempts to maintain a psychological equilibrium (upholding homeostasis). When the individual perceives the appearance of a mandala, ‘psychic attention’ is directed to the Self, to the ‘call’ for inner growth. This ‘call’ could be prompted by the previously discussed Child archetype, or by encountering the contrasexual archetypes. Chapter Four will describe the dynamics of these archetypal contents as related to the case study.

#### 3.1.2.5 Anima and animus

Although these contrasexual archetypes are not investigated in-depth for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to know some of the fundamental principles regarding the anima and the animus in order to comprehend my application thereof where it is relevant. Jung (1950:23) explains that “animus and anima are natural [sic] archetypes, primordial figures of the unconscious, and have given rise to the mythological gods and goddesses.” The anima is the soul, and everything the anima appears in assumes a numinous quality: it becomes

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<sup>54</sup> The true (sic) mandala, observes Jung (1953:96), is an inner image constructed through active imagination, a process that falls beyond the scope of this present study.

“magical” and “epic” (Jung 1950:77), experiences that, if encountered within the filmic context, I could describe as being ‘larger’ than myself.

Each individual possesses physical and psychological qualities of the opposite sex (Stevens 1982:68). The anima, which appears in a man’s dream as a woman, can be either helpful and loving or a seductive swindler. (The notion of the ‘helpful anima’ is significant for my discussion of *Signs* as the engagement with this archetypal manifestation stimulates psychological growth for the main character.) Jung’s conceptualisation of the contrasexual archetypes have over time proven to be very influential, at least within Jungian theory<sup>55</sup>. What I find important regarding these two archetypes is the notion that both genders possess psychological ‘traits’ usually associated with those genders, and not that these terms (anima and animus) serve as comfortable labels for the opposite sex.

In addition to the contrasexual figures appearing in dreams, there is also the potentially helpful or destructive presence of the archetype of the Trickster.

### 3.1.2.6 The Trickster

The Trickster, as discussed by Samuels *et al.* (in Sugg 1992:273) is the figure of Mercurius in some texts, which portray him as a malicious figure whose actions are often contradictory to those of the Hero. The actions of the Trickster “reflect a compensatory relationship to consciousness,” where I read consciousness as referring to the Hero and the Trickster as his compensatory complement. “Jung,” according to the authors, often “saw the Trickster as the equivalent to the shadow” (1992:274), or at least, for present purposes, as complementary to the Shadow. One finds the Trickster in numerous films of a more action-oriented nature, where the Trickster may be presented as the Hero’s sidekick or partner, a

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<sup>55</sup> For further investigation into the anima and animus, I refer the reader to Hillman’s *Anima: anatomy of a personified notion* (1985) and Hauke’s *Jung and the Postmodern* (2000).

character that is not as secure in his/her path as the Hero is. Norman Rheedus' character in *Blade II* (Del Toro 2001), in fact, betrays his mentor to serve his own needs. The Salieri character served a similar role in *Amadeus* (Forman 1980) although on a more complex archetypal level that highlights the dynamics of the Shadow-Trickster relationship.

The Hero, Child, Shadow, Self and Trickster are the main archetypes for this study, with due reference to additional archetypes when appropriate. These archetypes are vital to a Jungian critical reading of the text where an emotional experience forms part of the cinematic experience. Often, these archetypal contents, as well as contents from the personal unconscious, are projected to objects outside of the individual.

### 3.1.3 The phenomenon of projection

Jung (1964b:25) describes projection in the sense that an individual sees 'in' another individual what s/he him-/herself has within. Those psychological attributes that the individual is convinced someone else has, are then actually contained in ourselves on an unconscious level. "What we combat in him [the other] is usually our own inferior side," explains Jung (1964b:65), in a clear reference to what has been established as the Shadow.

The projectee becomes aware of the range of projections in life when s/he investigates emotions and feelings that provide the individual with "a [subjectively perceived] magical or intangible quality" pertaining to specific locations, persons or art (1964:26). Archetypes can be projected on what the projectee unconsciously perceives as a 'fit' container, thereby establishing projectee–container relationship with a "magical or intangible quality" as mentioned above. In Bill Condon's *Kinsey* (2005), for example, a scientist becomes the container for an outraged public's projections when he conducts controversial studies on human sexual behaviour.

From a Jungian point of view, one of the notions this study supports is that all experience is psychic experience, as perceived reality is psychologically 'real'. Projection serves as almost a "psychologically linking device" with what I cautiously refer to as one's 'external reality'. Whenever an individual reacts to something in a disproportionate manner (the response far outweighs the stimulus in terms of force or emotion), the situation could be analysed as a possible projection, a response affected by an archetype (1964:32). Von Franz (1980:117) states that whenever one is fascinated by something, it is due to a projection. This leads to the individual becoming very emotional, often more so than usual, and acquiring what is perceived as a considerable amount of consciousness over a short time span. "The projection of archetypes," says Cox (1975:143), "gives rise to the sense of holiness attached to places and things." This "sense of holiness" relates to experiences of the numinous, of enhanced emotional awareness. As such, the role that projection may play in the experience of the filmic text should be considered, as is done in Chapter Four, since it could account – at least in part – for the emotional cinematic experiences.

From the above observations, projection clearly plays a significant role in every individual's life, as these projections influence an individual's responses to various stimuli. Because of the great amount of projection taking place in everybody all over the world, it is nearly impossible to say what the world actually consists of (Jacobi 1953:10). For what Jung refers to as 'primitive man,' if I may use this doubly derogatory term, natural phenomena such as sunrise and sunset are "symbolic expressions for the inner and unconscious psychic drama that becomes accessible to human consciousness by way of projection – that is, mirrored in the events of nature" (Jung 1950:55). Again we encounter the idea that the psyche constructs the world that the individual inhabits, and that all 'reality' is psychic 'reality'. This notion of constructed reality aligns with the postmodern notion that rejects the claim to a single, objective experience of reality that everyone is part of.

Based on what has been said of the unconscious, projections can come from one of two places: either the personal unconscious or the collective unconscious. Whenever a projection comes from personal repression, the projections are targeted at friends, family, or one's immediate surroundings. In cases where the projections originate in the collective contents of the individual, religious and philosophical contents come into play and the individual selects a corresponding carrier for the projections, be it Catholics, Jesuits or even Imperialists, to cite Jung's (1964:320) own examples.

If projection is such a psychologically significant phenomenon as Jungian theory proposes, one might enquire whether one could not somehow become conscious of these projections that serve to link individuals with their external worlds. One becomes aware of one's projection when one experiences feelings of discomfort about one's assessment of another individual. One questions whether what one thinks of another person is valid and accurate, and whether one simply projected one's own psychic contents onto this person (Von Franz 1980:35). The object that the projectee is projecting upon becomes the container for the projectee's alienated mind and its content, that is, his/her shadow. In the *Blade* films (Norrington 1998, Del Toro 2001, Goyer 2004), the hero is a vampire hunter who shows no remorse in destroying the vampire villains of the narrative. However, Blade is himself a vampire, and needs to inject a serum on a regular basis to ensure that his vampirism does not overwhelm his humanity. Blade has come to hate what he is, projecting what he despises in himself on all other vampires, and in the third and final film of the series, destroys the vampires by destroying himself.

With regard to projection, the following basic example serves to demonstrate the occurrence of projection in daily life. In a relationship between a man and a woman, the romantic first stage of being in love is characterized by the man's projection of his inner image of the ideal female onto the woman. Later on, as



'being in love' begins to fade away, the man ideally comes to terms both with his anima and the real woman with whom he is in a relationship. American romantic comedies (*Sleepless in Seattle* (Ephron 1993), *While You Were Sleeping* (Turteltaub 1995)) seem to present only that part of relationships where projections are still significantly directing personal interaction: two people meet, there is a definite connection between them, and they finally get together after overcoming innumerable obstacles and misunderstandings. It is rare that a film comes along to show how relationships work after the initial romantic pairing, and after projections have presumably been resolved (as is the case with *When Harry Met Sally* (Reiner 1988)). The tension between the ideal and the 'real' is consequently seldom explored; the film ends before projections can be retracted. In *Enduring Love* (Michell 2005), however, the romantic couple has long moved beyond the early stages of projective infatuation and encounter a shadow figure that puts their relationship to the test.

It is necessary to understand the functioning of psychological projection as projection might serve to establish an emotional connection between the characters encountered in (a) film. This notion is explored in Chapter Four. The use of mythology for the Jungian critical reading will be discussed in the following section, since mythology serves as a representation of the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious, which in turn may function as the origin for individual projections.

#### 3.1.4 Mythology: archetypes old and new

To what dark God must we pay our respects in order to go down and emerge from the labyrinth of our own smoky-chambered souls, thick with thoughts and ideas?

- G.D. Astrachan (2000:450).

"Dark" here refers to the mysterious or unknown, the potentially malevolent. In my view, it serves as an adjective for "God", which in this instance refers not to a

Judaeo-Christian deity, but to a psychological construct within the individual. The implication of the above, I propose, is that psychological maturation is potentially perilous, and requires an encounter with the Self. With its perceived archetypal connotations and manifestations, mythology might function as a guiding journey to psychological growth. I ponder the details of such an ‘inner journey’ and ask, as Astrachan does above: what needs to be done to come out on the other side, perhaps augmented by the experiential results of the psychological journey?<sup>56</sup> In the following section, I will show how mythology could be beneficial to the Jungian critical reading of the filmic text.

According to Begg (1984:3) the word “myth” was first used in 1830 to imply a story that tells accounts of supernatural beings and events that had occurred during an earlier period of human history. Myth is “a narrative with multiple meanings” (Carlin, Fiedler & Schechter 1990:81), and Hillman (1979:23) phrases it in an almost poetic manner: “Mythology is the psychology of antiquity.” Furthermore, myth and psyche complement each other in that the one illuminates the other (1979:24). It may be suggested that a film retells a story familiar to people from a collective psychological past. In addition, Bolen (1993:3) claims the following: “Myths and metaphors, like dreams, are useful tools that draw the listener, dreamer or reader to a character, symbol or situation, as if in recognition of something deeply known.” Vague as the latter part of this sentence is, it does underscore that mythological narratives have strong symbolic stimuli (at least for readers who attribute a symbolic value to them).

Mythological tales or accounts of events have proven popular in film; such is the case with Wolfgang Petersen’s *Troy* (2004) and Disney films such as *Hercules* (Musker & Clements 1997). In contemporary times, it may be argued that we do not visit the temple sites of ancient Athens, for example, but frequent the cinema

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<sup>56</sup> What Astrachan says here mirrors the notion of the *nekylia* or “night journey” which the Hero undertakes before s/he is endowed with enhanced consciousness; Chapter Four describes the “night journeys” of the main characters of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy.

to experience the power of myth. The filmic interpretation of JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (Jackson 2001-2003) and the adaptations of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* (Columbus, Cuarón 2001-2004) adventures could point to the idea that the presence of mythological motifs could be an audience attractor on an unconscious level<sup>57</sup>. For example, if *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Hooper 1975) was an incarnation of the Bloody Chamber myth, consider that a newly filmed version of that tale and remake of the 1975 horror hit was released in American cinemas in October 2003 to considerable box-office success. The more recent *Hostel* (Roth 2006) tells a similar tale of extreme horror in a confined space of death and decay. Mythological events retold in film, in this instance, may convey information through a psychologically 'tuned' narrative. We know the psychological elements in myth to be archetypal in nature, from what is documented in a previous section. Myths, then, have a psychological origin in the collective unconscious.

According to Lennihan (2001:68), who quotes Romanyshyn, "(...) film portrays the mythology of an age. It is a shared myth, a cultural daydream." And films, argues Robert Sklar (1994:195), are responsible for the cultural myths<sup>58</sup> of our time. As Sobchack (1995:37) contends, the cinema is the most symbolic for of human communication. Problematically, it is difficult to determine with certainty why the same narratives are recounted repeatedly (Carlin, Fiedler & Schechter 1990:79), but it can be argued that these myths repeatedly manifest because they are psychologically necessary on a collective level. Jung (1964b:9) points out that mythological fantasy corresponds only to myths, and not to experiences of personal life since myths come directly from the collective unconscious. Jung (1964b:10) elaborates that fantasy relates to "unending myths of death and rebirth, and of the multitudinous figures who weave in and out of this mystery." These figures and themes reside in the collective unconscious. In this regard,

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<sup>57</sup> This argument does not discount the appeal of attractive actors and spectacle, but suggests that there could be a more unconscious reason for an individual to see a specific film. Long before being filmed, the books these films are based on became bestsellers.

<sup>58</sup> A cultural myth, according to Macary ([2003:[sp]]), is a collection of stories of significance underlying the philosophical stances of people.

Jung (1964c:329) confirms that myth is, in essence, a product of an unconscious archetype.

Therefore, myth is symbolic with an archetypal basis, much like film can be. This can motivate an analysis from a psychological perspective to investigate what emotional reaction is activated by the film, which serves as visual stimulus, with regard to the narrative and characters. The archetype is the link with the past, bringing the myth forward and providing it with a modern milieu (Jung & Kerenyi 1963:79). Myths are then continually retold, reformed or reshaped by films. Time and again I encounter the Hero on his Journey, or witness the tragic consequences of uncontrolled emotions previously embodied in the gods. Film is a far-reaching medium for these stories to be exhibited. I could even say that film is an evolutionary vehicle for the promotion of myths. Izod (2001a:139) writes that it is only possible to express “numinous mysteries” in a way that the human mind can comprehend. As such, the visual language of film can, in a Jungian view, locate a myth in a variety of settings or contexts. If the core of certain myths remains the same throughout time, as the above asserts, I should consider investigating the archetypal motifs ‘found’ in these myths. Recurring themes in mythology relate to Light versus Dark and the Dead either returning to life or advising the living.

