Wieland: An Archetypal Experience of Gender

by

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Abstract

The 1798 novel, *Wieland or The Transformation: an American Tale*, by Charles Brockden Brown, hereafter referred to in the thesis only as *Wieland*, contains a gothic challenge regarding gender to the American consciousness, which can be understood through the psychological analytical work of the famed analyst Carl G. Jung and the text of the narrative of the protagonist, Clara. The purpose of the thesis is to explore issues of gender in eighteenth century America, as experienced by the protagonist of the novel, Clara, through her relationship with her inner anima and animus. The thesis, which is titled, “*Wieland: An Archetypal Experience of Gender,*” makes a claim that as Clara’s story unfolds, her relationship with the strength of her positive feminine archetype, becomes paradoxically apparent in the text, as an inspired imaginative dynamic, in contrast from Clara’s experience and relationship with the oppressive cultural expectations of gender and the rigid patriarchal archetype. The text of the novel, other writings of and about the author, as well as historical, political, literary and cultural information about the period are considered through a gender lens. Jung’s own exploration of literature through his study of the psyche is noted to anticipate archetypal criticism such as Northrop Frye, [Shamdasani 150], which stresses the importance of text, or words in inspiring imagination through patterns of dialectical archetypes containing symbols and expressions of rhetoric [Web]. In summary, the thesis explores Clara’s anima and animus through her confrontation with shadow, the unconscious and the psychological layers of complexities Jung has identified as the work of archetypes, which in Clara’s case are driven by gender expectations of the eighteenth-century collective. The conclusion reveals the strength of Clara’s positive anima reflected in human connections, compassion and forgiveness, which allows the positive animus to consciously and thoughtfully face other and the world as it exists.
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