

The Role of Achior in *Judith* – An Autobiographical Response to *The Enemy is Within*

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an autobiographical response to the author's 2004 monograph on Judith focused through the character of Achior. It briefly outlines Jung's concept of individuation and the author's understanding of autobiographic biblical criticism. The article then addresses the author's original findings on Achior and concludes with a personal and academic response, noting particularly new insights and the role that her academic work has played in her own individuation / transformation.

A FIRST ENCOUNTERS¹

I first encountered *Judith*² during my Masters studies (1989-1990) through an article which interpreted *Ruth*, *Esther* and *Judith* as paradigms of human liberation.³ At that time, I was not at all familiar with *Judith* but soon became enamoured of its wild, sexy, sword-wielding, and genuinely pious female protagonist. It was not surprising, therefore, that this book emerged as the primary focus of my doctoral study a number of years later.

As a young doctoral student, I was delighted that few scholarly works had been written on *Judith* by comparison to other biblical books. I was also fascinated by studies which discarded the book on account of its historical-geographical inconsistencies, supposedly lopsided structure, and morally faulty heroine.⁴ Sensing that there was more to the tale than meets the eye, I began searching for a theory that would be able to encompass all of *Judith's* purported inconsistencies and interpret it as the whole that I believed it was.

At that point, my personal studies in psychoanalytic theory dovetailed with my study of *Judith*. I had begun with Freud and progressed to Jung in search of a deeper self-understanding. I found Freud's views far too deterministic and confining, offering me little hope of achieving wholeness within my chosen religious tradition. By contrast, Jung openly acknowledged the importance of religion and

¹ I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Prof. Jonathan Draper, for tirelessly reading and commenting upon the first few drafts of this paper.

² "Judith" refers to the character, while "*Judith*" refers to the book by the same name. The same distinction is maintained for other books and characters which share a name.

³ John F. Craghan, "Esther, Judith and Ruth: Paradigms for Human Liberation," *BTB* 12/1: 11-19.

⁴ See Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within: A Jungian Psychoanalytic Approach to the Book of Judith* (BIS 67; Boston: Brill, 2004), 7-18; 23-33.

his psychoanalytic theories, particularly his understanding of individuation, gave me hope that I would someday achieve the wholeness for which I yearned. His theories also convinced me that *Judith* functioned as a national dream and that its "inconsistencies" could, therefore, be ascribed to the expression of the unconscious psyche through the medium of the text.⁵

Excited, I read widely in the area of psychological biblical criticism and discovered that a number of different approaches had been applied to biblical texts,⁶ with most of these falling within the Freudian or Jungian camp. As with all interpretative ventures, these varied in quality, depth and scope. While some traced various psychological themes or symbolism throughout the entire Bible,⁷ others restricted their analyses to a particular book⁸ or pericope/s.⁹ Some commented generally on a particular genre, book, passage and/or character,¹⁰ while others meticulously analysed each verse and/or image.¹¹ Some applied selected components of psychological theories to their chosen texts, while others incorporated as many components of their chosen psychological framework(s) as possible.¹² A number also tried to apply and/or compare a variety of psychological

⁵ The communications of the unconscious often seem irrational and even nonsensical to the conscious mind. This is particularly clear in dreams where, for example, the dreamer might not look like herself or himself, or may be capable of flying, or command great power, etc.. See Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 44.

⁶ For a relatively up-to-date list of books, articles, and essays on the subject, see Psybibs, "Recent Books in Psychology and Biblical Studies," n.p. [cited 3 December 2013]. Online: http://psybibs.revdk.com/bibpsy_books.htm.

⁷ See e.g. Paul Diel, *Symbolism in the Bible: Its Psychological Significance* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986); and Edward F. Edinger, *The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the Old Testament* (SJPIA 24; Toronto: Inner City Books, 1986). One may add Kalman J. Kaplan and Matthew B. Schwartz, *The Fruit of Her Hands: A Psychology of Biblical Women* (Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), and Avivah G. Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious* (New York: Schochen Books, 2009).

⁸ See e.g. Michael W. Newheart, "Johannine Symbolism," in *Jung and the Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. David L. Miller; New York: Continuum 1995), 71-91, and Yehezkiel Kluger, *A Psychological Interpretation of Ruth with a Companion Essay: Standing in the Sandals of Naomi, by Nomi Kluger-Nash* (Am Klolsterplatz: Daimon Verlag, 1999).

⁹ See e.g. Robert Quillo, "Naked am I: Psychological Perspectives on the Unity of the Book of Job," *PRSt* 18/3 (1991): 213-222.

¹⁰ See e.g. D. Andrew Kille, "Jacob – A Study in Individuation," in *Jung and the Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. David L. Miller; New York: Continuum, 1995), 40-54. See also Kaplan and Schwartz, *Fruit of her Hands*; and Zornberg, *Murmuring Deep*.

¹¹ See e.g. Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (trans. John P. Galvin; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

¹² See D. Andrew Kille. *Psychological Biblical Criticism*. (GBSOT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

approaches to a single text.¹³ Some avoided engaging with other forms of biblical criticism¹⁴ while others put their insights to good use.¹⁵

For me, the most successful psychological interpretations incorporated as much of their chosen psychological framework(s) as possible, meticulously analysed the text, and incorporated the insights of other hermeneutical approaches. I determined that I would do the same. Having encountered Sugg's edited volume,¹⁶ *Jungian Literary Criticism*, I boldly declared myself a *demonstrably Jungian critic* – one who acknowledges a strong Jungian influence upon her work and life¹⁷ – and set about interpreting the book according to Jungian categories.

