# The Platonic Basis of Jung's Sky Story

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ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on one enduring aspect of the sky-story expressed by Plato (428/427 or 424/423 – 348/347 BCE): the daimon as a mediator between earth and heaven. In particular, it explores the survival of the Platonic soul-sky-drama in the work of C. G. Jung (1875–1961), bringing it up to date in the twentieth century. To support this idea, it firstly concentrates on Plato's material on the daimon to identify key characteristics. It then considers how this concept might be found within Jung's work – linking the Platonic notion of daimon to a core concept of Jung's thought, which is individuation. As part of this, it searches for explanations through Jung's language of depth psychology, and to explore the daimon more fully it draws on the concept of *mundus imaginalis* coined by Henry Corbin (1903–1978), whose insights of Jung's archetypal depth psychology supported and informed his ideas. So, the paper concludes that the daimon is central to individuation.

## The daimon in Platonic thought

Plato encapsulated the idea of the daimon most clearly as a liminal figure acting between gods and humans, and also as a personal guide.[1] This broader concept of the daimon had, in Platonic thought, essential philosophical importance in cosmology and theology as an element that ensured the unity of the cosmos.[2] However, Plato's daimon represents an adaptation of ideas that had gone before, and not a radical departure from the traditional notion.

Before Plato, the notion was utilized in ancient Greece from both a religious and a philosophical perspective; generally, the daimon was characterized as a sort of divine being that was circumscribed neither to a specific cult nor mythology nor by figurative representation.[3] This

[1] See A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London: Methuen, 1926), p. 1; Andrei Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne, histoire de la notion de daimôn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 37.
[2] Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne*, pp. 330–331.
[3] Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne,* p. 1.

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imponderable aspect of the notion was reflected by the assimilation of the daimon with destiny but also with vengeance spirits, heroes, and the spirits of the dead.[4] The daimon was associated linguistically and mythologically with the ideas of distribution, destiny, and divinity; what the daimon is distributing, then, would be the destiny, the lot of each one, but also the fate which is apportioned at a certain moment.[5] The daimons were also called 'assistants of the gods' in the fourth-century BCE *Derveni Papyrus* and the anonymous author also introduced the idea of a 'personal daimon' assigned to each soul.[6] For Heraclitus (c. early fifth century BCE), the daimon was simultaneously guide, guardian, destiny, and fate as revealed through one's character.[7]

To better understand how Plato's use of the daimon represents not a radical departure from the traditional daimon, but rather a repurposing of the notion to the end of communicating his philosophical aims, it is important to identify the underlying principles in his thinking.

**Underlying principles in Plato**

One of Plato's fundamental principles is the vertical hierarchy of being: humanity is inferior, living in 'the hollows of the earth'; in the exterior, in a celestial zone, is placed the 'true earth', which is incorruptible, with creatures that are navigating through the air in the same way men are doing

[4] See Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. by Samuel Butler (London: A. C. Fifield, 1900) Book II, pp. 134–135. For the daimon as vengeance spirit (referred to as the Erinyes); See Hésiode*, Théogonie, Les Travaux et les Jours, Le Bouclier*, trad. par Paul Mazon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1928), *Travaux*, pp. 121–126. For the posthumous title of daimon attributed to men of the Golden Age.

[5] Timotin*, La démonologie platonicienne,* p. 15.

[6] Gábor Betegh, ed. and trans., *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)*,* Col. 3, p. 9.

[7] See Heracleitus, para 247, in G. S. Kirk, J.E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 211; Stavros J. Baloyannis, 'The philosophy of Heracletus today', *Encephalos Journal*, Vol. 50, Issue 1 (January–March 2013), pp. 1–21 (p. 1), <http://www.encephalos.gr/pdf/50-1-01e.pdf>, [accessed 29 June 2018]; James Hillman, *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* (London: Bantam, 1997 [1996]), pp. 256–257. For Heraclitus' dictum *Ethos Anthropoi Daimon* – 'Character for man is daimon', Hillman offered a list of different interpretations as revealed by English translations, which understand daimon as guide, guardian, fate, and destiny.

