Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
2025, Vol. 19, no. 1, 235-246
https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss.1624989

ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Literary Studies | research note

A Jungian Archetypal Reinterpretation of the Psychological Undercurrents in Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus"

Sylvia Plath'in "Lady Lazarus" Eserindeki Psikolojik Alt Metinlerin Jungcu Arketip Kuramı Çerçevesinde Yeniden Yorumlanması

Münevver Yakude Muştak 0000-0003-2815-8144
Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University

ABSTRACT
The collective unconscious archetypes, including elements of the psychological process, universal symbols, and patterns of behavior, help us adapt to our internal and external environment. According to Jung, literature offers readers an understanding of the collective unconscious, allowing them to access universal symbols and archetypes of all people and societies. He thought authors frequently made unconscious use of these archetypes to produce works of art that connected with readers on a profound, psychological level. This interpretation of "Lady Lazarus" is a potent investigation of collective unconscious archetypes, particularly the Self, Shadow, Anima, Animus, Hero, and Trickster. The speaker struggles with her own impending doom. She challenges the reader to face their own deep despair and discover a method to overcome it by means of this exploration. This article aims to analyze the poem's literary analysis in light of Jung's archetypes of human behavior. By being grounded with these archetypal dynamics, "Lady Lazarus" becomes more than a confessional poem; it becomes a space for exploring the cyclical nature of destruction and renewal within the psyche. The relation between the poem and the archetypes allows readers to better understand literary characters and human psychology by remarking on universal prototypes for ideas that may be used to interpret observations. When "Lady Lazarus" is analyzed within the framework of Jung's archetype theory, it allows readers to connect with the collective unconscious and develop an understanding of their inner worlds. This, once again, demonstrates the powerful impact of literature on human psychology.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 26 Jan 2025
Accepted 23 Apr 2025

KEYWORDS
American literature, Carl Jung, collective unconscious archetypes, human psyche, *Lady Lazarus*

Introduction

Standing in front of the audience with its persona's experiences of death and rebirth, "Lady Lazarus" is a document of a sort of transperson who has committed suicide thrice. Plath's reflection on her own experiences with depression and suicidal ideation is evident in the expression of her sorrows and the foreshadowing of her desire, which are deeply embedded throughout her writings. Throughout the poem, Lady Lazarus recounts her own "resurrections," a form of self-destruction or a way of handling her emotional anguish, or a series of unsuccessful suicide attempts, and how she

CONTACT Münevver Yakude Muştak, Res. Asst., English Language and Literature, Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Turkiye | mymustak@agri.edu.tr; ORCID# 0000-0003-2815-8144; https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss
CUJHSS (e-ISSN 3062-0112) Published by Çankaya University.

has become almost indestructible as a result of her recurrent near-death experiences. She also appears to enjoy her own agony. The depressive mood is described so effectively with the psychological elements that the poem leaves a psychological weight on the reader by leaving them to empathize with the speaker and making them understand Sylvia Plath in a distinctive way. "Lady Lazarus" vividly depicts the tension between the self and external forces. Her antagonists are the figures of authority, power, and societal expectations, and she struggles to fully extricate her identity from their influence (Dyne, 1983, p. 400). These figures are often imbued with both personal and symbolic significance, representing not only individuals but also societal and existential pressures. Plath's complex and ambivalent relationship with these antagonists, while she names and resists them, accentuates that these figures are integral to her understanding of herself. They are both the sources of her suffering and the catalysts for her poetic expression, a duality creating a sense of entrapment, where the self is constantly negotiating its place between autonomy and subjugation.

This poem, through the interpretation of Carl Jung's theory of archetypes, becomes a way to understand the human psyche since they are "archaic remnants" (Jung, 1968b, p. 58). According to Jung, who has had a significant influence on literature and literary criticism, the human psyche is comprised of both the individual unconscious and the shared collective unconscious, which consists of universal symbols and archetypes. Jung believed that archetypes are congenital structures of the human psyche, molded by our developmental history and our experiences as a species. The human mind uses symbols to represent not-fully-grasp ideas, even before language, humans have an innate ability to create universal symbols or themes that appear across cultures (Meadow, 1992, p. 188), rejecting the idea of tabula rasa.

> In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This Collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (Jung 1991, p. 43)

Archetypes are powerful, fundamental elements of the psyche that operate independently and have their own energy. They draw related ideas from the conscious mind to themselves (Jung, 1973, p. 308). These archetypes manifest in our dreams, our myths, and our cultural symbols and provide us with a framework for understanding and relating to the world around us. Jung's archetypes, in other words, bridge both sociological and psychological dimensions while being deeply rooted in the unconscious (Greenwood, 1990, p. 489). He believed that by becoming aware of these archetypes and integrating them into our conscious awareness, we can achieve greater wholeness and live more fulfilling lives. He thus considers archetypes as a way to connect with the deeper aspects of our psyches and discover significance and intention in our existence.

