



# Jung Journal

## Culture & Psyche

ISSN: 1934-2039 (Print) 1934-2047 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujun20>

## Into the Woods with Jean Shinoda Bolen

Helen Marlo

To cite this article: Helen Marlo (2016) Into the Woods with Jean Shinoda Bolen, Jung Journal, 10:2, 97-125, DOI: [10.1080/19342039.2016.1159074](https://doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2016.1159074)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2016.1159074>



Published online: 16 May 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 10



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## INTERVIEW

### Into the Woods with Jean Shinoda Bolen

On Analysis, Activism, Artemis, and Archetypes

HELEN MARLO



Helen Marlo (left) and Jean Shinoda Bolen (right)

*The forest philosophers didn't go out into the forests in the beginning to try to find the self. They first live a full human life in the world and then comes the wood life. They are rooted in the world. They never shunned the individual social life, but gathered all the experience from their worldly existence, and then carried it into the wood. And that was the case in Buddha's own existence . . . I could say just as well that you could never attain the self without isolation; it is both being alone and in relationship.*

C. G. Jung, 1936

*Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the seminar given in 1934–1939*

On April 17, 2015, graced by the presence and spirit of the Marin Headlands, and awed by the majesty of the California redwoods, I wended my way to the home of Dr. Jean Shinoda Bolen. The tune “Children will Listen,” from Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s musical *Into the Woods*, came to mind. While ascending, descending, twisting, and turning through the hills of Marin County, my imagination played with its song lyrics, which affirm that going “into the woods” is inescapable, yet is where we are challenged to relearn what is known within, and is where we grope, cope, and hope—as we encounter the wolves and spells that line the path. How fitting that a musical—with an archetypal

theme of the journey, the path, the hunt—came to mind, as it's so resonant with Dr. Bolen's latest book, *Artemis: The Indomitable Spirit in Everywoman* (2014). Artemis, the Huntress, teaches, provides succor, and accompanies the individual who risks the journey "into the woods."

For decades, Dr. Bolen has led us "into the woods." She has given the world a lifetime of Artemis-inspired work, and through her example and writing, we can more fully understand and embrace the archetypal energy of Artemis within the psyche as well as its confluence with other archetypes, the analytic process, and humanitarian activism.

## On Artemis

**Helen Marlo (HM):** It is great to interview you, especially given the subject of your latest book, *Artemis: The Indomitable Spirit in Everywoman*. You have lived out and championed Artemis—an underrepresented or overlooked archetype that expresses, among many things, activism in women. Can you say a bit about the book and its central message?

**Jean Shinoda Bolen (JSB):** The key word in the title is "Indomitable," which means untamed or not able to be subdued. Artemis is the archetype active in the girl who survives abuse and neglect, who can see herself as a survivor rather than a victim. Like the goddess of the hunt and moon, she aims for a target or goal of her own, and with her lunar aspect, develops the capacity for reflection and perception of mystery. Egalitarian relationships with men and sisterhood are natural. This is the archetype of the activist and feminist. This archetype was liberated by the women's movement and is coming into its own now.

**HM:** What motivated you to write it now?

**JSB:** There was a reactivation of Artemis in my own psyche. I went to the United Nations (UN) in 2002 and have been going annually since then as an advocate for a UN World Conference on Women. I continue to be appalled at what I learn about: the trafficking of little girls, the use of rape as a weapon in conflicts, and, in many parts of the world, what a tragic and awful fate results from being born female. I was inspired by the indomitable spirit of girls and women who survive and work in the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that rescue and help. Artemis is their archetype. While I'm not on the frontlines, the intuitive feeling function that gives me empathy and serves me well in doing analysis, motivates my Artemis-activism. Writing the book began with telling the myth of Atalanta at the Jung Institute in Küsnacht (2012). In Jungian circles, the myth of Psyche, told by Erich Neumann in *Amor and Psyche* (1956), is described as *the* psychological development of the feminine. But it's a pattern that doesn't describe women whose leading archetypes are Artemis, Athena, and Hestia. I wanted this myth to become a counterpart to the Psyche myth in Jungian thought about women's psychology.

## On Being an Analyst

**HM:** You tell the story of Atalanta, this counterpart to Psyche in your recent book. I am curious to hear your thoughts, now, on analysis and your work as an analyst.

**JSB:** Your question makes me think about the people who are in analysis with me and what brought them into this work. I've a limited private practice with people who chose to see a Jungian analyst. They came when something was not right in themselves or their lives. They had anxiety, depressive thoughts, flatness, bad dreams, unhealthy preoccupations, tried prescribed medications that didn't help or other self-numbing activities or substances. I hear about difficult relationships, unfulfilling work, roles that have become rote. Sometimes, rather than feeling stuck, something happened that was more than the person could cope with, which was the reason to finally see an analyst. Some live with an inner judge who finds them inadequate; some keep busy to avoid emptiness. Joy is either in short supply or nonexistent.

I believe in individuation—people want to become who they were meant to be. There is an urge to grow, develop innate talents, and be creative. When life includes a spiritual, meaning-giving dimension, which may or may not seem to be religious, words such as “content,” “happy,” or “grateful” begin to be felt and expressed. I believe that each of us seeks to have meaning and purpose. Analysis is a way of finding that. In the beginning, meaning may come from fulfilling the expectations of parents, feeling worthy and loved in their eyes, meeting their needs, a pattern that may be transferred to someone else, but sooner or later, the cost is our own un-lived life.

Analysis is soul work—and psyche is personal and individual. When I consider the archetype of the Self, which Jung described as the central meaning-giving archetype, I think it can be used interchangeably with divinity, God, Goddess, Tao, Holy Spirit, All that Is, the Universe, Higher Power, or any name that means holy, sacred, and beyond what the human mind can fully grasp. As the center and source of meaning, both soul and ego find their bearings through the bond with the Self.

I think of ego as between Self and persona—intercessory between inner and outer worlds, the part of us that observes and learns, develops consciousness, and can make decisions that are compatible with our feelings and beliefs. Who we are inside and what others see from the outside are in harmony; we are doing what we love and being who we are. Lawrence LeShan in *Cancer as a Turning Point* (1989) said that each of us has our own song to sing. The task is to find it and sing it. LeShan worked with terminal cancer patients who went into long-term remissions after they could answer a question he asked (and do it): what can you imagine doing that would make you wake up in the morning looking forward to the day, and that evening, go to bed feeling “good tired”? Remembering what they once loved, and “who” they were then, was a beginning place.

Analysis is soul work for me and for the people in the analytic vessel with me. There is an alchemy in which both of us are affected. Their stories move me; my comments help them see patterns, the meaning of symbols in dreams and the validation of synchronicities. I use empathic imagination to put my perceptions together. It's using intuition, what I feel, deepened by Jung's concepts. In my practice, I see people getting in touch with feelings and meaning and moving into lives that have more juice, more creativity. This work is absolutely not value free. Inner life is important. Spiritual life is important. Creativity, however you define it, is important. Activism, in the broadest sense, is important—which means doing what matters to you, of speaking honestly, persevering in what you believe is yours to do, and trusting that the Self reveals itself when you are in alignment with your meaning.

**HM:** Your way of being expresses these values with those you work with—it is another kind of activism!

**JSB:** It is! I have a point of view. It's not value free. Integrity is also important.

**HM:** Yes. Let me ask you about integrity. What does that mean to you in the practice of analysis?

**JSB:** For me, integrity as an analyst begins with the Hippocratic underpinnings of my profession as a physician, psychiatrist, and then analyst; at least do no harm. The ethical codes of boundaries, of not exploiting, are part of having integrity. I also think it is important to believe I can help the person who comes for help. If I don't believe I can, then I am not the right person. Compassion and a capacity to find something to love in this person matters. I believe love is an essential ingredient in psychotherapy—love for the work and for the person. Then there is the reality that doing this work is a means of making a living. Letting a person go when it is right for them, means losing a source of income. Integrity means willingness to sacrifice what is personally beneficial to the therapist for the good of the client.

**HM:** What are your thoughts about proceeding in analysis when integrity is compromised? For example, the person is living out a shadowy dimension of an archetype or, perhaps, they are gripped by an intractable complex? The analyst may relate to it with the person in a timely, empathic, and attuned way—motivated by what often feels like the analyst's integrity—but that person may not be able to take it in and continues to suffer or inflicts suffering or leaves the analytic work.

**JSB:** Can you give me an example?

**HM:** A tragic example is coming to my mind. As I was driving over the Golden Gate Bridge to interview you, I thought of suicides on this bridge, as well as those that are happening at an alarmingly high rate in the San Francisco Bay Area, especially among high school students.