on the seas, and this is a paradise for man.[8] The inhabitants of the True Earth are living on the Isles of the Blest surrounded by an ocean of air.[9]

Plato, through his eschatological and cosmological myths, meant to abolish the distance between man and the sacred.[10] Platonic myths explained how the individual soul was imprisoned in the body, and how it could be liberated from this prison through 'philosophical life'.[11] Concerning Socrates' words in his dialogue with Hermogenes about 'body', Culianu wrote, 'I think this admits of many explanations, if a little, even very little, change is made; for some say it is the tomb of the soul'.[12] The liberation from the body involves a systematic separation of the human soul from bodily desires, as there is an afterlife reward 'allowing the good to ascend to the stars' while retaining the subterranean world as a place of correction for the unrighteous.[13] As Plato put it:

> … for it (soul) does not regain its wings before that time has elapsed, except the soul of him who has been a guileless philosopher or a philosophical lover; these, when for three successive periods of a thousand years they have chosen such a life, after the third period of a thousand years become winged in the three thousandth year and go their way; but the rest, when they have finished their first life, receive

[8] Plato, *Phaedo,* Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 1, trans. by Harold N. Fowler, Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1966), 109c; Plato, *Gorgias,* Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 3, trans. by W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1967), 523a–527c; Ioan Petru Culianu, *Psihanodia: o prezentare a dovezilor cu privire la ascensiunea celestă a sufletului şi la importanţa acesteia,* ed. a 2-a; trad. de Mariana Neț (Iași: Polirom, 2006), p. 13; Ioan Petru Culianu, *Experienţe ale extazului: extaz, ascensiune şi povestire vizionară din elenism pînă în Evul Mediu ,* ed. a 2-a, trad. de Dan Petrescu; pref. de Mircea Eliade; postf. de Eduard Iricinschi (Iaşi: Polirom, 2004), pp. 51–52;
[9] Plato, *Gorgias* 523a–523b.
[10] Culianu, *Psihanodia*, p. 12; Culianu, *Experienţe ale extazului*, pp. 27–28; pp. 50–51.
[11] Plato, *Cratylus*, Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 12, trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1921), 400b.
[12] Culianu, *Psihanodia,* p. 33.
[13] Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology,* Volume I: *The Ancient and Classical Worlds* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [2009]), p. 161.

> judgment, and after the judgment some go to the places of correction under the earth and pay their penalty.[14]

Plato attributed to the soul the power to initiate motion and exemplified it as a chariot pulled by two horses and guided by a charioteer.[15] Plato also likened this union of forces to the human personality: one of the horses symbolizes the power of irrational appetites in life, while the other symbolizes the imitative spirit of man, without a purpose of its own, and the charioteer symbolizes the individual power of reason.[16] The two horses are for the most part in a competition with one another, and consequently, everyone is in a certain state of internal conflict, and, as Plato remarked, 'the victory over self is of all victories the first and best'.[17]

Similar to Plato's ideas of the universe resting on the soul, or psyche, and that the human soul is a union of competing forces, Jung spoke, in a twentieth-century context, about the cosmos as psychological and that the human psyche is subject to an internal developmental process.[18] Plato argued that knowledge of the divine is possible only to the divine, but also that through man's reasoning faculty (the nous) a part of man is divine and thus he can have some knowledge of the divine, even if this is a difficult process which is not addressed to man's vision or comprehension but is rather a product of the imagination.[19] As Plato said:

> ... (T)he region above the heaven was never worthily sung by any earthly poet, nor will it ever be... this region... is visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul'.[20]

Plato's idea of acquiring knowledge of the divine via the soul's power to envision was also expressed by Jung through his concept of active

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[14] Plato, *Phaedrus,* Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9*,* trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1925), 249a–b.
[15] Plato, *Phaedrus* 245e–246a.
[16] Plato, *Phaedrus* 245a–b; See also Jerry S. Clegg, 'Plato's Vision of Chaos', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 26, No. 19 (1976), pp. 52–61 (p. 57).
[17] Plato, *Laws*, Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vols. 10 & 11, trans. by R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1967 & 1968), 626e; Clegg, 'Plato's Vision of Chaos', p. 57.
[18] Campion, *A History of Western Astrology,* Vol. I p. 164; Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology,* Volume II: *The Medieval and Modern Worlds* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [2009]), p. 252, p. 254.
[19] Plato*, Phaedrus* 247d, 246c–d.
[20] Plato*, Phaedrus* 247c–d.

