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Publisher: Routledge

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## Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujun20>

### The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla by Ivan Nastovic

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Published online: 25 Oct 2013.

To cite this article: Sanja Ivic (2013) The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla by Ivan Nastovic, Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche, 7:4, 48-55

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2013.840220>

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their own perspective. It may be the first time in which analysts and academics truly speak the same language and explore the same concern: the relation between their interest in Jung and how amplification, his version of “deep reading” has changed the color of their lives. The essays are distinguished not only for their quality and the usefulness of their insights, but also for the way in which each article complements and resonates with all the others. They provide a very encouraging overview of what drives the best of Jungian studies. Contributors include Paul Bishop, Betsy Cohen, George B. Hogenson, Thomas B. Kirsch, Shiuya Sara Liuh, Stanton Marlan, Susan Rowland, Mark Saban, Murray Stein, Craig Stephenson, and David Tacey.

**KEY WORDS**

amplification, Harold Bloom, close reading, Jung, deep reading, reading

## *The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla* by Ivan Nastovic

SANJA IVIC

Review of: Ivan Nastovic, *Arhetipski svet Nikole Tesle (The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla)*, Novi Sad: Prometej, 2010.

Nikola Tesla was one of the most important inventors of the twentieth century. He was born on July 10, 1856, in the Lika village of Smiljan and died on January 7, 1943, in New York. His mother Djuka Mandic was an inventor of household devices and his father Milutin Tesla was a Serbian Orthodox priest. Considered the father of the electric age, Tesla discovered wireless transmission of electrical energy, the laser beam, wireless communications, remote control, fluorescent light, robotics, Tesla's turbines, and vertical take-off aircraft:

A titan among scientists, Nikola Tesla invented the alternating current motor and thus released the sleeping giant of electricity. He harnessed the savage power of Niagara Falls, invented the telephone amplifier, the arc light, the Tesla coil. Of the two hundred and twelve patents granted him, one hundred and ten are in essential use today. (Beckhard 1959, 1)

Although much has been written about Nikola Tesla, his inventions have not been considered from an archetypal perspective. Tesla was strongly influenced by the archetype of light, light being an archetypal symbol of intellectual illumination, renewal, divine nature, enlightenment, and hope.<sup>1</sup> In his autobiography *My Inventions* (1919), Tesla states that he has always suffered from an affliction due to the appearance of images often accompanied by strong flashes of light. This experience strongly influenced Tesla's thoughts and actions. He visualized all his inventions before they became a reality by this light that burned within him. Tesla argues that everything that we see, read, and hear has the form of light particles. In an interview in 1899, Tesla said that the light was always on his side. For example, when he discovered the induction motor and rotating magnetic fields, his inspiration came from watching the sunset. He recited verses from Goethe's *Faust* as he watched the thousands of fires and thousands of colors. Tesla emphasized that he saw his invention in the sun. When interviewed in 1899, Tesla said he wanted to illuminate the whole earth and stated that there was enough electricity in the earth to create a second sun.

In his book *The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla*, Ivan Nastovic wants to differentiate the personal aspects of the unconscious from the archetypal ones that played a role in Tesla's life by distancing it from psychoanalysis

“which deals with research of the individual unconscious, i.e. what is solely personal” (2010, 179). It is the author’s belief that “analytical psychology allows us to comprehend what is to be found on the other side of the personal” (179). In the preface to *The Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla*, Nastovic describes the central aim of his book as that of remedying a gap left by previous studies on Tesla’s life and work. While a great deal of attention has been paid to interpreting Tesla’s personality and work, as yet no mature and comprehensive study has been undertaken of the archetypal world of Nikola Tesla, in other words, about all that was archetypal in Tesla’s personality and Tesla’s work.

Nastovic grasps Tesla’s archetypal world in light of the “depth-psychological approach.” The term *depth psychology* (*Tiefenpsychologie*) was coined by Eugen Bleuler, and it refers to psychoanalysis, that is, the psychology of the unconscious. Freud accepts this term, but does not mention that it was first described by Bleuler. The notion of “depth psychology” was broadened by Jung’s proposal of the “collective unconscious” (1917) and Szondi’s construct of the “familial unconscious” (1937). Nastovic argues that a unitary body of Freudian, Jungian, and Szondian theories is necessary in order to grasp fully the “unconscious” and explain the relation between psychoanalysis and other philosophical, social, political, and linguistic theories.