I earned my doctorate in 2003 and published my dissertation in Brill's Biblical Interpretation Series in 2004.¹⁸ Since then, I have published a number of articles that address issues raised in my monograph. Most of these have centred on Judith and continued developing my corrective to Jung's understanding of women's individuation cycles.¹⁹ In so doing, I have satisfied my claim to be a demonstrably Jungian critic, *viz.* one who "work[s] in both directions . . . using literature to clarify psychology as well as the other way round."²⁰

Strangely, I have yet to write on the character of Achior, even though my research has identified him as *Judith's* effective protagonist, *the* character who

¹³ See e.g. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects* and Kille, *Psychological*.

¹⁴ See e.g. Edinger, *Bible and the Psyche*; Kaplan and Schwartz, *Fruit of her Hands*; and Zornberg, *Murmuring Deep*.

¹⁵ See e.g. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*.

¹⁶ See footnote 20.

¹⁷ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 38.

¹⁸ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*.

¹⁹ Please see the bibliography for a list of these articles.

²⁰ Richard P. Sugg, "Introduction to the Selections," in *Jungian Literary Criticism* (ed. Richard P. Sugg; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press), 1-6. Sugg identifies three types of Jungian (literary) critics:

a) The "*shared affinities*" group share certain affinities with Jungian psychology, such as "mythical vision" and a belief in archetypes. However, they do not acknowledge outright the validity of his work, with some critics scrupulously distinguishing psychology from literary criticism;

b) *Myth Critics* see myth as a mode of thinking about and imagining the world, and consequently believe that literature is informed by "a mythic vision . . . as carrying a significance of archetypal and collective importance" (Sugg, "Introduction," 3.); and

c) The *demonstrably Jungian critics* who "identify an important aspect of their critical approach to literature as Jungian. They . . . have demonstrated the usefulness of a serious study of both Jung's psychology and the history and practice of approaches to literature that stem from it" (Sugg, "Introduction," 5). Many have even applied his theories to their lives. "Typically, such critics begin to work in both directions . . . using literature to clarify psychology as well as the other way round" (Sugg, "Introduction," 5).

best represents the author's unconscious psyche.²¹ In fact, the scholarly world to date has produced only a handful of articles dealing with this character. Neither have I reviewed my 2004 findings according to my current thinking and recent publications on Achior. Moreover, I have not taken my work as a demonstrably Jungian critic to its logical end: I have not examined what has prompted me psychologically to produce this body of work beyond noting that:

I have been dealing primarily with my shadow-side for the last number of years and. . . it [is] this that [has] (unconsciously) [driven] me to the study I have just completed.²²

I have also not discussed the effect that *Judith* and my work have had on my own psychological development. (In other words, I have neither read myself reading *Judith* as thoroughly as I have read *Judith* using a Jungian lens, nor have I used *Judith* to read myself in the way that I have used this book to read and provide a corrective to Jung's psychoanalytic theory). Retrospectively, there is something intellectually dishonest about my failure in this regard. It not only violates my position as a demonstrably Jungian critic, but it also flies in the face of recent statements I-as-a-feminist-Jungian-interpreter have made regarding the fallacy of objectivity and the necessity of the interpreter's openness in academic discourse. For example, in a recent piece dealing with feminist ethics and feminist biblical interpretation, I advocated that

. . . an autobiographical approach which takes account of *and spells out* the interpreter's background, experience, *and* emotions would be most helpful, both for the feminist biblical interpreter and the "ordinary reader." It would help us as interpreters to see that we do not interpret in a *personal* vacuum. . . [and] the reader to see that our interpretations are just that – *our interpretations*, which will give her/him the "space" to present her/his own without fear of reprimand or "getting it wrong." [While] this suggestion requires a fair amount of personal introspection on our part, [and] may not be [something we are] keen to do, it must be done if we are to create space for others to write their own stories into the fissures of the biblical texts [and our interpretations of them] and keep the interpretative endeavour afloat.

. . . We need to put into practice the womanist principle which accepts "emotional knowledge as a legitimate category of academic analysis" without forsaking the "analytical skills and tools" of our discipline²³. . . we need to be aware of and state our emotional

²¹ Terrence Dawson, "Jung, Literature, and Literary Criticism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* (ed. Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terrence Dawson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 264.

²² Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 408.

²³ Sarojini Nadar, "Toward a Feminist Missiological Agenda: A Case Study of the Jacob Zuma Rape Trial," *Missionalia* 37/1 (2009): 90-91. [This footnote is original to the quotation].

connection/disconnection to the text so as to understand *why* we may be seeing what we are seeing. In this way we will avoid falling into the trap of objective fallacy. . . and we will leave "space" for others to share their experiences and interpretations of the text/s freely.²⁴

In this article, I should therefore like to provide an autobiographical response to my 2004 monograph focused through the character of Achior. In so doing, I will briefly outline key aspects of Jungian theory and autobiographical biblical criticism in order to introduce readers to these approaches and establish the merits of an autobiographical review. I will then address my findings regarding Achior and conclude with an evaluative review that takes account of a) the personal reasons that underlie my work, b) the effect that my work has had on me, c) new insights gained through this review and d) other works on Achior that have been published since 2004.

I begin, then, with the theoretical and methodological considerations underpinning this article.

B THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to summarise Jung's vast tomes in an article such as this. I will therefore limit my discussion to the individuation process, the shadow and the *anima / animus*, as these are the most relevant aspects of his theory for this article. I will then briefly discuss my understanding of autobiographical biblical criticism (ABC) as well as the combination of Jungian psychology and ABC in my proposed review of my work.

1 Jungian Psychoanalytic Theory: Archetype and Individuation

Jung regarded individuation as a life-long, psychological maturation process by which each of us is *driven* to become the indivisible whole that we potentially are.²⁵ This process is usually sparked by a crisis – usually at mid-life – which shows us that we and/or the world are not as we had perceived. The success of individuation largely depends, however, on our readiness to withdraw the projection of the unacceptable parts of ourselves and/or our experiences from others and consciously integrate them into our psyche.