imagination – a method allowing what is unknown in the individual's psyche to communicate through images – which is discussed later on. Plato related the most elevated part of the soul, the nous, with the daimon, thus explaining the affinities of the human soul with the heavens. As he put it:

> ... the most lordly kind of our soul, we must conceive of it in this wise: we declare that God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us- seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant up from earth towards our kindred in the heaven.[21]

And he continued:

> … for it is by suspending our head and root from that region whence the substance of our soul first came that the Divine Power keeps upright our whole body.[22]

This subsequent statement points to the idea that the daimon represents the human potential to attain a state of personal detachment from the triple dependence of human nature on pleasures, pains, and desires.[23] This process of liberation of the human soul from bodily desires describes Plato's philosophical life and it is deducible that applies to the daimon.

It can be said that Plato compared humans to plants that grow on the earth, the difference being that man is a celestial plant, having his roots in the sky, from which his head is 'suspended'. The evidence in Plato's text subsequently suggests a continual contact of the human soul with the sky, through intellectual activity and related to the planets' movements; this

[21] Plato, *Timaeus,* Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9, trans. by W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1925), 90a–b.
[22] Plato, *Timaeus* 90a–b.
[23] Cf. Plato*, Laws* IV.732e: 'Pleasures, pains and desires are by nature especially human; and from these, of necessity, every mortal creature is, so to say, suspended and dependent by the strongest cords of influence.'
It may not be a coincidence that Plato used the same verb 'suspend' - which in the *Timaeus* defines the relation between the nous and the sky, to express in this context the triple dependence of the human nature of pleasures, pains, and desires.

also involves an ethical attitude, as to maintain this contact with the divine, the man, as far as is possible, should 'be likened unto god'.[24]

**Plato's dialogues on the daimon**

A cross-analysis of the *Timaeus* and the *Symposium* provides a consistent picture of what Plato meant by the daimon as an intermediary between the gods and the humans, while Plato's 'Myth of Er' expended on the personal daimon as connected with the idea of destiny, fate, and character – a context through which Plato ascertained the role of the daimon in the definition of philosophy and the philosophical life.[25]

In the *Timaeus*, Plato also put psychology and cosmology in concordance. He explained that the soul is formed of both that which is the same and indivisible and that which is divisible in bodies, thus making an essential psychological distinction between the immortal (indivisible) species, which is the work of the demiurge, and the mortal (divisible) species, the result of the work of his co-operators.[26] The immortal species, the Nous, is composed of a mixture of two elements following the model of the World-Soul, namely two circles of 'the class of the Same and the Other', except that for the human soul the mixture is impure.[27] The Nous has a spherical form and is placed in the human body in the 'bony sphere round about the brain'.[28] The circular movement of the stars represents the revolution of the World-Soul and, following this principle, the immortal part of the human soul is animated by a circular movement.[29] However, Plato did not give any supplementary details about the psychological reality of this movement.

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[24] Plato, *Republic,* Plato in Twelve Volumes*,* Vols. 5 & 6*,* trans. by Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1969), Book X. 613a.

[25] Plato, *Symposium,* Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9, trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1925), 202d–203a*.* Plato presented the daimon Eros as an intermediary figure between man and divinity, whose role is to arrange the passage from the sensible reality towards the intelligible world, by stimulating the exercise of reason and encouraging true knowledge; Plato, *Republic*, X.617e, 620d–e. In the 'Myth of Er', Plato introduced the image of personal daimon as an individualised figure of destiny, one's fate or one's character.

[26] Plato, *Timaeus* 41c.

[27] Plato, *Timaeus* 43e–44b, 41d.

[28] Plato, *Timaeus* 73e.

[29] Plato, *Timaeus* 42c, 43d ,44b, 47b.

Similar to the movement of the Nous, Jung explained the circular movement of the Self, which he understood as the source and the goal of the human psyche, and which can be attained through conscious inner work of integrating the individual's consciousness within this larger psychic centre.[30] This transformative process of personality represents Jung's concept of individuation and is further discussed.