Considering this, when "Lady Lazarus" is analyzed within the framework of Jung's archetype theory, it allows readers to connect with the collective unconscious and develop an understanding of their inner worlds. While previous studies have explored Plath's work through psychoanalytic and feminist lenses, few have provided a sustained and structured application of Jung's archetypal theory to a single poem. Although Sylvia Plath's poetry has attracted considerable psychoanalytic attention, Jungian readings remain relatively scarce, and when they do appear, they often focus broadly on her life and oeuvre rather than on individual poems. The previous studies, such as Schwartz's *Sylvia Plath: A Split in the Mirror* (2011) or Sarah Josie Pridgeon's *A Woman's Pilgrimage to Herself through the Mother Complex* (2017), mainly interpret Plath's oeuvre primarily in terms of a troubled father-daughter relationship and themes such as the mother complex, individuation, and

archetypes, including the animus, shadow, and wise old woman. They provide the psychological effects of paternal absence and the internalization of negative masculine archetypes, supporting the analysis of biographical trauma. In contrast, this article builds upon and diverges from those works, providing a sustained literary analysis of "Lady Lazarus" structured explicitly around six of Jung's key archetypes: Self, Shadow, Anima, Animus, Hero, and Trickster. It uniquely emphasizes how the poem activates these archetypes to dramatize psychological transformation and rebirth. By framing the poem as a conduit to the collective unconscious, this analysis delineates the power of literature to describe universal psychic patterns, allowing readers to discover and reflect upon archetypal dimensions of the human condition. This approach offers a more structured and focused Jungian interpretation than existing works, contributing a fresh view through which Plath's poem may be understood both literarily and psychologically.

The article's specific focus, in this context, will be on how the poem evokes elements of the collective unconscious. Divided into three main sections, the analysis will begin by examining the archetypes of the Self and the Shadow, exploring how the speaker demonstrates her own identity and inner darkness. The second section will focus on the Anima and Animus, considering the poem's complex gender dynamics and internalized projections of masculine and feminine energy. Finally, the third section will analyze the archetypes of the Hero and the Trickster, reading the speaker's repeated resurrections and theatrical defiance as expressions of transformation and subversion. Throughout, the article will argue that "Lady Lazarus" is an archetypal narrative of death and rebirth.

The Dance of Light and Dark: The Self and The Shadow

A confession opens the poem: "I have done it again. / One year in every ten" (1-3). At this point, the reader is left in suspense, as the ambiguous 'it' is not immediately clarified, creating mystery and foreboding. The speaker of the poem brutally confesses because she has nothing to say except her irreversible decisions. She describes herself as a 'Nazi lampshade' and 'Jew linen' to make the scene more vivid by using Holocaust imagery to convey her own sense of hell and mental anguish, repeatedly referring to her own death and resurrection, implying that she has endured a transformation of the psyche. These disturbing metaphors, therefore, evoke a sense of dehumanization and suffering. The speaker of the poem gives those intense metaphors to describe that she is not isolated in her suffering since she compares her mental suffering to that of concentration camp prisoners by aligning her anguish with a collective history of trauma. It begins a journey because Lady Lazarus "will vanish in a day" (15). With her description of her mentality, her personality, and her journey of the Self archetype, she captures the wholeness and harmony of the mind, a symbolic journey of self-discovery.

The Self archetype in Lady Lazarus stands for the speaker's innermost core, the essence of her being that remains intact despite the numerous deaths and rebirths she has experienced. Jung's concept of the Self is "not only the center but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious" (Jung, 1993, p. 4). He explores the idea that the Self represents the totality and the unity of the psyche, encompassing all aspects of an individual, including both the conscious and unconscious mind. This contrasts with the ego, which is merely the focal point of awareness and does not include the whole psyche. The ego is a complex content for Jung, who describes it as "a complex of representations which constitute the centrum of my field of consciousness and appears to possess a very high degree of continuity and identity" (Jung, 2017, p. 391). The poem's repeated use of the pronoun "I" supports the notion that the self is a permanent and unalterable entity; however, the self is simultaneously portrayed in "Lady Lazarus" as divided and unstable. By calling herself "a sort of walking miracle" (4), the speaker alludes that her survival might not be an unquestioned fact. Since the ego is concerned with survival, identity, and the external world, while the Self represents a deeper, more unified state of being, the relationship between these two here unites the speaker's conscious awareness of her identity, her pain, and her role as a performer of

her own death and rebirth. She is aware of and interacts with the external world, managing the persona and the everyday self that others see. The ego-complex here demonstrates the oscillation in "Lady Lazarus" between self-assertion and dissolution. Her identity, though fragmented by trauma and death, maintains continuity within herself.

