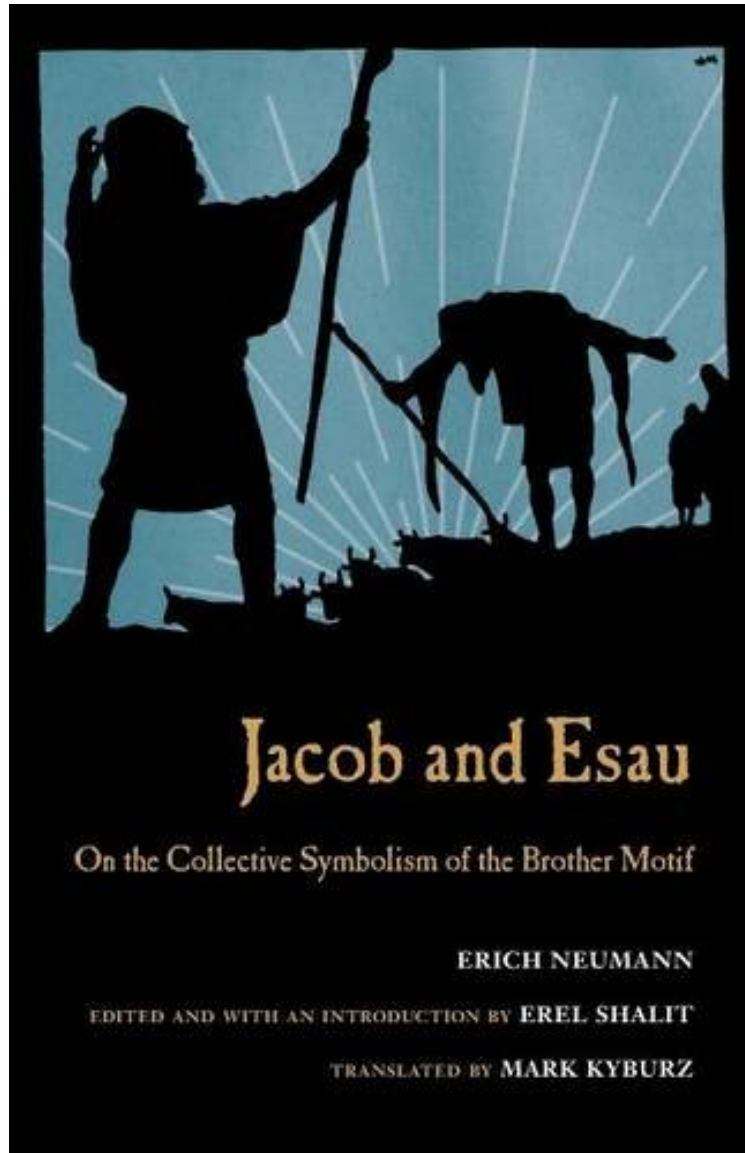


[Mobile ebook] Jacob Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif

## Jacob Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif

*Erich Neumann*

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**Erich Neumann : Jacob Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jacob Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Neumanns wonderful and deep book has finally been publishedBy EmmaNeumanns wonderful and deep book has finally been published. In the three chapters, edited by Shalit, Neumann shows how the biblical story of Jacob and Esau is a mythology of the development of consciousness, of the

