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Jung's Typology Revisited

Valerie Andrews

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trope for the goal of philosophy: “to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.”

A further interpretive layer is suggested by the name of the ship painted on the side of the lifeboat. *Tsimtsum*, though it sounds vaguely Japanese, is actually a Lurianic cabbalistic term for God’s act of self-emptying that is necessary to create a finite world.¹ The term also has resonances of the feminine aspect of existence—the Shekinah. Pi as an adult is a professor of Cabbala, and his imposition of the name *Tsimtsum* onto the ship (and lifeboat) appears to have been the product of his later studies. The clear implication is that Pi’s “creative illness” did not end with the tiger’s exit. In fact, we understand now that Pi himself was part of the professor’s (and the author’s and the director’s) creative imagination at work on the deepest illness of all—our birth in human form. As we walk off with Richard Parker into the thrice-imagined Mexican jungle, we feel free to hold on, for a while, to the “better story.”

ENDNOTE

1. Thanks to Sunthar Visuvalingam who pointed this out to me.

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AL COLLINS, PhD, is a psychologist and Sanskritist living in Anchorage, Alaska, and Chicago. A psychotherapist, he published the book *Fatherson: A Self Psychology of the Archetypal Masculine* (1994), along with papers in Indology and Indian and Western depth psychological studies of classical and popular culture. With Elaine Molchanov, he edited the Fall 2013 issue of *Spring Journal* on Jung and India. *Correspondence: nasadasin@gmail.com*.

ABSTRACT

Director Ang Lee’s *Life of Pi* can be interpreted as an example of Henri Ellenberger’s “creative illness.” A boy lost at sea for 227 days imaginatively re-creates and works through the horror of his family’s death through a waking dream or vision that reframes brute reality and finds that God is “a better story.” Outer events and Pi’s inner experience are worked over at several levels of narration, resembling the multiple layers of embedded tales in Indian collections of stories such as those retold by Heinrich Zimmer. Obsessed with God in many forms, Pi wrestles with Her in cruel and benevolent incarnations, achieving initiation into wisdom that leads him to his true vocation as a student of Cabbalistic theology. In the end, Pi, and his companion, the Bengal tiger Richard Parker, are set free to live “happily ever after” in the world of God’s better story.

KEY WORDS

Cabbala, creative illness, embedded tale, framing, God, Goddess, Ang Lee, *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel, *nekyia*, story, tiger, Heinrich Zimmer

Jung’s Typology Revisited

VALERIE ANDREWS

Review of: Sally V. Keil, *To Live in the World as Ourselves*, Rhinebeck, NY: Four Directions Press, 2013.

The concept of introversion recently came into the mainstream with Susan Cain’s best-selling

book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Cannot Stop Talking* (2013), showing how little our culture tends to appreciate those who process their experiences inwardly. What *Quiet* has done for introversion, *To Live in the World as Ourselves* does for the entire scheme of Jung's typology. Extraversion, introversion, thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation, and the ongoing dynamics of psychological experience they represent, are all made clear in an accessible style that goes to the heart of Jung's pioneering concepts. Any analyst wanting to broach typology with an initiate would do well to start with this book, but experts, too, will find fresh insights into the different personality types, such as the feeling type's built-in "phony meter" that instantly detects inauthenticity, the intuitive's tendency to imagine the worst possible outcome, and the thinking type's penchant to assume too much responsibility for his or her own good.

A seasoned journalist, Sally Keil breaks this complex psychological system into digestible bites with abundant examples from popular culture—from Yo-Yo Ma to Spider-Man. Yet her book goes much deeper, serving as a wonderful corrective to the reductive way typology is often used today. Managers and human resource experts frequently use this system to stack committees with "ideal" types, for instance, or to determine whether a candidate is a good "job fit." Typology can be a way to label behavior and snap individual preferences onto a proscribed grid. For others, it can become an excuse for rejecting relationship or for clinging to a certain way of being. We have more to gain by approaching the topic as a living practice, as Jung originally conceived of it. This timely book is valuable in teaching readers to approach typology as Jung did, through careful observation of oneself and others, without the need for a pencil or a test.

Typology Since Jung

As a young psychiatrist, Jung turned to Freud to understand the complexities of human relationship. It was the pain and confusion he felt over their differences, as well as the clinical need to make married couples "plausible to each other," that led him to explore personality types (Jung 1971, CW 6, ¶533). In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung writes, "What with the sexual interpretation on the one hand and the power drive of dogma on the other I was led, over the years, to a consideration of the problem of typology. It was necessary to study the polarity and dynamics of the psyche" (1989, 155).