Plath's speaker's changing personas throughout the poem, from Lady Lazarus to a "victim" to a "doll" and back, reflect this dispersion. She needs to accomplish this because this is the sole means by which she will be able to realize her own self, emphasizing the significance of confronting and reconciling every facet of the self to develop a sense of unification and wellness. As the objective of the journey and the completeness of individuation, where she achieves self-realization and a harmonious state of being, Lady Lazarus speaks through her psyche, transcending the ego, representing a higher state of consciousness where she is not just focused on their personal desires and fears but has a more inclusive sense of identity and purpose. The speaker's repeated resurrections are attempts to achieve individuation, where she continually tries to integrate the fragmented parts of herself. Each death and rebirth is a symbolic process of shedding old identities and attempting to forge a new, more complete Self. Her final transformation into a vengeful, phoenix-like figure who "eats men like air" is empowerment to achieve the full integration that the Self represents. Her defiant tone and rejection of societal expectations are endeavors to transcend the ego. This exploration of the quest for wholeness and individuation, where the speaker continually attempts to integrate the fragmented aspects of her identity through the cycle of death and resurrection, captures the tension between the desire for a unified identity and the reality of fragmentation and conflict.

The merger of our conscious and unconscious selves, therefore, is represented by the archetype of wholeness and integration known as The Self. Jung described the process of consciousness emerging from the unconscious as a struggle, the process by which the hidden aspects of the self are brought into the light of awareness, becoming an individual is more about psychological wholeness in Jungian terms. Individuation is awareness and reconciliation of multiple sides of the psyche, including the shadow and the anima or animus. Working toward fulfilling one's true desires and potentials, which are aligned with the deeper aspects of the psyche, is about pursuing personal growth and self-realization in a way that is authentic and true to oneself (von Franz, 1964, p. 161). The speaker's journey toward integration and transformation appears for the integration of the intentional and instinctual parts of the psyche, representing individuation and completeness, where she confronts inner conflicts and integrates them to achieve a unified sense of self. Plath's speaker embarks on a deeply psychological and symbolic journey in which her repeated deaths and resurrections reflect the process of confronting and integrating disparate elements of her identity. Her repeated "deaths" are symbolic of shedding old aspects of the self, while her "resurrections" signify transformation and a deeper understanding of her identity. She embodies life and death, victim and survivor, destruction, and creation, and the true Self lies beyond them. The archetype of the Self is often realized through trials and suffering, as these experiences force an individual to confront their deepest truths. While the personal details of the poem are specific to Plath's experience, the underlying pattern of destruction and renewal of the human psyche reflects a universal human process. Jung, in the same vein, emphasizes that archetypes are universal patterns or motifs that may vary in their specific representations but retain the same core essence:

> The archetype is the tendency to form such representations of a motif- representation that can vary a great deal in their detail without losing their basic patterns. There are, for instance, many representations of the hostile brethren, but the motif itself remains the same. (Jung & von Franz, 1964, pp. 58)

A key part of achieving the Self archetype involves integrating the shadow—the hidden, suppressed elements of the psyche. In the poem, the speaker confronts her suffering, anger, and trauma through

visceral imagery, such as "The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth." By acknowledging and externalizing her inner pain, she moves closer to integrating these fragmented parts of herself into a cohesive whole. The poem also explores the archetype of the Shadow or "the opposite of 'ego'" (Atre, 2011, p. 155) or the darker part of human psyche. Lady Lazarus is plagued by her own mortality and the destructive impulses within her. She refers to herself as a "victim of the Holocaust" the collective shadow of humanity and the atrocities committed during the Second World War. As Jung remarks "projections change the world into a replica of one's own unknown face" (2014, p. 9), she harbors unconscious anger and starts to realize her own unresolved emotions reflected in the world around her, leading her to become a "smiling woman" watching her burn, a perverse pleasure in her suffering, and an internalized sense of self-loathing.