When a film recounts certain mythic (or archetypal) events, themes, or figures, it is a case of “a journey resulting in the re-unfolding of primordial images” (Jung & Kerenyi 1963:8). The archetypes residing in the collective unconscious continually manifest themselves in various forms (symbolic and conceptual) as history takes shape on both individual and societal levels (Henderson 1964:249). One could thus refer to archetypes as “time bound expressions of timeless realities<sup>59</sup>” which we often find in mythology. It is the manifestations of the archetypes that point to parallels in mythology (Jacobi 1953:36). Putting theory

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<sup>59</sup> This notion of “timeless realities” should not be interpreted in the sense of a modernist universalism; the phrase suggests Henderson’s thinking of the archetypes as an integral part of existence, and as dynamic psychic entities.

into practice, Hippard (2003:[sp]) amplifies the filmic text (in this instance, *X-Men* [Singer 2000]), to highlight the film's parallels with mythology. Myths are "revelations of the pre-conscious psyche" (Jung & Kerenyi 1963:73) that are important to the collective well being of humanity. Michael Meade relates the following to De Boer ([sa]:[sp]): "A new myth is about retelling the old stories in a way that is needed<sup>60</sup>," which is why audiences were presented with yet another Batman film, *Batman Begins* (Nolan 2005), and a remake of *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Nispel 2003). *Star Wars*, its narrative and themes founded on a myriad of myths, promoted a new constructed myth, that of the Force. The Force is invisible and present in but a chosen few; those persons who 'feel the Force' are either Jedis, or fighters for good, or Sith, believers in the dark side of the Force. Although Meade's statement is simplistic, it serves to emphasise the importance of narratives *conveying* meaning, as opposed to individuals *contributing* meaning to mythologically founded, subjectively valued narratives. Even on the level of simply providing meaning to an individual's existence, then, myths are integral. In elaboration, Ferrell (2000:3-4) declares that myth is both the subconscious mind's product of an archetype and a metaphoric way of describing 'reality'. According to Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1991:48), socio-emotional expressions, such as bonding and grieving, often inspire mythological images and tales.

Based on the above, I suggest that myths and film are archetypal in terms of content and theme, and can give rise to emotional archetypal experiences, a claim further investigated in Chapter Four. Preston (1990:12) states that archetypes take conscious shape with a powerful mystical quality, which we recognise through the feeling of numinosity attached to it. According to Ferrell (2000:19), myth, whether as novels or films, form an opposition to the mechanization and secularisation that characterises contemporary society. Preston (1990:16) also emphasises that myths, due to its archetypal nature, constantly present the themes of duality and transformation. These two themes

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<sup>60</sup> This echoes the idea of the psyche as being compensatory or restorative.

are integral to film (analysis) in one way or another. Even in fairy tales do we encounter some form of transformation, as “[f]airy tales (...) point to the multiplicity of forms of ego development in both men and women” (Hall 1983:103). Notions of transformation and duality will feature in the discussion of Shyamalan’s film in Chapter Four. Indeed, Hockley (2001:40) seems to propose that the Jungian critical reading considers the archetypal in the interrogation of the text. To illuminate my understanding of archetypal images, I must investigate their presence and purpose in mythology. On this same issue, Philipson (1963:70) reminds me that there are psychodynamic ‘mechanisms’ underlying these processes that create this ‘awareness’ or ‘realisation’ of an image or series of filmic images that are experienced emotionally. The archetypal emotional cinematic experience becomes significant.

### 3.2 Alchemy and individuation: the process of wholeness

With reference to the unconscious, its content and the occurrence of psychological symbolism and emotional experiences through archetypal manifestations and myth, it is now necessary to explore alchemical processes and principles. An exploration of alchemy, the art of turning lead into gold, serves as contextual background for a discussion of the process of individuation. This section deals primarily with Jung’s and subsequent post-Jungian authors’ discussion and treatment of the process of individuation. Individuation is closely linked with the practice of alchemy; therefore, this study devotes a section first to alchemy, providing a general background to the practice. The psychological aspects of the process will be discussed, and where particularly relevant, the study will refer explicitly to the link between individuation and film. Both alchemical principles and an individuating approach will be applied to the “Everyday Hero” trilogy in Chapter Four. Before discussing alchemy, I need to acknowledge a Western bias in much of what is written by others and by myself on the subject. From this Western view, alchemy is often painted as something vaguely profane practised by foreigners, which gives it an exotic-esoteric allure.

Also, one cannot miss how in alchemical symbolism whiteness is associated with purity, where blackness is associated with chaos and disorder. I do not intend to maintain the validity of these ideas as is, but to appropriate them to highlight certain symbolic manifestations in the filmic text.

### 3.2.1 Alchemy: the arcane quest toward the Self

This section presents a historical-psychological background to alchemy, its principles and purposes to lay the theoretical foundation for the section on individuation that follows. Historically, it would seem that alchemy has been a part of especially Eastern spiritual practices (Eliade 1962:109, 120, 128). Jung played an essential role in bringing alchemy from perceived obscurity to psychological investigation. It may be necessary to be at least familiar with the basics of alchemy given that Jung closely links it to individuation. To understand individuation, then, one should go to the trouble of obtaining some knowledge of why Jung was interested in alchemy in terms of its potential explanatory function related to individual psychological development.

Alchemy is a process aimed at the creation of pure gold from a base material, an arduous and time-consuming process<sup>61</sup>. Later, Jung's writings from a psychological perspective would point out that this quest for gold reflected not only literal material fortune, but also a yearning for psychological wholeness and maturation within the individual (Jung 1967:105). Eliade (1962:47) echoes the notion that the alchemist is busy 'making himself' while he is working with natural elements. Alchemy warrants psychological investigation especially for its relevance to (analytical) psychology, since "there exists in alchemy an astonishing amount of material from the unconscious" (Von Franz 1980:22). It is alchemy's psychological dimension as well as its symbolism that is particularly

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<sup>61</sup> The term "alchemy" is thought to have developed from Egypt, "the land of Khem", and the word *chymia*, which is the art of alloying metals (Powell 1976:8). The alchemists of old searched for "inner gold", consequently calling it the "diamond body", or "treasure hard to attain" to distinguish effectively between the spiritual reward of the practice and the actual gold (Hall 1983:96).

relevant to this study. The information alchemy could provide regarding the symbolic can aid me in my reading of the text. For this reason, alchemical principles are now discussed.

A state of confusion (or unhappiness) is the beginning of alchemical work (Von Franz 1980:208). Psychologically, the psyche is in a state of perceived chaos (psychological imbalance, a disturbance of homeostasis) and needs to attain psychical integration. It is out of this psychologically chaotic ‘darkness’ that psychological growth eventually occurs. Regarding the symbolic dimension of alchemy, the Jungian critical reader – as practitioner of amplification<sup>62</sup> – should take heed of the motifs of opposites in alchemy. The case study in Chapter Four will demonstrate how useful an awareness of the motif of opposites can be in reading film.

In alchemy one also finds the recurring motif of opposites in tension: there are the overt ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ elements as well as the conflict between dark (*nigredo*) and light (*albedo*). In alchemical symbolism, day and night are of great significance for alchemy and psychological life. “The natural individuation process is depicted symbolically,” writes Jacobi (1965:63), “in its eternal cyclical recurrence.” Death is presented in alchemical works as blackness, as *nigredo*. The *nigredo* reduces substances to primary matter (Eliade 1962:153). *Nigredo*, or the notion of death, writes Eliade (1962:156), implies a rebirth from psychological chaos and darkness. As an archetypal event, death is amongst the symbols of the psyche that brings together opposites, as many psychic symbols do.

What is especially relevant from alchemy in terms of film is the role and function of symbolism as often seen in Greek alchemy with its emphasis on the

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<sup>62</sup> Amplification is the Jungian technique of investigating psychologically significant details in dreams, for example, by bringing material exterior to the dream (such as related myths) to the dream and its motifs. Amplification is discussed in relation to dream analysis in section 3.3 and in relation to film analysis in Chapter Four.



symbolism of alchemy. Firstly, alchemy contains archetypal symbols. Secondly, there is much symbolism from the images stored in the unconscious (Von Franz 1980:39). The result may be that alchemical symbolism invites interrogation.

Certain symbols serve to divide. Fire is often an image of a purifier, and “separator of the soul” (Edinger 1985:33); this last notion is taken to a surreal extreme in *Lost Highway* (Lynch 1996), where a house burning in reverse prompts the narrative climax soon after. In alchemy, light is the symbolical equivalent of consciousness. Therefore, analogies with light express the nature of consciousness (Jung 1967:20). There are also symbols of transformation such as the tree, passage and kitchen. These symbols are referred to in my discussion of Shyamalan’s trilogy. How these principles may become symbolically and psychologically significant in a Jungian reading of the text will be explored in Chapter Four.

Effectively, alchemy lays much emphasis on the transmutive, that is, that something transforms or changes into something new, with new properties. In other words, there is rebirth that endows the subject (usually a character in a film) with specific attributes different from what s/he had possessed before. Such a rebirth could form part of the process of psychological growth that Jungian theory refers to as individuation.

### 3.2.2 Individuation: the narrative of wholeness

Having provided a brief background to alchemy, I shift to an investigation of the Jungian notion of individuation. The aim of this section is to provide a coherent but by no means exhaustive account of Jung’s conceptualisation of psychological maturation, as the individuation motif becomes important in the interrogation of the filmic text. The occurrence of the individuation motif in the filmic text is emphasised in Chapter Four.

Jung (1966:173) refers to individuation as the “coming to selfhood,” while Stevens (1982:34) defines individuation as a reaction to the human quest for wholeness. It is the assumption of Jungian psychology – at least as it is presented by this study – that the urge to grow psychologically, to ‘come to selfhood’, is a collective drive. Jung’s notion of individuation and its collective occurrence should not be seen as outdated; Hauke (2001:72) asserts that Jung’s idea of individuation is “a parallel, or even a replacement, concept and practice for postmodern subjects faced with their own extinction within what Jung called ‘mass man’.” With regard to the collective prevalence of individuation, Rushing and Frenz (1995:42) affirm that individuation “exists as a universal motivation.” That is, there is potential for the activation of psychological growth in many individuals through subjectively meaningful contact with the Self. The archetype of the Self plays an important role in this psychological ‘triggering’. If the Self – that calls the individual to growth – is an archetype that has its origin in the collective unconscious, and the Jungian assumption is that every individual shares in this collective unconscious, the process of individuation is indeed collective. With regard to the Self, the aim of individuation links with the suggestive power of the primordial images (Jung 1966:174) or archetypes, meaning that this process is directed by the archetypes, specifically the Self and confrontation with the Shadow<sup>63</sup>. Thus individuation is about a synthesis of aspects of both the unconscious and conscious psyche (Jacobi 1965:49), bringing these opposites into psychological balance (or homeostasis).

In his discussion of the films of Nicolas Roeg, John Izod (1992:6-7) finds that heroes and heroines in film are driven towards the archetype of the Self when they “admit psychological change in their personalities”. A relationship with the Self can only be obtained through the process of individuation. Also, there is no guarantee that a person going through individuation will actualise him-/herself as a psychologically fully developed human being; there is something akin to

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<sup>63</sup> In Jacobi’s (1965:105) words, “Individuation (...) seeks to reunite light and dark, to ‘restore wholeness’”; there is a negotiation between Shadow and Self, which ideally guides the individual into increased psychological maturation and awareness.

arrested development, where the individual gets stuck in the process and develops personality disorders. Individuation as a character-related process is considered by this study in the psychological reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy, where both positive and arrested psychological growth can be perceived.

Carotenuto (1985:97, 81) highlights that with the process of individuation, the individual “differentiates himself from what determines him.” This process depends on the individual’s capacity to transform, the extent to which the person can reconcile the differences between the internal (psychological) and external (physical) ‘realities’ and achieve a balance of opposites, which indicates a turn towards psychic equilibrium (homeostasis). Jacobi (1965:96) reminds us that the individuation process is never complete; instead, it is a never-ending approach to a far-off goal. The process ends only in the final collectively archetypal experience: death. Individuation then implies separation and differentiation, “the recognition of what is yours and what isn’t” (Von Franz 1980:256), by which Von Franz refers to psychological contents that are personal in nature and contents that are collective<sup>64</sup>.

Individuation presupposes the integration of unconscious contents into consciousness. Jacobi (1965:15) calls attention to two main types of individuation: that of ‘natural’<sup>65</sup> processes with life events calling the individual to individuation, and a so-called ‘artificial’ individuation which is aided by techniques, methods and the application of guided analysis. The goal of this process is the development of personality in a complete, comprehensive manner that provides the individual with “inner peace” (1965:17). Hall (1983:14) elaborates on ‘natural’ individuation, where “there seems to be a need for the formation of a strong and reliable ego with which to establish oneself in the

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<sup>64</sup> Alchemy presents strong metaphoric links and parallels to individuation. The process is akin to a *circulatio*, moving through the four elements (Earth to Water to Air to Fire to Earth), which constitutes the *circumambulatio*: “the process of individuation through going through the four functions and phases of life” (Von Franz 1980:256).

<sup>65</sup> The word ‘natural’ in this sense refers to the individual going through with individuation as s/he reacts to individual psychological ‘prompts’ to grow psychologically.

world.” This consistent ego is employed in our daily relation to other persons within the context of the collective culture in which one finds oneself in life. However, later in life the ego needs to relate to archetypal contents of a collective and personal nature (1983:14). Often, individuals are called to individuation by a life crisis<sup>66</sup>, as is the case with the natural type of individuation.

With regard to the integration of unconscious contents in individuation, engaging the shadow is an important step. With the integration of the shadow (when previously repressed contents are brought into consciousness), the energy previously employed to repress the shadow is released (to be used in another way, for another purpose) (Hall 1983:15). After successful shadow-integration, the individual becomes rejuvenated, having become conscious of what s/he was previously ignorant of. The shadow is potentially ego: what is repressed and unknown has the potential to become part of our conscious existence. In manifestations, such as dreams or visions, ego and shadow have the same sexual identity (the same as the individual; if the person is male, so will be the ego and the shadow). Now that the shadow has been assimilated into the ego, the individual can bring her-/himself to relate to others in a manner more meaningful than before. S/he extends her/his relation not only to persons, but also to the collective consciousness and the archetypal contents of the collective psyche (Hall 1983:16). This integration of the shadow during individuation takes the individual through two stages, which I now discuss.

According to Palmer (1997:148), the first stage of individuation concerns the first half of life, which lasts from birth until about 40 years of age. In this stage, the psyche adapts to the external context of the individual as the individual develops a fitting persona to face the world. The first half of life is related to a one-sided development of consciousness; it is exactly this that leads to the development of the shadow, the ego’s “mirror image” (Jacobi 1965:38) which exists as the

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<sup>66</sup> When I trace the word ‘crisis’ back to its Greek roots, I encounter the term ‘krinein’, which means “to discriminate”, or “to decide” (Jacobi 1965:27).

repressed and un-lived psychic content that includes conscious content that was split off and excluded from consciousness. This is what Jungians term the personal shadow since it contains that which the individual has 'put in' there. The collective shadow, on the other hand, contains that which is termed "general evil": "it expresses all that opposes the spirit of the time, everything negative" (Jacobi 1965:38). Jacobi (1965:38) cites communism as an example – what is considered in this frame is dependent upon the individual's point of view. Thus in the first half of life, material of the collective unconscious is neglected to accommodate primarily the personal unconscious – there is what Carotenuto (1985:119) refers to as a "need for differentiation from the unconscious matrix." When the second half of life begins, the collective unconscious replaces the personal unconscious in importance (Jacobi 1965:48).