shadow, and of the relation with the inner other. Beautifully written, marvelously edited, and with the addition of a very clear introduction by Shalit, the book is highly recommended both to those in the field of depth psychology and all others with an interest in Neumanns work. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Neumann's Interpretation of Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel is Brilliant! By Thomas J. Farrell My favorite scholar is the American Jesuit polymath Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955) of Saint Louis University (SLU), the Jesuit university in St. Louis, Missouri. Over the years, I took five courses from Fr. Ong at SLU, starting in the fall semester of 1964 when I was twenty years old. I have published a book-length study of Ong's life and work (2000; rev. ed., 2015), and I have co-edited five volumes of his essays (1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1999, and 2002) and contributed introductory essays to four of those five volumes (1992a, 1995, 1999, and 2002). In addition, I have co-edited anthologies of essays by diverse hands about Ong's thought (1991 and 2012), and I have contributed essays to anthologies of essays by diverse hands about his thought (1987, 1991, 1999, and 2012). I regard Ong's body of work as a goldmine worthy of careful study and a very great blessing for understanding our Western and American cultural history. For bibliographic information about Ong's publications, including information about reprinted items, see Thomas M. Walsh's *Walter J. Ong, S.J.: A Bibliography 1929-2006* in the book *Language, Culture, and Identity: The Legacy of Walter J. Ong, S.J.*, edited by Sara van den Berg and Walsh (Hampton Press, 2011, pages 185-245). Ong's most original and creative contribution to our understanding of Western and American culture is his massively researched book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Harvard University Press, 1958). Briefly, Peter Ramus (1515-1572) was a French logician and educational reformer and Protestant martyr. When Harvard College was founded in 1636, Ramus' work in logic (also known as dialectic) dominated the curriculum. In addition, Ramus' logic dominated the curriculum at Cambridge University in England, where almost all college-educated men in New England had studied it. Years earlier, Ong had first learned about the influence of Ramus' dialectic from Perry Miller's book *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1939). When Ong was working on his 1941 Masters in English at SLU, the young Canadian Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) called his attention to Miller's book. At that time, McLuhan was working on his 1943 Cambridge University doctoral dissertation on the history of the verbal arts of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (or logic) and Thomas Nashe, which was posthumously published, unrevised, as the book *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of His Time*, edited by W. Terrence Gordon (Ginkgo Press, 2006). When Ong in the late 1940s proceeded to undertake doctoral studies in English at Harvard University, Miller served as the director of his massively researched doctoral dissertation about Ramus. With financial assistance from the Guggenheim Foundation, Ong was able to do field research in more than 100 libraries in the British Isles and Continental Europe, tracking down more than 750 volumes by Ramus and his supporters and critics that he (Ong) lists with brief annotations in the book *Ramus and Talon Inventory* (Harvard University Press, 1968). Fr. Ong died more than a decade before the brash developer Donald J. Trump of New York ran for president of the United States in 2016. Nevertheless, hints in Ong's publications and certain related publications can help us establish a conceptual framework for understanding President-elect Trump's appeal to the Trump voters in the thirty states who gave him a decisive electoral victory over the Democratic Party's candidate, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. In Ong's first book, *Frontiers in American Catholicism: Essays on Ideology and Culture* (Macmillan, 1957), he discusses the threefold schema of character typology that the American Jewish sociologist David Riesman (1909-2002) of Harvard University works with in his widely known book *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (Yale University Press, 1950): (1) outer-directed (also known as tradition-directed), (2) inner-directed, and (3) other-directed. Even though Riesman acknowledges that outer-directed people have always been present in American culture, he sees inner-directed people as the culturally more dominant kind of American people. Riesman's way of characterizing inner-directed people is consistent with and compatible with Ong's way of describing people (more often than not males) educated in formal logic in Western and American cultural history. But with the memory of the Holocaust under Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in Germany fresh in his mind, Riesman was understandably worried about the then-emerging other-directed character type in American mass culture which Ong eventually came to refer to as secondary oral culture, the cultural constellation under the influence of the various communications media that accentuate sound. However, Ong in his 1957 book was not as worried as Riesman in his 1950 book was about the possible negative implications of the then-emerging other-directed character type in postwar American mass culture. In connection with Riesman's threefold character typology, I should mention that the Swiss psychiatrist and psychological theorist C. G. Jung, M.D. (1875-1961), at an earlier time became known in the prestige culture in American culture for the far more detailed personality typology he worked out in the book *Psychological Types*, translated by H. G. Baynes (London, 1923; New York, 1926; orig. German ed., 1921; later, R. F. C. Hull revised Baynes' translation for the edition of the book published by Princeton University Press in 1971). On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the founding of Harvard College in 1636, Harvard University conferred an honorary doctorate on Jung in 1936. In 1937, Jung delivered the prestigious Terry Lectures at Yale University published as the book *Psychology and Religion* (Yale University Press, 1938). Ong delivered the Terry Lectures at Yale in 1964, the expanded version of which was published as the book *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (Yale