> By accepting evil, modern man accepts the world and himself in the dangerous double nature which belongs to them both. This self-affirmation is to be understood in the deepest sense as an affirmation of our human totality, which embraces the unconscious as well as the conscious mind and whose centre is not the ego (which is only the center of consciousness), nor yet the so-called super-ego, but the Self. (Neumann, 1990, pp. 140-141)

Plath's speaker embraces her shadow, acknowledging the destructive forces within her. The imagery of rising from the ash, like a phoenix, but with a predatory twist, so that the speaker's shadow is not just a force of self-destruction but also one of revenge. Her relationship with death is also the Shadow. Rather than fearing it, she almost revels in it, using her repeated resurrections as a way to confront and defy mortality. This defiance is a way of reclaiming power over her life, turning what is typically seen as a weakness, the impulse toward death, into a source of strength. Lady Lazarus' journey involves confronting the darker aspects of her own psyche, including feelings of hopelessness and despair. There are other characters in the poem who embody the Shadow archetype, including the Nazi genocide and demon-like beings such as men or doctors who represent the speaker's innermost rage. The Shadow archetype includes their fear of being buried before comprehensibility. Despite repeatedly confronting the image of her own death, she feels 'safe and free' because there is no longer any cause for concern or distress. Her dreams of dying, if she manages this time, mean everything becomes extremely bearable. Death seems resurrection, salvation, and power. Death represents the dream. However, actually, beneath the surface, death means the Shadow; death is the innermost fear at first. She does not feel complete if she dies without being able to do what she needs to do in the world. Even if she describes a zombie-like image of coming close to dying when the grave eats her flesh (17), she is still "a smiling woman."

She mentions her attempts at suicide by giving a sarcastic image. There is a sense of invincibility in effort 'Number Three' (22); she sees the failure of both suicide attempts as a chance given to her. It can be revealed the persona in the poem feels the same emotion because she depicts her personal derision about her attempts at suicide. This self-parody is tinged with satisfaction in her ability to deceive even death. She may think that she is so powerful that she always comes back to life regardless of her attempts or her cracked surroundings, causing her to do it. After all, to her, "Dying Is an art" that she does "exceptionally well" (43-45). These lines brilliantly highlight the poem's stunning description of being fearless about it. Therefore, her external ego and internal self undoubtedly become more united, and Lady Lazarus can even defeat death. The Self embraces the Shadow, and vice versa: after all, "[i]f a person is successful in detaching himself from identification with specific opposites, he can often see, to his own astonishment, how nature intervenes to help him. ... He will then experience an inner liberation" (Zweig, 2020, p. 267). In doing so, she detaches the Self from fear and suffering. The idea of sacrifice here results in the individual transformation of their perception of good and evil.

Our suppressed or unrecognized portions of the self that are frequently denied are represented by the Shadow, the archetype of our evil side. By remarking that everyone has a dark side, but

suppressing this dark side is "a bad remedy like cutting off the head for a headache" (Storr & Jung 2013, p. 76-77), Jung implies that one cannot integrate with oneself without one's shadow since only individuals who are aware of their both sides, dark and light, and in harmony with their shadow can find an inner integration (Burger, 2014, p. 158). Jung also believed that what is repressed or denied often contains significant power. By embracing the shadow, individuals recognize new potentials, leading to greater resilience and adaptability in life. Goodness and wickedness become less absolute and more fluid, revealing that what is traditionally seen as evil has a healing purpose in "Lady Lazarus." This reconciling process helps the poet's persona connect with her "true self" in Jungian terms, the totality of the psyche and the image of the divine.

> The God-image in man was not destroyed by the Fall but was only damaged and corrupted ('deformed'), and can be restored through God's grace. The scope of the integration is suggested by the descent of Christ's soul to hell, its work of redemption embracing even the dead. The psychological equivalent of this is the integration of the collective unconscious which forms an essential part of the individuation process. (Jung, 1958, p. 37)

She confronts the depths of despair and mortality, mirroring Christ's descent into hell as an act of redemption. While societal forces attempt to destroy her through exploitation and objectification, she repeatedly rises, asserting herself as something indestructible and transcendent. Her declaration of vengeance, "Beware / Beware" (80-81), represents a self that has gone through destruction and emerged not only intact but empowered, akin to a soul redeemed through divine grace since the God-image is the 'higher spiritual man' (Meihuizen, 1992, p. 102). Her metaphorical descent into hell and subsequent resurrection is a psychological journey of individuation, where the integration of her fragmented self, including shadow elements, allows her to reclaim power. The poem thus resonates deeply with the themes of redemption, transformation, and the restoration of a damaged but enduring divine essence within humanity.

The Inner Dialogue of the Persona: The Anima and The Animus

In Jungian thought, the principle of polarity is crucial for understanding the creation of the self and the world associated with it. This principle posits that all aspects of existence are built on opposites or polarities, which are essential because one cannot exist without the other, and so one cannot complete oneself (Atre, 2011, p. 157). Regardless of our gender by birth, the Anima/Animus reflects the feminine and masculine divisions of our personalities. As a persistent thought, to foster mutual understanding, the archetypes of men and women within the collective unconscious are critically significant (Fordham, 1991, p. 70) since a man's anima enables him to access and develop his intuition, leading to deeper insights, while a woman's animus helps her formulate philosophical thoughts and attitudes grounded in logic as Jung avers: "Little girls and little boys are thus to manifest different psychological characteristics. Women are expected to be ruled by the Eros (love) principle, and men by Logos (thought)" (Jung, 1974, p. 224).