The family and cultural stories surrounding some of these suicides are heartbreaking. I am thinking of the family and cultural mythologies that embody some shadow aspects of Artemis and other myths. People internalize messages regaling achievement and contributing in a large and influential way to the world. However, these messages and mythologies may be at odds with one's self and can be highly motivated by a shadowy and ego-driven relationship to status, wealth, success, and recognition. The costs, especially to human connection and mental health, are dissociated from consciousness. The failure to face truths about the person's self contributes to the fatal losses. As Jung said, the shoe that fits one person pinches another. Many people are walking along this path with very pinched feet and much suffering!

The devil is in the details—soul-wrenching details that contribute to these suicides, that may be heard in analysis, but don't make the newspapers. Facing these factors consciously, through analysis, can expose these complexes that may evoke guilt, blame, shame, and result in loss. Yet if we, as analysts, do not face their harmfulness, then we fail to address profound pain and suffering, collectively and individually, and destructive cycles continue. There is something about integrity there.

**JSB:** This is where mythology can provide important insights. These stories that you're talking about resonate with the myth of Procrustes and his bed.

Travelers on the way to Athens—the center of power, culture, achievement—were setting out on the road toward success. On the way, you encountered Procrustes and his bed. If you were too short for the bed, you were stretched, as on a medieval rack, until you fit. If any part of you did not fit, whack! It was cut off. Whatever is pleasing to family and culture is often stretched thin; you become identified with your persona. That which is unwelcomed becomes a source of shame and is suppressed, cut off, consigned to the personal underworld. Whatever is unencouraged remains as undeveloped gifts or potentials within the underworld. In analysis, dis-membered parts and memories are remembered and archetypal sources of meaning are found.

The “road to Athens” is a broad road and what happens to people like the ones you’re talking about, whose families expected them to get into the best schools and look good socially, is that they are made to fit a particular mold. When children are made to feel that aspects of their personalities or what interests or matters to them is not acceptable, they devalue and disown these qualities. Whack!

I also described a different variation of this as “the abandoned child” in *Ring of Power* (1999), my interpretation of Richard Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*. I was describing the patriarchal family—the authoritarian father, the disempowered mother, and the abandoned child. These are figures that often show up in family dynamics, as well as in the inner lives of the young people who are accomplished and look good, but who feel worthless, end up anorexic or suicidal. If a child feels that his or her purpose is to fulfill the ambitions of a parent, then the child’s true self is abandoned. What they really would have preferred spending the day or their life doing, is cut off. Whomever they would rather be with is deemed unsuitable and disallowed. Everything that’s cut off is still alive in the personal underworld. Archetypes that the child may be more naturally aligned with, may not have a chance to be lived.

**HM:** This is a really interesting and important point, Jean. Archetypal energies and themes are not felt equally in every life. Some archetypal energies are more relevant or powerful for a particular individual. Artemis may be very important and fitting for one individual, whereas another archetypal energy may be more central to another. Your work has done so much to bring this to light.

**JSB:** Yes. So when a person comes into analysis, he or she finds what has been cut off and devalued. That can be a source of feeling, meaning, and personal individuation. The whole notion of the path is one that I use often in my talks and books: finding the path with heart, finding the path with soul, life as a labyrinthine path. Dante writes about waking to find himself in a dark wood in the midpoint of his life (Pinsky 1994), which I used and applied to myself in *Crossing to Avalon*. The dark wood or wilderness is where you can find yourself when you realize that you no longer are who you used to be. The role, the marriage, the profession, good health, may be over, now what? Analysis is where people leave the road to Athens and make their individual way.

**HM:** That describes it well.

**JSB:** This is not only what I teach, but what I’m listening for: who is there? Finding out what a person feels excited, angry, ashamed, or guilty for, is really important. Shame, especially, because it

has often been imposed. To be in that space of curiosity and wondering elicits psyche. When the analyst is genuinely interested, it's creative work.

I see people face to face; we sit in identical chairs; the Self is constellated. We are partners in this alchemical dialogue. The material is brought in by the analysand and worked on by both of us.

Fragments from my early reading and training stayed with me because they made good sense. In residency my teacher misquoted Jung but got the correct idea: in order for one person, the patient, to be affected by the work, the other person, the psychiatrist, would have to be affected. Psychotherapy is like a chemical reaction—one substance changes the other. This concept gave me permission to be moved, to be affected by, and to care about what happened to my patients. In a psychoanalytic training program, I was told to be a blank slate, not be invested in what happened to my people. I thought that I'm not really good at blank slates, anyway, but I will try. It didn't work well for me. I had contact with people like Joe Wheelwright who was being so real. Also he was obviously having fun. That had a big impact. The idea that I should be influenced by the work—that's what makes our work so alive. It is a growth experience for the analyst as well as the analysand. When you're in a vessel it is an I-thou relationship and the Self is present. It energizes us to be in that vessel.

Analysis as soul work takes place in a sacred space, a sanctuary, a *temenos*, or temple. I'm thinking about the Temple of Asklepius at Epidaurus. On the map of the extensive ruins, a round structure is marked *temenos*. It was not only round, but also multilayered; the floor had a basement underneath it in which snakes were once kept. The snake is a powerful symbol associated with dreams, healing, and transformation. The snake comes up from the unconscious or underworld into the upper world of consciousness.

**HM:** What an allegory for the work!

**JSB:** This is what we do. We're in a round. We are in a vessel—the snakes, the unconscious, the mediators between the upper world and lower world are underneath what we are doing. We are in this process together, and I am invoking the healing power of the Self by being attuned to soul—helped by the two-way wordless dialogue that goes on between us below the surface, that dreams often comment on. An early-in-analysis dream in which all that happens is that I am with the dreamer bodes well on how the work will go, especially when trust is an issue. This dream can be a response to a perceptive, inner child who is acutely attuned to whether I am trustworthy. Is me being me in the office who I am? Is my care genuine? Can I be trusted to not see them as bad, unlovable, or even recoil from them on hearing what was done to them or by them? That people have trusted me when they had no basis to do so, except it is true—is something that touches me every time it happens, and taught me that there is an archetype of a good parent or strong and loving mother or positive anima that exists in the psyche in the absence of prior experience of such figures. To experience this is to learn the living meaning of Jungian words such as “archetype,” “constellate,” “complexes.”

I trust an instinctual below-the-surface perceptiveness in people who come to see me, especially those who as children found the world was not safe. I think the inner child is attuned to a safe kind of love, which adults know as compassion that needs to be present in the vessel for



healing and new growth to happen. The walls of the container have to be strong, which are principles, ethical boundaries: to hold confidences, to not exploit, to hold the tension of opposites, to have integrity as a person and a professional. In depth work, it is not only the patient but also the analyst who can be unconscious of what the work is stirring, and who may look to a patient for unmet needs in his or her personal life, and whose own shadow may be clouding judgment. The alchemical reaction between the two goes both ways; the analyst is susceptible to being infected by elements in the psyche of the other. I think that if we consider depth work as sacred or soul work, the presence of the Self is what keeps both safe.

Depth analysis calls upon Asklepiion principles, which we are there to invoke—not to do the healing or fix people. Then we wait on the god or the Self or the Tao, as we do what we do. We listen and are affected, hear about dreams and synchronicities, make sense of patterns, say what we do, as we foster growth of an ego-Self axis. Our own old wounds bleed a little, when past sources of pain are remembered as we listen and feel what we are hearing. We do not have to tell how it is we also know—and that we do, participates in the alchemy through empathic listening. I have a huge painting that takes up a wall in my office; it is in very subtle colors and often is not noticed, it's a landscape with water in the foreground. A wood sculpture of a pelican in front of the painting appears almost a part of it on a table in my consultation space/temenos.



**Pelican, reminder of the Self,  
in Dr. Bolen's analytic office**

I bought the sculpture without either the painting or its symbology in mind. An Episcopalian priest in my practice noticed it and asked, "Did you know that the pelican is the only feminine symbol of Christ?" It was chosen because of the belief that she will wound herself with her beak, drawing blood to feed her young. It reminds me that the Self is present in this vessel.

Another metaphor for this work is how Michelangelo described his work as a sculptor. He saw the beautiful figures that would emerge through his work in the block of marble and chipped away until the figure was free and then seen by others. I think this describes the creative vision of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, whom I called the Alchemical Goddess. To see what is there before it comes into being, and to love it out—that is something that I think we do—what I do. I am expressive when people are doing well. I'm not withholding. I'm enthusiastic. I'm me. One thing that Joe

Wheelwright clearly talked about, was that we do our Jungian work through who we are—authentic and genuine. I trust that I cannot be a fake person with the people who are in my office. This is really an interesting discussion for me, about what goes on in the office, and why it works.

**HM:** Talk about loving it out! I think you're naming right now what is so distinctive about the work we do as analysts. This space is so sacred. It's not the same as the marital vessel, or the vessel of family. It is not necessarily more or less or better or worse—it is profoundly different—and that is one reason why it can be so transformative.