²⁴ Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, "Judith, Feminist Ethics and Feminist Biblical/Old Testament Interpretation," *JTSA* 138/9 (2010): 110.

²⁵ Carl G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (Coll.Jung 7; 2nd, rev. and augmented ed.; 1966; trans. Richard F. C. Hull; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), 174.

According to Jung, individuation is a five-stage process²⁶:

- (i) *Complete identification with society*: At this stage, our thinking and actions are determined entirely by societal expectations as there is no distinction between the self and the group.²⁷
- (ii) *Separation from the other*: This is a long and often very painful process in which we begin to explore our identity, "usually by way of a dialectic with different facets of the 'other.'"²⁸
- (iii) *Differentiation of moral properties*. Having separated from the other, we now attempt to ascertain and establish our own moral or ethical code by "testing the collective morality" of our society.²⁹
- (iv) *Realisation of social reality and individual consciousness*. At this stage, the "collective norms and expectations" of the psyche lose their *mana* (power) "and the world is seen as it is."³⁰ Most often, as a result, we experience some kind of alienation, which then necessitates the final stage of the process.³¹ Even so, this stage also frees us to become who we really are.
- (v) *Individual identity / self-realisation*. "With this stage the process comes full circle as the person is prepared to re-enter society, to reintegrate with it, being wholly conscious of her/his own identity. . . This is entirely different from the first stage in which the person was un-conscious of her/his identity apart from that of her/his group."³²

While all the archetypes play an important role in the individuation process, the ones that "have the most frequent and the most disturbing influence on the ego"³³ – which is the centre of the conscious psyche³⁴ – are the shadow, the *anima* and the *animus*. Consequently, these are the archetypes that we most vividly experience and are required to integrate during the individuation process. Briefly, the shadow is the unconscious repository of all that which we dislike about ourselves

²⁶ It is important to note that individuation is not a linear process. Rather, it is a life-long cycle that is repeated many times over in our lives. We can also find ourselves at different stages of this cycle in various aspects of our lives at any given time (Dawson, "Jung," 268).

²⁷ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 57.

²⁸ Dawson, "Jung," 267.

²⁹ Dawson, "Jung," 267.

³⁰ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 57.

³¹ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 57-58.

³² Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 58.

³³ Carl G. Jung, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (Coll.Jung 9:2; 2nd ed.; trans. Richard Hull; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), 8, 33.

³⁴ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 46.

and which we, therefore, project onto others,³⁵ while the *anima* is the male's contrasexual soul image, and the *animus* that of the female.³⁶

For Jung, the *anima* is crucial to the male individuation cycle – which *Judith* follows.³⁷ She is typically encountered at the nadir of this cycle, and must be integrated in all her positive and negative aspects for the cycle to be completed successfully.³⁸

2 Autobiographical Biblical Criticism (ABC) – My Take on the Matter

As Mouton correctly observes, the last number of centuries have seen a shift in hermeneutical emphasis from “text production” (the origins of the text), via

³⁵ The shadow is “an inferior component of the personality.” See Carl G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 63-64. It is the repository of all that we regard as foreign to ourselves, all that we reject as the not-I. The shadow's nature is manifest chiefly in the emotional disturbances that affect the conscious state. See Carl G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1940), 20. It is thus the archetype whose contents can be made conscious with the least difficulty (Jung, *Aion*, 10). By the same token, it is the one that is most easily experienced (Jung, *Aion*, 8) and so one that is often either projected or repressed onto those whom we regard as “other” to ourselves. See Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 52-53.

³⁶ Albert Gelpi, “Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America,” in *Jungian Literary Criticism* (ed. Richard P. Sugg; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1992), 105-106.

³⁷ It may, at first, seem strange that the protagonist of a male individuation drama is female. However, this “oddity” may be explained by the fact that a) the Israelite community is often construed as female, and b) Judith acts as ego and *anima* of the Israelite community (Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 422). As I indicated in my monograph, depicting Judith as female “necessitates the reversal of gender i.r.o. the other characters in the dream/individuation drama so that traditionally male figures are rendered female and *vice versa*. That is why Judith's conscious shadow – [her stewardess] is female, and the male Holofernes, whom she encounters at the nadir of *her* individuation cycle (her sojourn in the Assyrian camp), is her *anima*!” (Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 410). See also Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, “What Makes Men and Women Identify with Judith? A Jungian Mythological Perspective on the Feminist Value of Judith Today,” *HvTSt* 68/1 (2012), Art. #1267, 9 pages, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i1.1267>.

³⁸ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 62-63. Jung assumes that the same holds true for the *animus* in women's cycles. However, subsequent studies – mine included – have shown that this is not the case: what Jung regarded as the *animus* in female individuation cycles corresponds more closely to the shadow, “which for women is “socially conformist [vs. the antisocial aspects of the male shadow], incorporating women's self-loathing for their deviations from social norms, specifically the norms of femininity.” See Annis V. Pratt, “Spinning among Fields: Jung, Frye, Levi-Strauss, and Feminist Archetypal Theory,” in *Jungian Literary Criticism* (ed. Richard P. Sugg; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1992), 161 .

"text preservation and mediation," to "text reception and interpretation."³⁹ Autobiographical biblical criticism is a natural progression of the reader-centred studies which have been a part of the last of these shifts. After all, the interpreter is a reader too!

