

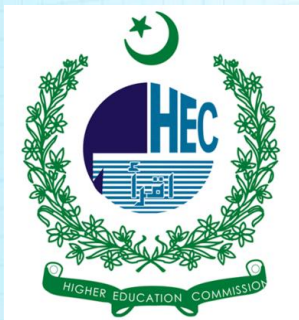
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**Search For Mandala: The 'Transcendent Function' of Ruritania
in Rudolf Rassendyll's Psycho-Analytical Journey towards
'Individuation'**



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Abstract

The journey motif has featured in a lot of literary works like *The Heart of Darkness*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Gulliver's Travels*. The hero has to undergo a perilous journey in order to achieve spiritual greatness. This motif of journey can also be traced in *The Prisoner of Zenda* ... a classic novel by Anthony Hope. Jungian analysis gives an added meaning to the journey and makes the meaning of the symbols and places incorporated in the novel by him, so that the whole novel appears to be a literary manifestation of Jung's psycho-analytical theory.

Introduction

The Prisoner of Zenda opens with a one to one dialogue between Rudolf Rassendyll and his sister-in-law ... Rose. She features as the mother figure in the beginning of the novel. Rose features as the mother in the most literal sense. The very first line if read without the name of the referee, then one might easily assume that the lines are spoken by the mother of the one referred to. "I wonder when in the world you're going to do anything, Rudolf?" said my *brother's wife*" (Hope 1994:1). The narrator of the story seems to be aware of this fact, therefore the addressee has been referred to by the relation rather than just by name. An archetypal image of the mother is an essential feature of the psycho-analytical world of Jung. A person's relation to his mother determines his state of affairs in the world and it is this relationship which makes the hero embark on the journey of self-discovery. "Researches into mythology had acquainted Jung with age-old myths of the hero who must undergo a dangerous Nekyia or 'night-sea journey' ... Psychologically, this is an unconscious image of our mothers to which we are attached and from which we must free ourselves in order to develop as separate, individuated beings" (Hyde and Michael 1999: 48). The authors, e.g. Ramzan and Javaid (2023); Ramzan et al., (2020), (2021) also affirms this.

Rose is such an unconscious image of mother in the novel. She is concerned about Rassendyll's character and future and several of her concerns are the ones typically associated with mothers. She is worried that Rassendyll is not serious enough in life. He does not care about his duties and does nothing for his future. She also tries to play a dominant role in his life by assigning him as an attaché of an ambassador. The emotional aspect of the relationship is also there and is evident through language ... one can feel tenderness and

gentleness in the conversation despite the light argument going on. The effect is also due to Rassendyll's punctuating comments like "said my brother's wife, blushing prettily" (Hope 1994:3) and others of the sort. A vigilant reader can detect, at the very beginning of the novel that Rassendyll must break free of this maternal, and therefore to an extent, controlling figure in order to achieve the legacy and arrive at the stature of a hero. This Rassendyll does by deciding to go on a secret expedition to Ruritania. His visit is not constructed by the writer to be coincidental or sudden. On the contrary the background is thoroughly explained by the author and thus built to be very logical.

Breaking away from the mother figure of Rose and setting out for Ruritania marks the initiation of Rassendyll's heroic and spiritual journey. According to Jung's analytical psychology, in order to become "separate, individuated beings ... the hero has to re-enter the mother ... because only through such a re-entry can he be born again from her, this time spiritually" (Hyde and Michael 1999: 48). Abstract figures like Mother Nature or a nation also stand for the archetypal images of a mother in Jung. Ruritania becomes the second archetypal image of a mother for Rassendyll. Breaking away from Rose he enters Ruritania. Due to the Elphberg blood in him (because of the illegitimate relationship between his ancestor Countess Amelia and King Rudolf the Third of Ruritania) he had a claim on Ruritania himself. This has been either mentioned directly or implied by almost all the characters in the novel. The King also calls him to be his cousin and once in the novel Sapt declares him to be as much of an Elphberg as Black Michael. In this way Ruritania becomes the motherland of Rudolf Rassendyll ... indirectly and later directly when he is put into the role of the King of the land.

If Ruritania is the archetype of the mother then the forest of Zenda is the archetypal image of mother's belly/womb in which the hero must enter to attain spiritual completion. Unlike the hostile nature of the mythical belly of Johann's whale, this forest appears to be a benign place full of peace and tranquillity, therefore the hero "walked on for an hour or more in its cool sombre shade" (Hope 1994:23). Such nature of the forest allows Rassendyll a communion with his inner-self and connects with his unconscious through his dream. The description of the forest establishes it to be an enclosed space, "The great trees enlaced with one another over my head, and the sunshine stole through in patches as bright as diamonds, and hardly bigger" (Hope 1994:23).