In Lasse Hallstrom's *The Cider House Rules* (1999) there is an interesting dynamic to the film's portrayal of individuation. The young but psychologically and cognitively mature Homer (Tobey Maguire) already individuates in a gradual and natural manner during the early first part of his life. His journey, reflecting an inner passage, literally takes him right back to where he started. He 'successfully' individuates but seems to know that his psychological growth has but begun. On the other hand, the doctor played by Michael Caine seems to have entered a phase of developmental arrest, getting addicted to anaesthetics instead of taking his psychological journey further in his middle age. Then again, individuation has been shown to commence very late in life, as is the case with the main character (played by Richard Farnsworth) in *The Straight Story* (Lynch 1999) who tries to complete an external and internal journey as he drives to his estranged brother on his tractor. Traditionally, the second half of life has been the most likely stage for individuation.

The second half of life regards the later life of the individual as s/he faces the question of the meaning of his/her life. The second half of life, thus the second phase of individuation, occurs now that the ego has been consolidated. The ego

now reaches toward a new vitality, greater life and energy (Jacobi 1965:42). This rejuvenation takes place due to the ego's engagement with its place of origin, the psyche<sup>67</sup>. The ego must consequently re-establish a connection with the psyche. There is, according to Carotenuto (1985:120), a "harmonization (...) of the various parts of the personality" in the search for totality. An integral task in this second phase of the individuation process is the confrontation with the anima (unconscious feminine features of the man) or animus (unconscious masculine features of the woman), as discussed by Jacobi (1965:45). When the contrasexual archetype is experienced as a primary feature of oneself (and not of projections), it becomes a symbol of procreation and birth. This perceived symbolic value has to do with what Jacobi (1965:46) describes as "the fount from which all artistic productivity flows." As esoteric as this line reads, it does serve to highlight the gravity of integrating archetypal experiences (specifically on a symbolic level).

There is a representative moment of breakthrough in the individuation process when the ego and the Self are reunited (1997:150). Each individuation process is a unique event and hard to typify (1983:20), as the process involves "a continuing dialogue between the ego [and] the Self" (1983:21). This individuation motif has been applied to literature. I refer to Jones (1979:4), who applies an individuation approach to the poetry of TS Eliott, and refers to the stages of individuation in the process. The first stage is childhood, when the individual is controlled by its instinctive nature. Only with the second stage, that of the youth-adult, the psyche truly begins to mature as the body matures. This double maturation continues until what is termed in popular usage middle age, when individuals might find themselves unhappy with the present state of their lives. People in the third stage often search for new values that they can accommodate. The fourth and final stage is old age, when the individual accepts the inescapable certainty of death and, in some ways, slip back to behaviours or

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<sup>67</sup> Consider a rejuvenated Lester's return of libido in *American Beauty* (Mendes 1999) after he regains control over his fragmented existence.

attitudes held during Childhood. During individuation, the reading of dreams and fantasies has the ability to call into action the creative force of the unconscious psyche (Jacobi 1965:43), which manifests symbolically.

Death and rebirth feature symbolically as part of the individuation process (Jacobi 1965:60). In individuation, uniting symbols seem to dominate. From a Jungian perspective, art is filled with the notion of uniting symbols, specifically mandala symbolism. Mandalas are even seen in atomic nuclei. The mandala is relevant for this study due to its symbolic links with the archetypal Self, which is in turn important for individual psychological development as well as for film analysis (as is demonstrated in Chapter Four). Jacobi (1965:59) goes on to make a significant statement: “Depending on the psychic disposition of a person and on the degree of development he has reached, everything in creation (...) can become a symbol of the Self,” the criterion of which is in the numinous (emotionally evocative) quality it possesses. The Jungian critic investigating the emotion in relation to film might interrogate symbols of the Self and the accompanying feelings of numinosity.

To conclude this section on individuation, Jacobi (1965:79) summarises some of the relevant major aspects of the individuation process:

- It is either a ‘natural’ process resulting from an initiation (participation in a collective event; these events could potentially include the viewing of a film) or an ‘artificial’ process, aided by trained psychotherapists;
- It entails either gradual development or a sudden awakening with sudden transformation;
- It either continues over the individual’s total life span or occurs in regular cyclical form;
- The process might be prematurely interrupted by some kind of force, or the undeveloped process becomes atrophied (or re-repressed).

From the above, the personality has a transcendent centre, which is the Self. For optimal psychological development<sup>68</sup>, the ego needs to engage the Self. “The call to individuate,” claims Stevens (1982:293), is “the call to become authentic – to live and affirm consciously one’s own unique individuality.” The Self, the “image of the unity of the personality as a whole”, can be seen in figures that are both human and animal, figures of power and prestige, or even suprapersonal entities such as the Sun and Nature (Palmer 1997:121). The Self can also manifest as numinous religious figures and symbolically as inanimate objects such as a glass. The unity of personality (Self) is achieved later in life through a “dialectical balance between conscious and unconscious aspects” (Young-Eisendrath & Hall 1991:xi), implying that there is a balance between ego and Self that leads to psychological maturation.

Finally, Izod (2001a:144) reminds us that Jung identified the Self<sup>69</sup> with the image of the divine. The divine is associated with notions of both ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and one should not be tempted to equate the Self with God (Palmer 1997:151) but rather with the god-image, or *imago dei*. Symbols of the Self become important to a Jungian reading of the filmic text in relation to the affective experience thereof (as will be illustrated in Chapter Four), along with relevant individuation associations and alchemical symbolism, which are beneficial for purposes of interrogation. Interrogations of the symbolic and the presence of individuation motifs (alluded to by alchemic symbolism) may help to explain my emotional reaction to the visual stimulus presented by a film. In this regard, a Jungian perspective on reading dreams is of further help.

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<sup>68</sup> To fulfil, from a Jungian perspective, one’s innate psychological potential. One has to wonder how this ‘authenticity’ is measured; it seems that only the individual can account for whether s/he is leading a psychologically satisfying life. No single worldview can dictate to people what it is to live ‘authentically’.

<sup>69</sup> Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1991:11) point out that the word ‘Self’ is sometimes written with a capital ‘-S’, and sometimes not. They explain that the capitalized Self refers to “the Self beyond experience, the empty center, or the organizing form.” For the purposes of this study, the word will be spelled Self.



Having discussed archetypes, alchemy and individuation and having started to place these concepts and notions into filmic context, dream analysis is additionally considered as tool in film analysis, as dream analysis combines much of what has already been described. Figures and images from the unconscious (that may also manifest in alchemical symbols and documents) appear in visual form in dreams; this provides a point of departure for what follows: Jungian notions of dream analysis.

### 3.3 Jungian dream analysis: reading the unconscious

Our ancestors gathered to tell stories, sing songs, and play with images and shadows; we go to the movies. The movie theatre serves as our *collective dream space*, the place where we moderns encounter images and narratives of superhuman beings, otherworldly creatures, heroic figures, and the full range of possible human destinies [my italics]  
– Ostwalt (in Martin & Ostwalt 1995:65).

The above quote suggests that the cinema, serving as a space where people gather for a dream-like experience, presents the reader with images, motifs pertaining to the Hero and also motifs of individuation. The dream space becomes a site of engagement with dream figures and representations. A Jungian approach to dream analysis could prove beneficial in that principles of dream analysis could also be applied to critically reading film, as explicated in Chapter Four.

Both films and dreams are perceived, from a Jungian point of view, as ‘carriers’ of psychological information (Hockley 2001:39). “The way in which a dream comes is already part of its statement” (Hillman 1979:124), which means that the sequence of events in the dream must be taken into account in the analysis thereof. The dream is always interpreted in its context (Jung 1953:44), and that considered, Jung writes that “the series is the context” (1953:46). Ellenberger (1994:716) confirms that great emphasis is placed on the dream within the

context of its series<sup>70</sup>. Dream interrogation occurs via the amplification of the dream. Izod's (1992:253) definition of amplification describes it as a process of interpretation dependent on finding an appropriate context for images by searching for dream or myth parallels. In film, I also read images in context of the film. I also read each film in relation to each other in the context of the film series, the "Everyday Hero" trilogy. "Images in film can be amplified by cross-reference to other images, whether in the same film or in comparable sources." Part of filmic amplification has to do with what is *not* there. Hillman (1979:77) stresses that when analysing a dream, what is not overtly manifested is as important as what is directly manifested visually. If the female dream image represents for the man his anima, what is there to say about a dream with only men? "Elements that the dream doesn't have must be introduced as compensation to the one-sided picture," Hillman suggests.

Dream analysis constitutes a large part of Jungian psychology, seeing as numerous titles on the matter are available, such as *Jungian Dream Interpretation* (Hall 1983), *The Dream and the Underworld* (Hillman 1979) and *Your Dreams* (Van Rensburg 2000)<sup>71</sup>. The following section emphasises the role of amplification in critically reading the dream.

### 3.3.1 Amplification and the dream: making meaning of the archetypal

Jungians accentuate dream analysis; as Jung (1969:49) himself said, "to concern ourselves with dreams is a way of self-reflection (...) it [dream analysis] turns the attention to the objective actuality of the dream as a communication or message

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<sup>70</sup> According to Turner (1988:78), who views film as social practice, emphasis should be on the context of the film. Examples are the *Rambo* films and their relation to the Reagan administration, and *The Fly's* (Cronenberg 1986) links with Aids. In the same sense, the more recent *Three Kings* (Russell 1999) links with the Bush administration and the Gulf War, and *Bully* (Clark 2002) links with the general anomie characterising contemporary American youth. Turner's (1988:111) critique against the cinema-dream analogy includes the notion that "films are not only images; they are also sound"; for present purposes, this is insufficient reason to neglect the dream-film parallel completely.

<sup>71</sup> These and other titles supply Jungian readings of dreams that range from those dream visions of the Old Testament to Gilgamesh's dream, to the dreams of individuals in therapy.

from the unconscious.” It is a Jungian notion that the unconscious is presumed to communicate with the individual on a psychical level through dreams. Additionally, Jung (1969:49) states that “the dream is a spontaneous process resulting from the independent activity of the unconscious”, and is “as far removed from our conscious control as (...) the physiological activity of digestion.” Dreams thus present the individual with the manifestation of unconscious contents. The dream is a channel for said contents to ‘appear’ in symbolic form since consciousness cannot investigate the unconscious contents as such. To investigate dreams, Jungians propose the practice of amplification, a technique of multiplying parallel or analogous word forms, symbols or icons (Hollwitz 2001:86). “Amplification of the dream image is analogous to ‘peeling’ the three layers of the complex,” says Hall (1983:36). The first of these layers regards personal association, while the second level is one of transpersonal meaning and the third is the archetypal level. It is exactly this archetypal, collective level that I emphasise. Of great importance is the consideration of the developmental context regarding the beginning and end of the dream narrative.

Palmer (1997:96) discusses Jung’s use of amplification as taking information from various sources such as one’s personal history, literary sources, myth, fairy tales and the like to in the end illuminate the “character and nature of the image.” Jung (1966:81) wrote that amplification could consciously reinforce and extend potential meaning. Jacobi (1965:102) is clear about the role of consciousness in interpretation; through amplification, I assimilate what emerges from the unconscious. This assimilation requires a symbolic reading or approach.

Firstly, there must be willingness in my attitude to understand dream-content symbolically. I could consider reading the film psycho-symbolically, as it were, if I consider it meaningfully constructive to do so. Secondly, I must decide whether it is illuminating to understand the dream in terms of the content being symbolic. With amplification implying the interrogation of the text via bringing other texts such as alchemical writings to this text, Von Franz (1980:14) writes that there is

much in alchemy that is important for people to know to improve their understanding of their dreams. In interrogating the dream as text, I would then consider the potential of alchemy (and additionally, individuation and archetypal images) in constructing a Jungian approach that addresses the emotional experience of both dreams and film. Based on what has been said, amplification reveals archetypal influences to be significant. Films could move me emotionally due to the perceived presence of this archetypal content. As Jacobi (1953:181) states, art – including film – often presents<sup>72</sup> me with “primordial images” as the work of art (one could not really say that it is the artist doing this) expresses that which drives the art in a way that is “above the occasional and the transitory into the destiny of mankind [sic].” Effectively, the primordial image is shaped to fit the contextual trappings of the time (Jacobi 1953:182).

Amplification aids my reading by emphasising that which is perceived during the reading as being symbolic. It is exactly this ‘Jungian symbol’ that is now addressed, since, as Jung (1964b:20) states, through symbolisation a simple object can become something much more in terms of meaning and significance, often as an emotional, ‘felt’ value. In any event, it is Hockley’s (2001:91) assertion that “film forms part of the symbolic life of society.” Having presented the link between the dream and the unconscious, Jacobi (1953:46) affirms that the dream relates to the collective unconscious, container of the archetypal. Additionally, Jacobi (1953:53) highlights the relevance of dreams and the interpretation thereof. In dreams, one might expect to experience images related to the irrational and fantastical, since the origin of this material is in the collective, the archetypal dimension of the psyche. Given that the dream is a communication from the unconscious, a dream can communicate particular fears or wishes; a dream can also be prospective (or predictive) and serve as a mirror of sorts (Ellenberger 1994:716). As Hall (1983:24) points out, on a psychological

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<sup>72</sup> In line with contemporary postmodern thought, it would be best to argue that archetypal content is perceived to manifest in art (film), not that art ‘presents’ archetypal contents to the receptive critic, as Jacobi seems to suggest. Still, there are certain stimuli present that ‘guide’ the reading, as previously mentioned.

level, dreams are regulatory and compensatory (this links with the view of the compensatory function of the psyche as a whole, discussed earlier in this chapter). From a Jungian perspective, dreams consist of psychologically meaningful chains of images. For its perceived communicative input, dreams invite a 'closer look', a detailed investigation through amplification since dream contents require a close analysis (Campbell 1982:8). Motifs in dream images are purposefully connected (or are at least perceived to be so) on a mytho-archetypal emotional level.