Plato saw the act of knowledge, which is proper to the nous, as an imitative act of the divine, which implies the superposition and coincidence of two figures: the Same and the Other; any disproportion between them leads to a distorted image of reality, and this appears to be for Plato the first source of ignorance.[31] From this becomes clear that Plato‘s idea of the philosophical life, which equates with imitating one’s daimon, demands this harmony of the internal movements of the nous while the gaze is directed perpetually towards the sky. This transformative process asks for both an ethical attitude and profound abstract knowledge, due to the archetypal geometrical forms which one must permanently consider.

**The location of the daimon in Jung’s thought**

Jung revised Plato's idea of the philosophical life and linked this transformative process with the concept of individuation, which Jung associated with the myth of the soul's journey through the planetary spheres in connection with human consciousness and the archetypal realm or Jung’s term of the unconscious.[32]

Individuation is a process that involves the unconscious content in a compensatory relationship with consciousness. Jung discovered that psyche is a self-regulating system: the regulating element situated in the unconscious compensates the conscious ego, or in other words, the ego is led by the unconscious towards its goal.[33] Jung explained that the psyche is a self-regulating system with a compensatory relation between conscious

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[30] C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. by Aniela Jaffé, trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 196–7.

[31] Plato, *Theaetetus*, Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 12, trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1921), 193 b–d.

[32] C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*: *An Inquiry into the separation and synthesis of psychic opposites in alchemy*, Collected Works, Vol. 14, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), para. 308, p. 272.

[33] C. G. Jung, *Modern man in search of a soul*, trans. by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (San Diego, New York, London: A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc., 1933), p. 17.

and unconscious.[34] And as Robert Aziz wrote, 'Both the inner image and the outer event are distinct aspects of the same compensatory pattern, and accordingly, are to be treated as parts of a unified whole, which as a total phenomenon requires interpretation on the subjective level'.[35] Consequently, the ego-self relationship is central to the individuation process.[36]

In contrast with Plato's archetypal geometrical forms, Jung personified them and enabled the archetypes to move into psychological reality, and thus made it possible for the individual to get a true image of reality and to achieve likeness with the daimon as in Platonic desideratum.[37] Thus Plato's notion of the philosophical life, explained in Jung's terms of depth psychology, is an inner process, which Jung called individuation, through which an individual can achieve full integration of one's unique inherent personality in cooperation with the unconscious – Jung's equivalent term for the Platonic World of Forms, or in the terms of Neoplatonist Iamblichus (254–325 CE) – the gods or daimons themselves.[38] Jung too affirmed that when he spoke of the unconscious he might just as well have used 'God' or 'daimon' and that this idea was likely considered appropriate to reflect the initiation of communication between the human soul and the divine, necessary to succeed with the individuation process:

> I prefer the term 'the unconscious', knowing that I might equally well speak of 'God' or 'daimon' if I wished to express myself in mythic language. When I do use such a mythic language, I am aware that 'mana', 'daimon', and 'God' are synonyms for the unconscious... A creative person has little power over his own life. He is not free. He is captive and driven by his daimon.[39]

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[34] C. G. Jung, 'The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious' in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Collected Works, Vol. 7, 2nd edn, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), para. 275, pp. 177–8.

[35] Robert Aziz, *C. G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 81.

[36] Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 7, p. 110.

[37] C. G. Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, Collected Works, Vol. 13, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1967), para. 299.; Plato, *Timaeus* 90c–d.

[38] Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 7, para. 266, p. 73.; See Iamblichus, *De mysteriis,* trans. by Emma C. Clark, John M. Dillon and Jackson P. Hershbell (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), Book II. About the gods and daimons and IX:1-3, about the personal daimon.

[39] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 336–7, p. 357.