The anima and animus archetypes of frustration encapsulate Lady Lazarus' journey, in which she highlights the different roles that we play in society and the different facets of our identities. These archetypes live in another world, a world that is far from the real one, "where the birth and death of individuals count for little." (1968a p. 210). According to Jung, the anima and animus are related to schizophrenia since it is almost impossible for them to irrupt the conscious world without amounting to psychosis. In Sylvia Plath's poem, there are several references to psychological distress and a sense of detachment from reality. Throughout the poem, the speaker's undergoing multiple deaths and resurrections presents a sense of dissociation and a blurring of boundaries between life and death. Lady Lazarus' own realm in which there are no distinctions between life and death, where she is constantly dying and rising again. This realm serves as a metaphorical representation of Lady Lazarus' psychological state and the struggles she faces in her life, reflecting

the feelings of isolation, despair, and inner turmoil she experiences. Her animus is evident in her aggressive, confrontational tone and her rejection of victimhood. She does not passively accept her fate; instead, she challenges it and those who would pity or control her: "Do not think I underestimate your great concern" (72). Her anima, on the other hand, is lying in the more traditionally feminine elements of the poem, such as the imagery of beauty, art, and the body as "bright as a Nazi lampshade" (5), as an internalization of feminine vulnerability and objectification. By navigating the dark realm, she embarks on a journey of self-discovery and redemption. Her rage against humanity and ultimately finding a path toward redemption and a renewed sense of purpose leads her to a constant desire to die because she knows that she will come back no matter what. This tension highlights the difficulty of integrating these aspects of the self, as the speaker vacillates between embracing her destructive impulses (animus) and confronting her suffering (anima).

Doctors in the poem, on the other hand, are bringing Lady Lazarus back to life. In doing so, they pursue their art, that is, the art of keeping people alive; yet she regards the doctor as an adversary because they are the ones who "saved" her from death, and liberation. The doctors surmise they have the right to decide whether this woman lives or dies, which leads them to feel hatred for these "parasites." The anima and animus are evident in Lady Lazarus as a result of the speaker's battle to balance internal conflicts and establish her own sense of self in the face of desired outcomes and pressure from others. While the speaker displays a fearsome persona from time to time, she sometimes becomes a more frail, feminine one throughout the poem, indicating the presence of both anima and animus forces within her. The speaker assumes a combative, almost masculine tone in the first stanza, calling herself "a walking miracle" and comparing herself to "a sort of god." However, she exhibits a more fragile side later on in the poem when she laments being "miserable and empty" and contrasts herself with a "dove" that has parted with its way. The masculine part of the psyche, animus, can be characterized by aggressiveness and wrath, as well as the speaker's longing for dominance and control in the poem. The anima, representing the feminine qualities within the psyche, can be associated with fragility and the craving for nourishment and protection.

Lady Lazarus comes to believe that the characters she hates are also 'the evil scum of the earth' since they did not give her free will. She describes this lack of free will by making a scream-ish impression "…Herr Doktor./...I am your.... The pure gold baby" (65-69). Then, the curse becomes unbearable, and the dark power seems to win. Meanwhile, the persona makes carnival references, causing her to remember her past with alarming flashbacks. Her trauma becomes understandable to the reader owing to her fragmented surroundings. Saving her from death is an explicit reference to the swimming accident in Plath's own life. She likens this try-to-revive scene to a mock striptease. Her clothes are unwrapped by the crowd, who want to rescue her and have to repeatedly call for her forcing her to perform metaphorically. They can see her hands, knees, skin, and bones (35). Lady Lazarus loses control of her body in this imagined scene. She is an object of spectacle for a hungry crowd. 'Being a doll for the others' is the most painful nightmare for her. This 'striptease' scene reminds the reader of the speaker's vulnerability and desire to disappear from the world.