Psychological Types was first published in 1921, and Jung's insights were quickly quantified into tests and adapted by the fields of human resources, career coaching, organizational development, advertising, sales, and marketing. As early as the 1930s, analysts Horace Gray and Joseph Wheelwright, then at Stanford University Medical Center,¹ developed a preliminary type test. In 1942, Katharine Briggs Myers created the *Briggs-Myers Type Indicator*² aimed at women entering the wartime workforce. Today university students, job seekers, and managers from McKinsey to the State Department, with estimates ranging up to 50 million worldwide (Cunningham 2012), have been introduced to Jung's ideas through what is now called the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*. The MBTI Foundation warns that this instrument should not be used as a tool for hiring or for assigning different tasks,³ yet some employees nonetheless complain that the test is mandatory at their workplace (Garcia 2010), and others fear they will lose out on jobs or promotions as a result of their typology (Burnett 2013).

Very likely, the last thing Jung would have wanted was a system that could pigeonhole or “typecast” individuals while ignoring their complexity. In *Digesting Jung: Food for the Journey*, Toronto psychologist Daryl Sharp writes that although tests are widely used in organizational settings to classify people’s interests, attitudes, and behavior patterns

Jung did not develop his model of psychological types for this purpose. Rather than label people as this or that type, he sought simply to explain the differences between the ways we function and interact with our surroundings in order to promote a better understanding of human psychology in general, and one’s own way of seeing the world in particular. (2001, 16)

Sharp warns that typology isn’t static but is a tool for exploring one’s own growing edge. He adds: “Type tests concretize what is inherently variable, and thereby overlook the dynamic nature of the psyche” (2001, 18–19).

Concerned that existing type tests sometimes forced people to choose between opposing functions, in 1978, Jungian analysts June Singer and Mary Loomis developed the Singer Loomis Type Deployment Inventory (Loomis 1982).⁴ Noting that the goal of individuation was to develop other portions of the psyche, they developed an instrument that more accurately assessed the auxiliary functions (those in second or third place). I’ve used this inventory in my seminars for professional women dealing with career and life transition, and found it helpful in exploring each participant’s developmental arc.

Keil, too, sees typology as a developmental aid and shows readers how to access less familiar functions. In her hands, Jung’s system is “an inner technology” capable of illuminating everything that is evolving in our lives, from our personal calling and our daily

relationship interactions to the nature of our spiritual development (Keil 2013, 90). Like Sharp and Singer, she assumes that everyone is “four functional,” and encourages readers to round out and explore aspects of their experience while acknowledging their strengths and preferences.

Her descriptions of the four functions are evenhanded and eloquent. Here are some examples:

Born to anticipate, Intuitives see possibilities and consequences, con as well as pro. Foreboding is worth investigating, though it can degenerate into worrying. Much anxiety comes from allowing our Intuition function to look ahead without grounding it in the current situation, where there is always guidance if we pay attention. (Keil 2013, 188)

Inner pressure or tension and its release are as familiar to the Feeling process as questions and answers are to the Thinking process. (274)

Our Feeling function holds for us a code, written in our hearts, of kindness, honor and dignity . . . When we carry ourselves with dignity, from the Latin word for worth and worthiness, it communicates that we value ourselves as human beings. Dignity is uplifting and allays fear and distrust. (280)

For Thinking types in a Thinking-intense culture, keeping an awareness of the roles of the other functions, both in themselves and in the people around them, takes effort, imagination, determination and practice. But with the Thinking process stilled, a perceiving function of Sensation or Intuition can come to the fore to provide fresh input of impressions from their immediate environment or insights from their creative imagination. (233)

With Keil, every function and type gets an honored seat at the table, including our “inferior” function, which is compassionately reframed:

None of us likes to see ourselves as limited or inferior in anything, but it is a fact of psychological life that for us to be good at our First Function, the opposite function must get far less of our psychic energy and attention. No human being is made any differently. Even whole societies have their Fourth Functions. The Fourth Function is not the competent workhorse that the First function is, nor is it meant to be. But therein is a mystery. (2013, 318)