This enclosure becomes an alternate for a vessel and therefore of the mother's womb

figuratively. A Freudian reader might read the “great trees” as the phallic symbol and perhaps as a wish for incest, but Jung does not give sexual connotations to his hero’s journey and his hero is without the wish for incest. There is also a mention of “fast-waning afternoon” (ibid). The movement of the sun also symbolizes the hero’s journey in Jung. “An **active** experience of the sun’s death and rebirth – that is the **archetypal process**” (Hyde and Michael 1999: 62) (the archetypal process means journey). Here the sun is “waning” which symbolically signifies two things – first that a new phase is starting in Rassendyll’s life and secondly that he is going further into darkness (as the sun is setting). Darkness here stands for the fact that the hero is going further into the womb ... the plot is thickening and one gets the idea that he is being engulfed deeper and deeper. This darkness is the thickest during the climax of the novel or the rescuing scene (as the scene takes place at night and the plot is the thickest at this instance) ... once the King is rescued, the darkness is lifted, both literally ... as a new day begins and metaphorically ... as a new time dawns in the kingdom of Ruritania and a new chapter in Rudolf Rassendyll’s life.

The dream that Rassendyll sees during his visit is also of metaphorical significance, “an obscure dream or fantasy image, releases the unconscious meaning of the archetypes” (Hyde and Michael 1999: 63). Kissing Princess Flavia stands for Rassendyll’s marriage with his anima¹. Living in the Castle of Zenda implies also implies the hero’s communion with his unconscious, which is later revealed to be the collective unconscious of the characters in the story of Zenda. It is in the forest that Rassendyll meets Fritz and Sapt ... his “wise old men”. Later in the novel the forest also acts as Rassendyll’s protector and hides him on at least one occasion. While going to retrieve the King from the wine-cellar of the wooden cabin where Rassendyll, Sapt and Fritz had left him ... “the trees, closing in behind us as the track zigged and zagged, prevented us seeing our pursuers, and them from seeing us” (Hope 1994:59) ... in this way fulfilling the protective function of the mother’s womb and strengthening the analogy all the more.

Ruritania poses a challenge to Rassendyll and through it gives him a chance to grow psychologically and also spiritually. Rassendyll’s growth can be followed by the different comments that his fellow characters make about him, what he says about himself and his actions to prove them. In the very first chapter when Rose reprimands him on his nonchalance and negligence of duties, he replies by saying “To a man of spirit, my dear

¹ I would give the detailed description of all the archetypal images in the novel later.

Rose, ... opportunities are duties” (Hope 1994:6). But, as soon as Rassendyll is assigned the duties of a King his personality almost takes a somersault ... this time the report comes directly from him rather than another character. Recognizing his role and the co-lateral responsibilities he organizes his course of action. During the coronation, he says, “Resolutely doing my duty in that station of life to which I had been marvellously called, I took my dear Michael by both hands and kissed him on the cheek I think we were both glad when that was over!” (Hope 1994:50). It is also noteworthy that Rassendyll bears Black Michael no personal grudge till this time in the novel. His feelings are guided solely by his duties ... this is still a lower level of spiritual development and Rassendyll appears to be much like the code-hero in Hemmingway’s novels. Yet, this is indeed a development and as soon as he shifts his focus from the physiognomy (in the initial part of the novel he puts much stress on the colour of his hair and his facial features) to the more serious and spiritual aspects Rassendyll matures as a character.

As the novel proceeds, he starts comprehending the situation himself and deciding what he ought to do accordingly. This development becomes evident through Rassendyll’s own words, he says, “I had already developed one attribute of royalty ... a feeling that I need not reveal all my mind or my secret designs even to my intimate friends” (Hope 1994:77). From here onwards a gradual but a more pronounced change can be detected in Rassendyll’s personality. He begins to take things in his own hands and decide for himself his course of action. This breakaway becomes complete when he goes to order Marshal Strakencz and decide his course of action without consulting either Sapt or Fritz and hence becomes in charge of things. Once Rassendyll achieves mental maturity, he starts to climb another level and then his physical growth begins. He develops an ability to go after what is right despite being aware of the stakes involved and even sacrificing his own self for the greater good, he says, “the triumphant issue ... the success for which we were bound to hope and strive and struggle, meant to me sorrow more certain and greater than if I were doomed to fail” (Hope 1994:115). Once Rassendyll completes his physical journey at the end of the novel, the process of his individuation also becomes completed and he achieves the communion with the self.