While ABC has not been embraced as widely as have other reader-orientated approaches,⁴⁰ it is based on some noteworthy theoretical principles, some of which have been alluded to in the introduction. For instance, ABC seeks to "implement personal criticism as a form of self-disclosure, wittingly, while reading a text as a critical exegete."⁴¹ In other words, it foregrounds the "I" of the interpreter while remaining firmly grounded in the work of biblical criticism. As such, ABC is not a purely solipsistic endeavour, or one which flies the kite far from the text, although some autobiographical readings certainly come close to being and doing just that.⁴²

Autobiographical biblical criticism foregrounds the "I" because it recognises that all interpreters are real people and that they approach the text with real needs, emotions, experiences, feelings, and biases, all of which impact on their reading of the text; there is no disinterested reading. In formal scholarship, these feelings, biases, *etcetera.*, lie hidden, buried beneath the third-person and passive constructs within which exegetes have couched their readings of biblical texts. While these constructs have long been regarded as the hallmarks of "objective" criticism, they are fallacious as they disregard the person of the interpreter and close meaning through their pseudo-objectivity. In other words, they close meaning by pretending to be the only or most definitive meaning that can be attributed to a text whereas, in fact, they really are someone's subjectively informed opinion undergirded by academic proof-texts or quotations.

³⁹ Elna Mouton, *Reading a New Testament Document Ethically* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 8.

⁴⁰ To the best of my knowledge, the academic world has published only four volumes of essays utilising ABC to date: Janice C. Anderson and Jeffrey L. Staley (eds.), *Taking it Personally: Autobiographical Biblical Criticism* (Semeia 72; Atlanta: SBL, 1995); Ingrid R. Kitzberger (ed.), *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1999); Phillip R. Davies (ed.), *First Person: Essays in Biblical Autobiography* (BibSem; London: T&T Clark, 2002); Ingrid R. Kitzberger (ed.), *Autobiographical Biblical Criticism: Between Text and Self* (Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2002).

⁴¹ Philippus J. W. Schutte, "When They, We and the Passive Become I – Introducing Autobiographical Biblical Criticism," *HvTSt* 61/1 and 2 (2005): 401.

⁴² See, for example, John L. Staley, "Fathers and Sons: Fragments from an Autobiographical Midrash on John's Gospel," in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Ingrid R. Kitzberger; London: Routledge, 1999), 65-85. Staley quotes a number of verses in *John*, after each of which he provides autobiographical details such as the mole on his daughter's left buttock (pp. 70, 71, 82) and his vasectomy (pp. 75-77). It is difficult to see what these events have to do with the verses in question, as no attempt is made to integrate the autobiographical details with a scholarly understanding of these verses.

By explicitly foregrounding the intimately personal nature of biblical interpretation, ABC foregrounds unconscious material, as it were, and acts as a skilled analyst who assists the analysand (patient – reader) to discover and integrate that which has remained hidden in her/his psyche. Autobiographical biblical criticism thus opens up the meaning of the text and frees others to participate in meaning-construction alongside the “experts.” It “gives scholars a critical forum for exploring the connections between themselves as real readers and their exegesis of biblical texts in a self-conscious and autobiographical manner.”⁴³ It also “exposes our exegetical enterprises as rooted in ‘ordinary reading’ like all other reading[s] of biblical texts.”⁴⁴ Moreover, it breaks the hegemonic stranglehold of methodology – a fixed bulwark of traditional biblical criticism – for in ABC there is no methodology.

Autobiographical biblical criticism appeals to me immensely as a feminist-Jungian reader of biblical texts for all the reasons mentioned above as well as those referred to in the introduction. To borrow the language of autoethnographer, Leon Anderson, it allows me to “illustrate analytic insights through recounting [my] own experiences and thoughts as well as those of others” and “openly discuss changes in my beliefs and relationships”⁴⁵ over the course of researching and writing a article. It allows me to be me, to be real within the act of criticism and it allows me to be me and to be real when reviewing my own work – a difficult but necessary demystification of my largest single contribution to the academic endeavor thus far. It also allows me to connect to the more rebellious, anti-authoritarian aspect of my psyche by flouting the traditional “rules” or dictates of academic writing. More importantly, as I indicated in the introduction, it allows me to take my work as a demonstrably Jungian critic to its logical end.

C ACHIOR – JUDITH’S EFFECTIVE PROTAGONIST AND TRANSFORMED CATALYST OF TRANSFORMATION

1 A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Achior and his Transformations in *Judith*⁴⁶

Achior first appears in *Jdt* 5, where he is presented as an Ammonite leader within Holofernes’ forces (5:5). Irked by the Judaeans’ refusal to capitulate, Holofernes gathers his leaders to enquire who they are and wherein their power lies (5:1-4). Achior responds by recounting sacred history from the time of Abraham to the destruction of the temple within a curiously Deuteronomistic or retribitional framework: when the Jews sinned, God gave them over to destruc-

⁴³ Schutte, “When They,” 402.

⁴⁴ Schutte, “When They,” 404.

⁴⁵ Leon Anderson, “Analytic Autoethnography,” *JCE* 35/4 (2006): 384.

⁴⁶ This sub-section is adopted and adapted from Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 186-191; 274-279.

tion; when they were obedient, God helped them to vanquish their foes (5:5-21). On the basis of this account, Achior warns Holofernes not to attack the Judaeans until he (Holofernes) has determined their standing with their God or else risk shaming his forces (5:21). His "prophecy" so angers Holofernes and the other leaders that they have him bound and cast to the foothill of Bethuliah there to await his fate once that of the Bethulians had been concluded (5:22-6:11). The Bethulians summarily retrieve Achior and take him, unbound, to their leaders (6:12-15). The whole city gathers around as he recounts "the words of the council of Holofernes... and whatsoever Holofernes had spoken proudly against the house of Israel" (6:17, RSV).⁴⁷ The people then pray (6:18) and offer Achior comforting praise (6:19). Finally, Ozias, the Chief Magistrate, hosts a banquet for Achior and the Bethulian elders at his own house (6:20) and, with that, we see the last of Achior in the first section of *Judith* (chs. 1-7).