Dreams occur in a contained space, with specific objects placed inside this space (Hillman 1979:188). In a dream, like with a film, these 'specific objects' are not randomly selected from the dreamer's memory banks. The practice of amplification, as posited above, could be appropriate for film as 'investigative tool'. As put by Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1991:162), the dream is "a text in which appear symbol and images". Symbolic imagery stimulates emotional investment and is seminal to this study. Moreover, for interrogative purposes it is beneficial to consider the dream series in a specific sequence (Hall 1983:25), stressing the context of the dream. The Jungian critical reader considers the dream image as inherently contextual (Hall 1983:80). Jung (1969:50) claims that "We discover a remarkable sequence in the dream images (...) The body of the dream is divided into its separate portions or images, and all the free associations to each portion are collected." Archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1979:124) echoes Jung's words by saying that "the way in which a dream comes is already part of its statement", implying that the sequence of events in the dream must be taken into account in the analysis of the dream's narrative structure. In dealing with the dream, one then examines the context. To be sure, "The series is the context," writes Jung (1950:101), as related dreams occur in a series (Hall 1983:40). Says Jung (1953:44): "The psychological context of the dream-contents consists in the web of associations [through amplification] in which the dream is naturally embedded." Amplification highlights the various associations pertaining to a certain motif or image, as these

associations stem from the context of the motif or image. In relation to film, I will consider the order of the films as they constitute the “Everyday Hero” trilogy: *The Sixth Sense* is first, followed by *Unbreakable* and *Signs*. The reading will demonstrate the functionality of approaching the films in sequence, as it contributes to the psychological context of the films. It highlights, for example, how the main characters in each film seem to be ‘psychological progressions’ of or on each other. I will elaborate on this idea in detail in Chapter Four.

The following steps in dream interpretation, as taken from Hall (1983:34) are of focal importance for a Jungian reading of the filmic text as it refers to the process through which meaning may be constructed:

- “the gathering of associations and amplifications in progressive order on one or more of three levels: personal, cultural, archetypal;
- placing the amplified dream in the context of the dreamer’s life structure and process of individuation.”

The first point above is important for this study since it highlights the use of amplification, the relevance of the reader’s personal and cultural context as well as the archetypal reading of the text. This archetypal reading is the most important aspect for this current study. I do not address Hall’s second point above. If I were to follow the dream-to-film parallel that I am establishing, it would follow that I would read and analyse Shyamalan’s films in relation to the director’s personal life. This is a difficult and at best speculative aim even if one has interviewed the director about this precise matter. Or, if films are dreams, then I, the viewer, am the dreamer, and I interrogate this film-dream in relation to my own life and individuation process. This falls beyond the scope of the study; I shall return to this last idea in Chapter Five.

To critically read the dream, one needs an understanding of what the symbolic detail in the dream could refer to psychologically. Through amplification, one could analyse the dream on an archetypal level (influenced by socio-cultural context). The dream could be placed in the larger context of individuation. In

relating these steps of interpretation to reading film, I suggest that the Jungian critic be familiar with the film's details in terms of its *mise-en-scene*. Certain images could be perceived as symbols and investigated as such, leading to amplification on a personal, cultural and archetypal level. Within the specific dream narrative and context of the dream, amplification is also beneficial in exploring the occurrence of 'unknown' visual motifs. The unconscious provides the individual with both the familiar and unknown, sometimes repressed contents to us, or exhibiting seemingly abnormal behaviour in dreams. It is important to note how the dream figures are introduced, advises Jung (1966:100). Hillman (1979:59) is of the opinion that the figures we encounter in our dreams are not the figures we know in real life; in the dream, the teacher from high school is not representative of the actual teacher from high school. Importantly, dream figures are neither simply dream versions of people I know nor mere parts of my psychological self (Hillman 1979:61). Hillman explains that these figures are images performing archetypal roles. To return to the example of the high school teacher in the dream, this image can be seen as the archetypal mentor. Finally, Hillman (1979:62) notes that "we are visited by heroes and gods shaped like our friends of last evening," which is a suggestion that dream figures are psychologically functional. Hillman's (1979:63) approach<sup>73</sup> to dream persons takes these figures back to the underworld, that is, the world of psychic images.

Like dreams, films express themselves through images; they also have a tendency towards narrative (even generic) structures, and give the effect of seeming more than 'real' (Turner 1988:111); that is, the experience thereof could be emotionally vivid. In amplification, the interrogation of the series of images, context and manifesting figures (characters in film) are thus important to the Jungian approach to film analysis.

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<sup>73</sup> Hillman (1979:2), the founder of archetypal psychology and author of *The Soul's Code*, considers dream interpretation for the purpose of a revised consciousness about living (as orthodox Jungians do) totally misleading. A more 'correct' dream interpretation, he proposes, places emphasis on the dream image itself (1979:5). For present purposes, a strictly archetypal approach as put forth by Hillman is neglected in favour of a Jungian approach.

When one works with dream analysis, as with film, Jacobi (1953:60) reminds us that it is important to consider the following:

A dream with a collective meaning applies primarily to the dreamer, but (...) expresses the fact that his momentary problem is also that of other human beings. (...) Every individual problem is somehow connected with the problems of the eye (...) when the dream actually uses a mythological, i.e. collective, symbolism.

Like dreams, film is a visual medium that presents me with contents related to the collective unconscious. Also, the dream presents its content in symbolic form, guiding me to mythology in an attempt to make meaning of the dream. The dream contents could be explored through amplifying the visual stimuli. In this regard, films, like dreams, may express themes related to experiences of the collective unconscious from a Jungian point of view. A specific theme is shown to be of collective relevance. Also, “film, like dreams, has a compensating nature” (Fredericksen 2001:50). Whatever perceived disturbance of homeostasis there is regarding a certain culture or society – an imbalance that could be expressed by symbols of the psyche – a specific film might be an attempt to restore some equilibrium, be it social, political or psychological on a collective level. This ‘restoration’ or compensation is not necessarily the conscious effort of the director or writer, but manifests in the film itself. How this is read depends on the approach of the individual critic; according to Hillman (1979:126), the dream can never have simply one explanation or meaning. A single dream, much like a film, results in multiple readings and meanings.

Possible hindrances in dream analysis can also apply to the analysis of film. Fredericksen (2001:38) quotes Jung as having said that “it is not enough simply to connect a dream about a snake with the myth of snakes.” One has to consider the setting and the context (as noted earlier), as well as reflect upon the descriptions of the personal, transpersonal and symbological dimensions of a dream. The dream and the film may require a psychological reading that constitutes more than archetypal or mythological reductionism. To avoid this



pitfall, the Jungian approach considers being ‘guided’ by the text in amplification, and pays close attention to details pertaining to the context in which the perceived symbolic appears.

Film, then, can be positioned as a collective dream that invites psychologically critical readings via amplification of (the) film as text. Based on what has been discussed, the quote that introduced this section makes sense psychologically: I enter a dream space by entering the cinema where I encounter archetypal images and figures. These images and figures may confront and affect me emotionally and prompt me to amplify the filmic text in an attempt to interrogate the potential meaning(s) of symbolic images. Linking alchemy and dreams, Edinger (1985:100) says:

The images of dreams and active imagination (...) coagulate. They connect the outer world with the inner world by means of proportional or analogous images and thus coagulate soulstuff. Moods and affects toss us about wildly until they coagulate into something visible and tangible; then we can relate to them objectively.

The only way I can relate to my “moods and affects”, or emotions, is when they take the form of something concrete – in the case of film, the visual image. Edinger uses alchemical notions such as *coagulatio* to ‘read’ dreams as one could read films through alchemy. Unfortunately, the use of “soulstuff” is vague and non-descriptive. Edinger suggests that emotions manifest visually in dreams.

Closely related to the Jungian approach to the dream is the notion of active imagination. Active imagination is “a method of bringing to the conscious some aspects of the unconscious (...) it opens up a confrontation which can become a total internal adventure” (Humber 1984:108). He continues: “the purpose of active imagination is to help the exchange of myth and of reality (...) [and] it is there that one finds [sic] meaning” (1984:93). Here Humber touches on the notion that active imagination connects outer reality with inner psychological

reality. For current purposes, however, active imagination falls beyond this study's scope.

### 3.4 Conclusion

For the purposes of this study, the collective unconscious is important because of the archetypes, which are significant in turn because they appear in symbolic form. These symbols are found in alchemy, which is psychologically a metaphor for individuation, a process guided by the archetype of the Self. As discussed earlier, alchemy provides a background and context for the emergence of a discussion of individuation. As has been established, individuation is a process that guides the individual in psychological growth. The ideal is for the individual to breach the gap between ego and Self. Jacobi (1965:53) states that individuation is supposed to establish continuous "dynamic contact" between ego and Self. Individuation, Hockley (2001:41) explains, is about "becoming a whole person who is aware of their own psychological make-up, and how they relate to other people and society in general." As the process progresses, "the psyche liberates symbols of wholeness and completion and balance". Individuation includes the engagement with archetypal contents. Archetypal contents also manifest in dreams as dream symbols and figures. These contents also manifest in visual form as symbols and figures. Alchemy, dreams and films are all image based to a great extent, and 'derive' meaning from their associations with the collective and personal unconscious.

Based on what has been said, I have constructed my specific approach that I will use to frame Shyamalan's films with. Through this approach I examine film through amplification and a wide array of symbolic images, scenes or motifs, to investigate the emotional cinematic experience.

This chapter has discussed the functionality of the notions of the collective unconscious, the archetypes, alchemy, individuation, dream analysis and the

notion of the symbolic. These notions were put into the context of Jungian analytical psychology and functionally linked with film. In the following chapter, I present a case study of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy to demonstrate the functionality of these notions for film analysis, specifically in examining and articulating the emotional cinematic experience.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### JUNG AND FILM: THE MOVING IMAGE

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four offers a critical reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy by writer-director M. Night Shyamalan. Through this critical reading I present a perspective on the emotional cinematic experience. With this analysis, I argue that the emotional cinematic experience concerns unconscious processes of an archetypal nature that function autonomously of ego consciousness (but it is examinable by conscious means) and that unconscious archetypal contents manifest as symbols in a particular image or series of images. As Hockley (2001:30) states, “broad themes of Hollywood narratives (...) are not just individual concerns.” Hockley here highlights the notion of collective themes read in Hollywood film. In this regard, Philipson (1963:171) argues that critical interpretations of works of art ‘reveal’ to a culture what dream interpretations reveal to a patient. Art presents something to be analysed on a collective level. If the arts express that which difficult to articulate, as Keyes (1995:1) claims, a filmic text could be amplified to examine the psychic stimuli of numinous cinematic experiences, often founded in the collective, archetypal psyche that Hockley and Philipson touch on.

I examine all three Shyamalan films as a complete body of work, though also, when relevant, looking at them as separate films. Indeed, I have discussed in Chapter Three how the Jungian approach to film analysis promotes the study of the dream in sequence, where the dreams form their own context. In basic plot descriptions I will discuss the films apart from one another. *Signs* is the most important of the three films for the purpose of this study since it deals with all of Shyamalan’s typical themes while (as I argue in section 4.2) symbolically

engaging the notions of the Self and the emotional cinematic experience more than *The Sixth Sense* or *Unbreakable* do. Consequently, *Signs* receives the most attention in the writing. In offering my reading of Shyamalan's films, aware of the myriad of meanings that the films stimulate, I am cognisant of Pippin's (1999:119) precautionary statement: "My reading is always in process, never completed and never arrived"; what I write is never final or exclusive, my meanings never absolute, and the reading never over.

I offer a critical reading of Shyamalan's films by using amplification (see Chapter Three) on the symbolic imagery of the films, principally describing the manifestation of mandala symbols as symbols of the psyche. I amplify the film *Signs* particularly in relation to the notion of the archetype of the Apocalypse. In addition, I apply an individuation approach to the texts to explore what is often referred to as 'character development'. The above notions contribute to the validity of my claim regarding the compensatory and restorative function of film (see Chapter Three). If a film is read as being compensatory and as relating to the archetypal, I come to consider how a film can stimulate psychological processes within me, effectively constructing the emotional cinematic experience. Indeed, it is Hockley's (2001:157) opinion that there is, perceived within the film's surface structure, another structure which is mythological and symbolic in nature, a structure that operates on a psychological level. Occasionally, a film's narrative cannot sufficiently account for the film's 'felt' power. Should that be the case, Hollwitz (2001:89) remarks that the 'emotional force' of the film, its 'felt' emotional power, lies in the archetypal images the film presents.

As introduced in Chapters One to Three, the Jungian approach puts forth the ideas that the construction of 'archetypal meaning' during the amplification of the images and symbols are highlighted by my critical reading of the films. This critical reading highlights what archetypal (unconscious, psychological) motifs and symbols help to construct my emotional cinematic experience. The symbolic is imperative to my critical reading: the symbol stimulates knowledge, expresses

a dysfunction in a system and, importantly, suggests actualisation (see Chapter Three). For the present study, I do not attribute these qualities to myself<sup>74</sup>. However, my reading discusses this actualisation in relation to the characters in the narrative (see section 4.2), within the context of the notion of individuation. This brings me to the importance of collective unconscious content in film.

Psyche is the basis of all experience; I construct the narrative experience from a psychological point of departure. The emotional experience of film stems from the dynamic between psyche (personal and collective unconscious) and image (archetypal material on screen). Thirdly, the emotional reaction has to do with the perceived archetypal manifestations in the filmic imagery<sup>75</sup>. A Jungian reading of the text is appropriate because of film's dependence on the visual; Jungian psychology is, in Hockley's (2001:1) words, "a psychology of images." Audiences connect with film on two levels, one "abstract intellectual" and the other "personal emotional" (Kenevan 1999:9). There is a strong emotional appeal behind the images that should be attended to (Hockley 2001:2). Looking at the 'personal emotional' visual, I investigate the visual text for the potential multiplicity of meanings that could illuminate the 'mystery' behind the images' emotional impact. This emotional experience provides a transcendent experience (Hockley 2001:103), that is, an increase in consciousness, as discussed in Chapter Three.

#### 4.2 The "Everyday Hero" trilogy: narratives of wholeness

In the opening scene of *The Sixth Sense* (1999), a psychiatrist, Dr Malcolm Crowe (played by Bruce Willis<sup>76</sup>), is shot by an ex-patient. A few months later, Dr Crowe, whose marriage has deteriorated since the traumatic incident, aids a young boy named Cole Seer (played by Haley Joel Osment). Cole, an introverted child raised by a single mother (played by Toni Collette), claims that he can see

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<sup>74</sup> Although this is important, it falls beyond the scope of this study. Chapter Five will elaborate on the potential effect of the symbolic on the critic-as-reader.

<sup>75</sup> The basis for this argument was explored in the previous chapter.