University Press, 1967). In 2009, Norton published an over-sized art-book edition of Jung's *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, edited by Sonu Shamdasani and translated by Mark Kyburz, John Peck, and Shamdasani. That elegant edition has spurred a renewal of interest in Jung's work and related work. I will say more about Jung's thought momentarily. In certain earlier publications, Ong also refers to Jungian thought. See, for example, Ong's article *St. Ignatius Prison-Cage and the Existentialist Situation in the Jesuit-sponsored journal Theological Studies*, volume 15, number 1 (March 1954): pages 34-51, which Ong includes in his book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (Macmillan, 1962, pages 242-259). (St. Ignatius Loyola was the founder of the Jesuit order.) At a later time, Ong published three important books with Cornell University Press (1971, 1977, and 1981). In two of those books, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (1971) and *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness* (1981), the published version of Ong's 1979 *Messenger Lectures* at Cornell University, Ong discusses the masterwork of the German-born-and-educated Jewish Jungian analyst and theorist Erich Neumann (1905-1960) the book *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (Pantheon Books, 1954; orig. German ed., 1949). In *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (1971), Ong ably sums up in one sentence Neumann's account in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954): The stages of psychic development as treated by Neumann are successively (1) the infantile undifferentiated self-contained whole symbolized by the uroboros (tail-eater), the serpent with its tail in its mouth, as well as by other circular or global mythological figures, (2) the Great Mother (the impersonal womb from which each infant, male or female, comes, the impersonal femininity which may swallow him [or her the infant] up again), (3) the separation of the world parents (the principles of opposites, differentiation, possibility of change), (4) the birth of the hero (rise of masculinity and of the personalized ego) with its sequels in (5) the slaying of the mother (fight with the dragon: victory over primal creative but consuming femininity, chthonic forces), and (6) the slaying of the father (symbol of thwarting obstruction of individual achievement, to what is new), (7) the freeing of the captive (liberation of the ego from endogamous kinship libido and emergence of the higher femininity, with woman now as person, anima-sister, related positively to ego consciousness), and finally (8) the transformation (new unity in self-conscious individualization, higher masculinity, expressed primordially in the Osiris myth but today entering into new phases with the heightened or, more properly, personalism of modern man [and woman]) (pages 10-11). During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly demonstrated that he, for one, does not yet see woman now as person. According to Neumann's way of thinking, ego-consciousness in both men and women is masculine, so both men and women need to evolve into seeing woman now as person. As I will discuss momentarily, Neumann sees two key episodes in the story of Jacob that occur at night as important. At night, one's ego-consciousness is usually at rest, compared with its more active role usually during the day. However, we should note here that both of the night events involve inner activity in Jacob's psyche. Now, Neumann was analyzed by and trained as an analyst by Jung in Zurich in the 1930s. Neumann and his wife and family settled in Palestine in 1934. For the rest of his life, he lived and practiced in Israel. In 2015, Princeton University Press published the Jung-Neumann letters translated into English in the book *Analytic Psychology in Exile: The Correspondence of C. G. Jung and Erich Neumann*, edited by Martin Liebscher and translated by Heather McCarthy. In 2015, Chiron Publications published an English translation of a document that Neumann had sent Jung in 1934 as an attachment with a letter as the book titled *Jacob and Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif*, edited by Eral Shalit and translated by Mark Kyburz. In Genesis, Abraham, who to this day is regarded as the father in faith in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, sends a servant to his brother Laban to find a wife for his son Isaac. The servant brings back the young Rebecca to be Isaac's wife. Rebecca gives birth to twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau emerges first from her womb, so he thereby receives the right of primogeniture. As the boys grow up, Esau is Isaac's favorite; Jacob, Rebecca's. When Isaac grows old and is planning to bestow his blessing on Esau before he dies, the wily Rebecca conspires with Jacob to trick Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob instead. Trickster figures are common in folklore. When Esau learns of the trickery of his brother Jacob, Esau is understandably filled with murderous outrage, and he even threatens to kill Jacob. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump's most fervent supporters seemed to express murderous outrage, which Trump at times encouraged them to express. To prevent Jacob from being killed by Esau, the wily Rebecca intervenes and sends Jacob to visit her father Laban. On Jacob's way to visit Laban, Jacob has a famous dream at the place commemorated as Bethel of a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels going up and down the ladder. In effect, this dream envisions an inner spiritual life the kind of inner spiritual life characteristic of introversion. In any event, Jacob visits Laban and works for him and marries both his daughters Leah, the eldest, and Rachel. Eventually, Jacob gets tired of working for Laban and decides to return to his homeland with his wives and children, even though he still understandably fears his brother Esau. On Jacob's way back to his homeland, he has another famous experience at night when he is trying to sleep at the place commemorated as Peniel. As he is sleeping, he wrestles with an angel of God. Before Jacob allows the angel to depart, he asks for the angel's blessing. The angel blesses Jacob, but also inflicts a lasting wound on him, and then re-names him Israel. The imagery of the lasting wound of Jacob in this episode remarkably resembles the imagery of the missing part in the reconstruction of Osiris, mentioned above. In the story of the reconstruction of Osiris, his sister Isis is portrayed as reconstructing him. But the inner transformation of Jacob is portrayed as being effected by the angel. Then Jacob/Israel goes forth to