Jung provided a new vision of the archetypes as a dynamic pattern of unique spiritual meaning, being active in nature as a whole, unrestricted by space-time limits, and manifesting through an individual's life as synchronistic experiences.[40] This is central for understanding the process of individuation which involves the unconscious content in a compensatory relationship with consciousness because the synchronistic event calls for reflection and the uncovered experience is interpreted on the subjective level.[41] Thus the individual's personality is transformed by integrating consciousness within the larger psychic centre that Jung called the Self, and which is Iamblichus's god or daimon, or the Platonic One.[42]

For Jung, the gateway between the visible and invisible worlds is to be found by "magic", which he explained using the words of Albertus Magnus (c. 1206–1280):

> ... a certain power to alter things indwells in the human soul and subordinates the other things to her, particularly when she is swept into a great excess of love or hate or the like. When therefore the soul of a man falls into a great excess of any passion… it [the excess] binds things [magically] and alters them in the way it wants.[43]

Jung pointed out the magical influence of the unconscious in terms of 'synchronistic ("magical") happenings... dependent on affects', when

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[40] C. G. Jung, 'Symbols and the Interpretation of Dreams' in *The Symbolic Life,* Collected Works, Vol. 18, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), para. 523, p. 228.

[41] Jung, *Modern man in search of a soul*, p. 17.

[42] See Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 196–197. For the Self as a goal of psychic development; See also C. G. Jung, *Aion: Research into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Collected Works, Vol. 9, Part II, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), para. 356. For the Self as the unifying archetype; See Plato, *Parmenides*, Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925), 137c–166c. For Plato's reference to The One. See also Merle G. Walker, 'The One and Many in Plato's Parmenides', *The Philosophical Review* Vol. 47, Issue 5, September 1938, pp. 488–516.

[43] C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Collected Works, Vol. 8, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), para 859, p. 573; See also C. G. Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus,* ed. by Sonu Shamdasani, trans. by Mark Kyburz, John Peck, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 2009), p. 314.

'images present themselves spontaneously and are based on no conscious knowledge whatever'.[44] Here, Jung was in total agreement with Iamblichus, who maintained that it is the god or daimon who initiate the communication.[45] For Jung, it was the archetype of the collective unconscious that takes action and requires receptiveness and personal reactions to initiate the individuation process:

> … you yourself must enter into the process with your personal reactions … as if the drama being enacted before your eyes were real. It is a psychic fact that this fantasy is happening, and it is as real as you—as a psychic entity—are real.[46]

Jung considered that the task in this encounter is to translate the unconscious emotions into images or to find the images lying behind emotions. He believed that the process could be deepened by the participation of the individual in a conversation with the archetypal imagery and that it could affect both. In Jung's own words:

> To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images that is to say, to find the images which were concealed in the emotions I was inwardly calmed and reassured. Had I left those images hidden in the emotions, I might have been torn to pieces by them.[47]

Jung's method of allowing what is unknown in the individual's psyche to express itself in the language of images describes his concept of active imagination.[48] And so the imagination communicates divine thoughts through images, and the actual act of imagining turns out to be a divine act of reconnection. As Jung put it:

> My consciousness is like an eye that penetrates to the most distant spaces, yet it is the psychic non-ego that fills them with non-spatial

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[44] Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 8, para. 860, p. 574; C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, Collected Works, Vol. 9, Part I, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1955), p. 334.
[45] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis,* III.7*,* (115.3-7). Iamblichus said that it is the god or daimon that initiate the encounter 'the god acting by himself'.
[46] Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 14, para. 753, p. 620.
[47] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 177.
[48]Joan Chodorow, ed.*, Jung on Active Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 3–4.

> images. And these images are not pale shadows, but tremendously powerful psychic factors… Beside this picture I would like to place the spectacle of the starry heavens at night, for the only equivalent of the universe within is the universe without; and just as I reach this world through the medium of the body, so I reach that world through the medium of the psyche.[49]

**Individuation and the personal daimon**

To understand how this communication works, Jung talks about his daimon Philemon, whom he met in a vision.[50] To establish a connection with him, Jung consciously invoked Philemon through active imagination. In Jung's description of his guru one can recognize the characteristics of the personal daimon as an intermediary celestial being, but a living figure at the same time:

> Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversation with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. He said I treated thoughts as if I generated myself, but in his view, thoughts were like animals in a forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air... It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche... Psychologically, Philemon represented superior insight. He was a mysterious figure to me. At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality... and to me he was what Indians Call a guru.[51]