<sup>76</sup> I do not present the actor as image. I name the actors only for the purpose of identification for those unfamiliar with the film and the characters' names.

dead people walking among the living. Crowe is skeptical at first, but comes to realise that Cole is being sincere. Crowe guides Cole to realise that he has to help the dead to help himself, instead of fleeing from them. Cole does so and his efforts culminate in his solving the murder of a young girl. Dr Crowe returns to his house where he encounters his wife, asleep in a chair. Ready for another lonely evening with his estranged spouse, he notices a ring falling from her hand and rolling across the floor. To his surprise, it is his own wedding ring. It is at that point that Dr Crowe realises that he is a ghost himself, having died on the day he was shot. Cole knew Crowe was actually dead from the start; Cole guided Crowe to actualise. Crowe talks to his wife for a short while, and his contented spirit disappears. Here, the child-healer sees ('Seer') what adults cannot (not only the dead but also the truth of a given situation), while the healer-doctor (a Wounded Healer like the shaman) has a name that plays on the image of crows picking the eyes from corpses, thereby eliminating the organs of vision and the windows to the soul. "Vision," says Plate (1998:29), "is a physical process and the eye exists connected to the body and to the other senses, which communicate with each other." Without 'true sight', Crowe did not see what was right in front of him: that he has passed on to the afterlife.

In *Unbreakable* (2000), security guard David Dunne (Bruce Willis) is the sole survivor of a horrific train crash; he survives without a scratch. This is of great interest to a mysterious comic book aficionado nicknamed Mr. Glass. His real name is Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson), a comic book aficionado who suffers from a disease that makes his bones extremely brittle and thus prone to constant breaking. In flashbacks we see Elijah reflected in a television screen and when we return to the present, we see him discussing the differences between comic book heroes and villains, between good and evil, while his image is reflected in the glass comic case in his studio. Glass attempts to convince Dunne that he is some kind of 'higher being' or superhero, much to the approval of Dunne's adolescent son, Joseph (Spencer Treat Clark). Dunne himself is skeptical; after all, he reasons, he does not even have the skill to swim. Meanwhile, Dunne's

marriage is falling apart, and the train accident as well as Dunne's uncertain handling thereof threatens to drive him and his wife (played by Robin Wright Penn) even further away from one another.

Eventually, Glass reminds Dunne of an event that occurred while Dunne was in college: he was in a car accident, and tore open the car doors to save his trapped girlfriend. Now in touch with his very real superhuman abilities, Dunne can 'sense' criminality in the people he touches. He saves a woman from a housebreaking murderer but in doing so almost loses his life when he falls into the swimming pool and nearly drowns<sup>77</sup>. Dunne talks to Glass again, who is very satisfied with Dunne's capture of the killer. It is then that Glass discloses how he personally arranged various disastrous events, such as the train accident early in the film. He did this to prove that there was someone like Dunne in the world, an exact opposite to himself, someone who was as strong as Glass is fragile. Dunne turns his back on Glass and walks out of Glass's office; Glass, we are told, is subsequently taken to a mental institution. Where *The Sixth Sense's* narrative twist is based on a situation that is put into a new perspective, *Unbreakable's* twist is more character based in that a potentially heroic and empathetic character reveals himself to be clinically insane.

In the films *The Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable*, Shyamalan deals with the destabilisation of the notion of the nuclear family, as well as ghosts and a superhero in urban settings. In *Signs* (2002), Shyamalan turns to a rural town in which the main character is a doubting ex-clergyman, Graham Hess (Mel Gibson). This film also deals with the destabilised nuclear family. Where in *The Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable* the woman was a passive narrative player, merely reacting to the Hero's individuation process, the Woman in *Signs* is absent as a main character. Hess lost his wife in a car accident and we see him dealing with his grief over her premature death. We only see his wife in truncated flashbacks.

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<sup>77</sup> Earlier in the film, Price remarks: "Water. It's like your Kryptonite." This suggests that water strips Dunne of his abilities, much like Kryptonite stripped Superman of his own.



His young daughter and son, and his quiet brother Merrill (played by Joaquin Phoenix) live with him. Rural life is without incident, until the children begin to claim that something strange is happening on their farm; they suspect that there are aliens, actual extraterrestrial beings, invading the farm. Hess is not convinced until he is physically confronted with evidence of their material existence. Meanwhile, Merrill witnesses an alien sighting on television. The alien presence seems benign at first, but then the alien ships begin to attack cities across the world. The Hess family comes together to face the extraterrestrial conflict. When his son's life is threatened, Hess realises what his wife meant with her dying words (which he has always found perplexing) and, following her instructions, his son survives. The aliens leave and the world goes back to normal. Graham Hess also returns to the church, his faith restored.

The following motifs appear in all three films: the rupture of the nuclear family, through collapsed relationships or death (death is one of the main archetypal life events); doubting or confused, uncertain heroes; the protagonists (or heroes) are all introverted (see Chapter Three) and an element of the supernatural. *The Sixth Sense* deals with ghosts, *Unbreakable* with a working class superhero and *Signs* with extraterrestrials. In all three films, the Hero is in a condition of arrested psychological development in the sense that he has not become psychologically conscious of himself and individuated: Crowe does not know that he is dead; Dunne is unconscious of his superhuman abilities; and Hess has lost his faith in God. When applying an individuation motif approach, I find that all three characters are in the second half of life and experience mid-life crises, particularly regarding disintegrating or non-existent marriages. Crowe believes his marriage has fallen apart, while Dunne is in the process of separating from his wife. Hess's wife has literally passed away. These and other crises call the individual characters to individuate, to reconstruct their psychological lives – in particular, to realign the ego with the archetypal forces of the unconscious. As the films begin, the main characters have proceeded successfully with what Jungian theory refers to as progression, where the ego adapts to suit the needs

and demands of the external world or reality. All three Heroes perform the duties that society expects of them, such as mundane wage labour and looking after children. An example of this occurs in *Signs*, where Hess simply keeps the farm running after his wife's death. I do not witness any scenes of him dealing directly with his grief; I only intuitively sense echoes of it as he does what he needs to do around the farm. However, the narratives guide me to read a regression-motif in the films as well: due to the demands of the world on the ego, there is an imbalance in the psyche; to address this imbalance, the unconscious demands consciousness from the characters. An alien visitation (and eventual invasion) unconsciously stimulates Hess to question his psychological existence. Hess, like the introverted heroes of the two other films, is subsequently open to psychological renewal and regeneration, two emotionally charged experiences. This regression, which places an emphasis on the engagement with the psyche, is seen as part of the individuation process.

What is then clear from all three films – most explicitly so from *Unbreakable* and *Signs* – is that they portray narratives of individuation, which, to Jung (1964c:379), is the alternative to mass-mindedness. The viewer constructs the notion of the Hero as standing out from the masses, which encourages greater audience alignment with this person who is 'different' to others yet 'ordinary' enough to align with. Furthermore, the films' narrative structures and character development all hint at notions of repression (see Chapter Three) since the process of growing consciousness of repressed materials is a critical part of the individuation process. In the three films, repression takes the form of forgetting. The Hero in each instance 'forgets' critical information that pertains specifically to his psychological existence. Malcolm Crowe has 'forgotten' his death while David Dunne has 'forgotten' a significant event from his youth that kept him from fulfilling his developmental potential (saving his girlfriend from the car wreck). In *Signs*, Graham Hess remembers his wife's dying words but does not realise their meaning until it is necessary to do so; in addition, he represses his spiritual side until he is forced to take notice of it in the alien confrontation. Shyamalan's

construct of the Hero seems to evolve psychologically in each successive film. I read Shyamalan's main characters experiencing individuation to increasingly greater extents. In *The Sixth Sense*, Crowe reconciles with the reality of his situation; in *Unbreakable*, Dunne is called to individuate by a life crisis that threatens to permanently disrupt his family. In the end, his actualisation is complete. In *Signs*, I not only read similar patterns of a life crisis guiding Hess into psychological development, but indeed, significantly, a return to (the notion of) God<sup>78</sup>. In this sense, there is a thematic progression in the films much like the thematic progression one encounters in individual dreams. This emphasises the need to consider the film in context; I can deliver a more informed critical reading of *Signs* when I read it in its context. A particular context provided by the films themselves is the context of individuation. In individuation, previously repressed contents from the personal unconscious permeate the ego-consciousness. In *The Sixth Sense*, the hero<sup>79</sup> (Dr Crowe) realises what is going on in his life only after the acknowledgement that he is dead – the information is repressed; he is unconscious of his status as non-corporeal. In *Unbreakable*, the hero (David Dunne) is unaware of his superhuman abilities until a traumatic event directs him into discovering this. In these two films I am witness to the traumatic events: Crowe is shot, Dunne survives the train crash.

In *Signs*, the trauma is past: Hess's wife had died, and we are shown the event only fragmentarily in flashbacks as Hess revisits it in memory. In all three films, I am guided to align myself with the hero through the unfolding narrative that invites the reader's investment of interest into this person. Like Crowe, I do not know that he is actually dead; like Dunne, I question the notion of the superhuman (or superhero) and am surprised to learn of Elijah Price's hand in Dunne's affairs; I understand Hess's placid bitterness towards faith and God and how he steadfastly keeps his family going on the farm.

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<sup>78</sup> The discussion of *Signs* will elaborate on the significance of this 'return to God'.

<sup>79</sup> I mean "hero" in Campbell's and Jungian terms, meaning the individual who is called to adventure and thus called to individuate; it is this person's psychological development that I read from my Jungian approach.

This alignment with the hero lays the foundation for the emotional cinematic experience, since I join the Hero on his Journey of psychological development, his *individuation*. Campbell's notion of the Hero's Journey, which he posits as the underlying monomyth to all narratives, is read from a Jungian perspective as a metaphor for the process of individuation. From the call to adventure to returning to the land with the elixir, the Hero is stimulated to develop psychologically. The obstacles that the Hero faces are all thresholds that s/he crosses in the journey to greater psychological consciousness and maturation. A significant difference, of course, is that the Journey – especially as we see it on film – is a closed system wherein all the challenges and adventures are successfully undertaken in no more than three hours' running time. In contrast to the linearity of the Hero's Journey, individuation as a *process* has a cyclical dimension in 'real' life, and there is no clear-cut 'end' as individuation continuously spurs the individual on to enhanced psychological awareness. That said, individuation as *motif* – as I read it in film – is more often than not linearly contained within the narrative. Despite the similarities in the heroes of the "Everyday Hero" trilogy, the individuation motifs pertaining to each are remarkably different.

Crowe and Dunne move forward towards a certain climax by engaging with a helper (Cole, Elijah Price). In *Signs*, Hess literally looks into himself, into his memory of his late wife, to individuate. These characters' journeys are emotionally charged since the films deal with archetypal themes such as Death and the Destructive/Destroyed Marriage; as I am aligned with them, I experience these emotions from his narrative position, guiding me to emotional response. This emotional experience does not occur in a typically Aristotelian way in that I identify with a specific character. Rather, I experience emotion through archetypal activation aligned with the *individuation motifs* (symbolically embodied in film images and experienced by the characters) of each film. Individuation necessitates contact with various archetypal figures and events. As Chapter Three established, archetypal experiences are 'felt', that is, emotional

experiences, and I am subject to the these experiences vicariously when engaging an individuation narrative such as is presented by the “Everyday Hero” trilogy.

As previously stated, cinematic emotional experiences based on the individual engagement with the archetypal can be described as numinous. Jung (1964c:340) explicitly emphasises that the archetype has a feeling value, a numinous quality. Individuation stimulates consciousness to search for psychological engagement with the Self, which, as any other archetype, is emotionally charged and delivers numinous experiences. In Chapter Three, I illustrated how the collective unconscious, a ‘reservoir’ of the archetypal, creates symbols. The ‘awareness’ of the symbolic is characterised by an emotional response dependent on the prerequisite emotion-laden archetypal activation. This activation often forms a part of the beginning of the individuation process. In Izod’s (2001b:28) words, the symbolic has a “unifying emotional [or numinous] power”. I amplify the filmic texts to stimulate personal and collective associations from a Jungian perspective. It is then possible to establish how a film could aid in constructing an emotional experience.

What is important for the current amplification is the role of the symbolic, and also how it relates to the larger frame of the individuation motif in each film. By amplifying the filmic text, I can investigate the emotional response to a specific image or series of imagery. Since the characters’ individuations require the confrontation with various archetypes en route to the Self, and I am vicariously involved in these individuations, I respond emotionally to certain symbolic imagery. The filmic text is amplified to investigate and amplify elements of filmic imagery that are read as symbolic. For investigating notions of the symbolic from a Jungian approach, alchemical symbolism provides a functional point of departure. It could be possible for me to make a vague, esoteric statement about the link between alchemy and film, but I would like to avoid psychologically lurid exclamations, since this sort of semi-esoteric writing is not condoned by the

Jungian approach advocated by this study. Colour symbolism is of particular importance to alchemy, and my reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy requires this kind of alchemical amplification. The colour black is a prominent part of the individuation process that is reflected by alchemical practice.

What I read in the narrative individuations presented by the “Everyday Hero” trilogy relates to the alchemical notion of the *mortificatio*. A prominent identificatory trait of *mortificatio*, or death, is the colour black. From a Jungian perspective, blackness refers to the shadow archetype (Edinger 1985:150); apart from dark blue and grey hues, black is the most prominent colour in particularly Dunne’s world in *Unbreakable*. *Mortificatio* is initially experienced as “defeat and failure” (1985:172), but the subject is psychologically ‘reborn’ to be more psychologically advanced or mature than before. By implication, *mortificatio* thus involves, as listed by Edinger, “darkness, defect, torture, mutilation, rotting.” These apparently negative experiences lead to more positive ones, such as “growth, resurrection, [and] rebirth”. Dunne experiences psychological resurrection after enduring a physically threatening ordeal, becoming conscious of what was previously unconscious. This process of becoming conscious can be described as a form of *coniunctio*, the integration of opposites and previously unconscious contents. Malcolm Crowe’s narrative existence is precisely one that occurs post mortem; his dark journey that leads him into contact with death brings about psychological actualisation. Graham Hess’s path in *Signs* leads him into violent and life-threatening conflict with aliens; he even engages one of them in combat and severs the alien’s finger. Significantly for Hess, this contact with death and destruction guides him back to Christianity, a religion that bases its theology on the supremely archetypal Death of its Hero, the Christ figure.

In Chapter Three I highlighted that in alchemy there is always a suggestion of tension, often in the form of light (*albedo*) versus dark (*nigredo*), where light symbolises consciousness and dark symbolises the unknown, unfamiliar or unconscious. Additionally, objects and spaces such as trees and the kitchen are

symbols of transformation. Also, alchemy is a transmutive process wherein the subject is endowed with new properties: the lead has become gold, the alchemist has gained insight into his psychological Self and existence. Based on what has been said, I will now look at the alchemical principles of use to film, as well as how the concept of the process of individuation may aid me in the interrogation of the filmic text since individuation is, due to its archetypal foundations, an emotional or 'felt' experience.