A woman who has endured significant tragedy and suffering and nevertheless has a passionate resolve to live is the persona archetype. The Persona, which represents the social roles we play and the way we portray ourselves to others, in the same respect, is the archetype of our social mask. For individuals, there are two spaces of their personalities: inner and outer. The outer stands above the inner (Storr & Jung, 2013, p. 83). Jung states that the elements that determine the inner attitude are the inner psychological processes of the individual, while the outer attitude is determined by the roles assigned to individuals by collective life, that is, social life. The outer, thus, is the individual "persona" (ibid., p. 87). The speaker of the poem assumes several guises as she addresses her audience. She portrays herself as a performer, victim, and survivor in order to draw attention to the various social roles that our identities play. She talks about her experiences of repeatedly trying to

commit suicide and being saved each time, which made her feel like a type of "miracle" or "freak show" attraction. She also makes references to authors and historical individuals who have dealt with death and rebirth, such as the Holocaust survivor Anne Frank and the mythical Phoenix. This archetype is typified by the speaker's great drive and fortitude in the face of difficulty. In addition, the poem's use of allusions to death and rebirth infer that the speaker views herself as going through a transformation, similar to the mythological Phoenix emerging from the ashes. In its overall form, Lady Lazarus is a potent examination of the archetypal figure of a woman who has gone through tragedy and suffering but objects to letting it define her. Instead, she aspires to change herself and transcend her predicament.

Rising with Defiance: The Hero and The Trickster

The journey an individual takes to achieve greater understanding, and illumination is represented by the archetype of The Hero, which is the search for self-discovery and transformation. Typically, therefore, the Hero archetype has been linked to bravery, fortitude, and the capacity to overcome challenges. In Jungian psychology, the hero's journey often involves enduring significant and numerous struggles that are depicted as having epic proportions, involving life and death challenges (Iaccino, 1998, p. 138). Not just physical battles but also psychological and moral conflicts reflect the high stakes of the hero's journey in the transformative nature of her psychological development. In Lady Lazarus, the speaker exemplifies many of these traits. She battles mental illness and has made several suicide attempts, but she still fights and defies those who want her to fail. Her self-description is "eating men like air" (84). The frequent use of the numbers as in the phrases "I am only thirty" (20) and "This is Number Three" (22) alludes to a movement reaching an increased state of awareness, much to the three phases of the journey of a hero, which are separation, initiation, and return. (Campbell, 2004, pp. 45-227). The protagonist in the poem takes on the role of the hero who must overcome her own suffering and transform herself. However, the hero archetype is also associated with sacrifice and martyrdom, and this is where the poem and the game become more complicated. The speaker in Lady Lazarus seems to both celebrate and resent her own ability to survive. Corresponding to this, Lady Lazarus calls herself a "sort of walking miracle" and a "pebble" that "repeats" itself, implying that she is fed up with being brought back to life only to encounter the same difficulties repeatedly. The complex and dynamic nature of her journey on death and rebirth constantly, as well, makes her heroin of the possibility of transformation and renewal even in the face of death and destruction. However, the hero archetype in her is complex and multi-layered. The protagonist embodies both the courage and the sacrifice associated with this archetype, but she also struggles with the weight of her own identity and the expectations placed upon her by others.

The speaker's persona itself, moreover, is interpreted by Lady Lazarus as the Trickster archetype. This archetype of mischief and volatility represents the tumultuous and changeable parts of existence. Being a complex figure embodying both destructive and transformative qualities, the trickster often undergoes significant suffering or torment, which can contribute to his seemingly wicked or disruptive nature. This suffering might not always be literal; it can also symbolize internal psychological conflicts or societal rejection. This archetype's experiences of pain and torment contribute to his role as a catalyst for chaos and change, often causing disruption or destruction (Jung, 1991, p. 15). In challenging and dismantling established norms and structures, the trickster's behavior often defies societal expectations and conventional morality, resulting in renewal. As a complex figure that distinctively embodies the collective shadow, the Trickster defies conventional categories and norms, representing a fusion of opposites and embodying both the bestial and the divine (Avens, 1977, p. 207). Representing the chaotic elements that society tends to reject, she embodies both human and non-human qualities, blending the subhuman with the transhuman. This dual nature reflects the trickster's role in transcending ordinary boundaries and defying established

categories (Jung, 1991, p. 143). The trickster's body is often depicted as lacking cohesion, just as Lady Lazarus' phoenix attributes. This metaphoric physical disunity is the trickster's role in disrupting and questioning the status quo, as well as the different aspects of the self. She is illustrated as a performer who takes on several guises in an effort to discover who she really is. She continually questions and undermines her own sense of self ironically, utilizing black humor to deal with her inner anguish. By subverting social norms and expectations with her wit and guile, the speaker in this instance exemplifies the trickster archetype.

In addition to human beings, there is another interpretation of the trickster archetype in "Lady Lazarus," which is the recurring imagery of fire and rebirth. The speaker describes her personal process of self-discovery using the allegory of the phoenix, a mythical avian that reemerges from the remnants of its own destruction. The transforming power of death and rebirth is thus linked to the trickster. With 'a charge of the light brigade' and "a cake of soap" (76) as costumes, she displays herself as a performer. She mocks her audience by challenging them to see her demise and subsequent rebirth. The Trickster archetype is characterized by this fun and erratic behavior as a revolutionary force that defies conventional gender roles and customs, and the poem can also be read as a critique of a patriarchal culture. The speaker's defiance and rebellion against the expectations placed upon her can be seen as a form of trickster behavior, using humor and irony to expose the hypocrisy and oppression of the dominant culture. Broadly speaking, this archetype of Lady Lazarus creates a sense of tension and unease that challenges the reader's perceptions and expectations.