Jung also claimed that he himself experimented with the encounter with the self: 'Through uniting with the self we reach the God... I have experienced it. It has happened thus in me'.[52]

It can be said that for Jung the individuation is a two-way process: through rational ascending to the divine, which is the encounter with the personal

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[49] C. G. Jung, *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, Collected Works, Vol. 4, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (New York, N. Y.: Pantheon Books Inc. for Bollingen Foundation, 1961) para 764, p. 332.
[50] Jung, *Liber Novus*, p. 359.
[51] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 183.
[52] Jung, *Liber Novus*, p. 338.

daimon, while in the realm of imagination one could receive divine wisdom necessary to perform the inner journey toward the self – the God archetype, and thus to accomplish the individuation process. For Jung, similar to Iamblichus, the ascent and the descent of the soul are in perfect harmony as there is 'a completely unbroken coherence' between the Intelligible world and the physical cosmos.[53]

### *Mundus imaginalis* and active imagination

Likening the imaginal realm with Jung's archetypal field, Corbin affirmed that '[the active imagination] It is not a theory; it is an initiation to vision'.[54] To explain its function, Corbin articulated the term *mundus imaginalis*, which he described as an intermediary world, situated between the empirical and the world of abstract intellect.[55] This world, according to the Neoplatonic Sufi mystics, is 'the world of the image' or the imaginal world.[56] The term imaginal is characteristic to a consciousness that is 'fully objective and real', as opposed to imaginative perception, which is 'an outpour of "imaginings"'.[57]

Corbin held that the *mundus imaginalis* represents also 'the Platonic archetype of light', which is a spiritual place, occupying the interval between heaven and earth, the space of the angels, the messengers between God and men.[58] Corbin described this world using the mirror metaphor, likening the imaginal world with a reflective plane between the material and spiritual world; the active imagination represents 'the *mirror par excellence*, the epiphanic place for the Images of the archetypal world'.[59]

Corbin's interest was focused on the idea of redemption of the world through an individual's relationship and ultimate identification with one's angelic counterpart.[60] In the angelology of Avicenna (981 BCE–1037 CE),

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[53] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis,* VIII.8.

[54]Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*: *Creative imagination in the Sufism of Ibn' Arabi*, tans. Ralph Manheim, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press,1969), p. 93.

[55]Henry Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis or the imaginal and the imaginary,* p. 5, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0b1c/ecef17498852e164b3ef36dcd071fccf1cf7.pdf> [accessed 29 March 2018]

[56] Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis,* p. 5.

[57] Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis,* p. 5.

[58] Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis,* p. 6.

[59] Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis,* p. 7.

[60] Angella Voss, Becoming an Angel: the *mundus imaginalis* of Henry Corbin and the Platonic path of self-knowledge, p. 2, <http://www.academia.edu/472446/Becoming_an_Angel_the_mundus_imaginali

each human soul has its celestial counterpart of the soul, its 'transcendent celestial Self', as Corbin described it, also named 'guardian angel, guide and companion, helper and saviour'.[61] As can be seen, the term guardian angel has the same characteristic as the notion of daimon and they could be used interchangeably.

As part of the *mundus imaginalis,* the angel can be manifest for the sensory world only through images, and Corbin maintained that '(n)o-one who is not in the same spiritual state can see him.'[62] The process of discovering the angel is not easy, and Corbin stressed the importance of individual experience, as a unique path where the theophany that one witnesses will correspond to an individual's 'inner heaven' or 'his eternal individuality'.[63]

Similar to Jung's process of individuation, Corbin said that the recognition of the angel, which takes place in the imaginal world, represents a process of deep interiorisation until the point is reached when there is no difference between the human ego and angelic consciousness.[64] Corbin considered that the failure to connect one's angel results in the depolarisation of the human soul and the powers of the darkness invade the soul, which means perdition.[65]

For Jung, individuation embraces the polarities inherent in the psyche, and recognizing evil is an intrinsic aspect of good.[66] Jung represented darkness through his concept of the 'shadow', and defeating evil begins with its recognition; the confrontation with the darkness is transformative.[67] By making a parallel with the Biblical story of Jacob fighting with the Angel, Jung considered the individuation path as one's journey to be blessed. As Jung put it:

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s_of_Henry_Corbin_and_the_Platonic_path_of_self_knowledge> [accessed 29 March 2018]

[61] Henry Corbin, *Avicena and the Visionary Recital*, trans. Willard R. Trask, (New York, N. Y.: Pantheon Books Inc. for Bollingen Foundation, 1960), p. 21.