As with the other characters in the tale, Achior may be interpreted both as a personal entity and as an aspect of the Jewish psyche which produced *Judith*.⁴⁸ The fact that he is able to stand out amongst his group of peers to address Holofernes shows that, in his personal capacity, Achior has reached a stage of consciousness in which the ego has separated itself from both the unconscious mass and its peers (stage 2). However, Achior identifies with the Judaeans and Holofernes⁴⁹ by holding onto the Deuteronomistic philosophy of retribution, and using it to warn Holofernes. Achior's identification with the Judaeans, a people group traditionally inimical towards the Ammonites, and Holofernes, his erstwhile enemy and captor, shows that his (Achior's) ego has not quite distinguished itself from ancient norms and patterns of thought. In other words, his level of conscious awareness has not quite reached or become established at the third stage of conscious awareness, viz., the differentiation of [his own] moral properties. Moreover, Achior's dual identification shows that his is an identity in flux or in crisis.

⁴⁷ All English translations are taken from the RSV unless otherwise indicated.

⁴⁸ This is consonant with Jung's approach to dreams, which he regarded as the primary vehicle of unconscious communication. See Jung, *Two Essays* (Routledge & Kegan Paul), 176-177. As such he placed tremendous emphasis on the analysis of his patients' (analysands') dreams. After carefully recording and collecting an analysand's dreams, Jung subjected the dream material to two successive types of analysis, namely "objective" and "subjective" analysis. See Jung, *The Integration*, 43. In the first, he related the dream material to the world outside the dreamer (Achior as person), while in the second, he related the dream contents to the dreamer herself/himself (Achior as an element of the Jewish psyche). In this way, the analysand was reunited with the memory complexes present in her/his unconscious psyche, thus raising her/his level of consciousness / conscious functionality.

⁴⁹ Note, – "we shall be put to shame before the whole world" (5:21, my italics).

As an aspect of the Jewish psyche, Achior represents a conscious shadow element at the second stage of conscious awareness.⁵⁰ However, this shadow element has lost conscious libido as a result of the instability caused by Achior's partial transition to Stage 3. Consequently, it becomes subsumed into the rambunctious tide of the unconscious shadow attack, which is represented by Holofernes and his forces. Achior's ability to address Holofernes indicates that this shadow content has somehow begun regaining conscious libido, to the extent that it is not only able to cross the threshold of consciousness awareness, but also become largely integrated at a higher level of conscious awareness (Bethuliah) than the one from which it originally came: Achior is well received by the Bethulians, who represent the outer tier of the third level of consciousness, and enjoys a meal with Ozias, their leader.

Achior next appears in *Jdt* 14:5-10, within the context of Judith's victorious return to Bethuliah. Having briefed the Bethulians on the next day's line of attack, Judith commands that Achior be brought out to her before any of her commands are carried out (14:5). Upon seeing Holofernes' head in one man's hand, Achior faints (14:6)! When the Bethulians revive him, he falls at Judith's feet in submission/obedience and pronounces a blessing upon her (14:7). He then requests a report of her activities (14:8a), which she provides. Achior then believes in God, is circumcised, and joins the house of Israel, "remaining so to this day" (14:10).

The account of Achior's conscious transformation into a Jew is also the account of his transformation of the Jews. For example, his partial integration into Bethulian society – prior to his conversion – acts as a catalyst for Judith's transformation from widow to warrior woman and her success at Holofernes' tent. This is demonstrated by Judith's words to Holofernes in *Jdt* 11:9-10:

Now as for the things Achior said in your council, we have heard his words, for the men of Bethuliah spared him and he told them all he had said to you. Therefore, my lord and master, do not disregard what he said, but keep it in your mind, for it is true: our nation cannot be punished, nor can the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God...

Judith's words, above, initiate a retrospective glance on narrative events which allows the following narrative reconstruction: Judith heard Achior's words to Holofernes when he recounted them to the Bethulians (see 6:16-17),

⁵⁰ Briefly, Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes successively attack various nations and group of nations, each of which represents a distinct level of conscious awareness: Arphaxad – level 1, the coastal dwellers and other vanquished nations (including the Ammonites) – level 2, the Judaeans – inner tier of level 3, and the Bethulians – outer tier of level 3. Holofernes' aim is to capture Jerusalem, which may be regarded as the centre of ego consciousness.

although this is not specifically mentioned in the text. She also heard the Bethulians' subsequent threat and ultimatum (7:24-32), although it is not specified that she is amongst those who spoke with the elders. Hearing the people's words prompts Judith to call upon and upbraid the elders (8:9-16), and subsequently to promise God's deliverance through her own hand⁵¹ before the time for the ultimatum is up (8:32-34). Judith's promise is then followed by an extensive prayer for God's assistance (9:2-14) which is predicated on Simeon's deceitful dealings with and slaying of the Shechemites (9:2-4, 10, and 13). Her prayer is followed by her physical transformation from widow and prayer warrior to a beautifully adorned (warrior) woman (10:1-4 and 7) who uses deceit and sexuality to ensnare and finally dispose of Holofernes.

Thus, it is clear that Achior's words and transformation precipitate Judith's plan and transformation. Having defeated Holofernes, Judith is transformed further into a liberatrix. Encountering Judith-as-liberatrix subsequently enables Achior to acknowledge the greatness of her God and so willingly complete his own transformation through his conversion. In turn, Achior's conversion so inspires the Judaeans-Bethulians that they are able to rout the Assyrians on the following day, thus effecting even more transformations: the Judaeans are victorious, the Assyrians are defeated, and the people's covenant with God is restored. Achior's initial transformation is thus the catalyst for all the other transformations in the book.