greet his brother Esau. Jacob/Israel confers many gifts on Esau. After their amicable meeting, the two brothers part company and take up living in different territories. In Neumann's recently published book, he works with Jung's terms introversion (Jacob) and extroversion (Esau). For all practical purposes, Riesman's term outer-directed (also known as tradition-directed) can be aligned with Jung's extroversion, and Riesman's term inner-directed, with Jung's introversion. However, Riesman's term other-directed does not correspond to any explicit term used by Jung or Neumann. But this is where things get really interesting. Neumann also sees Jacob and Esau as representing what Jung refers to as the problem of opposites. Jung's magnum opus about the problem of opposites is his massively researched book *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, 2nd ed., translated by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton University Press, 1970; orig. German ed., 2 vols. in 1955 and 1956). Briefly, Jung interprets alchemical texts as containing imagery about inner psycho-spiritual dynamics. Now, even a cursory look at Jung's paintings in *The Red Book: Liber Novus* (2009), mentioned above, shows that he experienced vivid imagery during his dangerous experiment with what he came to refer to as active imagination. Jung's calligraphy in that book also contains vivid imagistic thought and expression. But Jung stopped working on that book in 1930. I see Jung himself as further working through and processing his dangerous experience in his massive research about alchemy. Now, Neumann interprets Jacob's wrestling with the angel as representing a significant inner shift in what Jung refers to as the shadow. In short, Jacob's wrestling with the angel represents his wrestling with his shadow side, thereby consciously assimilating his shadow side, thereby leading to its detoxification and depotentiating it (page 28). Unless and until we consciously assimilate our shadow side, we tend to un-self-consciously project our shadow side onto others onto other individual persons or onto groups of persons. But if other-directedness (in Riesman's terminology) represents a step toward consciously assimilating the shadow side (in Jung's terminology), then Ong's positive view in 1957 of the emergence of other-directedness may be warranted. By analogy, perhaps we can liken our contemporary rivalry between inner-directed economic libertarians in the Republican Party today, on the one hand, and, on the other, other-directed progressives and liberals concerned about economic and social justice in the Democratic Party to the rivalry between the biblical twin brothers Esau (the extrovert) and Jacob (the introvert) in Genesis, respectively. However, it strikes me that Neumann's way of interpreting Jacob's wrestling with the angel has far more importance for people who are characterized by introversion than it does for people who are characterized by extroversion. No doubt people who are characterized by extroversion also need to consciously assimilate their shadow side. However, even though Esau's murderous outrage at being tricked by Jacob has subsided by the time when Jacob returns to his homeland, there are no other details about Esau that seem to indicate that he has assimilated his shadow side. In the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump at times sounded as if he were projecting his shadow side onto certain groups of people, including Mexicans and Muslims to the cheers of his most fervent supporters. His most fervent supporters could not be characterized as other-directed in the positive sense that Ong suggests at least not toward certain others. In general, multiculturalists tend to be other-directed in the positive sense that Ong suggests. Oftentimes, however, they tend to have a blind spot toward white culture, because they tend to be hyper-critical of white culture which they tend to see as tainted by so-called patriarchy. In general, multiculturalists tend to project their shadow side onto our Western and American cultural history. However, if we were to imagine our collective American culture as having a psyche, then we might see Trump as representing and expressing the shadow side of our collective American psyche. In contrast with today's multiculturalists, Ong does not project his shadow side onto our Western and American cultural history, probably because he had assimilated his shadow side into his ego-consciousness. Jesuit spirituality tends to be conducive to assimilating one's shadow side into one's ego-consciousness. In contrast with Trump as representing and expressing our collective American shadow side, Ong represents a more evolved and individuated ego-consciousness. In any event, certain white Christian voters gave Trump his narrow electoral victories in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, thereby blindsiding Hillary and her numerous supporters. In Riesman's terminology, we can characterize Trump's white Christian voters as representing the inner-directed character type. Even though Hillary won the overall popular vote by a substantial margin, Trump's decisive electoral victory in thirty states blindsided Hillary and her numerous supporters. No doubt Hillary has been mourning her electoral loss. In the self-help book *The Journey from Abandonment to Healing* (Berkeley Publishing Group/ Penguin Putnam, 2000), Susan Anderson ably describes the process of mourning non-death losses in our lives. No doubt mourning a non-death loss and mourning the loss of a loved one to death involve an inner experience like Jacob's wrestling with the angel. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Dolores S. Anderson Excellent, thank you.

