

An Introduction to C.G. Jung's *Aion*

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People are experiencing the disrupting effects not only of an unsatisfactory childhood experience but also of an upheaval occasioned by a major cultural tradition. Edward Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*, p. 107.

A. Objectives

We will refer to Jung's text *Aion* and, as well, Edinger's commentary on it, shuttling frequently between the two books:

C. G. Jung, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (references are to paragraph numbers) and

Edward F. Edinger, *The Aion Lectures: Exploring the Self in C.G. Jung's Aion* (references are indicated by "ED" and are to page numbers).

I have listed a few particularly cogent quotes from *Aion*, and I have put these in *italics*.

I have used an underline to indicate a couple of important summary points.

At each of the Roman numeral chapter designations I have summarized the gist of the chapter rather than just repeat its title.

B. Introductory comments

the title *Aion*. ED 15-18
archetypal psychohistory. ED 9
the difficulty in reading *Aion*. ED 11f.
Jung's letter to Victor White concerning *Aion*. ED 13
note the text corrections. ED 194

The first four chapters of *Aion* are a review of Jungian fundamentals. We'll begin our study with chapter five.

C. The two fish

V. The self is a duality, images of Christ are singular. The self's duality plays out in history.

74 Christ lacks wholeness
76 Christ and the anti-Christ are two halves of a totality. Cf., 79
77 the coming of the anti-Christ is a psychological law
78 the self's duality plays out in history
115 reasserts point: the self "can only be described in antinomial terms."
126 "*when the individual remains undivided ...* "

VI. Fish symbolism. The self's duality plays out in history.

- 127 (summarize) Christ associated with fish symbolism. Cf., esp. 147
- 128 astrological connection behind Christ-fish association. ED 69f., 20, 79 (sums up the two-fish theme)
- 137 Joachim of Flora, d. 1202, declares the importance of Holy Ghost movement
 - 139 Holy Ghost movement "starts" 539 AD
 - 140 link of that movement with fish symbolism
 - 141 Holy Ghost movement was the precursor of secular times. Cf., 143
- 142 Pisces, Aquarius
- 148f. sums up the two-fish theme

VII. A summary of Nostradamus' prediction of the macro trends of Western spiritual development. We won't focus on this.

- 150 more on the two-fish theme
- 155f. Déesse Raison. ED 82

D. The second fish (our task)

VIII. The second fish and its transformation.

- 168 Two Messiahs. ED 91.
- 169 Two Messiahs united at the end of time.
- 170 *"the destruction ... "*
- 174 fish = *concupescentia*, savior. ED 93
- 178 Leviathan will be the Eucharist at the end of time (= food for the elect). ED 95f./98

IX. More on the two fish.

- 185 Leviathan and Behemoth described

E. The nature of the second fish

X. The fish in alchemy

- 195f. first reference to fish in alchemy is to a "jelly fish"
 - 197 characteristics of this "fish"
- 199 burns but gives no light
- 208 Jung's dream ED 106f.
- 209 *"hell is ... "* ED 108 (the relation between affect/fire and the self)
- 213-6 another reference to fish in alchemy, a "real" fish: the Cinedian fish. It has stones in it; when the stones are extracted they have healing powers. ED 111f.
- 217 another reference to fish is the *Echeneis remora*
- 218 skim text. ED 113f.
 - "you can't make ... "* ED 117
- 236-8 (point out) dream. ED 118-20

F. How to "catch" the second fish

XI. Continues "magnet" theme

- 239f. Echeneis is magnetic and the alchemist exerts a power on the fish ED 121
- 243f. magnet = aqua doctrinae. ED 123
- 248 (mention) another example of magnet/aqua doctrinae. ED 128f.
- 253 *"Man's consciousness ... "*
- 259 interpretation of magnet/aqua doctrinae/veritas

XII. The implications of "theoria" for:

- 268 (mention) science and religion
- 268 *"Faith lacks experience ... "*
- 270-7 (mention) religious creeds
- 272 *"in Africa ... "*
- 278-82 (mention) myth
- 281 *"the therapeutic character ... "*
- 283-6 (mention) Christianity

G. Other images with meaning similar to "magnets" —the discussion shifts from alchemy to Gnosticism—

XIII. Transition from "magnet" to "redeemer"

- 288 "He identifies three texts in Hippolytus' work that speak of a magnet." ED 139
- 288 first: four rivers flowing out of Eden. ED (139), 141
- 290 second: signs of the Father
- 291 attraction from "son" not "doctrine" or "water" ED 143, 142/4
- 292 third: ray of light. ED 144
- 293 (review) summary. ED 145
- 296f. ego/self

H. The nature of "what is caught"

- 306 introduction. ED 148
- 307&n Sophia. ED 148f.
- 308 (skim) demiurge or Anthropos
- 311 (skim) Naasene serpent
- 313 Hermes ("has an urge from below upwards"). Cf., 324-7. ED 151
- 314-20 (detour) sexual symbolism of original man. ED 152f.
- 323 (detour) God-image "seen" in nature. ED 154
- 328-31 the Moses quaternity. The basic idea here is that, for the Gnostics, salvation is a process that proceeded from a lower man, through human life, to a higher synthesis in the higher Adam. This is analogous to the understanding we have concerning the transformation of the "second" fish. ED 155-7 We'll return to the Moses quaternity in par. 360.

- 332 (skim) God who dwells in the flood (needs to be rescued by the ego)
- 333 (skim) the "perfect man" is a door or gate through which one goes to be reborn. ED 159
- 334 (skim) the Mumia of Paracelsus (a preserved mummy to be brought to life)
- 338 (skim) Proteus in the Odyssey
- 340 (skim) the point

I. More of the nature of "what is caught" —the phenomenology of the self—

XIV. A diagram of different levels of self imagery

This chapter is very involved. We will focus on Edinger's summary of the chapter's material in his book pp. 178-182 and compare it with the diagram I've provided. The goal of our discussion here is to acquaint you with Jung's broad argument. FYI I've summarized in a general way the main points below. We will not, however, go through the chapter item by item but rather focus in an overall fashion on the chapter's schema of the self.

- 347/50 the self is a "not I"
- 348f. the self in the Upanishads
- 351-57 review of the self concept
- 358 introduction to the quaternities to follow
- 359f. the first half of the Moses quaternity. Cf., earlier discussion, par. 328.
- 361-71 the second half of the Moses quaternity
 - 363 the cross-cousin marriage
- 372-76 the third quaternity
- 377 the fourth quaternity. Cf., 396-8
- 377-82 squaring the circle, vessel, alchemy
- 383-95 all four quaternities
- 402-407 (we'll do this) the four quaternities in history. ED. 186-7
- 408-11 cyclic nature of the four quaternities
- 412f. (we'll do this) physics, psychology

J. Conclusion

Conclude with Edinger on pages 192-3 concerning Pisces and Aquarius. The task for the future.