**JSB:** It is. It is special because we witness. I have been in practice since the '60s. And people return. I would see people finish a piece, then something may come up, and I'll see them again. It's like I'm their witness. I also know the meaning. Sometimes somebody comes in, or writes me now, to let me know what happened about something, because somewhere in their psyche, and in reality, there is somebody who knows what it means that this has happened to them. It's shared with me in the birthing of whatever it is to them, and what a privilege it is.

**HM:** A tremendous privilege!

**JSB:** I see this as spiritual practice for me. People keep assuming that I do Zen, or some spiritual practice regularly, and I don't. I walk in the woods when I can, but the spiritual practice really is fine-tuning the instrument who does the work. I have to be centered, receptive, just present. I can't be thinking about other things that are personal to me.

**HM:** That is spiritual work.

**JSB:** And things come up while I'm listening, and I can watch them. So it's a kind of meditation. I hold questions. When images or thoughts come up as I listen to this person, I wonder which should I mention? This is sort of a metaphor of this, that, or the other thing. If I'm just present for who comes in and what comes up, I have fifty minutes of spiritual practice with each person I see.

**HM:** That's a lot of spiritual practice.

**JSB:** It is.

**HM:** It is a gift that, for many of us, this vocation, of being an analyst, is seamless with, or in tandem with living a full, spiritual life. The commentator [David Brooks](#) recently wrote about having a "moral bucket list," where he referred to "resume virtues" versus "eulogy virtues" and emphasized the importance of the eulogy virtues that can be at odds with our resume virtues (2015). It is, I think, honorable that, as analysts, we live a professional life where the resume and eulogy virtues can be so compatible.

**JSB:** When I was younger, in practice, I recognized that I needed to be centered. I wasn't always, but my job was to sit in my chair before patients came in and pray to be centered. It's sort of like you don't operate with an unclean scalpel. You've got to have a clean field. Those are living metaphors for me about the nature of the work. The nature of the work is also that I laugh a lot in my practice.

**HM:** I love that. Yes, it doesn't always have to be dark, restrained, serious, and shadowy. That gets confused with depth—analysts and patients alike.

**JSB:** Right. A certain amount of real trauma needs to be shared during the course of the work, but if a person is invited to relive it, again and again, it can be wounding.

**HM:** That is an important issue with trauma and can be a real challenge, especially in working with adults who are living the good life; whose outer lives are intact; who are high functioning, yet whose inner worlds and lives behind closed doors, are quite ravaged with pain, suffering, and distress. Tell me more about how you work with that kind of situation.

**JSB:** One of the things that I've noticed in people in the second half of life, they are pretty well defended. They are also operating pretty well in the world, but it's amazing how many bad things happened to people who look like they had life pretty good. It's amazing how many women as girls were molested, suffered incest, or were raped. An amazing amount of real pain has been inflicted on people when they were vulnerable. Sometimes it first comes up through a dream image. Surprisingly, often, I've not heard about it right away when they began working with me.

**HM:** Perhaps that speaks to your point about how powerfully it is defended? And, I would add, its emergence may relate to being in relationship with someone who actually cares in an authentic and loving way about their life experiences—the dark and the light ones.

**JSB:** Yes. That feels right. It may be a couple of years before this trauma comes up, and then maybe it will recede, and then come up again more fully. I don't push for it. When it does come up, I feel it is up for me to receive it, with the feelings I have, that it really shouldn't have happened, but it did happen. And to listen, and have it pour out.

I'm just thinking now how there are people who have a need to go over things and the people around them don't want to hear it again. Part of my function is to listen to people grieve or speak about experiences that others in their lives may not be able to bear. For me, mythological parallels allow a deeper acceptance and understanding.

If I didn't have the depth of my archetypal thinking, I might be bored with the repetition, but if I understand why the pain may need many cycles before healing can take place, I can listen. I can listen to the pain of an abortion done years ago, or grief over the loss of a child in infancy, many years later, that has been spoken of many times, but still elicits tears. It is the personal experience of a woman who is in her depths. This is a woman sitting before me but also she is a grieving Demeter who was cut off from a deep source of meaning, as well as the loss of fetus or child, or the opportunity of being a mother—as she grieves, it is also all the mothers who have ever been in this situation—which is archetypal. The archetypes, more than anything, help me to be present.

**HM:** That the archetypes help you to be more present, more related in a personal way, is very interesting. I don't think I have heard it articulated quite in this way with appreciation for all the levels that the archetypal touches on. It goes down deep, but it also goes out wide. Personal and universal.

**JSB:** I have this intuitive intellectual feeling mind that wants to make sense, and when somebody brings it up again and again, I have to delve into my own knowledge base to understand why this is going on. The privilege of this work is that nothing goes to waste. I may not have had an experience like I'm hearing right now, but I have a piece of something that informs me I know something about that. That's another way of being really present—I do know something about that—then for me to realize,

I just had a piece of it. This person had something that was far worse, far longer, far whatever, and my own experience can help me to get it. I just keep learning along with the person I am working with.

**HM:** That's really lovely. I just flashed to T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1958). Arthur consults with Merlin about sadness. Merlin counsels him to keep learning because, he says, it's the one thing that never fails. I thought of that when you were talking about how you're continually learning and still energized by this work after all these years of being an analyst. You've used it actually to be more present—you are not battling with being disillusioned, hardened, bored, apathetic, or burnt out as an analyst. I wonder if that is part of the spirit that infuses the room and contributes to its power to heal.

**JSB:** Well, Terence, the Latin writer in the second century BCE, said, "I am a human, and I think nothing human is alien to me."

That is true. At some level, that's the archetypal level, that says, though I have led this life, when I read something about what life was at a certain time and place, I know it. Also assuming that nothing human is alien to me, maybe I haven't acted out on something, but who could say that it didn't happen to me because I wasn't in this awful situation?

**HM:** Right, exactly.

**JSB:** The thing that made me know that I would love this work came as a first-year resident at Langley Porter when I was assigned to the inpatient service, which was a locked ward. My patients were acutely psychotic people who had hallucinations, delusions, and had made suicide attempts. I found that I was comfortable with them, and perhaps because they didn't scare me, my ease put them at ease. I felt connected to a part of them that was overwhelmed by awful things the voices said about them, or the part that had irrational fears or felt sinful or had no reason to live. I felt their suffering and believed that I could form an alliance with a weakened ego, one that could be strengthened by trust and by the first effective antipsychotic drugs. I was fascinated by the tormenting imagery and source of voices. At UC and Pomona College, I was pre-med, and for a time, also a history major. I was moved by art and art history courses, medieval history, history of Western civilization. I never took a psychology course in college.

**HM:** So, the allure, your passion for the image, combined with history, gripped you?

**JSB:** Yes, the image, and the idea of an archetype. Why is it that we can tell when somebody is genuinely conveying something—not spinning a story? Why is it that we are affected by it, may feel it in our heart or body? Is it that there's something archetypal? Meaning that a depth experience is being conveyed in words, that resonates with something in us that recognizes it, which I think of as archetypal. This has parallels in music, art, and rituals that emerge from the archetypal level through someone with the ability to convey it. Then others will be touched and moved.

**HM:** Hitting that archetypal dimension whether that be in story, art, music, or relating does express something that is fundamentally and profoundly human.

**JSB:** Yes. This is really what I mean by how we do the work.

**HM:** I would like to talk more with you about that.

**JSB:** I was looking forward to our meeting today, being interviewed by another analyst. I don't usually get to speak about how I work with those who interview me. But we are circling around it. You're nodding as if you know what I speak of.

**HM:** Absolutely.

**JSB:** This sense of what the archetype is—it's an abstract idea, but it is also particular, real, and has form. When a patient comes with an archetypal dream, it is to be shared as a work of art. It truly is, and I go into my own image state. When a person tells me a dream, I am present, in the way I read fiction. It stirs me up. We go into an ordinary-looking office, and suddenly, someone comes with something that is like a work of art.

**HM:** It is interesting you referenced that it is like reading fiction for you. There have been studies on the relationship between fiction, empathy, and narcissism, indicating that people with higher empathy and lower narcissism read more fiction. They have the experience of staying connected to and being stirred by another's story.

**JSB:** Fascinating! That is what it is like for me. I experienced the profoundly human core with high-functioning everyday people as well as those with psychotic and suicidal ideation.

**HM:** I can relate. What you're talking about reminds me of a fantasy that a man, with psychosis, shared with me, one that repulses most people. He expressed wanting to eat my menstrual period. I was genuinely curious and inquired about it—what is human here? After meandering through his inner world and its myriad associations, we got to the heart of the matter. He explained that, if he ate my period, he would take away my ability to get pregnant, and then he would always be able to stay my baby.

**JSB:** Oh my goodness! How human!

**HM:** Yes, I have always loved Harry Stack Sullivan's quote (1966), "We are more human than otherwise." He, vulnerably, shared that I would leave him if I got pregnant because I would have another baby to love. We had to be together with that one, and we transformed it.