In 1934, Erich Neumann, considered by many to have been Carl Gustav Jung's foremost disciple, sent Jung a handwritten note: "I will pursue your suggestion of elaborating on the 'Symbolic Contributions' to the Jacob-Esau problem . . . The great difficulty is the rather depressing impossibility of a publication." Now, eighty years later, in *Jacob and Esau: On the Collective Symbolism of the Brother Motif*, his important work is finally published. In this newly discovered manuscript, Neumann sowed the seeds of his later works. It provides a window into his original thinking and creative writing regarding the biblical subject of Jacob and Esau and the application of the brother motif to analytical psychology. Neumann elaborates on the central role of the principle of opposites in the human soul,

contrasting Jacob's introversion with Esau's extraversion, the sacred and the profane, the inner and the outer aspects of the God-image, the shadow and its projection, and how the old ethic- expressed, for example, in the expulsion of the scapegoat-perpetuates evil. Mark Kyburz, translator of C. G. Jung's *The Red Book*, has eloquently rendered Neumann's text into English. Erel Shalit's editing and introduction provide an entre into Neumann's work on this subject, which will be of interest to a wide range of readers, from lay persons to professionals interested in Jungian psychology and Jewish and religious studies. Erich Neumann was born in Berlin in 1905. He emigrated to Israel in 1934 and lived in Tel Aviv until his death in 1960. For many years he lectured and played a central role at Eranos, the seminal conference series in analytical psychology. His writings include *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, and *The Great Mother*. The correspondence between C. G. Jung and Neumann was published in 2015. Dr. Erel Shalit is a Jungian psychoanalyst in Israel and founding director of the Analytical Psychotherapy Program at Bar Ilan University. He is the author of several books, including *The Cycle of Life and The Hero and His Shadow*. Dr. Mark Kyburz specializes in scholarly translation from German into English and is the co-translator of C. G. Jung's *The Red Book* (2009). He lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland.