

JUNGIAN ARCHETYPE LENS ANALYSIS

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WHALE RIDER

In Jungian Psychology, the animus archetype refers to the unconscious masculine qualities like courage, strength, intellect, and spirituality in a female psyche. These characteristics are generally derived and accumulated from previous male ancestors who exemplified these qualities. There are various stages in the development of a female's animus. In the first stage, the female's animus appears in the form of physical power and other surface level traits. Then, in the second stage, the woman's animus is imagined as a "man of action" with characteristics of the generic father or husband. Progressing, the third stage of the animus is personified by a "man of intellect". Finally, in the fourth and final form, it manifests as a source of spiritual guidance that is able to mediate between a female's unconscious and conscious mind. Because of their possession of an animus, these female characters usually end up breaking tradition by being able to take on traditional male roles. In *Whale Rider*, Paikea begins on the border of the third and fourth stage of animus development and evolves into an exemplary instance of the fourth stage animus in which she is spiritually guided by her animus, derived from the original Paikea.

During the initiation of the "potential chiefs", who are the firstborn males of every family in the tribe, Paikea breaks with tradition by sitting in the front benches along with her male peers on sacred land. Witnessing this, Koro, who is a staunch believer in tradition, orders Paikea to sit on the back benches. By refusing to and leaving the ceremony, Paikea exhibits her spiritual strength by believing in her right to be the leader of the tribe, or at least be given a chance to compete for this title. In Jungian psychology, the animus is intertwined with one's persona, and when the animus is suppressed by the female persona, the animus often emerges as the dominant force and overpowers the persona. We see this when Koro tries to suppress Paikea's development of certain traits that are necessary for her to fulfill her spiritual journey. Her animus emerges in the form of Paikea's determination to accomplish all of these tasks through alternate methods, which shows her ingenuity, a trait that is derived from the third stage of animus development. As a result, she ends up learning how to use the taiaha, a symbol of the chief of the clan, which was essentially the only skill that she lacked, from her uncle, and getting her grandfather's rei puta (whale tooth). In doing so, she has finally gained the right to become the chief and her animus is prepared to evolve to stage four.

Through her evolution as the Whale Rider, Paikea reinstills the Maori tribe's sense of identity. As Jung's animus theory suggests, Paikea is in the fourth stage of animus development, when her actions are guided by the original Paikea. This is demonstrated in the scene that leads to Paikea being acknowledged as the Whale Rider. Whereas the rest of the community loses hope of returning the whales to the ocean, Paikea climbs on top of Paikea's whale and rides it, saying that "[she's] not afraid to die." With the emergence of her animus,

Paikea possesses the courage that leads her to break the traditional values of having a male Whale Rider, and prove her abilities as the new one. This event parallels the first Whale Rider's story. By riding a whale away from danger to the Maori islands, the first Paikea founded the present tribe. In doing so, the Maori's story (of survival), and sense of identity comes from their connection to him and the whales. So when the current community fails to bring the whales back to the ocean, they lose hope in their connection to the animal that has defined their identity. As such, when Paikea is led by her animus to go against the others and successfully rides Paikea's whale - a spiritual animal associated with Paikea himself, she represents the continuation of the culture that the first Whale Rider created. Paikea thus demonstrates that she is the reincarnation of the Whale Rider. In other words, she represents the rebirth of the figure of hope that guided her community, and restores the Maori tribe's sense of identity.

Jung discusses the way in which we are unconsciously motivated by our beliefs, and how that can be dysfunctional or broken. Koro exemplifies this when he asks Paikea, "do you want the other boys to fail?" Because of the recurrence of male chiefs throughout the tribe's history, Koro associates the animus qualities needed to be the chief with males. When he says "boys to fail," he implies that by Paikea (who in his eyes embodies the anima) striving to become the chief, she interferes with the lineage that can restore the health of the tribe. As a result of his belief, Koro suppresses the anima within the members of the community.

However, *Whale Rider* suggests that the balance between the anima and animus is what ultimately creates a healthy individual, and by extension a healthy community. Paikea portrays this idea, as we see her embrace both her masculine and feminine aspects. When she tells the women of her tribe that smoking prevents their child-bearing abilities, she is seen to acknowledge the value of her feminine traits like fertility alongside her animus, making her a balanced individual. Additionally, the health of the Maori people depends on the health of their leader, which is demonstrated when the community is left distraught by Koro, who struggles with finding a suitable male chief. By having Paikea, who as a female embodies the anima, assume the role of the chief, a position traditionally occupied by the males of the tribe, she establishes the balance between the anima and animus as the leader. For the Maori people who look up to their leader for guidance, this balance influences them to acknowledge and embrace both parts of themselves, the anima and animus they were denied before. Through accepting themselves and therefore their identity, the Maori tribe becomes a healthy community.

THREE DAY ROAD

In Jungian philosophy, Carl Jung proposed that the persona is the outer "mask(s)" people develop to show to society. It consists of developed behaviors one deems socially acceptable as one grows up and develops societal norms. The persona conceals parts one believes is unsavory from the viewpoint of society. However, when one becomes too preoccupied with the persona, they lose their true self. In *Three Day Road*, the concept of the self, the center of

one's personality, is strongly intertwined with the characters' native roots, as Xavier is seen connecting again and again to his culture in times of need for strength. Therefore, when Elijah starts to conceal his native identity through his newfound British accent, and refuses to connect with his culture unless it is to hunt, it is symbolic of Elijah's persona taking over his sense of self identity, of his true self.

As the maintenance of the persona requires the repression of the socially unacceptable, these repressed traits manifest into what is known as the shadow; a looming representation of the side one does not want to show to the world hidden in the unconscious. Often, in cases where one's persona takes over their whole being, there will be a moment where the persona breaks and the shadow emerges, a result of oppressing the shadow for too long. Within Elijah, this is observed through the growing *windigo* in him, brought on through his obsession for being the best and making people like him. The *windigo*, Elijah's shadow, slowly consumes him and becomes him. Elijah is only aware of this until the last minute when he is brought up onto the plane, and then dreams of becoming the chief of a tribe when he gets back home; Elijah wears his moccasins again. By this time, it is too late for Elijah; Xavier no longer recognizes the Elijah he used to know, as the consumption of Elijah by his shadow and the morphine has worn him thin and bloodthirsty.

Elijah in the book *Three Day Road* represents the archetype of the trickster; his last name, Weesageechak, traditionally represents a shapeshifting trickster, and his English name, Whiskeyjack, is the name of a tricky bird. In his native culture, there is a story of the Weesageechak bringing the flood that ends the world. In a way, Elijah brings his end onto himself and a different end onto Xavier. Elijah allows himself to get absorbed in the morphine, although he is smart enough to know it will kill him. Elijah obsesses over being the best hunter, and no longer believes he is fighting a war; he is playing a game with the Fritz, the game of a bloodthirsty trickster. Elijah wants to know how quickly he can hunt the Germans, how many of them he can scalp, how many he can play tricks on and surprise. Elijah, other than tricking Fritz, is often playing tricks on Xavier; even after his death, his identification tags cause all the infirmary staff to believe Xavier is Elijah. Elijah exemplifies the common traits of a trickster archetype; charming, cunning, bold, witty. Through the book he moves from one end of the archetype spectrum to the other; starting off as a clever boy playing innocent tricks on his friend, ending off as a battle-lusting corpse, playing much more sinister "tricks" on the opposing troops.

To compliment Elijah's trickster archetype, Xavier embodies the hero and the rebel archetype. Xavier is the main character of *Three Day Road*, leaving his home to fight in a war, and comes back changed. His storyline follows that of a hero; more specifically, the hero cycle. Although not obvious at first, Xavier often goes against the flow, a distinguishing trait of rebel characters, despite his intentions not being malicious. He kills the horses on the boat as he knows their legs are broken despite knowing his higher ups would hate him as a result. He runs off to find Lisette in an act that can be seen as desertion, and risks execution. He

refuses to kill the nest of birds in his hospital bed, despite the pressure from Breech. Xavier clashes with Breech; he knows Breech does not like him. Defying higher-ups is another trait of rebel characters. For a character to be rebellious, they do not need to rebel against all higher ups; instead, rebels stand for what they believe in, which causes rifts between the rebel and oppressive authority. This is why Xavier follows Thompson and McCain, but not Breech.

As mentioned earlier, Xavier is strongly connected to his self, which represents his native culture, and more importantly, Niska. Xavier and Niska are fragments of the same person; both go against the flow if needed, both prefer to stay as outcasts, both are silent, and both are wendigo killers. Xavier stays in touch with his spirituality and his true self often during the war, chanting Niska's name to give him strength, and carries out spiritual processes when he is feeling lost. Xavier and Niska go through similar processes, both through their respective traumas. This suggests that Niska and Xavier's "selves" are connected in a collective identity of native pride and belief.

Finally, Niska exemplifies the mother archetype. She is caring and watches over Xavier, nursing him back to health through the three day road back to her camp. She is observant, sitting in silent contemplation after Elijah's off hand comment about the nurses bathing him. She understands how to nurture Xavier and Elijah as they grow up, teaching them how to hunt, live, and other skills. She is stubborn and unwilling to give up on Xavier, even when he is fresh off morphine and in extreme pain, and when she realizes Xavier has come home to die. She, also, in her own storyline, is the hero, the rebel, and the trickster, refusing to live at the colonized trading posts, playing tricks with the Frenchman, and lives through her own hero cycle.

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