Rita Knipe, *The Water of Life: A Jungian Journey through Hawaiian Myth.* Illustrated by Dietrich Varez. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989. Pp. 176. US$22.50 hardcover.

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Scholars of Polynesian oral literature are familiar with a great variety of approaches and methods for dealing with mythology. Chants and stories have been collected, translated, compared as folklore, and interpreted in the context of linguistic, religious, or historical studies. Rita Knipe came to Hawaii as a professional psychologist, and also with a deep yearning for an island that to her was something like a "mythical land." It became a "love affair," and she felt as though she had "known this place outside my personal life history" as an "almost remembered place of origin" (p. 2).

It is against this background (fittingly described in her first chapter as "Drumbeat, Heartbeat") that we must view her involvement with the study of Hawaiian mythology. Her exploration of the deities and heroes of ancient Hawaii led her "beyond the myths," and her fascination with "the brown and golden Hawaiian people, who are changing now as they strive to reconnect with their own vanquished heritage" became a "personal odyssey" to uncover "her roots as a woman." Using the trea-

sure of edited and translated material of well-known scholars like Emerson, "The Water of Kane," symbolizing "The Water of Life" (chapter 2), became the central topic of her explorations and the title of her book.

As an analytical psychologist of the Jungian school, she found a "storehouse of archetypal motifs": Mother Earth, Father Sky, "the orphaned and miraculous child" (p. 14), and other gods, lovers or heroes, communal themes of life and death, and "universal images born anew within each of us," repeated in our basic behavior and expressed in our religion and art forms. "We discover them in our dreams and as the motivating force within various rituals" (p. 15).

"All myths of all nations teach important psychological truths" (C. G. Jung, *The Vision Seminars*, Books 1 and 2 [Zurich: Spring Publications, 1976], 461). Knipe applies key concepts of Jungian psychology to symbolic characters of Hawaiian mythology, for example, "the collective unconscious," archetypes, and the unity of opposites (male-female, yin-yang, anima-animus, and so forth). She also develops the relevancy of mythical accounts to the modern human psyche by dream analysis, translating archetypal patterns of dream messages received by herself or through her patients into individual experience. Conversely, she explains them, often elegantly amplified, in symbolic, archetypal terms: for instance, as the "healing quality" of "the water of life" in a quest for wholeness (p. 170), or Pele's destruction and primitive power as Great Mother in suppressed femininity.

Knipe, however, studies mythological characters as more than a psychologist searching for illustrations of her concepts. Although aware of her Jungian training, she approaches her subject with the sensitivity of a woman and in her own poetic way. (In the tradition of science one might call her method a hermeneutical one.)

In a sequence of myths and stories featuring prominent Hawaiian goddesses, gods, and heroes like Hina, Kane, Maui, the Menehune, Kamapua'a the pig god, and Pele, the author (in eleven chapters) returns, together with Pele's younger sister Hi'iaka, to her original question: the search for "the water of life." Analyzing the account of Hi'iaka's travels to find her sister's and her own lover, Knipe confesses: "When I, as a woman, am loyal to my basic nature, raw and primitive as it may be, and yet differentiate myself from it by separating from the volcano, and embarking on my own journey, I may be able to touch the Hi'iaka quality within myself. When I learn not to divide my loyalties and love, but to suffer the conflicts they are sure to bring, gradually I may discover what belongs to me" (p. 157). The previously undiscov-

ered parts of our personalities are brought together in a new way, in a process that Jung termed "individuation." At this juncture, of the author's personal odyssey and the Jungian journey through Hawaiian mythology, a new perspective seems opened, a kind of dialogue possible. The symbolism of Hi'iaka's travel allows not only for the transformation of mythical into psychological experience, but may, again, express human experience in poetic or mythological language. It may thus become a differentiated and analytical "narrative" psychology.

If the reader is willing to accept Knipe's conceptual premises, she or he will find this book stimulating reading. We should, however, remember that it is a Jungian journey through Hawaiian myth. Other journeys are conceivable: for example, with Freud or Erich Fromm; or as literary excursions teaching us new insights into the life of another people as well as our own existence; or, last but not least, as a purely aesthetic encounter with Hawaii's oral literature, the hula chants and legendary tales. The author is aware of the poetic quality of her mythological material. The illustrations of Varez are very popular in Hawaii; contrary to the text, however, they romanticize rather than explore mythology. A glossary of Hawaiian words and an index are useful background information for the general reader, and the bibliography serves as an introduction to the classics of ancient Hawaiian literature (although the Fornander Collection is not included).

In conclusion, I offer some subjective remarks on a subjective book. It will certainly appeal to readers familiar with Jungian psychology and New Age discussions; more traditional scientists may find Knipe's interpretations occasionally speculative, also perhaps too feministic. I can identify with her rather poetic approach to Hawaiian myth, her subjective voice not denying but transcending "objectivity." I share her hopes that the "communal myth about the search for the water of life may point toward a modern mythology" (p. 163), which I would understand to be an "enlightened" one, reflecting our human condition on an endangered planet. I am in sympathy with her involvement in contemporary Hawaiian life, the current renaissance of Hawaiian culture, and the female revolution, which should help to channel rage and frustration of modern women into creative paths (p. 118).

Other dimensions of Hawaiian life, important as they are for many native Hawaiians, are not within the perspective of a Jungian journey, such as political and social problems of recovering the land (like Kaho'olawe) in a concrete way. "The Hawaiian eats the rock and is formed by it into a *pua* of Hawaii. He brings the land inside of himself and thus becomes one with it. At the same time the land becomes his."

This intimate relationship between language, land, and Hawaiian tradition is "an ideal of Hawaiian poetry: to reproduce in words the density of experience," to quote John Charlot (*The Hawaiian Poetry of Religion and Politics: Some Religio-Political Concepts in Postcontact Literature*, Monograph Series, no. 5 [Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1985], 28). Symbolic language—according to his analysis—is "a screen impenetrable to non-Hawaiians, behind which authentic indigenous concepts and feelings can be expressed" (ibid.). A question I eventually ask of myself is, how do Hawaiians react to our quest for understanding?