**JSB:** What a beautiful piece of work that was—your curiosity and acceptance of him and not being reactive negatively. This is part of the work we do. Sometimes we do beautiful work, and nobody sees it except us.

One of my pleasures has been seeing psychiatrists and helping them to trust being themselves. And countering the idea that the interpretation is everything. The Freudian influence in my generation was very strong and led to the idea that if you said the exact words at the right time, that would transform things. The idea of having to do finished work all the time, versus the work that is

much more akin to doing artwork, or clay work, where you are in a process, absorbed in the changes, where something emerges over time is more of what analysis is like for me. When I wrote the chapter on Aphrodite, as the alchemical goddess in *Goddesses in Everywoman* (1984/2014), my emphasis was on the archetype that brings together love and beauty, whatever the medium, which can apply to an artist, dancer, director, surgeon, or analyst.

**HM:** As we have been talking about beautiful work, I think of the other side. Can you say something about how, despite our focus on inner work and healing, and leading lives devoted to living more consciously, that personal complexes and institutional challenges can rise up so destructively?

**JSB:** I think when doing individuation work in the vessel of analysis, power can become a shadow area, for example, when an analyst assumes a power role. He or she becomes unaware of the effect on himself or herself or upon the person who is being judged or evaluated. Patriarchy is about hierarchy, power over those below; it's about institutions and maintaining institutional standards. This can lead analysts to identify with the institution and authority—falling into a power complex, with negative consequences.

**HM:** You came to a Candidates' meeting when I was in training and talked about this as part of the San Francisco Institute's history.

**JSB:** It's important to me to describe the situation that led to the formation of the Candidates' Organization and also to speak about a part of the history that involved an analyst, John Perry, a man who made positive contributions and also is infamous for his shadow.

When I entered the Institute, applicants were few and we were welcomed; we felt like young members of the family. This suddenly changed when a fellow candidate sued the Certifying Committee. Once that happened we all became suspect; applicants and candidates became scrutinized by wary analysts. The application process had been brief, about two-thirds of a page written and a meeting with an admissions committee.

The new form was an eleven-page intrusive document. The policy became that every candidate had to be evaluated every year. We were required to write about "our innermost feelings and thoughts" and had to appear annually before a committee of analysts we didn't know, who would be held responsible if a bad apple got by them. We were supposed to trust them in this charged and changed atmosphere of mistrust. Something felt wrong! This was when I wrote a letter to all the candidates about organizing a Candidates' Organization. My letter called for us to meet together at a retreat. There, we looked to the *I Ching* for insight and got "18. Ku/Work on What Has Been Spoiled (Decay)." We became the model for other Institutes, and the result of that effort is that it has led to more candidate inclusion in decisions, policies, and service on committees with analysts.

**HM:** And your story about John Perry?

**JSB:** This time I was a whistle-blower activist, again through a letter, this time to the San Francisco Jungian community after it seemed that everybody knew that one of our best-known and respected senior analysts, John Perry, had sexual relations with women patients, and nobody would do

anything about it. I had asked the Chair of the Ethics Committee to look into this and found he would not. He said I should talk to Perry, which I did. Perry said it was all in the past. I said, "I hope so—you know me, and if this isn't true, I'll have to do something about it."

Synchronicity confronted me with firsthand information that I couldn't ignore. A young woman in my seminar at UCSF spoke out about her sexual relationship with him, which had occurred after she had been under his care in a psychiatric facility. About the same time, a troubled consultee told me about a woman he was treating, who had been Perry's patient, then his lover, and not recovered from the violation of analysis, followed by abandonment.

After I wrote the open letter, John Perry called *me* before the Ethics Committee for having written it. The Committee decided to ask analysts and candidates for confidential information about what they knew, which validated what was far more than rumors. At the time Katherine Bradway was the Chair of the Ethics Committee. With care and concern for all involved, she summarized what then came to light. As I recall, there were eighteen reports from analysts and candidates in the Jungian community, about twelve women who had been his patients and sought therapy after a romantic/sexual relationship with him had ended. Later, information became available about actions taken by the Ethics Committee of the Northern California Psychiatric Society, and dismissal or resignation from the faculty at one of the Graduate Theological Union schools and UCSF Psychiatry Department. Sadness more than outrage was the prevailing feeling. When Perry explained and justified his actions, his blindness to the effect of his actions was obvious; he was urged to go into analysis, which he refused.

Katherine Bradway had her office in the same suite of offices in an old Victorian building as Perry's friend and colleague who knew nothing of Perry's shadow. Perry had been my analyst and in the intact *temenos* of my analysis with him, I felt respect, affection, and trust. In retrospect, I recalled the "Dorian Gray" dream in which Perry appeared dissolute, much as the painting in the novel, and could see it as metaphorically true. Following "the John Perry incident," the Ethics Committee, chaired by John Steinhelber, created the first ethical code for Jungian analysts, which became the model for other Jungian Institutes and the IAAP. Good came of it, but it was very tragic.

**HM:** How profoundly wounding and tragic! I can understand how these experiences fit with your spirit of activism.

## On Being an Author

**HM:** Let's transition to the story of your life as a best-selling author?

**JSB:** It all began with a talk I gave at a Jungian public lecture series. My topic was synchronicity, a word coined by Jung to describe acausal meaningful coincidences. His examples included telepathy, ESP, precognition, all examples that illustrated the coincidence of outer events with inner states. These were considered parapsychological or psychic events. Years before, my former husband, James Bolen, and I started *Psychic Magazine*, which he edited and published. I had met many of the most prominent researchers and mediums in this field.



Marie Cantlon, executive editor for Harper and Row, came to my lecture on synchronicity, and without knowing that we were married, had lunch with Jim and brought this up.

**HM:** Talk about synchronicity!

**JSB:** That was a synchronicity. I was greatly complimented, but I did not have time to even think about being an author at that time, with a beginning practice, husband, two toddlers, a house, and a dog. Several years later, I wondered if Marie Cantlon would remember me and still be interested, another synchronicity moved me to make the call and I found that the answer was yes.

**HM:** Did that lead to your book the *Tao of Psychology* (1979)?

**JSB:** Yes it did.

**HM:** How funny! It was about twenty years ago, Jean, that you and I first connected through that book. I was writing an article on synchronicity as a form of unconscious communication. I wrote to you and you graciously put me in touch with your materials and commented on my paper.

**JSB:** Really? So we both started out writing about synchronicity. Wow!

**HM:** I didn't think about it until just now. Your book was one of the very few resources at that time; there wasn't much written in a clinical way.

**JSB:** There wasn't. I couldn't use the word "synchronicity" in the title at the time. The editorial advice was that the title could be the *Tao of Psychology*. *Synchronicity and the Self* became the subtitle because "synchronicity" was too esoteric a word.

**HM:** Well, if that is not confirmation!

**JSB:** I was not a Taoist, and to make the connection between the Eastern concept of the Tao and Jung's synchronicity took a series of intuitive leaps and "help from the universe" in the form of stories and references that came just when they were needed. A pattern that is true for every one of my books. With the *Tao of Psychology*, I could link the feelings of grace that came with synchronistic experiences—say, the memory of a numinous experience at night under the milky way at Girl Scout summer camp—with Jung's concepts of the Self, synchronicity, and the Tao which was new.

That's how I got started as an author.

## On a Person(al) Note

**HM:** After all this talk of you as an analyst, psychiatrist, activist, and author, I am curious to hear a little bit more about who you are as a person.

**JSB:** Our training is that we don't speak much about ourselves.

**HM:** Exactly. But you have adeptly challenged many tenets from training!

**JSB:** Well, yes. The training—that’s part of it, but one of the things that I have found with writing is that it is important to speak about things that are personal only when how and what I know requires it. This was especially so for *Crossing to Avalon* (2004). After I finished writing that book, I wasn’t ready to have it go out in the world because it took place during a midlife transition that included leaving my marriage. It is a personal story that could only have happened and be told through living it, and yet my voice is that of a narrator-guide.

*Close to the Bone: Life-Threatening Illness as a Soul Journey* (2007) is the only book I’ve ever revised because AIDS had become a chronic disease instead of a terminal diagnosis. However the main reason for revising the book was to include the story of my son, Andy.

Andy was twenty-eight years old when he died in 2001. He certainly contributed to the sense that I already had—that life is a soul journey and that how we face life’s difficulties gives shape to who we are and who we become. If life is Earth School, Andy would have graduated *summa cum laude*. His diagnosis was Neurofibromatosis, Type 2, which meant he had nonmalignant tumors that could grow on any peripheral or cranial nerve. It always affects the auditory nerves, and his great gift was perfect pitch and music. He knew that this would make him deaf. He was about twelve when the “birth bump” on his forehead was removed and found to be a neurofibroma. At eighteen, a neurosurgeon removed the protective bone over the spinal cord in order to operate on the tumor that had already displaced the cord. As it grew, pressure from it could cause paralysis. As it turned out, he fell, and without the protective bone, his spinal cord was damaged, and in the last phase of his life he became paralyzed as well as deaf. It was remarkable how he responded to what he was given to bear, with grace and even humor. His spirit was Indomitable.

