

THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT BY JOSEPH LEWIS HENDERSON, MAUD OAKES

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The Wisdom of the Serpent



*The Myths of Death, Rebirth,
and Resurrection*

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From the Back Cover

The Myths of Death, Rebirth, and Resurrection: The tribal initiation of the shaman, the archetype of the serpent, exemplifies the death of the self and rebirth into transcendent, 'unknowable' life.

About the Author

Henderson is an analytical psychologist and member of the C.G. Jung Institute of San Francisco.

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The Wisdom Of The Serpent By Joseph Lewis Henderson, Maud Oakes. Learning how to have reading practice resembles learning how to try for eating something that you actually do not want. It will certainly need more times to help. Moreover, it will additionally little bit force to serve the food to your mouth and also swallow it. Well, as reviewing a publication *The Wisdom Of The Serpent By Joseph Lewis Henderson, Maud Oakes*, sometimes, if you should review something for your new jobs, you will certainly really feel so woozy of it. Also it is a book like *The Wisdom Of The Serpent By Joseph Lewis Henderson, Maud Oakes*; it will certainly make you feel so bad.

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The tribal initiation of the shaman, the archetype of the serpent, exemplifies the death of the self and a rebirth into transcendent life. This book traces the images of spiritual initiation in religious rituals and myths of resurrection, poems and epics, cycles of nature, and art and dreaming. It dramatizes the metamorphosis from a common experience of death's inevitability into a transcendent freedom beyond individual limitations.

"This is a classic work in analytical psychology that offers crucial insights on the meaning of death symbolism (and its inevitably accompanying rebirth and resurrection symbolism) as part of the great theme of initiation, of which [Henderson] is the world's foremost psychological interpreter. This material is really the next step after the hero myth that Joseph Campbell has made so popular, and provides an understanding of how not to use the hero myth in an inflated way as a psychology of mastery, but as an attainment progressively to be died beyond. [Henderson] is helped by the presence of Maud Oakes, who is a trained anthropologist with exquisite taste in her choice of mythic materials and respect for their original contexts."-
-John Beebe

- Sales Rank: #590496 in Books
- Color: Other
- Brand: Brand: Princeton University Press
- Published on: 1990-08-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .72" w x 5.51" l, .94 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Henderson's Seven Stages of Initiation

By Steven Herrmann

Steven B. Herrmann, PhD, MFT

Author of "Walt Whitman: Shamanism, Spiritual Democracy, and the World Soul"

The Wisdom of the Serpent is one of the classical texts on initiation in the field of analytical psychology. Written in 1963 with the assistance of Maud Oakes, Joseph Henderson examines the myths, poems and epics of many world cultures and reveals a basic pattern of initiation that depicts the annihilation and death of the ego and its ultimate release into transcendence and spiritual liberation. The theme of the first chapter is the fear of death, or the ego's fear of the unknown (3). This fear, so common during the passage through mid-life turns out to be a natural part of the process of individuation, where the individual must undergo an excruciating experience of death to the limited ego, surrender to the Self and death to the larger reality of the unknowable. In chapter five, he points out that the number most commonly associated with initiation, the number seven, is a number connoting the steps or stages of an inner, as opposed to an outer, journey. The word initiation, he explains is derived from the Latin *in ire*, "to enter into," and therefore it denotes a temporary withdrawal from outer actions, and especially adventures of a heroic sort. Henderson is well-known for his positing of a transit beyond the hero myth. Submission is the central characteristic of initiation, a strong element of the archetypal "trial of strength" that is carried over from the earlier heroic phase of life and exemplified by the symbol of the seven stages, represented as seven rungs of a ladder leading to Heaven (42-43). While Henderson finds the therapeutic powers of the shaman in the Hebrew and Christian traditions, he cautions that we need to be careful not to strain the analogy between shamanism and Christianity. He shows in chapter 6 that the classically archetypal figure from which all other mythic ancestors' spring is the aboriginal shaman, who is a master of his own initiation, and who stays humbly true to the pattern of his or her own vocation (63). Henderson views the shamanic impulse as the root of the culture-patterns. He defines initiation as an archetypal process consisting of the following seven stages: 1) spiritual education and psychic liberation, 2) engagement and disengagement, 3) descent and ascent, 4) death and rebirth, 5) incarnation and release, 6) coniunctio (marriage, union and spiritual illumination), and 7) submission and transcendence. Each of these 7 stages are said to represent an ineffable mystery of human existence. Understood psychologically, Henderson says that 7 connotes the fullest development of the numbers 3 and 4, in which confidence and trust in the pattern of individuation is represented numerically; this is not just as a process, Henderson tells us, it is a way of life. As an eloquent example of the experience of the acceptance of death Henderson cites Walt Whitman's 1868 poem "Darest Thou Now O Soul" to end the book. This book was published four years before *Thresholds of Initiation*. It shows the progression of his thought between his excellent chapter for *Man and His Symbols* and what many consider to be his masterpiece in 1967, *Thresholds*. (See my Amazon Review of *Thresholds* for further reading).

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

WISE SERPENT !!! A VERY RESPECTABLE REPTILE !!!!

By jorma

This is an excellent collection of world-wide myths and some of the belief systems they promulgated!! If you are a student of ancient texts, this is a first class resource, with listings from Babylon to the Great Plains to Africa to India, from Christian to Zen Buddhism, To Quetzalcoatl to the Great Mystery, to the Hindu accounting of the death and rebirth of the Universe, to the Malekulan journey of the Dead !! If there is someone who believes and reveres it, the authors detail and coordinate, weave it together, to search for a common thread that ties it all together. Whatever your belief system is there is surely something to digest here. I found this volume highly readable, and insightful, and you may (I would surely wager) discover where beliefs originated, or were derived from, and you may be in for a Shock !!! **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED !!!** May your path be beautiful for you ! We are all related ! **PEACE !!!!**

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Amazon Customer

Very interesting

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