

# 'Othering' and 'Self-othering' in the Book of Tobit: A Jungian approach

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*The Book of Tobit* is replete with various instances of 'othering' that hold the potential for alienation and a variety of strong emotions. For example, Tobit 'others' Anna by insisting that she had stolen a goat, whereas she had not. Following a Jungian paradigm, this paper reads the various 'otherings' inherent in the interrelationships between the characters as reflections of the main character's relationship with himself. In so doing, it analyses these relationships through Jung's concepts of *Eros/Logos* and *anima/animus* to determine the nature of Tobit's 'self-othering' and its effect on those around him. It is concluded, among others, that Tobit's multiple 'self-otherings' and his 'othering' of 'other' characters are because of his suppression of his *anima-Eros* function that has, in turn, given rise to a dominant (and demonic) *animus-Logos*.

## Introduction

*Tobit*<sup>1</sup> is full of 'others' and relationships with 'others' that hold the potential for alienation, identification and a variety of positive and/or negative emotions. As such, the book presents many instances of 'othering'. For example, the Assyrians 'other' the Israelites by subjugating them, exiling them and doing them the ultimate dishonour of not allowing them to bury their dead.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Tobit 'others' himself by continuing his socio-political allegiance to the South in opposition to the North where his tribe is situated. At the same time, he 'others' his tribesmen by painting them as apostates from God's decrees.

While a number of readings have been penned that deal with various aspects of 'othering' in *Tobit*,<sup>3</sup> I would like to read *Tobit* from a Jungian perspective that would regard the visible forms of 'othering' in the text as well as the interrelations between the characters as representations of the far deeper 'self-othering' of the main character, Tobit. While I have previously read *Tobit* and *Tobias* as two sides of the same character undergoing an individuation cycle (Efthimiadis-Keith 2016), the reading proposed here has never been attempted before, to the best of my knowledge. The paper thus contributes to the growing body of literature regarding psychological, biblical hermeneutics as well as to the small but increasing body of literature that attempts to read Old Testament apocryphal texts from various psychological perspectives.

I begin with a brief description of key Jungian concepts for my analysis, namely the shadow, *anima/animus*, *Eros/Logos*, the individuation process and the Self. I then proceed to the textual analysis after which I conclude on the resultant reading.

## Theoretical background: A 'definition of terms'

### The shadow

The shadow is the dark side of the ego that we typically project onto others (Jung 1959b:8–9). It contains the parts of ourselves that we fear, despise, keep hidden or repress (Samuels 1985:32) for a variety of reasons, such as their incompatibility with societal norms and expectations, or our inability to consciously admit to their existence. The shadow is essentially emotional in nature

1. *Tobit* (italics) refers to the book of Tobit, while Tobit (normal) refers to the character in the book. I will use Di Lella's (2007) verse numbering and translation of the GII manuscript unless otherwise indicated. However, I will retain the more conventional spelling of character names, except when quoting directly from Di Lella's text. I have chosen to work from the GII manuscript as it is believed to be the oldest of the Greek manuscripts (Otzen 2002:63).

2. [A]ccording to the Old Testament mindspace, a burial establishes the integration of the dead into their people's ensemble: by a worthy burial the dead reach the Sheol where the downright proverbial 'gathering to the father's kin'... takes place (Ego 2009:90). Not to be buried was therefore considered an extreme dishonor, while not being permitted to bury one's dead would mean that one was dishonoring them, thus bringing shame both to the deceased and oneself. Similarly, burying the dead was regarded as *the* act of kindness as it could not be repaid (Abrahams 1893:350).

3. For example, a number of readings, such as Bow and Nickelsburg (2015) and Jacobs (2015) have dealt with the way that women are 'othered' in *Tobit*.

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(Jung 1940:20; 1959b:8) and is the repository for the 'evil' that we are capable of. As it stems from our prehuman animal past, when human concerns were limited to survival and reproduction, it is also a repository for sexual and life instincts in general (Jung 1940:69). Given its dark qualities, it is often symbolised, among others, by snakes, dragons, monsters and demons (Fontana 1993:17, 19).

### The *anima* and *animus*

According to Jung, the *anima* is the contrasexual soul image of a man while the *animus* is that of a woman (Jung 1959b: 13–14; Monick 1991:34). Together, they form what he called a *syzygy* (Jung 1959b:11). On a personal level, the *anima* contains all of a man's experiences of and reactions to women, beginning with his mother. Similarly, the *animus* contains all of a woman's experiences of and reactions to men, beginning with her father (Jung 1953:258–259; 1959b:13). These experiences and the archetypes related to them naturally hold both 'good' and 'bad' elements and exercise a tremendous pull on human emotions, even as the shadow does (Jung 1940:20–22). The *anima* and *animus* are therefore represented, among others, by a prince or princess, a femme fatale or demonic lover, the Virgin Mary or Christ (Fontana 1993:12; Von Franz 1964:192).

While the shadow, *anima* and *animus* are not the only archetypes that are experienced (others include the animal, the wise old man, the mother and the child, as well as 'an indefinite number of archetypes representative of situation' [Jung 1953:157]), they are the most important as they are the ones 'which have the most frequent and the most disturbing influence on the ego' (Jung 1959b:8).