What I added to the end of the book told how author and friend Terry Tempest Williams, and his father, and others, heard from Andy after he died.

Years before, I was present at the moment of my father’s death. He looked at something I couldn’t see; his face just filled with joy. Then he was gone, in a nanosecond. I mean really, it was like “whoof.” His face was a testimony to not fear death, and his body without his soul was like threadbare discarded clothes that were no longer needed. I learned from my father that there was something to look forward to at the time of death, and then these messages came from my son.

I was also present when my son died. I had been sleeping on the sofa right over there, across from the hospital bed where he was, in this very room where we now sit. He woke me up before he left. His voice was impaired by damage to his nerves, so he could talk but it was sort of a loud whisper. With my “mommy antenna” up, if he needed something during the night, his whisper, “Mom” would wake me up—just like when the kids were little.

This time, I heard him call “Mom” loud and clear, in his old voice. The first thing that I recall was the thought, “How could he do that?” Then I went over to his bed, but this time was different. His eyes were closed, and he was breathing with great difficulty. He was taking the end-of-life breath. When I went over to turn up the light, he took his last breath and died.

**HM:** How very connected.

**JSB:** A number of people have had experiences with him after he died. That’s what I ended up writing about.

**HM:** I'm touched for you, Jean, in hearing this, also as a fellow mother. The mother-child bond is so profound, certainly in life but also, to your point and experience, in the afterlife.

**JSB:** Many parents lose a much younger child. It was a privilege to have him for the twenty-eight years he was here. Although outliving even a middle-aged child feels wrong, a reversal of the natural order.

Life is both a mystery and an adventure. I don't talk about my son much, though I wrote about him in *Close to the Bone*. Once in Ireland, I did talk about him in a room full of women. Soon they were sharing personal stories; there were many mothers whose children had died—many tragically or too soon.

I don't think of his death as tragic. He was amazing in so many ways, including when and how he left and then was heard from. His father was about to go into profound grief when he heard our son saying, "Hey dad, I'm okay. Tell mom I'm okay." Then he said such things as, "There are lots of people here, and there are lots of helpers." And "A lot of people are confused." Then he said, "I have a new body." Given his new body, he said, "I can eat anything I want to, and I don't even have to poop." This is how my son talked. Most people don't get that those are messages from the other side, but that's really convincing to me. It is how he talked.

**HM:** Do you think all the work that you have done with consciousness influenced you to experience this? I have wondered how that shapes the experience of synchronicity—since it is not an experience that is consciously experienced by all. I am not suggesting that synchronicity is for the special or gifted—that's antithetical to it being deeply human and potentially accessible to all. But, rather, I wonder if the gifts that come from the hard work of consciousness enlarge experience? It allows us to receive certain things that we might not otherwise be aware of—such as synchronicities. The experience of being intimately and spiritually connected, which is often felt with a synchronicity, may be one of the lasting things of being on this journey—a journey that is so very different than the road to Athens.

**JSB:** I think the wider aperture makes a huge difference.

I think about what I now know about ancestors, and every culture except ours assumes that ancestors care about what's happening here. I'm thinking, when I die, and if my daughter is still on this earth, that I would hover around until the people I care about are gone. Then maybe we can go on to whatever comes next. The idea of having angels is a cultural thing, across time, and the general rules seem to be that you have to ask—they don't impose. I feel my son Andy's presence, in a much more expanded space now than he was in the last period of his life. I have such a sense of the liminal, that the liminal is where everything interesting happens—the subtle energies of things.

**HM:** The subtle energies of things are so powerful.

## On Being a Mother

**HM:** Speaking of the energies of things, perhaps we could shift our energy to your work about women's development and the archetypes of women. Given your contributions to the psychology of women, I am curious about your experiences as a mother and professional—both are so profound.

**JSB:** One thing that I've written, that comes to mind immediately, is that the labor and delivery is what made me become a feminist.

**HM:** I am intrigued by your feelings about that. I have found birth and the birth process fascinating and profoundly influential. How did your own experience of labor and delivery shape you in becoming a feminist?

**JSB:** One factor about birth—it is so impersonal. The other, my accomplishments didn't matter.

**HM:** Birth doesn't discriminate. Your accomplishments did not matter, you mean, when it came down to having a baby?

**JSB:** Exactly. Giving birth is egoless. You are a woman giving birth, and this is hard—it is labor, it is painful. This is what women have done forever. This is what it was like for the women I saw in the general hospitals, and I am no different. I am like every woman who has ever given birth, only I'm safer than so many women. When I went through OBGYN residency, it was a male profession, and there was contempt for women within it. I heard comments like, "Well you should've kept your knees together." It's politically incorrect now. Professionals aren't saying these things anymore.

**HM:** So for you, then, to be humbled by giving birth, made you just like everyone else.

**JSB:** Yes, I was like everywoman who has ever given birth, and it was much harder than being a rotating intern at LA County Hospital—which was one of the hardest internships in the country. The Jungian perspective makes me appreciate that a birthing mother goes through a transformation, an initiation, really. Who she was before is no longer. Motherhood is a commitment that will last forever, and she could die in the process of giving birth.

**HM:** Yes, death, the opposite of birth, is ever present, concretely and symbolically. Although improvements in medical care, especially in the United States and Western countries, have reduced fetal and maternal deaths, death is still a risk, and there are even more psychological and symbolic deaths associated with birth. From my perinatal work, I see many women who are not conscious of these powerful opposites—the interplay between pregnancy, birth, and death. Riveted by the archetypal experience of birth, their challenges often revolve around the concrete or symbolic deaths that occur with birth.

Captured in art, for example, Frida Kahlo's painting *My Birth* (1932) provocatively depicts Kahlo's imagination of her birth, which included the feeling of having given birth to herself. Painted shortly after a miscarriage and following the death of her mother, it shows a large head of Frida emerging from her mother's womb into a pool of blood. Her mother's head is covered by a sheet while the weeping face of the *Virgin of Sorrows* is above the bed. Intimating archetypal and developmental themes, the painting elicits wonder about Kahlo and the complexity of her birth story, both as a daughter and an adult woman.

Speaking more generally and collectively, is Gustav Klimt's *Death and Life* (1910), where we see the grim reaper, on the left, who is gazing to the right, upon all circles and generations of life,

from newborn to grandmother, with a menacing grin. Quite symbolically, the symbol of death, omnipresent on the painting's left side, is seemingly rivaled by the fullness, vibrancy, prominence, and diversity of life, in all her forms, colorfully painted on the right.

**JSB:** Yes, it's not just metaphor that the old self is dead and a new self will come. When the baby goes under the pubic bone of the mother, both lives are in danger. Labor progresses until the baby emerges, or one or both dies in the process. Without good obstetrical care, pregnancy can be life-threatening and fatal.

**HM:** Yes, Africa has the highest maternal mortality rate with approximately one in sixteen women dying in labor.

**JSB:** Incredible. Awful. Unnecessary. It's really awesome to birth new life into this world, to be the mother of a newborn, and it is also awesome to deliver babies out of the mother, which I loved to do. I took extra OB rotations at John Wesley Hospital, an outpost of LA County Hospital, where it wasn't rush, rush, rush. There was time to take care of the woman in labor and help the baby come out, with minimal trauma. The emergence of a new baby is archetypal. This is what the archetype is about. People die, people are born—it is archetypal. You are present at something that is deeply human and real.

**HM:** It is such a profound intersection of the archetypal and the developmental. It is all right there.

**JSB:** Truly—very much so. Again, mystery—and so very awesome. This is what archetypal experience is. I have this archetypal experience, and it is profound. I am now forever appreciative about what women's experiences really are about. Delivering babies is an aspect of Artemis as the archetype of the midwife.

Being the mother from whom the baby emerges and then nursing the infant was another archetypal experience. In the middle of the night, everyone else was asleep, with my daughter at my breast, and me, in a rocking chair. Together we were enacting the Madonna and Child.

Being a Jungian—having the concept of archetypes and living into them amplifies experience. Archetypal and meaningful moments stay in memory. Motherhood did this for me. It also made me discard concepts that didn't fit: "What is this business about tabula rasa?" Forget it! Newborns and children are not blank slates upon which parents draw.

I remember when Melody, my first child, got fussy in the afternoon, and I had to figure out what could be wrong. I thought, thank goodness, I've worked with schizophrenic patients! I assume that distressful behavior made sense from their point of view, and it was up to me to figure this out and to help them—which is just like being with infants. How can you be a mother without having worked with schizophrenics first?