2 Achior: *Judith's* Effective Protagonist⁵²

As we can see from the preceding analysis (C1), Achior has undergone tremendous *permanent* transformation both as a person and as an element of the Jewish psyche:

- (i) As a person, Achior retrospectively begins as an enemy of Nebuchadnezzar, who then becomes (or is forced to become) his ally through

⁵¹ In *Judith*, the phrases "by my hand" and "by the hand of a woman" are extremely important, even though they only appear a total of six times (8:33; 9:10; 12:4; 13:14, 15 and 16:6). As Skehan has ably shown, these phrases link Judith to Moses, making her deliverance of the Jews akin to that of Moses' deliverance of the Israelites in the Exodus. See Patrick Skehan, "By the Hand of Judith," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 94-110. For an insightful intertextual reading of Judith as Moses, see Jan W. van Henten, "Judith as Alternative Leader: A Rereading of Judith 7-13," in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna* (ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 224-252. (Van Henten's 1995 essay is almost identical to the one published in 1994: Jan W. van Henten, "Judith as Female Moses: Judith 7-13 in the Light of Exodus 17, Numbers 20, and Deuteronomy 33:8-11," in *Reflection on Theology and Gender* [eds. Fokkeliën van Dijk-Hemmes and Athalya Brenner; Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994], 33-48).

⁵² This sub-section is adopted and adapted from Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 204-207; 301-318.

Holofernes. In both instances, he is the enemy of the Judaeans. However, he is soon evicted from Holofernes' army as an enemy and a traitor. He is then taken in by his traditional enemies, the Judaeans-Bethulians, becomes their ally and is largely integrated into their society. This partial integration is completed in section 2 through his willing conversion. The covenant outsider, hated Ammonite enemy, and pagan has thus become a full member of the covenant community, a friend and a believing Jew.

- (ii) As an element of the Jewish psyche, Achior begins as a conscious shadow element at the second level of conscious awareness. He then loses libido and becomes an element of the unconscious shadow. Subsequently regaining sufficient libido to cross the threshold of consciousness, he becomes largely integrated as a conscious shadow element at the outer tier of the third level of conscious awareness where he is finally integrated completely.

Notably, Achior is the only character in *Judith* who has undergone such momentous *permanent* transformation:⁵³

- (i) The Assyrians remain unconscious forces / inimical towards the Judaeans.
- (ii) Those drafted into the Assyrian army remain loyal to Holofernes' cause / in the embrace of the unconscious, and are defeated as such.
- (iii) The Judaeans-Bethulians remain at the third level of conscious awareness despite the libidinal upsurge brought about by Achior; Judith's activities causes them to stabilise at this level.
- (iv) Even Judith returns to her widow's rags once the celebrations in Jerusalem are over. Her transformation into a warrior-woman is temporary, even though the effects of the liberation she wrought last "for a long time after her death" at age 105 (16:25; 23).

Achior is thus *Judith's* undisputed effective protagonist, and so the unconscious representation of the Jewish psyche that has produced this amazing book.

⁵³ As Roitman astutely observes, Achior is the only secondary character in *Judith* whose role is developed. See Adolfo Roitman, "Achior in the Book of Judith: His Role and Significance," in *"No-one Spoke Ill of Her": Essays on Judith* (ed. James C. VanderKam; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1992), 31-46. Roitman's 1992 essay is a reworking of the one published in 1989 and is virtually identical to it (Adolfo Roitman, "The Function and Meaning of Achior in the Book of Judith," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1989 Seminar Papers* [ed. David J. Lull; *SBLSP* 28; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989], 540-549). I will be using information from the updated 1992 essay throughout the present article.

His psychological dilemma or challenge is consequently that of this same Jewish psyche (and so of the text) and may be stated as follows: successfully to transition the second level of conscious awareness, *viz.* separation from the shadow, and become fully functional at the third, *viz.*, the differentiation of [his own] moral properties without falling into the clutches of the unconscious psyche.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the solution to this dilemma, as proposed by the Judithic dream, lies precisely in integrating that which is feared: the unpalatable shadow properties projected onto Holofernes and his army.⁵⁵ *Judith* demonstrates this integration in seven steps:

- (i) Judith's inclusion of Holofernes' head into her food bag (13:9-10);
- (ii) the re-incorporation of Judith into Bethuliah (13:13);
- (iii) Uzziah's blessing of Judith, which is endorsed by the people (13:18-20);
- (iv) Achior's blessing of Judith (14:7);
- (v) Achior's incorporation into Judaeans society following his conversion (14:10);
- (vi) the people's plunder of Assyrian goods (15:6-7); and
- (vii) the Sanhedrin's blessing of Judith (15:8-10).

The seven steps indicate that Judith and the Judaeans have completely integrated the shadow contents represented by Holofernes. Judith's dedication of the Assyrian booty given her to the Lord, her votive offering of Holofernes' canopy that she had brought from the Assyrian camp (16:19), and her return to her widow's garments, then indicate that her ego has not become inflated⁵⁶ through her victory / incorporation of shadow contents. This, no doubt, is the ideal state which the dream would like the Jewish psyche to adopt, for inflation would undo the gains achieved through the assimilation of unconscious shadow contents (see footnote 55) and put the Jewish psyche at greater risk of being subsumed by the

⁵⁴ For greater detail please see Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 207-211, 387-389, 420.

⁵⁵ As previously indicated, Achior represents a palatable shadow content which is therefore integrated into consciousness with relative ease. By contrast, Holofernes represents that which the Jewish psyche had found reprehensible about itself and had therefore projected onto Holofernes and his forces.