In reading individuation in film, colour symbolism and alchemical principles are significant. I have already mentioned the individuating qualities indicated by the *mortificatio*. In addition, Hockley (2001:155) asserts that in the film *Trancers*, for example, the colours blue and red reinforce an underworld-perspective (here, 'underworld' denotes 'paranormal' or 'supernatural'). Blue represents the heavenly, spirituality, or the feminine; red stands for the masculine, for heat, fire and blood (2001:156)<sup>80</sup>. With its red overtones and hues, *The Sixth Sense* also denotes this otherworldly impression, where a man is caught in the world of death, or the 'underworld'. "Every act of conscious realization is a plunging into the darkness of the underworld [the unconscious] and a re-emergence from it", claims Jacobi (1965:70). To consciously realise unconscious contents (hitherto unknown and hidden, possibly repressed) is the goal of the individual's psychic development (1965:91). Effectively, Crowe has embarked on a 'night journey', a *nekyia*<sup>81</sup>; a journey to the underworld where Crowe is literally dead and he integrates this content into his consciousness; at this point, he emerges rejuvenated from the underworld knowing more than he had before. This links to individuation, as "[t]he fear of the descent to Hades is at bottom the timidity and resistance experienced by every individual when it comes to delving too deeply in himself" (Jung 1950:244), leading to psychological growth and enhanced

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<sup>80</sup> Although this study does not address the cultural differences regarding the cultural coding of colour, I am aware of the matter, and do not pretend to present anything but a Western approach regarding these issues. These differences illustrate the non-exclusive oppositions that a Jungian reading and approach promotes.

<sup>81</sup> In some cases, the *nekyia* can mean a regression, a psychological suggestion of the possibility of rebirth.



consciousness. In addition to colour symbolism, one might also consider how one may employ alchemical principles in a potential understanding of the symbolic. It is important to keep in mind that the symbolic represents archetypal contents that are not yet conscious. When these contents do become conscious, the symbol is 'liberated' and disappears, as it does not serve a purpose anymore after its assimilation.

In both *Unbreakable* and *Signs*, water is a prominent symbolic motif. *Unbreakable's* Dunne has had a fear of water ever since he nearly drowned as a child. During the film's climax, he almost drowns again; for him, water equals death. The alchemical principle of *solutio*, or solution, leads the individual experiencing "the emergence of a rejuvenated new form" (Edinger 1985:47,52). Additionally, "bath, shower, sprinkling, swimming, immersion in water (...) are all symbolic equivalents for *solutio* that appear commonly in dreams" (Edinger 1985:58). Water-images are also related to the motif of the Baptism, implying cleansing and renewal (1985:58). Edinger (1985:78) notes that the purification ordeal and the solution of problems are aspects of the *solutio*<sup>82</sup>. For Dunne, this final confrontation with a childhood trauma is a purifying ordeal; he falls into the swimming pool, which serves as a final rite of passage from which he emerges ready to fulfil his life purpose having confronted his weakness. After this 'baptism' he consciously acknowledges his status as a 'higher' being and is able to achieve his goal in defeating evil. Significantly, water is also symbolic of the unconscious. On a symbolic level, Dunne does not drown and die because he has integrated the knowledge he needed from the unconscious by actualising his potential. For Dunne, this watery encounter signifies a *mortificatio*, or "the experience of death" (Edinger 1985:148) as a road to *solutio*, the solving of problems, which leads to greater psychological integration.

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<sup>82</sup> The notion of the alchemical *solutio* supports parallels with the Hero's Journey, as it seems that the Hero goes through a purifying ordeal to obtain a solution for both personal and collective problems.



In *Signs* the symbolic value of water is significant. The young daughter is advised to drink water because it calms her down; she also uses water to deter the alien beings from harming her. Eventually, it becomes clear that the aliens are hurt by water. Water is both a life force, in that it literally sustains life by hydrating the body, and a destructive force that wipes out lives by the thousands, as seen in the tsunami of December 2004. A Jungian reading brings the following to this event: “For the old masters of alchemy, water is at the same time fire” (Jung 1964:389), purifying and purging painfully and explicitly. This notion echoes *Unbreakable*'s David Dunne's ordeal in the swimming pool before emerging from the water (unconscious) as an individuated hero.

These images of water, with all of the associations I have highlighted above, are emotionally charged images as they serve a symbolic function. On the one hand, water motifs guide the characters (especially Dunne) on the path of individuation. On the other, these motifs guide me towards awareness of the transcendent, and with it, a greater consciousness of the actualising potential of the Self (a feeling toned archetype).

I have illustrated how alchemical symbolism points to individuation. Having looked at specifically colour symbolism in alchemy regarding *Unbreakable*, I now direct my focus to the notion of space. ‘Space’ has the connotation of ‘heaven’ or ‘the heavens’, where the aliens in *Signs* hover in their round shaped UFOs. The space referred to in this study exists in two ways. First, there is the alchemical space of the kitchen. Second, there is the apocalyptic space. Both spaces, alchemical and Apocalyptic, involve the same process of integration and consciousness. Alchemical space is stimulating in that it provides a symbolic site for psychological growth, the kitchen, which is a space for the integration of previously repressed or unconscious contents (Shadow). *Signs* provides the textual space where the Apocalypse will manifest; the Apocalypse implies Death and Rebirth, and with it, psychological integration of previously unconscious

contents. Death and Rebirth are prominent alchemical motifs (see Chapter Three).

In the *Signs* and *Unbreakable*, the kitchen space is a significant motif. In *Signs*, Hess first denies the existence of extraterrestrial beings that his two children claim to see. The suggestion is that children are more aligned with the unconscious, since society has not yet prescribed to them what is real or what to believe. Hess then sees the aliens with his own eyes, and goes to the kitchen to inform the children that he agrees with what they see and believe. In *Unbreakable*, there is a scene set in the kitchen where Dunne's son Joseph tells his father that he (Dunne) cannot be injured; the boy is standing there with Dunne's loaded firearm aimed across the table at his father. Joseph threatens to fire, convinced that the bullet will simply bounce off his father. From my reading, I can examine Joseph's actions from two perspectives. On the one hand, Joseph is the helpful Child who wants his father to actualise. It is significant that the Child engages the Hero in the kitchen: an archetype of growth guides the Hero to actualisation in the alchemical space representative of individuation. On the other hand, Jung (1968:167) makes special mention of a motif that concerns the abandonment of the Child. This fear relates to the Child's helping the Hero.

If the Hero actualises in individuation, the Child is safe (not abandoned). Due to his new role as saviour-figure, Dunne decides not to leave his family. To Joseph's great relief, he will have a father. My Jungian critical reading positions this scene as a case of the Child<sup>83</sup> confronting the adult with the possibility of actualisation that the Child knows is valid and even necessary but the adult, in his/her psychological ignorance, denies. It is in this same space later in the film that Dunne passes the newspaper to a visibly depressed Joseph. On the front page is a story about a hero who caught a violent criminal. "You were right," mumbles Dunne, and at this acknowledgement of his father's trial, renewal and return, Joseph starts crying softly.

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<sup>83</sup> Child with a capital 'C' indicates the Child archetype specifically.

In *The Sixth Sense*, a child character also guides an adult towards actualisation, but I read Cole Seer's relationship with Malcolm Crowe as a *puer-senex* relationship. In such a relationship, the adolescent, or *puer aeternus* (Jacobi 1965:27), is helped by an older mentor-figure, or *senex*, throughout a journey. Crowe is as significant to the child's psychological development as Cole is to his. Cole helps Crowe to individuate (to confront death and integrate this part of his repressed shadow) while Crowe helps Cole to find purpose in his role as helper to the dead. While the *puer-senex* relationship is significant in my reading of *The Sixth Sense*, in *Unbreakable* it is the Ego-Shadow relationship, so pivotal to individuation, which stands out.

In *The Sixth Sense* the shadow manifests as repressed contents from Crowe's personal unconscious (this occurs in *Signs* as well, regarding Graham Hess's loss of memory). In *Unbreakable*, there is an actual Shadow figure present in the narrative in the form of Elijah Price. As is typical of shadow encounters in dreams, the shadow figure Price is of the same sex as the ego-figure or Hero, Dunne. Price fulfils the role of the personification of evil as he destroys numerous lives to serve his personal ego-driven needs. However, to read Glass as simply the shadow opposite of Dunne's Hero would be reductive. Glass is also the Trickster, a near equivalent to the shadow archetype, who appears helpful but goes against the Hero in the end. He is the opposite of Dunne's Ego-figure who becomes conscious of his acquaintance's status as mass murderer, yet continues with his role as saviour figure that Price helped him to discover and shape<sup>84</sup>. What happens in *Unbreakable* is that the Shadow manifests in two ways. First, the shadow manifests as repressed contents, specifically memories. Dunne had forgotten about a significant event that cements his status as superhuman. Second, the shadow manifests as an actual Shadow-figure in the form of Elijah Price that is (has to be) confronted before Dunne can continue with his work.

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<sup>84</sup> In addition, Dunne is also Price's Shadow, as he is everything that Price is not; Dunne is selfless in his aid to people.

*Signs* also has images suggesting the integration of unconscious contents through the process of individuation. In the film's dinner scene, however, there is no Shadow figure, but a depiction of a family coming together in a time of need. Close to the end of *Signs*, the Hess family has a dinner that resembles the Last Supper – depending on what malicious actions the aliens take, this could be the family's last meal together. There is a suggestion of sacrifice and resurrection inherent to this visual. Like Da Vinci's depiction of Jesus and his disciples, Hess is visually located at the head of the table with his family members seated around it. Together they drink and break bread. Amplifying the symbolism of the scene from a Biblical position, the scene suggests a final gathering before a great sacrifice for the 'greater good', suggesting Hess's role as messianic. This image of bringing family together by eating is also significant when we turn to alchemical symbolism in dreams. When a dreamer is offered something to eat, it indicates that "an unconscious content is ready for *coagulatio*, assimilation by the ego" (Edinger 1985:109). Eating is a known symbol for the alchemical *coagulatio* (1985:113), which on a psychological level implies ego-formation (1985:115). Psychologically, the Hero is strengthened by this consumption motif as the actual intake of food parallels the process of growing individual consciousness. Psychological growth leads to a stronger ego through increased consciousness. Significantly, it is after the meal on the next day that Hess climactically confronts and vanquishes an alien intruder in his home.

Eating further links with the Christian ritual of Communion, a numinous ritual which is representative of the ego's incorporation of a relation to the Self (1985:111) in that Communion is symbolic of the individual's participation in divinity. According to Bell (1997:108), Communion is indeed a "human-divine transaction", a rite that invokes the notion of sacrifice, which means, "to make holy" (1997:112). The archetypal energy in this scene contributes to the 'felt' experience of this scene. Communion is also a feast, where "shared participation in a food feast (...) defines and reaffirms (...) the human and cosmic community" (Bell 1997:123), which in my reading relates to establishing a relation between

consciousness and the unconscious. Psychologically, Communion represents the integration of Ego and Self. From an individuation motif perspective, it is a psychologically important step forward for Hess, whose psychological growth had presumably been stunted when he lost his faith. Here he prepares spiritually for the confrontation with the destructive divinity of the alien beings after which he will regain his faith.

This spiritually rejuvenating confrontation with the aliens and, in fact, the whole idea that the further existence of human life is in certain peril, stimulate associations of the apocalyptic as I read the text. It is in relation to this that I construct a position for *Signs*'s compensatory function. In his seminal work on the Book of Revelations and the so-called "end of days", *Archetype of the Apocalypse*, Edinger (2002:172) states that it is his "conviction that that we are at the threshold of a time of trouble of immense proportion." In the light of 9/11 and continuing conflict between Middle Eastern factions and Western power-mongers, Edinger's argument that humanity faces immense physical and spiritual trouble rings true. From religious and symbolic perspectives, the battle at the end of the world, of the Apocalypse, is not only a manifest war but also a spiritual conflict. After the suffering, the Bible promises renewal. Apocalypse, from the Greek *apokalyptein*, means to uncover, to reveal (Pippin 1999:78). *Apokalypsis* is "to take the covering away" (Edinger 2002:3) and implies a reorientation (Van Wishard 2003:[sp]) of the individual on a psychological level. As in many other films from the science fiction genre (*Independence Day*, *War of the Worlds*) the world of *Signs* faces a deadly threat in the form of aliens (possibly contemporary substitutes for the flesh-devouring dragons of old). Pippin (1999:x) notes that the apocalyptic "grows as it eats up more textual space"<sup>85</sup>, as is the case with *Signs*, but that "only certain religious sensibilities indulge in these texts." I am unsure what exactly to make of 'indulge' and 'certain religious sensibilities', but a Jungian critical reading that considers mythology and religion part of its

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<sup>85</sup> We see apocalyptic events on television in *The X-Files* and on film, for example in *Fallen* (Pippin 1999:4).

conceptual framework cannot ignore these apocalyptic archetypal motifs, especially not for the purposes of this study<sup>86</sup>.

Apocalypse might be mostly about the promoting of fear and desire for Pippin (1999:104), but from a Jungian critical reading, it is also a necessary event for rebirth, as is shown later in this section. According to Van Wishard (2004:[sp]), the apocalyptic process operates in four phases: revelation, judgment, destruction and new birth. Destruction and new birth occur simultaneously. Importantly, the changes stimulated by the apocalypse occur in the collective psyche (Van Wishard 2003:[sp]). When Pippin (1999:112) constructively relates that the apocalypse is both intimate and global, it makes sense that *Signs* depicts the global side on television (that the fate of the whole planet is threatened), while the intimate plays out in front of us on the screen as the Hess family first doubts what is happening and then fights for survival<sup>87</sup>.

Positioning *Signs* as an apocalyptic text informs my critical reading thereof; highlighting the apocalyptic ‘warnings’ of the film emphasises yet another emotionally laden archetypal motif that conjures up imagery of other archetypal events such as Death and Rebirth. Edinger’s preface presents, from the outset, “psychological evidence of the end of the world”, thus highlighting the inner conflict related to this notion of massive destruction (Edinger 2002:xiii). He refers to the experience and resonance of 9/11 as “this terrible transition in culture (...) [which] will be bearable if we understand the meaning of what is going on” (2002:xvi). Here, Edinger’s contention is that psychologically whole individuals will guide world events away from utter wartime destruction and create more constructive ways of solving differences. *Signs* presents me with a contemporary apocalyptic narrative where I am informed of the state of the world as being

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<sup>86</sup> According to Zizek, genocide is a form of acting out an unconscious apocalyptic fantasy (Pippin 1999:11). Significantly, Zizek proceeds to link apocalyptic fantasy and ideology; for present purposes, I do not take this same route although I do find this a highly stimulating and constructive position.