(laughter)

**HM:** I completely get that one! I felt the same way and recall how very meaningful my training and work with psychotic patients was upon becoming a mother. Can you imagine training in psychosis

being part of new parenting classes!? It seems that being able to know, tolerate, and experience the so-called irrational can really help when having children.

**JSB:** One of the things I did with Melody was take her to bed and curl up around her, so that she could hear my heart and be contained. Thinking that she used to be inside me, held tightly in the womb, with the sound of my heart, and it worked.

**HM:** From your heart to hers! And now there is much more we understand about development and early infancy that affirms your instincts here.

**JSB:** That is part of the wisdom of the archetypal world.

**HM:** Yes, it preceded and existed before science. So here you are, being author, activist, analyst, wife, and mother—and you’ve been so prolific. How did you manage and have space? How could you mother attentively and maintain your professional life—to have space for that creative spirit, while being prolific?

**JSB:** It helped that my husband and I shared in household and childcare and both of us worked. I could hire help. I think it was very useful to be a psychiatrist-mother in interviewing who you’re going to leave your children with. I ended up with two superb, past-midlife women who had raised children. They loved what they did, loved my children. I wasn’t working full-time either. It’s privilege, a real privilege, not having to work full-time. That really softens the conflicts and stresses.

**HM:** I appreciate your clarity and honesty—it is, indeed, a real privilege, not having to work full-time—to have the choice to stay at home or work part-time—to have that kind of support. That has such an impact on a woman’s life and personal development as well as her capacity to play and enjoy motherhood and engage with her children with less conflict.

**JSB:** The other thing around making the decision to write had to do with waking up early in the morning. I was active in the American Psychiatric Association and knew two women psychiatrists with families who wrote a lot of articles. I wondered how they found the time and asked one of them. And she said, “Oh, I have insomnia.” So I thought, maybe I don’t need eight hours of sleep. My mother never seemed to need eight hours. I bet if I got up early, I could find time.

So I set my mind to waking up early. Then the whole house was quiet. I could get into writing. When the household moved into our morning routine, I’d shift into being mom. Taking Wednesdays off helped. I had hours to myself in the middle of the day.

I began writing with the intention that I didn’t want to go to another room and close the door. I wanted to be accessible to my kids and did my writing on the dining room table. I learned I could say, “Wait till I finish the sentence.” I wanted to be interruptible. Jungian author Irene Claremont de Castillejo, in *Knowing Woman* (1990), described two kinds of consciousness: focused consciousness and diffuse awareness. Focused consciousness is what I was good at.



With Artemis as my active archetype, I had to learn to shift out of it to be an attentive mother. Whatever I was focused on, I really focused on!

When I was a child, my mother said that I could get so engrossed in the book that it was like she almost had to knock to get my attention. The downside of focus is to get irritable at being interrupted. I didn't want to be that way with my kids. Intention helps. I learned to shift from focus to being attentive and welcoming of them when I wrote. They were also old enough to wait a minute or so.

**HM:** That is great—how you understood and consciously related to this part of your nature, this archetype as it expressed itself in you. That is an excellent point about the charge and need around focus when one is an Artemis type. Often, that longing for focus, to become engrossed, is put aside and becomes a source of conflict and distress—the creative spirit that wants to produce gets restless.

**JSB:** That is right and that is exactly what I did. I made the choice that I wanted to be here and learn how to be interrupted. When I was interrupted, I wanted to be able to just totally focus on what Melody or Andy wanted of me. Then I would go back to what I was doing. Having the concept was very helpful. To be able to write, I needed to have the desire and had to find the time: maybe I didn't need as much sleep as I thought I did; maybe I could shift focus gracefully.

This shift in focus and the effect on others is helpful to know about, especially when a stay-at-home wife and mother shifts her focus. Common scenario: kids spend most of day in school; husband is supportive; wife wants to go back to college or graduate school and be somebody. Everybody says, we support you, but they keep bothering her when she's writing the paper or reading for the exam. If she's organized by the energy of one of the relationship goddesses, she's already feeling guilty and stressed. Then just as she's learning how to focus, someone wants her attention, and her irritation shows. She feels unsupported and they feel neglected when, all that's happening is that she is withdrawing diffuse awareness from everybody, and subliminally, those around her are reacting.

**HM:** Yes, that she is now focusing. And for those women who are not as identified with Artemis, this requires personal development. When this archetype doesn't shape a woman's life, it seems this kind of woman is more likely to have the partner who supports her and the family while she supports her partner and the family through her work at home; and she is more likely to go back to school or pursue other paths later in her life than the women who are more identified with Artemis.

**JSB:** Yes. The desire to focus emerges later. And now, she's focusing, and now, at this stage of her life, people feel it.

**HM:** Of course, her libido is manifesting somewhere else.

**JSB:** Somewhere else, and they're used to having her tuning in to them. So everybody interrupts. I did an experiment when my kids were about five and seven: they were fine as long as I was doing housewife things. They were off playing with each other and I would think, "Okay, what if I just

focus? What's going to happen?" I'm in another room mind you, and pretty soon they would be coming in to interrupt me.

**HM:** I know this one well. What do you think that is about?

**JSB:** I think they feel a shift in subtle energy, and if you were in the jungle and your mommy forgot about you, you'd be in trouble. Mother energy is protective. It is about her awareness of what's going on with her child and her immediate response to signs of danger. I think that children sense when you are not paying attention and feel anxiety. They interrupt what you are focused on to get reassurance that mom's there. People know when you are withdrawing energy. They'll take it personally. The little people don't know; the big people—like one's partner—need to understand the concept. It helps: it's not personal. She is not withdrawing from you; she is learning to focus. She also is developing the Artemis and Athena archetypes that are not relationship oriented.

**HM:** Often, I see so much darkness at this phase of life, perhaps because a woman can't develop or express this creative Artemis energy that is part of her Self. She is often not aware something is stirring—trying to be born in her—that requires hard work for development. Then if there are economic or real-life limitations, responsibilities, and stressors, it compounds and threatens this growth even more. The extent of her individuation and development of her Self/self are revealed. It can get perverted, almost, into having the best birthday party for one's child rather than exercising the kind of creative energy that fulfills one's soul.

**JSB:** When women's competitive energies are directed at orchestrating the social and academic lives of their children, everyone suffers.

**HM:** Yes. It seems this could reflect women who are struggling to have a relationship with disavowed Artemis energy, although it may also reflect women who feel or wish they were an Artemis type, but really are not. That is more like who they partner with or marry—an Apollo—who has the drive, which manifests in outer success and achievement; who enables a lifestyle or standard of living that provides many comforts. But it comes with costs, including to the self, that become challenging—their partner gets so much attention and has this seemingly full or meaningful life and all this recognition so the woman may try to be an Artemis. Could it be a desire and a failure to accept one's archetypal nature? Sometimes I hear it manifest when a woman talks about her partner's work or accomplishments as "our company" or "our accomplishments," or when some stressor in her partner's life is usurped as a stressor that is happening to her directly. It's as if her quest for meaning is channeled in a painfully limited, unconscious, and misdirected way, which is detrimental to her and others.

**JSB:** If your strong archetypes are those that the culture rewards, it's a good time for you. In the 1950s, when America's birth rate equaled India's for the first time, it was wonderful if you were a Demeter or Hera type. This was the era of the suburban housewife, with her husband in the gray flannel suit, the house in the suburbs, and several children. Then Betty Freidan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) about the unhappiness of women who had what should have made

them happy and weren't. She described it as "the problem with no name." They fulfilled roles, but did not have a life that fulfilled them. Demeter-oriented and Hera-oriented women were doing fine. Athena, Artemis, and Aphrodite types were not. There was no place for these archetypes.

In the mid-sixties and seventies, the women's movement and birth control came along, and expectations changed. It was an era of egalitarian relationships and the sexual revolution. Women were now supposed to go to college, have a career, and make a living. Wife and mother were no longer idealized roles. Now women who could thrive in traditional roles were out of step.

Many women in the Artemis-Athena mode are opting not to have children because there is choice about where to put one's energies now. Some of them have children and turn their caretaking over to nannies or househusbands. Some discover that motherhood is very satisfying. Others try to become pregnant late in their childbearing years and don't succeed. While not having a child frees a woman's energies up to do other things, not being able to have a child can become a source of sorrow. Then there are women who find, only after bearing a child, that they aren't cut out for this.

**HM:** Those situations are complex and often not talked about. Many harshly judge when a woman has a baby and she is not cut out for motherhood. The shadow here can be painful and really ugly to address. What are your thoughts about addressing shadow here?

**JSB:** I think of Medea who killed her children when Jason abandoned her and Hera who rejected Hephaestus when he was born with a clubfoot. Wife and mother go together in traditional cultures, but they are two distinct archetypes. If Hera is the archetype, it is her husband that matters. She will have children for him and neglect them or stand by if he abuses them.