⁵⁶ "When an archetype gathers enough *libido* to enter the sphere of consciousness and is subsequently assimilated into that consciousness, the ego-consciousness takes on its erstwhile *mana* or magical power." See Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 63. This may result in either positive or negative ego inflation, which see the affected person becoming either too sure of herself/himself (positive inflation) or "regarding herself/himself as the very embodiment of all evil" (negative ego inflation). See Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 64. In both cases, inflation will almost surely lead to the destruction of everything that has been gained by assimilating the archetype in the first place. See Jung, *Two Essays* (Routledge & Kegan Paul), 228.

unconscious, namely becoming that which it had feared and therefore projected onto Holofernes and his forces.

D ACHETYPE AND TRANSFORMATION – A PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC RESPONSE TO *THE ENEMY IS WITHIN*

As Jung has taught us, our persona, the mask we wear, is not the person we really are.⁵⁷ The mask is adaptive to the outside world – it helps us to navigate life by projecting an ideal image of who we are - but it is not all that we are. In my case, a terrified little girl and a host of bad memories lay beneath the mask of the strong, assertive, spiritual woman that I projected and was trying to become. The arousal of these shadow contents during my post-graduate studies and my fierce attempts at preventing myself (rather, my mask) from disintegrating are reflected in the way that I read and interpreted *Judith*. I was Judith, under attack but in control, stemming the tide of rapidly rising unconscious material by decapitation.

When the head of the SBL's Bible and Psychology programme asked me to present the findings of my 2004 monograph at the November 2013 conference, I thought that the task ahead would be an easy one. To my surprise, it has proved inordinately difficult, taking three times longer to complete than I had first imagined. For instance, I found myself resistant to re-reading my monograph. Reasoning that my resistance was founded in boredom with the topic - I had completed my monograph over a decade ago – I tried to soldier on and eventually completed the task under severe personal duress. In retrospect, my resistance should have alerted me that something more was afoot than mere boredom. Indeed, two months later, further introspection has led me to conclude that I have never stopped dealing with my shadow even though I closed the book on *Judith*, so to speak. The shadow is not silenced by decapitation; it is brought to rest through integration.

As I struggled to re-write this article, I was also surprised by a particular resistance to engaging with my reading of Achior! I could see that I had made a mistake in originally assigning the Bethulians to the fourth level of conscious awareness.⁵⁸ I could also see that I had been swayed by the text and my own emotions into seeing *Judith's* rising unconscious contents as an attack whereas, in fact, a more welcoming interpretation would be in order, but I could not "touch" Achior. As I allowed my thoughts to run freely, I realised that I did not *like* Achior and so did not want to deal with him again. Despite my own positive appraisal of this character in *The Enemy is Within*, the child within me saw him as a wimp who

⁵⁷ See Jung, *Two Essays* (Meridian Books), 194.

⁵⁸ "The Bethulians are citizens of a town/city situated on/near one of the important mountain passes by which entry might be gained into Judaea and its temple in the capital city, Jerusalem (4:6-7; 6:12). They may thus be seen as the (spiritual) guardians of central consciousness (Jerusalem) and/or the outer layers of it." See Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 193.

hedges his bets to safeguard himself and ends up identifying with opposing sides to his own detriment. In short, I had projected an age-old childhood image of myself onto this character and so regarded him with disdain. This points me to the fact that I need to integrate the child within – my main shadow complex – in order to move from Stage 2 to Stage 3 in this aspect of my individuation cycle.

Having realised my unconscious attitude towards Achior, I then turned to Judith. I began wondering whether my then unconscious feelings towards each of these characters had prevented me from comparing them. A comparison was certainly called for by my reading of Judith as the ego/obvious protagonist and Achior as the shadow/effective protagonist, but I had failed to provide one, and this despite the fact that I had used Adolfo Roitman's (1989 ≈ 1992)⁵⁹,⁶⁰ essay (see below) in my work. With hindsight, I now see that I had failed to compare the two characters because I feared placing my conscious and unconscious personalities alongside each other.

On a more academic level, I note that few scholarly articles or essays have been penned specifically on the character of Achior. The first publication dedicated solely to Achior was that of Roitman (1989 ≈ 1992). Prior to Roitman's excellent study, the most detailed reflection on Achior's overall function⁶¹ was that of Moore, who noted that Achior is "a crucial character for uniting both sections of the book. . . a splendid study in contrasts and an effective foil for several of the book's characters."⁶² Building on Moore's observations, Roitman correctly notes that "there is an especially intriguing structural relationship and a subtle complementarity between Achior and Judith which must be explained."⁶³ Focusing on the complementarity between the functions of these two characters, Roitman then traces these complementarities through five stages in each character's development, as follows:⁶⁴

- (i) *Opposite roles and location*: man/woman; Ammonite/Israelite; Pagan/Jew; Holofernes' encampment/Bethuliah.
- (ii) *Parallel roles and location*: both deliver a speech, which utilises the history of the Jews to teach spiritual lessons upon which

⁵⁹ I am deeply grateful to Proff. Roitman and Schmitz who severally emailed me copies of Roitman's essays at my request.

⁶⁰ See footnote 52 and the bibliography for details.

⁶¹ I refer specifically to Achior's overall function in *Judith*. As Roitman notes, while Cazelles and Steinman "clarified some obscure aspects of Achior," they failed to note his complex function and structural importance. See Roitman, "Achior in the Book of Judith," 32.

⁶² Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), 59.

⁶³ Roitman, "Achior in the Book of Judith," 32.

⁶⁴ Roitman, "Achior in the Book of Judith," 33-37.

suggestions/advice/recommendations are made.