The author is skeptical about employing psychoanalysis in a reductionist manner to explain the creative process in art and science. He claims that too many psychoanalytic studies, beginning with Freud’s essays on art and culture, are reductionist and narrow. Freud saw creativity as a sublimation, a positive response to the frustrated libido, that is redirected toward creative, socially acceptable

activities. Although a psychoanalytic approach based on the individual unconscious may tell us something about the works of art, it cannot fully comprehend them, particularly, the extent to which archetypal patterns make their way to consciousness through personal experience. Relying on Jung’s analytical psychology, Nastovic argues that the secret of the capacity for creativity is a transcendent phenomenon. Jung rejects the Freudian notion that the creative process is based on repression. The literary, visual, or scientific text is often perceived as the symptom of neurosis. According to Jung:

The essence of a work of art is not to be found in the personal idiosyncrasies that creep into it—indeed, the more there are of them, the less it is a work of art—but in its rising above the personal and speaking from the mind and heart of the artist to the mind and heart of mankind. The personal aspect of art is a limitation and even a vice. Art that is only personal, or predominantly so, truly deserves to be treated as a neurosis. When the Freudian school advances the opinion that all artists are undeveloped personalities with marked infantile autoerotic traits, this judgment may be true of the artist as a man, but it is not applicable to the man as an artist. In this capacity he is neither autoerotic, nor heteroerotic, nor erotic in any sense. He is in the highest degree objective, impersonal, and even inhuman—or superhuman—for as an artist he is nothing but his work, and a human being. (1966, CW 15 ¶156)

According to Jung’s analytical psychology, the collective unconscious, with its archetypes and archetypal images, is the source of great works of art and significant scientific discoveries. Archetypes can be defined as primal patterns, or forms of experience and thought that represent general forms of perception and comprehension of human beings that shape

human relations, creation, choices, and destiny. Having both positive and negative aspects, they can represent both great creative and destructive potentials. Jung proposes that creative potency is the result of a relation between individual experience and innate archetypes. The great individuals who develop their creative potentials and produce innovations are able to interact with the world in a mature way, by maintaining contact with the Self, the source of wisdom. Jung did not aim at comprehending the work of art; he aimed at comprehending the creative process.

In his attempt to comprehend the archetypal world of Nikola Tesla, Nastovic first describes Tesla's personal myth, the importance of the archetype of light for him and his love for electricity. The archetype of light was strongly present in Tesla's personality. In the 1899 interview, Tesla said he was electricity in human form. According to Jung, this personal myth manifests in the life of the person as an expression of his or her own internal image (*sub specie aeternitatis*). Tesla's personal myth manifested in his innovations, as will be shown in what follows.

A number of elements from Tesla's life are hard to understand from the perspective of what is considered a "normal life." For instance, he eliminated romance and love from his life, devoting his life to science. He worked on perfecting his ability to visualize and memorize in order to achieve sensibility and unlock the mysteries of nature. Thus, Tesla was often misunderstood. As Nastovic emphasizes, the notion of normality is often described in psychiatry as the ability to adjust oneself to the social world. However, Tesla, who changed history by his invention of the alternating current induction motor, transcended and overcame social conventions, choosing a different path. Great individuals

who change the world, such as Tesla, cannot be measured from the standpoint of "normality." Those individuals can do much more than average men or women. Hence, living in accordance with social norms would be an obstacle for the development process of these individuals (that is, for their individuation process). Tesla claims:

The progressive development of man is vitally dependent on invention. It is the most important product of his creative brain. Its ultimate purpose is the complete mastery of mind over the material world, the harnessing of the forces of nature to human needs. This is the difficult task of the creator who is often misunderstood and unrewarded. But he finds ample compensation in the pleasing exercises of his powers and in the knowledge of being one of that exceptionally privileged class without whom the race would have long ago perished in the bitter struggle against pitiless elements. (Penner 1995)

Tesla was not given a credit for a number of his discoveries, which were ascribed to other scientists. Tesla was aware of this, but he found compensation in the power of his knowledge.