Artemis, however, is a protector of the young and has the mother bear as one of her positive symbols. She was quick to respond to save or to punish. Carried to an extreme, she is symbolized by the Calydon Boar she unleashed—it manifests as indiscriminate destructive rage at being disrespected.

In the early phase of the women's movement, the shadow elements of Artemis came out in the intolerant political correctness women subjected each other to—the "are you feminist enough?"—and dismissing men as male chauvinist pigs. It was not a very pretty scene because an unprocessed archetype was erupting into the culture.

But because of the Women's Movement, there are more possibilities—more archetypes that can be expressed and lived out. Relationship forms have changed; men and women can be good friends. The patriarchal marriage with the little woman and the children is no longer the ideal and is replaced by the egalitarian couple. Both have problems. Sometimes egalitarian becomes too much brother-sister, and without Aphrodite, the union becomes sexless or competitive. Same-sex marriages ended the assumption that marriage had to be between a man and a woman, and our era allows much more fluidity in roles—more possibilities of living out and expressing the complexity within us.

We've been speaking about goddess archetypes in women, but they exist in men as well, just as the male archetypes exist in women. Most women find one or more of the male archetypes active in them, as men find the same is true about the female archetypes. The active ones are part of our inner "committee."

Tensions within arise when strong archetypes are in conflict. Holding the tension of such opposites is a beautiful Jungian concept that has within it a trust that, rather than it having to be an either/or choice, that in holding the tension, a resolution can emerge by the activation of the transcendent function.

**HM:** You work with the tension of the inner committee through the transcendent function.

**JSB:** Yes, and the tension can also be caused by the shadow of an archetype, and between it and the ego. The destructive anger of the Calydon Boar feels justifiable to the woman who has been taken over by this until she can recognize positive and negative aspects of “her” archetype. In the analytic container, where the positive aspects of Artemis are valued, the idea of shadow can be absorbed and its origins in her life explored. In doing so, a transformation takes place. True to the myth of Atalanta who stood her ground and shot the boar, activism can be an inner confrontation as well as an outer one.

## On Activism and Being at the United Nations

**HM:** In speaking of activism, and your life as an analyst-activist, what are your thoughts on the International Association of Analytical Psychology Conferences on Jungian analysis and activism? The second one, this year, in Italy, sounds very rich and exciting and is titled “Analysis and Activism: Social and Political Contributions of Jungian Psychology.”

**JSB:** I also was intrigued—“analysis and activism” usually don’t go together. A whole conference on the subject? There are many Jungian analyst-activists, like me? I have decided to go and will be on a panel.

**HM:** It is interesting because it has always felt to me that activism *was* part of a Jungian sensibility or worldview, so to speak—a dimension of what Jung was talking about around individuation allowing us to be more wholly ourselves yet also connected to the collective—an embodiment of having a spiritual attitude that is so central to Jungian work. Activism has been important in my clinical and academic life, as an analyst, psychologist, and professor, and my understanding of these values in Jung motivated and drew me to his ideas from the beginning.

Moving out of the Institute, though, and into the world, can you speak about your work with the UN. What you do, and what it’s been like?

**JSB:** My little book *The Millionth Circle* (1999/2003) is why I am at the UN. The *Millionth Circle* is a metaphoric number, inspired by the allegory of the Hundredth Monkey, which had inspired the antinuclear proliferation activists, even when ridiculed to think that ordinary citizens could stop the nuclear arms race between the two superpowers. Their activism was based on theoretical biologist Rupert Sheldrake’s morphic field theory. Change happens within a species when a critical number change how they perceive and behave, a tipping point is reached, and the cultural attitude changes. We just saw it happen with gay marriage. Sheldrake wrote in a *Psychological Perspectives* (1987) article that the human morphic field is the collective unconscious.

An aha! moment was my inspiration. I wrote the premise in one sitting at my computer: women's circles with a spiritual center, hundredth monkey—millionth circle, bingo! I knew about archetypes and the collective unconscious and how consciousness-raising groups became the women's movement. A circle with a sacred center is an archetype, a mandala, an image of the Self. It is Goddess of the Hearth and Temple, Hestia, whose presence in the fire at the center of a round hearth made home and temple sacred.

I had been leading women's wisdom workshops where the women met in small circles as well as in the large circle with a sacred center. I often was asked for specific instructions. I laughingly said that one day I would write a how-to and call it "Zen and the Art of Circle Maintenance." Well—in my own way, I did. In print, it resembles verse. An accidental failure to change the margin made the first sentences look like verse, and I continued with it, finding that this form led to condensing information into images and metaphor.

*The Millionth Circle* proposed nothing short of changing the world by bringing humanity into a post-patriarchal era. It still didn't feel like a book and wasn't of interest to Harpers. Besides, I had interrupted writing *Goddesses in Older Women* (2003) for them while I wrote *The Millionth Circle*. I knew one publisher of small books who, on hearing that the subject was women's circles, said there was space in the fall catalog. It was published in 1999, shortly before the Parliament of World Religions Conference in South Africa. Again, synchronicity! This little book was brought by one woman, sparked discussion among others that continued later in Geneva. The first I heard of this was from Peggy Sebara, whom I didn't know, who talked of an organizing meeting—could they use the name, and would I participate?

I went to the UN because many of the women involved in the formation of The Millionth Circle Initiative were connected to it. I learned how women and girls are treated in the world and wanted to accelerate change through what I intuitively knew would be possible if we had a Fifth World Conference on Women (5WCW).

**HM:** Funny, how roads intersect when led by the Self—there's the circle and your office.

**JSB:** The circle and my office. You perceive that quite correctly. Both are vessels of transformation when they are trustworthy and when love supports those within them to grow, to be honest, see clearly, and call upon the Self. When circles get in trouble, the dynamics are similar to when analysis gets in trouble, when there is a loss of meaning and libido.

**HM:** So where is all this going?

**JSB:** I'm with Hecate at the crossroads right now. I came back from the 2015 UN meetings in March discouraged, accepting the reality that UN Women, the entity within the UN that was founded to advance women, is in support of not having a Fifth World Conference on Women. I also learned that UN Women is making it harder to criminalize the pimps and traffickers by supporting sex workers. In India, the highest price paid by brothels is for a seven-year-old virgin—a little girl. This makes me sick!

I've been the leading advocate for 5WCW for over a decade. What now? Is this Self, or ego? I'm waiting for the Tao, waiting for something to become clear, and sitting at the crossroads with Hecate, doing nothing.

My activism has been guided by the notion that circles are like geese flying in formation. Research shows that geese flying in formation can fly 71 percent further than they can by themselves. If one falls out of formation, they realize that they need to get back in formation because they're flying on the air current of those in front. When the lead goose gets tired, another one goes into the lead position and the lead goose rotates into a side position. I've been the lead goose, and I've gotten tired. What I would really like to see would be the sky filled with the formations, with all these women forming circles, moving together.



Bar-headed geese flying in formation

the negative and stuck comments from an inner critic derived from the past. It's expressing approval and belief in what is possible, as we follow behind.

**HM:** Well—honk, honk to you, with wherever your next steps may be.

**JSB:** At the moment, I'm waiting for my next "assignment." It needs to meet three criteria: Is it meaningful? Will it be fun? Is it motivated by love? Creativity is fun. Learning something new is fun. Doing something that stretches us is fun. Being with others who share the same values and are

**HM:** That is beautiful to imagine! It makes me think of lines in Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese."

**JSB:** Yes! The geese. I introduced the story of the geese in *Urgent Message from Mother: Gather the Women, Save the World* (2005), citing Angeles Arrien and Milton Olson, in a talk at the Jung Institute in Chicago. At the end, I sang "There's a river of birds in migration, a nation of women with wings," flapped my arms like wings, and honked. Had to get over my doctor persona and risk looking foolish to do so. I've done this many times since. It's important that people do what the geese do—honk encouragement to keep up speed.

Honk! Honk! Honk! has been going around in e-mails. It means, "You go girl; we support what you're doing." I think that as analysts we do something equivalent, when we recognize and reflect back positive insights and are encouraging. It counteracts



moving in the same direction is fun. It's a broad definition of what motivates an activist. To take one step at a time or keep your eye on a distant goal as you move toward it, is being an "activist." I ended my book *Artemis* with what I called my activist mantra, but it also could be my analyst mantra. That is, if I had one! Love, hope, perseverance, and optimism.

