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Joseph Campbell Foundation & OPUS Archives Research Grant Summary

Archives are always an exciting place to be—the material is so fresh, the records so direct—like finding a trunk of treasures hidden in grandma’s attic. The Opus Archives and Research Center on the campus of Pacifica Graduate Institute is no different.

The Jane Hollister and Joseph Wheelwright Collection holds documents pertaining to Toni (Antonia) Wolff, the subject of my scholarly research. As scholars of Jungian Studies know, Toni Wolff was C. G. Jung’s colleague and mistress for over forty years. She single-handedly helped him to mold his theories in the early days of analytical psychology, when his ideas were neither formulated in a systematic way nor recognized globally. She worked with him every day during the years 1913-1917, when he encountered his unconscious, a time of powerful images from the psyche, symbols which provided the raw material for a lifetime of inquiry:

The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life—in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details are only supplements and classifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious” (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections* 199)

Toni Wolff was his anchor during this chaotic time. With her remarkable insight and intelligence, she provided a beacon of light through a prolonged psychological *nekyia*. Laurens van der Post sums up her legacy to Jung well: “I for one believe the world owes her...a gratitude which no one yet has attempted to assess, let alone openly express.”

Yet little has been written about Toni Wolff; there is neither a biography of her life nor an anthology of her writings translated into English. My scholarship entails locating historical data about her from sources in the United States and Switzerland in

order to assemble the first-ever interpretation of Toni Wolff's life and contribution to analytical psychology, or as she preferred as its name, "complex psychology."

Jane Wheelwright expresses in a transcribed interview in Opus Archives' collection how difficult it was for the two women who loved Carl Jung—his wife, Emma, and his "other wife," Toni, as he called her—to cope with their personal circumstances. Although Jung himself did not publicly hide the existence of their unconventional marital triangle, he could do little to influence the impressions of others in his circle, nor temper the inner feelings of the two women involved.

The Wheelwright Collection also contains five essays written by Wolff, originally given as lectures at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zürich. Of the five, only two have been published in English. There are also several letters from Toni Wolff written individually to Jane and Jo Wheelwright, both of whom were in analysis with her. In one, Wolff discusses two classical Jungian concepts, the animus and the psychological types (i.e. the four functions). About the animus Wolff says: it will cause a woman to second guess her decisions and to let resentments and bitterness seem justified. About the types she says: they are the single most important factor for understanding a relationship, particularly a marriage.

Toni never visited the United States because she disliked its cultural "newness," but she greatly valued Great Britain. As a result she and Joseph Wheelwright got along especially well because his Bostonian background made him seem more British than American. In the archives he reports that Toni Wolff was the best analyst he ever had. It was common for analysands in Zürich during the 1940's to see both Jung and Wolff concurrently—a sort of dual analysis—which Jung encouraged, because he regarded the

input of both a man and a woman as optimal to integration. The Opus archives confirms this fact: Joseph Wheelwright's appointment book for 1939 shows a handwritten entry for an appointment with Dr. Jung on Monday, Jan. 16, followed by an appointment with Miss Wolff the following day, on Jan. 17th.

But one letter in the collection stands out. In it Toni writes in a decidedly more poetic manner. Her beautiful words, deftly composed in non-native English, show remarkable artistic flair. Carl Jung always regretted that she did not develop her poetry further, for he regarded her creativity as parallel to Goethe's.

Toni Wolff comes across vividly in the Wheelwright Collection of Opus Archives just as she was in life, an exceedingly intelligent and fascinating woman, perhaps a bit tragic, but clearly a woman of great personal presence—as Jane Wheelwright describes her, “a big personality.”