Nastovic discusses several archetypes and their role in forming Tesla's personality and growth: the archetype of light, the archetype of Great Mother, and the archetype of the white dove. According to Jung:

The impact of an archetype, whether it takes the form of immediate experience or is expressed through the spoken word, stirs us because it summons up a voice that is stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and

evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night. (Jung 1966, CW15 ¶82)

The archetype of light lies in Tesla's discovery of the rotating magnetic field. Tesla developed a light that was simpler and more economical and reliable than the previous one. The rotating magnetic field, one of Tesla's greatest discoveries, came to him while he was walking with his friend Szigeti through the city park in Budapest (in 1872), watching the sunset. At this point, Tesla was reciting lines from Goethe's *Faust*:

*The glow retreats, done is the day of toil;  
It yonder hastes, new fields of life exploring  
Ah, that no wing can lift me from the soil  
Upon its track to follow, follow soaring!*

...

*A glorious dream! though now the glories fade.  
Alas! the wings that lift the mind no aid  
Of wings to lift the body can bequeath me.*

(Goethe 2005, 34)

Suddenly, Tesla got the idea of the solution to the rotating magnetic field by drawing a diagram in the dirt in front of the bench on which he was sitting. The rotating magnetic field represents a basic principle in physics that underlies the polyphase alternating current and induction motor, making the universal transmission and distribution of electricity possible. Tesla designed the first hydroelectric power plant in Niagara Falls in 1875, which is considered the final victory of Tesla's alternating current. Nastovic argues that Tesla's discovery originated from the archetypal layer of the unconscious and an irrational part of Tesla's personality. From his early childhood, Tesla was afflicted with blinding flashes of light that appeared before his eyes. According to Nastovic, this experience was a manifestation of the archetype of light,

which anticipated Tesla's innovations. Nastovic emphasizes that not only was Tesla's ability to receive the images from that layer of psyche significant, but also the themes surrounding the images were relevant.<sup>2</sup> Tesla argued that there are two eyes: earthly and spiritual. He connected the spiritual eye and creation to his idea of light. According to Tesla, there are four laws of creation. The first law he saw in the dark particle that the mind cannot conceive or mathematically measure. According to Tesla, in this particle the whole universe enters:

The second law is the spreading of darkness that is the true nature of light, from the inconceivable and its transformation into the light. The third law is the necessity of the light to become the matter of light. The fourth law is: no beginning and no end, the three previous laws always exist and the creation is eternal. (Tesla 1899)

Tesla is known as the father of electricity. From his boyhood, Tesla had an interest in electricity, and it could be argued that he had almost intuitive understanding of how it worked. Later in his life, Tesla made light bulbs glow in his hand and shot sparks from his fingertips, without being burned. He invented the Tesla Light System, which is "a personal energy management system designed to donate electrons, recharge and permeate one's subtle energy bodies with compatible high frequency subtle energies" (Multiwave Oscillator Reviews 2011). He was trying to find discover how to preserve human energy. He argued that this energy had a form of light.

Nastovic also emphasizes the importance that the archetype of the Great Mother had for Tesla's life and work. In contrast to Freud's study, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood" (1910), in which Freud reduced the work of Leonardo down to the Mother complex and disregarded the



transpersonal level, Nastovic emphasizes that both Leonardo's and Tesla's relation to mother were of a transpersonal, archetypal nature. In his autobiography *My Inventions*, Tesla traces his inventions to his mother's influence on a personal level. Tesla's mother constructed and invented all kinds of tools and devices for the household. Nastovic emphasizes, however, that Tesla projected the archetype of the great, transpersonal mother onto his mother. The archetypal mother represents the source of creativity and stands behind the personal mother. The archetype of the Great Mother implies growth, wisdom, creativity, self-realization, fruition, fertility, and spiritual and emotional nourishment.<sup>3</sup> In the Hindu tradition, Kundalini<sup>4</sup> is perceived as the Divine Mother of all forms. It is the primordial cosmic energy in every individual. In India, Kundalini is personified as the Divine Mother: Shakti Ma, Kali Ma, and other goddesses.<sup>5</sup> This goddess, which represents the divine consciousness, is awakened by meditation and various esoteric practices such as Kundalini Yoga. Tesla compared the state of higher consciousness that he achieved by celibacy, imagination, and concentration to the Hindu concept of Kundalini, which represents the cosmic energy that arises in the human body (1899).

Nastovic reveals how Tesla fed and cared for several pigeons, especially for one of them—a beautiful white dove with brown-grey tips on her wings. Symbolically, the pigeon can represent many things: love, purity, harmlessness, the Great Mother, and sublimated eros. Tesla projected his anima onto the white dove. Here is what he told his biographer John O'Neill, who knew him very well:

Yes, I loved that pigeon, I loved her as a man loves a woman, and she loved me. When she was ill, I knew and understood; she came to my room, and I stayed beside her for days.