<sup>87</sup> Pippin (1999:112) lists *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* as examples of global and intimate apocalypse respectively.

unstable, uncertain and dangerous. Yet, like Hess, I am told that there is hope in re-establishing contact with the divine and with my psychological self, or rather, in contacting the 'Divine' Self. I will elaborate on this notion.

Edinger (2002:2) contends that it is to one's benefit to internalise the psychological meaning of Apocalypse in one's life; following this, "the worst of the external (global, collective) Apocalypse can be softened". I find that the Apocalypse occurs on two levels, the external and the internal. Edinger's main concern lies with the psychological meaning of the Apocalypse, which is also important for this current study. Regarding the film and its depiction of an alien invasion, Edinger (2002:6) comments:

The possible encounter with extra terrestrial intelligence is an image that is more and more gripping to the modern mind; and in many cases in science fiction these encounters are followed by apocalyptic consequences – an aspect of the archetype.

Here, Edinger links the archetypal, the apocalyptic and the appearance of aliens. So I read in *Signs* a Hero not on just any journey, but facing nothing less than the end of the world itself. This constitutes an important leap from *The Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable's* 'personal' journeys to a journey that echoes a collective motif in the form of the Apocalypse. As presented by the film, I am witness to images of devastation and deliverance. Typical of Apocalypse narratives, *Signs* presents a separation of opposites (in alchemical terms, a differentiation of elements) and, in the end, a union of the opposites (the alchemical *coniunctio*), particularly regarding Shadow and Ego, and Ego and Self<sup>88</sup>. Between the separation and eventual union, I encounter images of "cosmic catastrophe, heavenly bodies falling to earth, [and an] anointed 'messiah' figure" (Edinger 2002:3–4). I read the "heavenly bodies falling to earth" as a sign of the Apocalypse in *Signs*, as extra-terrestrials from beyond the stars hover above the earth's surface in spherical objects, or in colloquial terms, 'flying saucers'. These flying objects are never

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<sup>88</sup> These opposites should not be seen as polar extremes, but as different dimensions occupying the same space.



seen by everyone; some see them, others do not (Jung 1964c:314), and in *Signs* some people, including Graham Hess, only see them after being violently confronted by the reality of the objects. According to eyewitness accounts, those who are witnesses to sightings find that the experience is accompanied by an unusual emotion (1964:315), or a numinosity – seeing these round shapes up in the air grants me a sense of belonging to something larger than myself, even something divine that is visually positioned in the heavens. Symbolically, the aliens have come to liberate humanity, by calling attention to the need for individuation, not only for the characters (mainly Hess), but also myself. As symbols of the Self, these mandala-shaped UFOs<sup>89</sup> lead me to feel like a small part of something omnipotent, a truly numinous experience.

In my reading, this invasion serves to make people conscious of psychological imbalance on a large (that is, non-individual) scale – the collective homeostasis has been disturbed in a world fraught with violent conflict. Based within a culture still reeling after the shocks of the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Edinger (2002:172) links the material reality with psychological reality: “The Self is coming,” he informs us, “and the phenomena that ought to be experienced consciously and integrated by the individual in the course of the individuation process are occurring unconsciously and collectively in society as a whole.” Instead of consciously integrating unconscious content and material during ‘normal’ individuation, society now experiences violent explosions of unconscious content that has been repressed and not resolved and subsequently integrated. When psychological opposites differentiate (see above) through splitting, it is for the purpose of eventual integration (union), the ego (consciousness) is faced with conflict (Edinger 2002:174–175).

The archetype of the apocalypse is about the activation of an archetype of the Self. This activation, says Van Wishard (2004:3), brings with it a “new

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<sup>89</sup> “UFOs”, Jung (1964c:394) maintains, “are subliminal contents that have become visible; they are, in a word, archetypal figures”.



relationship to the divine” as well as a *new stage of psychological maturation*” (author’s italics). It is precisely Hess’s encounter with symbols of the psyche that stimulate individuation and engagement with the Self, after which he experiences a rejuvenated reform of his relationship to the divine, to his ‘God’. This development is seen as part of Hess’s personal psychological maturation, which required him to acknowledge the existence of the aliens and allow his psyche (in memory, his wife) to aid him on this road of psychological growth.

From a Jungian reading, UFO sightings as presented in *Signs* are collective psychological projections (Jung 1964c:319, 320). “In the threatening situation” of a war-torn earth, the “projection-creating fantasy” (Jung 1964c:320) goes beyond mere earthly figures and into space (previously heaven), home to gods and divinity. As noted in his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1971:367) refers to the UFO symbol as a “universally present psychic [psychological] disposition”. The UFO shape is an archetypal projection. At the basis of these projections lies an emotional tension due to collective distress or danger. The emotional basis of the cinematic experience in the case of *Signs* is already established before the first images appear; my psychological context predisposes me to react and read a certain way. In other words, the unconscious makes its contents perceived via projection “onto (an) object(s) which reflect(s) the essence of what had lain in the unconscious” (my brackets) (Jung 1964c:320). According to Jung (1964c:322), UFO’s have become a “living myth”; during difficult times, there are stories of helpful aliens or “heavenly powers” that aid humanity (1964c:323).

Spielberg’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) is a good example of this type of ‘heavenly aid’; in *Signs*, however, the aliens have turned malevolent. The symbolic effects and consequences of their presence are still psychologically helpful, but the aliens themselves are much more forceful in their manner as if their message is more important than ever: the individual needs to connect with his/her Self, for it has been neglected too long – Graham Hess neglected his Self

by way of negating his faith, which served to link himself to divinity. This link had been severed by his own conscious decision after his wife's death. This link to the divine was established by Hess's projection. Belief in God is, in Jungian theory, the projection of aspects of the Self. After this link was removed, Hess's psyche demanded expression not in religion (which had lost all symbolic value for Hess), but in mandala symbols: the UFOs.

Jung (1964c:325–326) states that this flying round disc, the UFO, appears as a mandala representing unconscious contents, serving as a symbol of order. Significantly, it is an individuation symbol, in which instance the UFO is read as a “symbolical representation of the Self” and the “[psychological] totality composed of the conscious and the unconscious” (ego and the unconscious in equilibrium). Clearly, the mandala is significant in uniting opposites (Jung 1964c:327). As far as Clift (1983:50) is concerned, the “union of opposites is only possible through symbols”. It is reasonable that in the post-Industrial era, the archetype assumes a technological form to, in Jung's (1964:328) words, “avoid the odiousness of mythological personification”. It is upon seeing and believing in the UFOs that Hess finds himself hurtled towards psychological wholeness, on his path to uniting his Self with his consciousness, to re-uniting with his faith as a man of God. The UFO is a call to adventure and to introspection; it is as if Hess heeds Edinger's warning about making conscious and integrating unconscious material. The aliens are masculine shadow figures in opposition to Hess, who is read as a representative of ‘ordinary humanity’ embarking on a dangerous quest.

In *Signs*, the alien presence is a threat to Hess, but also guides him to greater contact with his children. Mackey-Kallis (2001:163) notes that children in film are often symbolic of the transcendent, of the notion of moving beyond set parameters. In all three Shyamalan films, the children are individuation archetypes, a compensation for rational one-sided thinking (they see what the adults do not); they are by implication archetypal representations of possibility and wholeness (Mackey-Kallis 2001:164). Hess's children then lead him to

believing in the aliens, and, in turn, in himself. Although the aliens and their UFOs are hostile, they are symbols of the Self, renewal, and individuation insofar as these UFOs serve the same purpose as mandalas; they guide and stimulate Hess to individuate. Critics state that the Child does not always appear in the form of an actual child (Jung 1968:161). My reading reveals that the child characters in the films serve the function of the Child archetype. I do not read them as Child archetypes simply because they are children, but because they are helpful figures guiding Heroes to individuation.)

By engaging these shadow figures, Hess attains greater consciousness that leads him to the divine again. As depicted on screen, this integration defeats the aliens literally by causing them to leave; the symbolic value of the aliens as shadow figures in need of a Self remains. In this case, literal death (the Apocalypse) is averted because Hess successfully individuated in the second half of his life after a psychological death and rebirth related to his wife's passing. The 'Death' in this instance was a spiritual trial in the time after Hess's wife's passing and his loss of faith – effectively, he consciously broke contact with the Self by denying his faith, his Christianity, thereby denying the numinous power and transcendence of the ultimate symbol of the Self, the figure of Christ. I read the moment of Hess's engagement with the Self and return to God as a moment of *apotheosis*, where the mortal man, Graham Hess, advances in individuation and integrates Shadow (in the sense of the memory of his wife) and Self. "The central archetype, the Self, is the transpersonal center of the psyche, and acts as the instrument and agent of transcendence" (Van Wishard 2004:[sp]), which is what the Christ figure facilitates via projection. Or as Jacobi (1965:75) puts it, "the encounter with the Self and conscious possession of the Self can give man a feeling of lasting security through the relation he has found to the God-image."

*Apotheosis* is, in Izod's (2001a:146) words, the elevation of a mortal, human individual to the level of a god. Although Hess does not become a god in the traditional mythological sense of the word, his psychological maturation has led

him back to the God-image; the notion concerns Hess's enhanced consciousness and psychological integration in the form of a re-alignment with God. If individuation culminates in a continuous journey towards psychological wholeness, and experiences of wholeness are generally expressed as sayings such as "He's made his peace with God," or "He's submitted himself to the will of God" as Jacobi (1965:56) claims, then Hess's return to Self implies a "union of ego with Self" that is indistinguishable from a *unio mystica* with God" (Jacobi 1965:56), which is a profoundly spiritual experience. Still, there is no direct Christ figure in *Signs*, only UFOs. As I have said, both are symbolic of the Self.

The UFOs' message is this: as signs in heaven, they invite us to psychological wholeness (balance, equilibrium, homeostasis) (Jung 1964:382). In dealing with the Self and individuation, alchemy (as discussed earlier) proves important. I use the above to amplify the text, drawing on alchemy and individuation motifs to construct meanings that, through my reading, contribute to my emotional cinematic experience by emphasising the psychological process that underlie such an experience. A patient of Jung's had two dreams of UFOs. From this dream content, Jung points out that in one dream, the UFO looked like a drop falling from the sky. Using amplification, Jung (1964c:332) frames this dream image in alchemical terminology as the *aqua permanens*, or "heavenly fluid". In alchemy, this fluid serves as a solvent for certain chemicals but is also representative of the solution to a problem. The above illuminates my reading of *Signs* as an emotional cinematic experience that affects me due to its archetypal imagery and motifs that involve and invite notions of the Self and individuation that relate to events in 'real' life.

In *Signs*, the narrative revolves mainly around Hess, and it is his individuation narrative that is represented. However, there are numerous UFOs on screen, not just one. From a Jungian reading, the unity of the Self has split (differentiated) into many entities, reinforcing the call to the individual to integrate and unite the opposites. This occurrence relates to the alchemical principle of *multiplicatio*, or

splitting into many. Jung (1964c:334) says that this “plurality of the symbol of unity” refers to a splitting of the Self into numerous independent units, corresponding to projections of numerous human beings whose ‘choice’ of symbol (the O-like mandala shape of the UFO) indicates an ideal psychological totality. Lacking the relationship that he had had before with his God, Hess needs to individuate, to rediscover his connection to the numinous. At the beginning of the film this desire is still unconscious, but by the end of the film this has changed dramatically.

By making the symbol content conscious, the symbol, a “channeliser of psychic energy” (Clift 1983:13), is liberated from its energy as the symbol has no more unconscious value. The content has been made conscious and integrated, and so the aliens and their UFOs are not necessary anymore<sup>90</sup>. This integration, when energy is liberated as the symbolic becomes conscious, signals that the symbol had served its purpose. This integration of previously unconscious archetypal contents, part of the process of individuation, is an emotional experience. As previously stated, an archetypal experience is a ‘felt’ experience. This ‘new consciousness’ forms part of the individuation process, in which archetypes constellate and guide the individual to psychological maturation.

Based on the above, my reading is that *Signs* deals with individuation in the context of the Apocalypse, along with the requisite emotionally toned archetypal contents, figures and symbols that go along with it. This apocalypse is presented as ‘real’ or ‘literal’ in the film, but I read it on a non-literal, symbolic level, which is also the ‘felt’ or emotional level. The individual needs to grow psychologically before violent conflict ends life. Another significant archetypal image in the film is the recurring image of Hess’s wife at the scene of the accident. She is trapped between a car and a tree and will die at any moment. Significantly, the tree is a symbol of upward growth and, as shown in Chapter Three’s elaboration on

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<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, the aliens in Spielberg’s *War of the Worlds* first come from under the ground, representing bursts of unconscious material from below the surface of consciousness.

alchemical symbolism, a symbol of transformation. Muller (1969:227) cites the tree as symbolic of “continuously recurring rebirth”. Before her passing, Hess’s wife tells him something that comes back to him during a critical moment in the film, where his Child, his guide to growth, is in grave danger. I have written about the theme of repression in Shyamalan’s films, but in *Signs* it is necessary to consider the wife not only as a repressed memory from the personal unconscious that calls out when necessary, but also that, as Jung (1964c:377) observes, this contrasexual archetype “personifies the collective unconscious.” In Hess’s case, the anima leads ego-consciousness towards the unconscious (Izod 2001b:41). Indeed, Hall (1983:16-17) observes that the function of the anima is to lead the “individual out of accustomed ways of functioning (...) [to] widen horizons and move [the individual] toward a more comprehensive understanding of oneself [individuation]” (Hall 1983:17).

In this instance, the anima functions as a symbol of rebirth which impels Hess to act and, thereafter, to a rejuvenated psychological existence in which Hess returns to the clergy. To this extent, I position this particular anima-figure of the wife as the helpful anima: she helps the Hero in a narrative sense to defeat the hostile alien forces, but also on a psychological level by guiding him towards shadow integration and enhanced consciousness. At the right moment, it is the collective unconscious (symbolically represented by Hess’s anima) – that is becoming more conscious for the individuating Hess – that starts the process that saves him and his family; the psychological balance, homeostasis, is restored. *Signs* in this sense reads like an alchemical text that presents in its images the whole of the psyche in which the balance between consciousness and the unconscious is destabilised, only to return to balance at the end. However, the shadow in Hess is not just repressed materials in the form of memory, but also the alien figures who constitute a collective shadow based on the motif of war, which in turn underscores the apocalypse-archetype in the narrative. In *Signs*, Hess’s wife, read as an anima figure, rises from the unconscious into consciousness to help Hess beat the aliens. Jung (1964c:398)

explains that when the unconscious intrudes into consciousness, it results in various types of “disturbed reactions” including lapses in inhibition and the forgetting of readily available information. Hess is aware of the memory of his wife, but never remembers it in its totality until when absolutely necessary. These happenings are seen as complex-indicators, and any “archetypal complex always leads to the symbol of the [S]elf” (Von Franz 1980:124). The complex, in relation to the archetype (primarily the archetype of the Self), is a “loosely coherent collection of experiences” that is “collected’ around the compelling affective-imaginal core.” The significant notion here is that the experience of the Self is inherently emotional. Any symbolic representation of the experience of the Self, however vicarious, is emotional.