Some of the most recent creative thinking about typology comes from John Beebe who relates the eight functions or modes of consciousness to archetypal complexes, considering how one's personal typology relates to the hero/heroine, puer/puella, the mother/father image, the animus and anima, and the shadow (Beebe 2005). Keil's book serves as an introduction to this more sophisticated material, laying the groundwork for those who want to understand how typology can be used as a tool for integrity and wholeness. As Beebe provides bravura analysis of these eight modes of awareness, spurring others to consider their neurological basis (Thomson 2004), he writes as a thinking type, providing a stunning picture of the psyche's own permutations and internal cast of characters. Keil's insights spring from her intuitive feeling function, and her ability to speak to a wider audience through stories and scenarios, thus proving that there are as many ways to approach this topic as there are typologies.

Typology and Happiness

In a noteworthy epilogue to this book, San Diego Jungian analyst Robert A. Johnson writes of his experience as an introvert and a feeling type: "When I accepted my typology and my fate, I got happy. Everyone's unique

typology informs and shapes his or her life, as it has mine" (Keil 2013, 370). Certainly our typology is the one thing we cannot afford to get wrong or to deliberately override. If we do so, we risk depression, isolation, and repeated disappointment.

Yet different types resort to all manner of striving and contortion to "fit into" a culture that is predominantly extraverted-thinking, valuing a rational, organized, and outgoing personality. Keil observes: "Being a Feeling type can bring out a certain brand of heroism. [Feeling types] must release themselves from requirements to be different from who they are . . . and not to give over their powers of knowing what is real and true to others" (2013, 294).⁵ This is especially true in the workplace.

Organizations and professions that emphasize long-term planning may also prove frustrating for sensation types, who prefer dealing with the task in front of them and solving problems in real-time. "Sensation types have a special genius for being in the right place at the right time, without advance planning (and) the big things in their life just land at their feet," Keil notes. "They live opportunistically, not worrying too much about what they might be missing. Their life is full, and everything that is supposed to happen somehow does" (2013, 120).

In her chapter, "Relationships 101," Keil describes typology's influence on couples, friendships, and family interactions. Keil wrote the book at the urging of her stepchildren, "typologists" all, who wanted to understand more about themselves and their patterns of relationship. Children, she notes, refine their primary function by apprenticing to parents or siblings who share their way of being in the world. Yet she also shows how individuals can explore their inferior

function by studying family members who naturally excel at its unfamiliar tasks (2013, 339).

While Jung felt a deeper understanding of typology would make a husband and wife more “plausible” to each other, it also helps us build a stronger rapport with relatives, children, friends, and colleagues—anyone with whom we have a “daily partnership.” Keil provides simple guidelines, both for relating to different types and avoiding “type clashes.” Her examples are light-hearted and humorous, but useful:

- When going on an outing with an intuitive, bring the directions, pack lunch, and prepare for any changes in the weather—in other words, help out in the sensation department. Then be prepared to spend the day considering, “What if?”
- When dealing with a thinking type, don’t gush. Give reasons, concisely state your views, then allow time for your companion to “mull things over.” It also helps to be on time, to hear them out, and offer your credentials.
- When spending time with a sensation type, slow down, clean up, and don’t push the planning button. Be spontaneous—follow their lead and try the latest styles or the newest restaurant.
- When conversing with a feeling type, be *real*. Feeling types have “phony meters” and immediately see through any rationalizing, posing, and posturing. No need to try to “fix” them if they are suffering. (Their own feeling function will take care of that.)

Such practical advice helps the reader anticipate what another may need and bridge the gap.

The Mystery of the Fourth Function

When individuals grapple with their fourth function, they confront some of their most intractable problems. Yet viewing the undeveloped function negatively, with impatience or antagonism, leads to protracted frustration and misery. “When we understand its unique nature and treat it as the special realm and dynamic force it is, the Fourth Function shows us its very positive aspects,” Keil writes. “At first, tackling a Fourth Function task may feel like leaping into a void. But perseverance furthers. If we show up, without any expectations as to what is ‘supposed to’ happen or how it should be done, our open-mindedness is rewarded. Inspiration enters” (2013, 319).