I nursed her back to health. That pigeon was the joy of my life. If she needed me, nothing else mattered. As long as I had her, there was a purpose in my life. (O'Neill 1944, 316)

In Nastovic's opinion, Tesla projected his anima first onto his mother and later onto the white dove. According to Jung, the anima is a significant factor because it is closely tied to the archetype of life and creation. According to O'Neill, Tesla loved this dove like it was a human being:

One night as I was lying in my bed in the dark solving problems, as usual, she flew in through the open window and stood on my desk. ( . . . ) As I looked at her I knew she wanted to tell me—she was dying. And then, as I got her message, there came a light from her eyes—powerful beams of light ( . . . ) It was a real light, a powerful, dazzling, blinding light, a light more intense than I had ever produced by the most powerful lamps in my laboratory. (1944, 317)

After the dove's death, Tesla's work was finished. Tesla said that something went out of his life. Up to that time Tesla was certain that he would complete his work, but when the dove died, his life lost purpose. Nastovic emphasizes that archetypal, not personal love toward the white dove was closely tied to Tesla's creative work. Jung describes the anima as the archetype of life itself (1964). Tesla's anima projected onto the white dove served, in the later phase of his life, as his guide to creative work and life. Tesla's personal life was subordinated to the transpersonal, archetypal world in himself, from which he drew his scientific ideas:

It is out of phenomena such as Tesla experienced when the dove flew out of the midnight darkness and into the blackness of his room and flooded it with blinding light, and the revelation that came to him out of the dazzling sun in the park at Budapest,

that the mysteries of religion are built.  
(1944, 317)

In the concluding chapters, Nastovic writes about the mysticism in Tesla's personality and creativity. He explains Tesla's work in light of Hillman's "acorn theory." This theory is based on the idea that human lives are formed by a particular image, just as the oak's destiny is contained in the acorn. Hillman develops the Jungian theme of archetypes into a psychological therapy based on ideas (not individuals). In the *Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* (1996), Hillman argues that soul enters in contact with archetypal images to recognize its own calling, which exists beyond contingent circumstances and social pressures. "Judging by this theory, Tesla was instructed by his *daemon* to enrich humanity with his discoveries, and especially with the discovery of the rotating magnetic field, the energetic nucleus of all his discoveries" (Nastovic 2010, 181).

The significance of Nastovic's book is in its recognizing and combining all three dimensions of the unconscious: individual, collective, and familial. He aimed to comprehend Tesla's life and work from these three perspectives. In this way, Ivan Nastovic avoided a one-sided approach based solely on the individual unconscious. This work represents an authentic contribution to understanding Nikola Tesla—the great individual whose discoveries influenced the twentieth century and the world in which we live today.

#### ENDNOTES

##### 1. Bauer notes:

This archetype can be found in various traditions: In the Hebrew tradition, eight thousand years ago, Enoch described "two very tall men, different than any I have seen in the lowlands. Their faces shone like the sun and their eyes burned like lamps." The ancient prophet Ezekiel is transported from

Chaldea to Jerusalem and back in an aerial chariot of God, operated by angels. Elijah also ascended in a fiery chariot and was gathered up "in a windstorm to the heavens." Five thousand years later, the prophet Daniel recorded: "... a man dressed in linen with a girdle of pure gold around his waist, with a face that shone like lightning, eyes that were like fiery torches, arms and legs gleaming of burnished bronze, and the sound of his voice was like the noise of the crowd." (...) In the Chinese tradition, the princess Miao Shan attains the light body and ascends to the immortal realms after being executed by her father, the emperor. She is thereafter known as Kuan Yin, the goddess of compassion who particularly assists those in poverty, those suffering from oppression, disease and war. In the Tibetan tradition, the book *Dzyan* speaks of the luminous sons who are the producers of form from no form. One leader shines forth as the sun. He is the blazing divine dragon serpent of wisdom. (...) In Christianity, the appearance of light forms are seen as, the Divine Mother, as the angels, and as Christ. These appearances have been recorded through history and particularly by the great artists who have influenced our experience of the divine forms. Mary is told she will become the mother of God by the angel Gabriel, who proclaims: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee and blessed is the fruit of thy womb—Jesus." The Christ rises again after three days in the form of light. (2011, 1)