- (iii) *Change of places*: Achior is expelled from Holofernes' camp / Judith leaves Bethulia voluntarily.
- (iv) *Change of roles in terms of function and reactions, and speech*: example Achior's truthful advice earns the ire of Holofernes and his people, whereas Judith's misleading advice earns their praise and approval.
- (v) *Meeting and transformation of the character*: Achior meets with Judith and is transformed into a civilian and a Jew / Judith meets with Achior and is transformed into a pious and secluded widow.

For Roitman, the parallels above show that Achior is "a kind of double or 'alter ego'" for Judith.⁶⁵ According to my psychoanalytic interpretation of *Judith*, Roitman is more correct than he may have imagined. Achior, as I have indicated, is *Judith's* effective protagonist upon whom depend all the transformations in this text. As such, he is indeed as much a protagonist of the tale as is Judith. Achior also functions as the *animus*-shadow of a femininely construed Jewish community,⁶⁶ just as Judith functions as the ego and *anima* of its masculine representation.⁶⁷ Moreover, Achior is as responsible for the salvation of the Judaeans as is Judith. He is the first answer to their prayers. The text tacitly acknowledges this fact by having the Bethulians' receive Achior wholeheartedly prior to Judith's transformation and descent to the Assyrian camp. Achior is therefore even more important to the unfolding of the story than either Moore or Roitman imagined him to be.⁶⁸

In sharp contrast to the veritable explosion of *Judith* studies in the last few decades,⁶⁹ the academic world has produced only one more English article

⁶⁵ Roitman, "Achior in the Book of Judith," 38.

⁶⁶ I owe this insight to Prof. Athalya Brenner.

⁶⁷ Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, 422.

⁶⁸ This statement is not meant pejoratively in the least. My work corroborates that of Roitman and Moore even as their work corroborates mine, for we are working at two distinct but related levels of the text, namely the surface and deep levels. I could not have completed my deep-level analysis of Achior without the insightful work of these scholars.

⁶⁹ See, for example, the monographs by Toni Craven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith* (SBLDS 70; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983); Margarita Stocker, *Judith: Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998); and Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy is Within*, or the volumes edited by Luis S. J. Alonso-Schökel (ed.), *Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith: Protocol of the Eleventh Colloquy: 27 January 1975* (Berkeley, Calif.: The Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1975), and James C. VanderKam (ed.), "No-one Spoke Ill of Her": *Essays on Judith* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1992). See too the most recent works edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti and Hendrike Lähnemann (eds.), *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*

on Achior, namely that of Venter (2011), "The Function of the Ammonite Achior in the Book of Judith."⁷⁰ Using Stahlberg's theory concerning the telling and re-telling of texts, Venter argues that Judith and Achior are used propagandistically to "for a new definition of Israelite identity."⁷¹ For him, the author "combines an exclusivist view of Israel with an inclusivist stance not only including proselytes and marginalised widows in the Judaeon history. . . but even proposing that they are the heroes and leaders who save their [sic] people."⁷² As I have already indicated, my deep-structure analysis shows that Achior is as responsible for the salvation of the Jews as is Judith. Venter's views therefore find parallel in my own.

E CONCLUSION

In this article, I have attempted to provide an autobiographical response to my 2004 monograph focused through the character of Achior. In order to do so, I have briefly outlined Jung's concept of the individuation process, presented my understanding of ABC and addressed my findings about Achior. Then, with a view to demystifying (my own) academic work, I presented the personal reasons that fuelled my original study as well as the effect that writing this article has had on me. In this, I have confirmed my commitment to being a demonstrably Jungian critic and unearthed a shadow complex within me which cries out for integration.

While my perspective on Achior vis-à-vis *Judith* has not changed – rather, it has been confirmed by extant English studies – I have come to see him as a recipient of my own projected animus-shadow contents which need to be integrated into my conscious psyche as fully as he was integrated into Bethulian society at his conversion. However, I have made at least one important revision to my 2004 study: I have interpreted the Bethulians as people / psychological elements at the third level of conscious awareness, contrary to my initial study which had placed them at level four. I believe that this change better enables us to see the similarities between the Bethulians and Achior in terms of their shared faith, fate, Deuteronomistic worldview, and level of consciousness. It also enables us better to understand the dilemma fac-

(Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), and Géza G. Xeravits (ed.), *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith* (DCLS 14; Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012). The former contains twenty-five essays dealing with the representation of *Judith* in Jewish textual traditions and the arts, without a single contribution dedicated to Achior. The latter deals with *Judith* from a variety of perspectives. It contains a German contribution on Achior, but I could, unfortunately, not get it translated into English on time for this publication.

⁷⁰ Pieter Venter, "The Function of the Ammonite Achior in the Book of Judith," *HvTSt* 67/3 (2011), Art. #1101, 9 pages, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i3.1101>.

⁷¹ Venter, "The Function," 8.

⁷² Venter, "The Function," 8.

ing Achior and the Bethulians in terms of becoming stabilised / fully functional at the third level of consciousness, namely the differentiation of moral properties and individual consciousness.

My autobiographical review of *The Enemy is Within* has also prompted me to query my first interpretation of rising unconscious contents as an attack on consciousness. Moreover, my current article has focused far more on the transformative function of Achior than had my monograph. I have no doubt that these changes too are fuelled by my own psychological development in the last decade. As I have previously indicated, I have not ceased battling my shadow since I completed my monograph. My work on Judith has facilitated more shadow contents breaking through my conscious threshold than I had ever expected. Some of these have been so contrary to my conscious nature, that they have terrified me. However, I am slowly coming to see the rising tide of the unconscious as a blessing, rather than an attack, for it gives me the opportunity to integrate that which I have deliberately or not so deliberately "lost" of myself. I am slowly being transformed, so that I no longer need to feign wholeness but can embrace brokenness. However, I am still not ready to compare Judith and Achior. Clearly, I need to do more internal work before I can externalise it into an article or a part of an article.

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