Out of the blue come moments of consternation, but also of genius. An Intuitive can unexpectedly make a memorably nourishing and delicious meal, a Sensation type can come out with an insight that stuns his or her listeners, a Thinking type can make a gesture of valuing that brings a friend to tears, and a Feeling type writes the memo that explains a financial deal with such clarity that everyone now understands it and knows what to do. From out of the Fourth Function come startling results. We experience them as gifts. (320–321)

While we generally prefer the sense of comfort, control, and mastery that accompany our primary functions, the natural energy of growth points toward the unknown. The fourth function, in her view, is continually trying to foster our own personal evolution and holds the key to fulfilling the ground plan of our life—but it must be wooed as if it were a muse. That function responds only if approached steadily, slowly, and with great reverence. Keil advises:

It takes a certain bravery and inner strength to present oneself to the Unknown and to hold the tension of unknowing. But when we face a Fourth Function task, if we slow down and direct our attention to it, a partnership arises, and the task gets done. It is as if rather than “doing” your Fourth Function, it will “do it” through you . . . Be ready for surprises, delights, possibly even a revelation. (333)

The concept of nonaction, and allowing events to unfold, is usually anathema to the ego. Yet this is where the fourth function blossoms. Explored at the depth that Keil advocates, the fourth function is our best ally on the path toward wholeness.

Typology and Cultural Bias

This engaging book also returns us to Jung’s idea that a society neglects a particular function at its peril. Western civilization, Keil says, has come to overvalue and greatly overuse the thinking function, as thinking types know better than anyone. The complexities of human life are way beyond the ability of one function. Understanding our four functions, she believes, will allow us to use them more skillfully, “considerably alleviating the pain, turmoil, and exhaustion that touch almost everyone’s life.”⁶

“To approach the crisis of excessive materialism,” the author speculates

a real understanding of the Sensation Function is essential. To heal the desperation that haunts many relationships, we must look into the most endangered psychological function, the Feeling Function. Intuition must be brought into down-to-earth daily reality of finding our purpose and meaning. We think we know the Thinking Function all too well, but what about its natural and vital role in making our lives and culture viable?⁷

The wisdom of typology is more crucial today than ever before. We live in an open global society that has dropped traditional social signposts and pedigrees, yet requires us to interact with people of all different ages, countries, and education or social and financial backgrounds until there seems to be no common ground. All the more reason for developing a versatile 360-degree approach to dealing with the world, using all four functions—and learning to trust our own observations. An empirical understanding of typology, of what makes us human, offers us real hope for mutual understanding, collaboration, and cooperation.

ENDNOTES

1. Winer Foundation, www.winerfoundation.org.
2. Center for the Applications of Psychological Type, <http://www.capt.org/mbti-assessment/isabel-myers.htm>. See also *A Guide to the Isabel Briggs Myers Papers* (Library Staff 2011).
3. The Myers-Briggs Foundation, Ethical Guidelines, <http://www.myersbriggs.org/myers-and-briggs-foundation/ethical-use-of-the-mbti-instrument/ethical-guidelines.asp>.
4. This test is described in detail in Mary Loomis’s article in *The Journal of Analytical Psychology* (1982) and on the website of Moving Boundaries, Inc., the Oregon company that now owns and distributes the test (<http://www.movingboundaries.com/history.html>).
5. Keil capitalizes the four types to indicate that these are “archetypes of human behavior. They should be capitalized,” she said, “just like the Greek Gods.” From an interview with the author, April 29, 2014.
6. Personal interview with the author, June 15, 2014.
7. Written communication from the author, June 25, 2014.

NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

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VALERIE ANDREWS, BA, is a writer and seminar leader with a background in spiritual direction and Jungian psychology. She is the author of *A Passion for this Earth* (Harper 1990) and founder of Sacred Words: A Center for Healing Stories. In her work as a spiritual director and seminar leader, the reviewer has used the Singer-Loomis Type Deployment Inventory to help women in life transition identify their growing edge. *Correspondence: valwords@gmail.com*.

ABSTRACT

The reviewer describes Sally Keil's overview of Jung's system of typology and its importance in friendships, marriage, family dynamics, and the workplace. *To Live in the World as Ourselves* offers valuable tips on the role of typology in contemporary culture, recognizing one's own typological "blind spots," and minimizing conflict with other personality types. It also explores the link between understanding one's typology and achieving a fulfilling life, and the emergence of the fourth function and type as a function of ego consciousness.

KEY WORDS

breakthrough of the fourth function, conscious ego, extraversion, four functions—thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation, introversion, Jung, MBTI, mediator function, Singer-Loomis Type Deployment Inventory, typology, typology as a form of enlightenment