**HM:** Talk about another kind of beautiful formation!

**JSB:** That's also what I feel about people in analysis with me. If I don't feel this with the person, some essential ingredients are missing. There needs to be love and hope, perseverance, and optimism in the waiting and holding. Maybe events don't turn out in the way I thought or hoped for, but there remains an optimism that doing this work is meaningful. Analysis, activism, and life can move very slowly and have setbacks. There can be periods when nothing seems to change. One of us has to hold onto the hope, love, perseverance, and optimism that there is something that we do not see yet. It's keeping faith that what we are doing does have meaning; that the connection matters. It's also trusting in the Self, waiting on the Tao, and, in the meantime, holding the tension of not knowing—to have love, hope, perseverance, and optimism.

**HM:** I appreciate what you are saying, especially about perseverance. That quality, in particular, I think, distinguishes someone from being able to be an analyst or not—it is the quality that enables one to see a person through profound suffering or trauma, or through a developmental stage, or a kind of birth process, or a period of individuation.

**JSB:** True, it's long-term.

**HM:** The perseverance part seems to be more challenging for many people, including mental health professionals. I wonder about cultural movements that discourage engaging with perseverance, which are also influenced by technological developments that diminish direct concentration, absorption, and direct relationship with others. I see this in the reactive ways email, social media, and blog posts are used, especially when they replace conversation. And, with 24/7 instant access to Internet postings and feeds from Twitter to Instagram to other social media—which may be far more gratifying than real relationships, which provide an immediate story in 140 characters or less, a story that often registers as the whole story—there is little space and time for reflection or expression of material that is not so reactive, for material that emerges over time and with more consciousness. I see people practically develop a tic if they are not checking their smartphones! You see whole tables of people at restaurants, now, reading their phones, engaging with virtual relationships on social media yet not with one another.

I wonder if some of the popularity of Attachment and Relational Theories is compensatory—expressing an archetype of attachment and connection that is partially emerging in response to cultural trends that diminish authentic engagement.

In addition to my clinical practice, much of my professional life has involved teaching and training future mental-health professionals, so I wonder how this cultural climate influences emerging professionals who will be the future of psychotherapy and analysis. I see shifts in current

cohorts of students and professors—compared to, say, a decade ago. I wonder how these trends impact how perseverance develops as well as its value in mental health and analytic training.

I think this erosion of attention, concentration, and personal engagement does shape and distort the kinds of transformation and healing that we imagine or feel is possible. Patients often want to know, “Do you think I’ll get past this?” I express and really feel, “We are in this together.” Your analysis mantra feels so important: the hope, the optimism, perseverance, and, absolutely, love.

**JSB:** It is activism. That’s where the analyst has an attitude of activism—that things could change for the better, for the deeper. I think this particular interview, if edited, could actually sound like a whole essay on activism.

**HM:** Analysis as activism, yes! I was surprised to learn that the 1907 meaning of activism, according to the Random House Dictionary, was that it is a theory that posits “the essence of reality is pure activity, especially spiritual activity, or process.” It also states it is a “theory that the relationship between the mind and the objects of perception depends upon the action of the mind.” This reminded me of synchronicity. I thought these meanings for activism were uncanny!

**JSB:** I didn’t know that! That is incredible!

**HM:** How appropriate—as we wind down this interview—we are being led right back to the spiritual, to synchronicity.

**JSB:** Indeed! It was really a pleasure to be interviewed, to have a conversation with an analyst. I can’t help but think that, with activism being an expression of what might come out of analysis, that it would be part of individuation. Some don’t see them as integrated, yet they’re all quite integrated in me. They are related to the bigger picture—I find it essential for people who do in-depth work.

**HM:** This seems to be part of what Jung was talking about regarding having a spiritual attitude as well as in his emphasis on individuation—this is our birthright. It involves relating and connecting with and contributing to a widening, to wholeness within the collective. It is not about a narrowing that lacks integrity and is obsessively or narcissistically fixated on the individual.

**JSB:** Yes, that is right. So it would be nice if we both, as analysts, can help bring more activism, in the positive term of being, to help foster this in analysis as an expression of a person’s true self.

**HM:** I’m with you. I am a fellow goose with you in that formation!

**JSB:** Honk! Honk! Honk!

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bolen, Jean Shinoda. 1979. *The Tao of psychology: Synchronicity and the self*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.  
 ———. 1984/2014. *Goddesses in every woman: Powerful archetypes in women’s lives*. The Thirtieth-Anniversary Edition. New York: Harper Perennial.

- . 1999. *Ring of power: Symbols and themes, love vs. power in Wagner's Ring Cycle and in us—a Jungian feminist perspective*. York Beach, ME: Nicolas Hays.
- . 1999/2003. *The millionth circle: How to change ourselves and the world: The essential guide to women's circles*. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.
- . 2003. *Goddesses in older women: Archetypes in women over fifty*. New York: Harper.
- . 2004. *Crossing to Avalon: A woman's midlife quest for the sacred feminine*. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: HarperSanFrancisco.
- . 2005. *Urgent message from mother: Gather the women, save the world*. York Beach, ME: Conari Press.
- . 2007. *Close to the bone: Life-threatening illness as a soul journey*. 10th Anniversary Revised Edition. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press.
- . 2014. *Artemis: The indomitable spirit in everywoman*. San Francisco: Conari Press.
- Brooks, David. 2015. *The road to character*. New York: Random House.
- Castillejo, Irene. 1990. *Knowing woman: A feminine psychology*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Friedan, Betty. 1963. *The feminine mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Jung, C. G., and James L. Jarrett. 1988. *Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the seminar given in 1934–1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- LeShan, Lawrence L. 1989. *Cancer as a turning point: A handbook for people with cancer, their families, and health professionals*. New York: Dutton.
- Neumann, Erich. 1956. *Amor and Psyche: The psychic development of the feminine—a commentary on the tale by Apuleius*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Oliver, Mary. 2004. *Wild geese*. Tarsset, England: Bloodaxe.
- Pinsky, Robert. trans. 1994. *The inferno of Dante: A new verse translation*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Sheldrake, Rupert. 1987. Mind, memory, and archetype: Morphic resonance and the collective unconscious. *Psychological Perspectives* 18(1): 9–25.
- Sullivan Stack, Harry. 1966. *Conceptions of modern psychiatry: William Alanson White memorial lectures*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- White, T. H. 1958. *The once and future king*. New York: Putnam.

JEAN SHINODA BOLEN, MD, is a psychiatrist, Jungian analyst, and author of thirteen influential books, translated into eighty-five languages: *The Tao of Psychology*, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, *Gods in Everyman*, *Ring of Power*, *Crossing to Avalon*, *Goddesses in Older Women*, *The Millionth Circle*, *Like a Tree, Crones Don't Whine*, *Close to the Bone*, *Urgent Message From Mother*, *Moving Toward the Millionth Circle*, and *Artemis: The Indomitable Spirit in Everywoman*. She is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a retired clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco, and a former board member of the Ms. Foundation for Women and the International Transpersonal Association. She is in the Academy Award–winning antinuclear proliferation film *Women—For America, For the World* (1986), the National Film Board of Canada's *Goddess Remembered* (1989), and *Femme: Women Healing the World* (2013). The Millionth Circle Initiative was inspired by her book *The Millionth Circle* and led to her becoming an advocate for the fifth United Nations World Conference on Women and a United Nations Non-governmental Organization (UN NGO) delegate for Pathways to Peace. She lives and has a private practice in Mill Valley, California. *Correspondence*: jeanbolen@gmail.com. Website: [www.jeanbolen.com](http://www.jeanbolen.com).

HELEN MARLO, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and analyst member of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. Professor and Chair of the Graduate Clinical Psychology department at Notre Dame de Namur University, she is a Faculty Scholar with the Sr. Dorothy Stang Center for Social Justice and Community Engagement. Out of her clinical and academic work in reproductive mental health, she developed “Mentoring Mothers,” a circle and community service that addresses perinatal issues. She serves as Reviews Editor for *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche*. She lives with her husband, two daughters, and son in San Mateo, California, where she has a private practice. *Correspondence*: 205 De Anza Blvd., #138, San Mateo, CA, 94402. Email: [helen@helenmarlophd.com](mailto:helen@helenmarlophd.com). Website: [www.helenmarlophd.com](http://www.helenmarlophd.com).

**ABSTRACT**

Jean Shinoda Bolen is interviewed by Helen Marlo regarding her latest book, *Artemis: The Indomitable Spirit in Everywoman* (2014). Dr. Bolen discusses Atalanta as a counterpart to the Psyche myth and expands on the archetype of Artemis with activism and feminism. She shares her reflections on the practice of analysis and draws parallels between analysis and activism. With candor and feeling, Dr. Bolen shares about profound and meaningful personal and professional experiences, including birth, her son's death, motherhood, patriarchy, analytic training, boundary violations, activism, the United Nations World Conference on Women (5WCW), and the importance of love, hope, optimism, and perseverance for analysis and activism.

**KEY WORDS**

activism, analysis, archetypes, Artemis, birth, feminism, motherhood, Self, social media, soul, spirituality, synchronicity, trafficking, United Nations, women, woods