The poem demonstrates the reborn as a redemption because while the speaker initially considers ending her own life, she finally chooses to be a light in the lives of others. The old Lady Lazarus gives birth to a new Lady Lazarus, taking control of what she lost before. The idea of death and rebirth is a common motif in mythology and literature, representing the cycle of life and the process of transformation. The speaker's journey is marked by defiance of death and an assertion of power over her own fate. Her repeated resurrections can be seen as trials or ordeals, where she emerges each time with a renewed sense of identity and purpose, albeit one that is dark and vengeful. The title, "Lady Lazarus," is also an invocation of the biblical narrative of Lazarus, who was revived from death by Jesus; furthermore, the speaker's reference to the phoenix means she will be reborn as a strong, fully formed figure this time to fight not only for herself but for all women who are dealing with similar issues, before devouring men who oppress women. Instead of being consumed metaphorically, it is now her turn to consume, rising again to start a new life. It is not a loss, but a gift. Her deaths are birthdays. She thus is a trickster as a clever hero, which is described by Klapp (1954) as a type of hero characterized by their ability to outsmart opponents who are more powerful (Carroll, 1984, p. 106), whether that power comes from physical strength or other forms of dominance. Through her use of cunning to challenge societal forces that crave to dominate or diminish her, she defies expectations and transforms what is meant to annihilate her into a source of strength and empowerment. Like the clever hero, she turns her apparent weakness, her repeated "deaths," into a weapon, reclaiming freedom in a world that tries to control her. The theatrical presentation of her own suffering is not just a physical act but a symbolic one, where she outsmarts those who try to exploit or contain her. Each time she rises, she becomes stronger, turning the destructive forces against themselves and emerging more empowered.

Conclusion

Carl Jung's understanding of psychological evolution and individuation is about the journey toward becoming one's true self; however, Jung reminded us that achieving a complete personality is seen as an unattainable ideal, something that can never be perfectly realized because the human psyche is inherently multifaceted. He argues that ideals that help one recognize one's personal journey are the "signposts" rather than actual destinations. They point individuals in the direction of

development and understanding of themselves and life (Jung, 1970, p. 172). The journey toward wholeness and the complete realization of the self remains an ever-evolving process, just like Lady Lazarus coming back to life and living in it fully again and again. She embraces her own darkness, starting to discover her self-identity after she is reborn again. Within the persona of the poet, her dual reflections, feminine and masculine sides, the Trickster's cunning and unpredictable nature, and the Hero's growth and development bring to the fore thinking beyond conventional approaches, expanding their abilities and understanding. Carl Jung's significant formulation of human psychology thus is "described as the deepest layer of the psyche, containing the experiences, fears, memories and all cognitive perceptions shared by all human beings on earth" (Ekstrom, 2004, p. 662).

Facing Lady Lazarus' fears and the darker aspects of her psyche, while at the same time showing the potential for growth and transformation through overcoming certain challenges by becoming aware of these archetypes and integrating them into our conscious awareness, so that we can achieve greater wholeness and live more fulfilling lives. While these constituent parts of the psyche are present in the life of every human being, the poem recognizes that these archetypes, shaped by pre-human and human evolution, are inherited aspects of the human mind. Jung's idea that humans can achieve greater integrity and live more satisfying lives by becoming aware of these archetypes and integrating them into their conscious awareness can be more easily achieved by directly presenting the literary object to people and letting them experience it, which means inviting them into becoming aware of the components of the psyche and living what is presented as if it were their own life. Lady Lazarus just as each individual "represents the 'eternal man' or 'man as a species and thus has a share in all the movements of the collective unconscious" (Jung, 1959, p. 42).