[62] Corbin, *Mundus imaginalis,* p. 13.

[63] Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, p. 61.

[64] Corbin, *Avicena and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 20–21.

[65] Henry Corbin, *Le paradoxe du monothéisme* (Paris: L'Herne, 1981), pp. 243–244.

[66] C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, Collected Works, Vol. 11, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p.197.

[67]Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 9, Part II, p. 8; See also John Pennachio, 'Gnostic Inner Illumination and Carl Jung's Individuation', *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Fall 1992, pp. 237–245 (p. 244).

> I would wrestle with the dark angel until he dislocated my hip. For he is also the light and the blue sky which he withholds from me.[68]

Even if Corbin differs from Jung in the way he saw the dark forces in the process of discovering the guardian angel/daimon, it can be spoken, definitely, about this connection of human and angelic in terms of individuation, for the ego must experience a painful transformation before the encounter with the angel can occur.[69] So, the conclusion here is that the daimon is central to individuation.

Jung's concept of individuation can be equated with the Platonic notion of daimon; this inner process encompasses communication and potential transformation for both the human and the daimon while reconciling the distance between the human and the divine, and communion is gained when there is full transparency in a person's spiritual life – so that through man, the daimon/ guardian angel can be seen, and through the daimon inside the human soul, God can be seen.[70]

**Conclusions**

This paper focused on one enduring aspect of Plato's sky-story: the daimon as a mediator between earth and heaven, and explored the survival of the Platonic soul-sky-drama in Jung's work. The characteristics attributed by Plato to the daimon, including being an intermediary entity, one's destiny and fate, a personal guide, one's character, the messenger between humans and the divine, and the equivalent of the concept of the philosophical life, were highlighted while looking at three of Plato's dialogues: the *Symposium,* where he defined the daimon Eros as an intermediary being; the 'Myth of Er', in *Republic* Book X, where he defined the personal daimon; and the *Timaeus,* where the daimon is cosmologically and psychologically explained as an intermediary. The Platonic figures of the

[68] C. G. Jung, *Letters*, selected and ed. by Gerhard Adler in collaboration with Aniela Jaffe, trans. by R. F. C. Hull, vol.2, (Routledge, 1990 [1976]), p. 493.
[69] See Voss, 'Becoming an Angel', p. 8.
[70] See Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 183. For his daimon/spiritual master Philemon; Jung, *Liber Novus*, p. 338. For the experience of uniting with the self which is reaching the God; See also Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, *Corpul îngerilor: fragmente dintr-o istorie a ierarhiilor cerești* (București: Humanitas, 2017), p. 210–213. For an inside ascending and the transparency of spiritual life; See Andrei Pleşu, *Despre îngeri* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2003), p. 260–264. For human soul as a latent angel.

daimon – whether presented as an intermediary function between humans and the divine or as a personal guide – are inseparable and sufficiently similar to support one broad concept. Thus, Plato's concept was analysed through its link with Jung's language of depth psychology, and located the daimon within individuation, a core concept of Jung's thought. Through this inner process of individuation, Jung explained that an individual can achieve full integration of one's unique inherent personality but must perform a deliberate effort to work imaginally with internal conflicts, using the technique of active imagination, thus converting what is unknown in the psyche into conscious awareness, through the language of images. As a result, the individual's personality is transformed by integrating consciousness within the larger psychic centre that Jung called the Self, and which is Iamblichus's god or daimon, or the Platonic One.

Similar to Jung's individuation, Corbin explained, in terms of Neoplatonic Sufi mysticism, the process of identification of the human soul with one's angelic counterpart as part of the imaginal world, via the active imagination. It can reasonably be concluded that Jung's individuation equates with the daimon, and this relates to Plato's idea of philosophical life.