In summation, the archetype of the Self constantly appears to people (Jung 1964c:406) as a projection, often in the form of an “epiphany from heaven”. This symbol is of an antithetical nature – it consists of both ‘fire’ and ‘water’ values (traditionally purifying and destructive, cleansing and life giving), or ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ values indicating a differentiation between an “enigmatic higher world and the everyday ordinary world” (Jung 1964c:408). The Self functions as the God-image (Van Wishard 2003:[sp]). Optimally, if the activation of the Self is experienced on a conscious level, it is it is integrated into the totality of individual life (Van Wishard 2003:[sp]) through individuation. By aligning with characters in films that present archetypal imagery regarding the Self, other archetypes, individuation and the Apocalypse, I am emotionally moved by the experience because the archetypal activation caused by these images touch upon my personal complexes. The result of this is the experience of numinosity.

This numinosity, by its very nature an emotionally laden experience, arises from a feeling of ‘otherness’ as it is both wonderful and horrifying, leaving the individual in awe (Clift 1983:62). According to Clift (1983:20), a complex consists of a “cluster of associations and associated meanings [possibly brought to light by amplification] around a nucleus of meaning that has a great deal of ‘feeling



tone' or a numinous quality to it". I compare this feeling-toned emotional cinematic experience to Levy-Bruhl's notion of the *participation mystique*, which refers to a "psychological connection with objects, or between persons, resulting in a strong unconscious bond" between the film image and I – we occupy the same space, and the relationship between us is unconscious in that it is based on archetypal experiences. This *participation mystique* regards the "observation of synchronistic<sup>91</sup> events, of signs," according to Von Franz (1980:45) and is often used to describe the interaction between that which is normal and everyday with the supernatural, which results in a realisation that the individual is part of a much greater series of processes and events that exist outside of the individual.

Put another way, the *participation mystique* is a numinous experience. What *Signs* achieves in its constellation of the archetypally numinous is the *unus mundus*, "a state in which ego-consciousness and the unconscious work together in harmony" (McNeely 1989:114). The *unus mundus*, a notion borrowed from alchemist Gerhard Dorneus, presents a "unified psychophysical reality" (Roth [sa]:10), a state of existence "beyond the split between inner [psyche] and outer ['reality'] worlds." It is presented in the form of what Mackey-Kallis (2001:29) calls a 'Creation Myth', a narrative that deals explicitly with notions of death and rebirth, resulting in enhanced consciousness based on interaction with the unconscious. "Emotion", says Izod (2001b:7), "is the key to the deeper levels of the psyche [collective unconscious] because the expression of deep-seated needs and desires is inextricably bonded to the formation of myths." The "Everyday Hero" trilogy stimulates an emotional experience based on the foundation of the myth of the Hero's Journey<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> Synchronicity is "[the] almost simultaneous occurrence of two events in time, one inner and one outer, that seems to have meaning" (Hall 1983:92). It is important for the individual to perceive the relationship between the inner and outer events as meaningful for these events to be synchronous. Hall (1983:95) suggests that one asks what motivated the unconscious to direct conscious attention to something in particular.

<sup>92</sup> An argument introduced earlier in this chapter.



*Signs* is emotionally moving not because I pity Hess for the loss of his wife, but because the film managed to raise my own self-awareness (of the archetypal motifs involved in individuation) in gaining a fuller experience of my emotional being through a screened fiction, to paraphrase John Izod (2001b:16). This effect brings me to psychological introjection as a follow up for projection. By watching *Signs*, I stored in my psyche not only images (from the film), but also the energy (emotion) that these elicit (Izod 2001b:18). The statement that energy is emotion is significant. When a symbol is read and its content integrated, it is liberated and not a symbol anymore as its essence has become known. This symbol is now less powerful in its capacity to elicit emotion. In this sense too, then, the symbolic is directly related to the cinematic emotional experience. Through projection and introjection, there occurs a continuous two-way communication between the screen (images) and my unconscious (archetypes) (2001b:19), a process that has no defined ending.

#### 4.3 Conclusion

In Jungian terms, *Signs* is what Izod (2001b:20) refers to as a visionary work, since I find the film to possess a psychologically “glorious or demonic” force that engages me emotionally. In this sense, film has a transcendent function (2001b:25), related to the experience of the numinous. I feel justified in quoting Izod (2001b:24) directly: “When scholars [readers, critics] succeed in analysing a film while feeling and relishing the impact of its symbolism’s energy upon their own minds, they are more likely to be able to convey (...) a sense of its numinosity.” The above statements are important for a return to Fredericksen’s initial questions about the individual’s inability to always articulate the impact of a film on him/her. From what has been said, the emotional cinematic experience is constructed primarily through an unconscious interaction between the reading of the numinous, engagement with symbols of the Self and various individuation

motifs (highlighted by alchemy). The holistic<sup>93</sup> reading I provide of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy highlights the dynamisms that combine to stimulate an emotional cinematic experience.

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<sup>93</sup> “Holistic” in the sense that I consider the interaction between film and psyche as more complex than a simple cause-and-effect occurrence.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Introduction

This study looked at film from a Jungian analytical approach to provide a critical reading of the case study, the “Everyday Hero” trilogy by M. Night Shyamalan, which highlights the emotional cinematic experience. This chapter details the accomplishments of this study.

#### 5.2 Summary of chapters

Chapter One presents the main aim of the study and provides an outline of the rest of the chapters. Principally, Chapter One introduced the thesis statement and positioned the study as investigating film, primarily the emotional cinematic experience, through a Jungian approach.

In Chapter Two I examine the scholarship consulted throughout this study to indicate where and how a Jungian critical reading of film would be constructive, in the process delineating it as a functional complement to psychoanalysis and cognitivism.

In Chapter Three, I spent much time and space on presenting Jungian theory as it links, overlaps and establishes discourse with film. I investigated various Jungian notions of the unconscious, archetypes, projection, dream analysis and alchemy to present the theoretical basis on which my reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy is based. The chapter develops these notions in considerable detail. Concepts had to be clearly defined to ensure reader understanding and contribute to the clarity of the application of theory in Chapter Four.

Where Chapter One introduced the study (objects and aim), Chapter Two considered the paucity within available research and Chapter Three developed the relevant Jungian theory, Chapter Four is the culminating chapter in which I applied the theory to specific films. By delivering a Jungian critical reading of M. Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable* and principally *Signs*, I elaborated on how the relationship between viewer and visual text is constructed as an emotional cinematic experience. This experience, while not discounting the impact of musical manipulation, dramatic gestures and other audio-visual cues, is based on an unconscious reading of and reaction to the visual stimulus that relates to archetypal experience. I argued and demonstrated how this emotional cinematic experience is activated mainly through the relation between the symbolic, the archetype of the Self and the visual motifs presented by the films.

### 5.3 Contribution of study

The value of this study lies in its ability to complement other approaches to film, such as psychoanalysis and, more recently, cognitivism. Jungian theory is also positioned as an approach comfortable in a contemporary context of active interrogation and deconstruction: "Jung's careful attention to the world of the inner psyche will serve as a corrective to the overly extraverted orientations of both modernism and postmodernism" (Rushing & Frenz 1995:35).

I demonstrated the significance of Jungian theory in reading film, particularly regarding the emotional cinematic experience. In doing this, I:

- Used alchemical symbolism in amplifying the "Everyday Hero" trilogy;
- Positioned the Hero's Journey as laying the foundation for the emotional cinematic experience;
- Unpacked the relationship between archetypes and symbolic manifestations thereof;
- Highlighted the manifestation of archetypal experiences and events by investigating the Apocalypse myth as portrayed by *Signs*.

Fields such as semiotics, as discussed by Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis in *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics* (1992), could benefit from the specific psychological approach that Jungian film theory brings to film; the study details the difference in the conceptualisations between ‘sign’ and ‘symbol’ in Chapter Four, demonstrating the psychological dimension that a Jungian reading brings to the text. This involvement of the psychological complexifies a critical reading of the filmic text as it invites notions of the archetypal. In Bodkin’s (1951:1) words:

The special emotional significance possessed by certain poems – a significance going beyond any definite meaning conveyed – he [Jung] attributes to the stirring in the reader’s mind, within or beneath his conscious response of unconscious forces which he terms ‘primordial images,’ or archetypes.

Not only can Jungian theory provide semiotics with new terminology and descriptions of mental events, but also, as Bodkin emphasises, focus the reader’s attention on the significance of the psyche (mainly the collective and personal unconscious and the archetypes) in the process of signification.

Although other critics have discussed many of the concepts dealt with in this study in detail, this study’s contribution to the existing scholarship lies in its application of these notions, concepts and ideas to the emotional cinematic experience. This study has paid particular attention to the films of M. Night Shyamalan, a prominent American writer-director whose films invite precisely the type of approach to the text that promotes notions of the archetypal and symbolic.

In my reading of the “Everyday Hero” trilogy I worked inclusively and considered the archetypal processes and figures in continuous interaction with each other; there was never a single, correct reading. I am aware that a Jungian approach is not without potential pitfalls. In the “Popular Culture Symposium”, Schechter (in Carlin, Fiedler & Schechter 1990:86) warns that one should ward against a kind of reductionism to stock archetypal patterns.

#### 5.4 Suggestions for further research

Some reflection is necessary. I refer, as Jung himself did (Izod 2001b:9), to the Jungian model of the psyche (the unconscious and the archetypes) as a metaphor to aid me in my reading and exploration of texts. In this sense, the Jungian approach effectively aided my reading of the films, highlighting critical issues that, in my view, a Jungian approach could best explore. Yet I left many notions and prominent Jungian ideas almost untouched. These ideas are stimulating points for departure for other studies. Based on the present study, I then identified certain ideas as potential research questions for further investigation.

Firstly, active imagination, a notion introduced but not all explored in its entirety by this study, can be further investigated to examine the individual's emotional response to film. Active imagination is a follow-up process to the actual watching of a film. From this Jungian position, images that stimulate an emotional response require conscious investigation on an individual level. In this sense, the image requires the individual to visualize and imagine new narratives. Amplifying the watched film and its images or scenes activates these narratives (Izod 2000). Once the 'new narrative', often a narrative of the Self, is constructed, the emotional resonance of the original cine-image or scene(s) becomes clear. Active imagination is employed in Jungian therapy for dream analysis (as discussed in Hannah [1989], *Encounters with the soul: active imagination as developed by CG Jung*).

Regarding the interpretation of dreams, one must take into account personal details of the dreamer himself: his philosophical, moral, religious, ideological convictions that make up his worldview (Jacobi 1953:61). No critic can say that s/he can stand apart from that which makes up his/her person. The critic brings himself to the film as I did in my reading of Shyamalan's films. Humbert (1984:93) asks: "How is it possible to allow that which forms in one's imagination to inspire

one's concrete experience?" A study on active imagination and the emotional cinematic experience addresses that question, accounting for the ability of a film to impact on individual existence even outside of the confines of the cinema. I am reminded of the words of director Nicolas Roeg, as quoted by Izod (1992:249): "The critic is also the maker and we all are reviewing ourselves." A study on active imagination would then refer not only to collective symbols, but also explicitly to the dreamer/viewer's personal context and progression in individuation. Indeed, such a study would reinforce the notion that "[r]ather than any pretence of objectivity, the encounter between spectator-subject and image-object is a process of interference or mutual mutation whose assemblage produces truth effects rather than any objective truth" (Smith 1998:9). Active imagination would articulate these 'truth effects' as experienced in a cinematic context<sup>94</sup>.

The dynamics of projection and introjection can also be explored. According to Grotstein (1993:124), projective identification "is, in effect, imagination," a way to make sense on a psychological level of what is outside of the individual, such as a film image.

Rethinking the position of the film critic in contemporary society could be added to by positioning the critic as shamanic figure, an idea introduced in Chapter One. A study such as this could draw on the works of Levi-Strauss (1998) and Eliade<sup>95</sup> while not necessarily developing its argument along structuralist principles. I particularly find the ideas of the shaman as 'Wounded Healer' and as interpreter or reader for other people stimulating.

Lastly, the contribution of the actual cinematic space (the cinema or movie theatre) to a cinematically 'transcendent' experience could be examined. The cinema itself could be posited as a space or site of numinous experience, as it

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<sup>94</sup> Indeed, such a study could be done as an exploration in reader response theory.

<sup>95</sup> See *Myths and symbols: studies in honour of Mircea Eliade*, edited by JM Kitagawa and GSM Hodgson

could be compared to a temple, or some kind of 'holy place'. Lundquist (1990:114) reports that individuals who had visited temples reported that "as one enters the temple, ordinary time is stripped away and one experiences sacred time and space." The holiest section of the temple is referred to as "the illuminated room", where the individual becomes aware of his or her place in personal and collective (psychological) 'history' and is thus conscious thereof. What Lundquist says about the temple, albeit in esoteric, essentialist terms, has much to do with cinema. Indeed, the "illuminated room" is the space of viewing where the source of light is the projector; within this space I, the critic, encounter various archetypal figures or images that may demand interrogation. The critic, 'circling' the filmic experience with his/her consciousness, reaches toward a psychological understanding of the text and how it affects him/her. If the cinema is akin to a sacred place and filmic experiences relate to the experiences within this 'temple', the question may arise as to how a Jungian reading could be psychologically illuminating.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this study, I argued that a Jungian reading of the text illuminates the emotional cinematic experience. To investigate this experience, often termed numinous, I examined Jungian notions and applications of dream analysis, alchemy and individuation. The study also scrutinised the Jungian model of the psyche (the unconscious and the archetypes) as important constructs manifest during the emotional cinematic experience. In applying the above in my reading of M. Night Shyamalan's "Everyday Hero" trilogy, I highlighted how an emotional cinematic experience is constructed between the visual text and myself as the critical reader.

Based on what had been discussed and demonstrated in Chapter Four, I then discussed the contributions of the study as well as potential investigative



questions for further research, primarily regarding the Jungian practice of active imagination.

With this study, I accomplished what I set out to do in Chapter One: I analysed films as complete narratives and investigated the films in context to one another. With my Jungian critical reading of M. Night Shyamalan's "Everyday Hero" trilogy, I demonstrated how the archetypes – in particular the archetype of the Self – and the symbolic correspond in constructing individuation motifs that altogether construct the emotional cinematic experience.

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