That being said, "Lady Lazarus" uses archetypal themes to explore complex human experiences and the transformative power of confronting one's own inner darkness. Patterns of behavior in response to external stimuli are instinctive, so these archetypes are also instinctive and innate. These archetypes, deeply rooted in the collective unconscious, provide a framework through which the poem's speaker communicates universal truths about suffering, fortitude, and renewal. The title itself reconstructs the biblical figure of Lazarus, who was resurrected by Jesus, symbolizing rebirth and the cyclical nature of life and death. This behavior of human beings can be transferred through this poem with the help of the speaker and modeling of ideas with emotional overtones that shape how we perceive our environment, our thoughts, and our feelings. However, Plath's "Lady Lazarus" reclaims the archetypes, entwining them in a narrative of personal trauma and recovery. External forces cover this personal trauma, whether societal expectations or even death itself; therefore, the poem illustrates how archetypes influence not only individual behavior but also collective perceptions of identity shaped by collective minds. Furthermore, the speaker's defiance against patriarchal oppression embodies strength, determination and resistance, qualities that resonate across cultures and eras. Her voice, dripping with irony and anger, becomes a vehicle for challenging these oppressive forces that seek to define her, asserting autonomy over her own narrative. Thus, it can be depicted as an object symbolizing the various components of the psyche, represented as archetypal images within the collective unconscious (Gallagher, 2021, pp. 1-6). This representation goes beyond mere personal narrative; it stands as a testament to the tenacity and strength of the human spirit. By embodying these archetypes, it highlights the shared experiences and struggles that connect individuals, emphasizing the enduring nature of hope and the capacity for growth despite challenges.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors

References

Atre, S. (2011). The Feminine as Archetype. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 92, 151-193, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43941279.

Avens, R. (1977). The Image of the Devil in C. G. Jung's Psychology. *Journal of Religion and Health,* 16(3), 196-222, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27505406.

Burger, J. M. (2010). *Personality*. Wadsworth Publishing.

Campbell, J. (2004). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton University Press.

Carroll, M. P. (1984). The Trickster as Selfish-Buffoon and Culture Hero. *Ethos*, *12*(2), 105–131. http://www.jstor.org/stable/639961.

Dyne, S. V. (1983). Fueling the Phoenix Fire: The Manuscripts of Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus." *The Massachusetts Review*, 24(2), 395-410. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25089435.

Ekstrom, S.R. (2004). The mind beyond our immediate awareness: Freudian, Jungian, and cognitive models of the unconscious. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 49: 657–682. doi: 10.1111/j.0021-8774.2004.00494.x.

Fordham, F. (1991). *An Introduction to Jung's Psychology.* Penguin Books.

Gallagher, J. (2021). "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious and Complexes." *Academia.edu*. https://www.academia.edu/32947677/Archetypes_of_the_Collective_Unconscious_and_Complexes.

Greenwood, S. F. (1990). Émile Durkheim and C. G. Jung: Structuring a Transpersonal Sociology of Religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 29(4), 482-495, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1387313.

Iaccino, J. (1998*). Jungian reflections within the cinema a psychological analysis of sci-fi and fantasy archetypes.* Westport.

Jung, C. G. (1958). *Psyche and symbol: a selection from the writings of C. G. Jung.* In Cary Baynes and F. C. R. Hull (Trans.). Garden City Publishing.

Jung, C. G. (1959). *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. In Herbert Reid, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler (Eds.). Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1968a). "Jung and archetypes". *The collected works of C.G Jung*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1968b). "Approaching the Unconscious." In Carl Gustav JUNG et al. (Eds.), *Man and His Symbols.* New York: Dell Publishing Company.

Jung, C. G. (1970). *The development of personality*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.). Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1973). *The collected works. Volume 5, symbols of transformation*. In E. C. Hull (Trans.) Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1974). *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy.* In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.). Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1991). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.). Routledge.

Jung, C. G. (1993). *Psychology and Alchemy.* Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (2014). *Aion Researches in the Phenomenology of the Self.* Taylor & Francis.

Jung, C. G. (2017). *Psychological Types.* In R.F.C. Hull (Trans.). Routledge.

Klapp, O. E. (1954). "The Clever Hero." *Journal of American Folklore*. 67(263), 21-34.

Meadow, M. J. (1992). Archetypes and Patriarchy: Eliade and Jung. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 31(3),187-195, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27510694.

Meihuizen, N. (1992). Yeats, Jung and the Integration of Archetypes. *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 80, 101–116. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41801969.

Neumann, E. (1990). *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic.* C.G. Jung Foundation.

Plath, S. (1965). "Lady Lazarus." *Poetryfoundation.Org,* http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/178961.

Pridgeon, S. (2017). A woman's pilgrimage to herself through the mother complex: A Jungian reading of selected works by Sylvia Plath. Dissertation (M.A. (English)), University of the Free State.

Schwartz, S. E. (2011). *Sylvia Plath: A Split in the Mirror.* IU Libraries Journals.

Storr, A. & Jung, C. G. (2013). *The Essential Jung: Selected and introduced by Anthony Storr.* Princeton University Press.

von Franz, M. L. (1964). "The Process of Individuation" In Jung, Carl G. (Ed.) *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Anchor Press, 158–229.

Zweig, C. (2020). *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature.* Penguin Publishing Group.