##### 2. Tesla writes:

A long time ago, when I was a boy, I was afflicted with a singular trouble, which seems to have been due to an extraordinary excitability of the retina. It was the appearance of images, which, by their persistence, marred the vision of real objects and interfered with thought. When a word was said to me, the image of the object which it designated would appear vividly before my eyes, and many times it was impossible for me to tell whether the object I saw was real or not. This caused me great discomfort and anxiety, and I tried hard to free myself of the spell. But for a long time I tried in vain, and it was not, as I clearly recollect, until I was about twelve years old that

I succeeded for the first time, by an effort of the will, in banishing an image which presented itself. My happiness will never be as complete as it was then, but, unfortunately (as I thought at that time), the old trouble returned, and with it my anxiety. Here it was that the observations to which I refer began. I noted, namely, that whenever the image of an object appeared before my eyes I had seen something that reminded me of it. In the first instances I thought this to be purely accidental, but soon I convinced myself that it was not so. A visual impression, consciously or unconsciously received, invariably preceded the appearance of the image. Gradually the desire arose in me to find out, every time, what caused the images to appear, and the satisfaction of this desire soon became a necessity. The next observation I made was that, just as these images followed as a result of something I had seen, so also the thoughts which I conceived were suggested in like manner. Again, I experienced the same desire to locate the image which caused the thought, and this search for the original visual impression soon grew to be a second nature. My mind became automatic, as it were, and in the course of years of continued, almost unconscious performance, I acquired the ability of locating every time and, as a rule, instantly the visual impression which started the thought. (1900, 9)

3. From the website Myths-Dreams-Symbols: The Psychology of Dreams:

The Great Mother manifests itself in myth as a host of archaic images, as divine, ethereal and virginal. Commonly conceived of as a nature goddess, the recurrent theme of nature and motherly care go hand in hand. As the prominent feature of almost all early Indo-European societies, the mother archetype manifests itself in a host of deities and symbolism. Always ambivalent, the Great Mother is an archetype of feminine mystery and power who appears in forms as diverse as the queen of heaven and the witches prevalent in myth and folktale.

4. The serpent power of the goddess Kundalini gives life. Kundalini lies coiled in at the base of the spine.

5. Kundalini is the feminine power at the base of the spine that travels to unite with the masculine power at the top of the spine. This unification leads to higher awareness.

NOTE

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#### ABSTRACT

The *Archetypal World of Nikola Tesla* (2010), written by Prof. Dr. Ivan Nastovic, looks at the scientist Nikola Tesla in the light of the analytical psychology of C. G. Jung. Unlike psychoanalysis, which deals with research of the individual unconscious, that is, what is solely personal, Jung’s analytical psychology allows us to comprehend what is found on the other side of the personal. Nastovic discusses several archetypes that shaped Tesla’s world. He first points out the importance and the

function of the Great Mother archetype and Tesla’s white dove in order to fully understand his personality and his work. While introducing the reader to Tesla’s opus, Nastovic explains the archetype of light, strongly present in Tesla’s personality, the archetypal roots of Tesla’s discovery of the rotating magnetic field, and the mysticism of his personality and his creativity. He also looks at Nikola Tesla in light of Hillman’s acorn theory.

#### KEY WORDS

archetype, collective unconscious, creation, Great Mother, Jung, light, rotating magnetic field, Tesla, transpersonal, unconscious, white dove

## The Lost Cause A Jungian Critique of *The Master*

THOM F. CAVALLI

*Review of: The Master*, written, directed, and co-produced by Paul Thomas Anderson, 2012.

Great acting, good direction, excellent casting, lovely stage sets and wardrobe, wonderful photography, and even an interesting plot, fail to make Paul Thomas Anderson’s latest movie, *The Master*, a film worth seeing. The film takes us on a voyage that explores the inner landscape of three people who are driven by their passions, popularity, and power; unfortunately, they never confront these drives or in any appreciable way resolve them. Having listened to a recent interview on National Public Radio, I am convinced that Anderson had no firm idea what his movie was meant to convey, other than offering interesting portrayals of these three inscrutable characters.

The three main characters are Lancaster Dodd, Freddie Quell, and Peggy. Dodd boasts that he is a “writer, a doctor, a nuclear physicist, and a theoretical philosopher,”