Jung believed that Synchronicity plays a role in the functioning of psychological processes. Dr.C.George Boercee describes synchronicity as “the occurrence of two events that are not

linked casually, nor linked teleologically² yet are meaningfully related” (N.pag). Rudolf Rassendyll decides and also succeeds in going to Ruritania at the time of the coronation of the King who is his identical, although he had had the wish to visit the country for quite sometime. Similarly, he comes into direct personal contact with the King at the exact same time that Duke Michael sets his plan into motion to abduct him. Rassendyll’s visit to Ruritania and his presence in the forest at the exact same instance that the king is there coincides with the initiation of Black Michael’s plot guides the rest of the plot in the novel, these two instances are apparently coincidental and therefore comply with Jung’s theory on synchronicity.

Collective unconscious is a reservoir of memories and experiences which are shared by a group of people. These memories and experiences may not be revealed or are suppressed due to a purpose or because they had been forgotten. In the world of The Prisoner of Zenda, the Castle of Zenda becomes the seat of the collective unconscious. Collective unconscious is an abstract rather than a concrete phenomenon. The castle therefore is not the secret itself but the beholder of the secret. The very description of the castle makes the analogy clearer. It consisted of two portions ... a part of the old fortress whose “ancient keep was still in good preservation and very imposing” (Hope 1994:22) and a “handsome modern chateau” (ibid) which were connected to each other by a draw-bridge. As soon as the draw-bridge was lifted, the old portion of the castle became completely isolated and “nothing short of a regiment and a train of artillery” (Hope 1994:23) could break into it. While, “leading to the modern chateau there was a broad and handsome avenue” (Hope 1994:22). It is noteworthy in this description that the real Castle of Zenda or the old building can be totally isolated or opened to people on the desire of somebody from the inside. It is later revealed that Black Michael was not the only inhabitant of the castle and it is one of the servants Johann uncovers the “inside information” to Rassendyll and his group and consequently the readers. In this way all of these parties become included in the scope of the collective unconscious. The actual object of the collective unconscious is the news that the king is kept inside the Castle of Zenda, where he is kept and how he is treated.

Rupert of Hentzau refers to Rudolf Rassendyll as a “play-actor” (Hope 1994:151) and within a span of a few paragraphs Rassendyll draws a parallel between himself and Black Michael as “play-actors” (Hope 1994:153). The use of the word by the characters themselves

² Means related to fate.

brings forth the contrast between their public images and their private selves more clearly than anything else. The text however, explores this difference in Rudolf Rassendyll's character on two levels ... first is his reality, that is, who he is in actuality and what he is perceived to be by the people of Rurtania. The second is what his thoughts, feelings, innermost desires and longings are ... or the personal consciousness and how he is seen by the people around him. At one point in the text while commenting on Black Michael, Rassendyll says "He [Black Michael] could not appreciate ... I will not say an honest man, for the thoughts of my own heart have been revealed ... but a man acting honestly" (Hope 1994:123). These two faces of the same coin are referred to as the ego and the persona in psychological terms.

"The ego is your sense of purpose and identity" (Hyde and Michael 1999: 87). Authors e.g., Ahmad et al. (2022), Amjad et al. (2021) also affirm this. The way a character refers to itself speaks a lot about his ego. The first person pronoun "I" and its association with the context speaks for the ego of the character. In the very first chapter Rassendyll says "When I do a thing, I don't do it by halves" (Hope 1994:7), this image of his is carried till the end. The actions and how other characters relate to the character in question also built up his personality, for we are social animals and cannot exist in isolation. Sociocultural issues are a complex yet integral part of human life (Akram & Abdelrady, 2025, 2023; Ramzan et al., 2023). They can range from challenges related to cultural integration (Akram & Yang, 2021; Javaid et al., 2023), social inequality, and systemic discrimination to issues surrounding gender norms, identity, and generational conflicts (Al-Adwan et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2024), trauma, or personality disorders (Javaid et al., 2024; Ramzan & Khan, 2019; Nawaz et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2017). The afore-mentioned statement of Rassendyll is proven by his refusal to leave dead Josef unburied (Hope 1994:61) despite of all the danger involved in performing the deed. Rassendyll is also portrayed to be extremely loyal and so he remains true to his task despite the stakes involved and his emotional interest in Princess Flavia. Rassendyll informs the readers of this attribute of his personality when he says, "the triumphant issue ... the success for which we were bound to hope and strive and struggle, meant to me sorrow more certain and greater than if I were to fail" (Hope 1994:115). This speaks for the qualities of loyalty, integrity and honour in his personality.

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