### *Eros* and *Logos*

Jung has at times described *Eros* as the relational, connective principle or function present primarily in women and, at other times, as a cosmogonic principle (Jung 1959a:14–15; 2009:246, 301). *Logos* is the principle of reason, 'discrimination and cognition' which, in Jung's opinion, is present primarily in men (Jung 1959a:14). Even so, *Eros* and *Logos* have a 'permanent residence' in all human beings (Jung 2009), with each requiring the other:

Logos ... means understanding, insight, foresight, legislation, and wisdom ... Eros is desire, longing, force, exuberance, pleasure, suffering. Where Logos is ordering and insistence, Eros is dissolution and movement. They are two fundamental psychic powers that form a pair of opposites, each one requiring the other. (p. 365)

Interestingly, the 'animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros' (Jung 1959a:14), albeit on a 'low level the animus is an inferior Logos, a caricature of the differentiated masculine mind, just as on a low level the anima is a caricature of the feminine Eros' (Jung 1962:118). This suggests that the *anima* and *animus* are both present in a man or woman, even as *Logos* and *Eros* are. I will therefore refer to the *animus-Logos* and the *anima-Eros* in *Tobit*.

### Individuation

Individuation or maturation is a life-long, cyclical process of incorporating unconscious aspects of our beings and withdrawing unconscious projections from others (Dawson 1997:267; Jung 1940:3), that is, becoming more conscious of them. Perhaps the most critical unconscious contents in this process are those present in the shadow, *anima* and *animus* (see the previous section). These are the fundamental opposites or 'others' within us that we spend much of our lives trying to repress. Incorporating the snake or shadow is what allows us move from conscious differentiation to conscious re-integration (Efthimiadis-Keith 2016:153), while incorporating the *anima* or *animus* is the acme of any individuation cycle.<sup>4</sup> Incorporating these 'others' means that we consciously accept all their 'good' and 'bad' aspects as part of who we are. Making peace with ourselves, with all of who we are and our demons, brings about genuine transformation in ourselves and allows us to bring transformation to others and the society in which we live. The individuation drama is typified by the hero's quest (Frye 1992:26–27) in which the hero has to slay a dragon and/or other monsters (shadow elements) in order to arrive at the destination of his sought-for object. Having arrived, he typically has to slay a dragon to free a maiden and/or untold treasure (the *anima*). He then marries the maiden and returns home to become a visionary leader (self- and societal transformation).

### The Self

The Self is at once the centre of the unconscious psyche – just as the ego is the centre of the conscious psyche, and the totality of the conscious and unconscious psyche that embraces the 'whole living organism' (Jung 1953:263). In terms of the individuation process, the Self is that which drives the process and its ultimate goal, namely becoming all that a human can be or, stated differently, becoming 'that near divinity which each human being has the potential to become' (Atkinson 1992:92). The Self is usually symbolised by the babe and the wise old man – 'that nuclear source of energy within us at birth ... which, if we integrate our lives, comes to the fullness of its wisdom in our maturity' (Atkinson 1992:92).

Having discussed the Jungian concepts that I will use in my analysis of *Tobit*, I now proceed to apply them.

## Making peace with the 'other' in *Tobit*

### Alienation, 'othering' and broken family relationships

In a recent article (Efthimiadis-Keith 2016), I showed how *Tobit's* individuation cycle regresses to the first stage of

<sup>4</sup>Jung assumed that the *animus* plays the same integrative role in women's individuation cycles as the *anima* does in men's. However, feminist scholars such as Pratt (1992a, 1992b) and Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:82–88) have shown that the *animus* plays a dissociative role in women's lives, much like the shadow, often leading them to isolation and/or madness, and that it is also necessary for women to integrate the *anima* (who is no longer seen as an archetype found solely in men) in order for a successful individuation cycle to take place.

individuation prior to the exile of the Northern Kingdom and is only completed once Tobias returns from Ecbatana, that is, once Tobias has successfully negotiated his own individuation cycle. This, for me, indicated that Tobias and Tobit are psychologically two expressions of the same character.<sup>5</sup> In the same essay, as well as others, I also showed how much alienation Tobit has endured and caused in his life, for example:

As indicated in the introduction, Tobit alienates himself from his tribe, Naphtali, and so alienates them from himself: for him, they are apostates, he is not (1:4–6). This double alienation, or double ‘othering’ continues in exile as he ‘alone’ upholds traditional religio-cultural behaviour: he keeps to ceremonial food laws, while ‘other’ Israelites do not (1:10–11). In other words, he is ‘other’ among the Israelite ‘others’ whom the Assyrian ‘others’ have ‘othered’ by displacing them to Nineveh in another (an ‘other’) land and denying them the burial of their dead.

Tobit’s double ‘othering’ also manifests at family level: he merely mentions Anna and Tobias in the narrative of chapter 1 (1:9), focusing instead on himself and his experiences: he is the ‘norm’ while they are ‘other’. Seemingly oblivious to their suffering, their needs, their feelings and fears<sup>6</sup> – never once does he show narrative awareness of their feelings, he further ‘others’ his immediate family by focusing on the poor, naked, hungry and dead of his people – who themselves are the ‘others’ of Israelite society, and those in his wider kinship group. The ‘other’ Israelite focuses on Israelite ‘others’ in the ‘other’ land of Assyria while ‘othering’ his own family and ‘othering’ himself from them.

Given the above, it comes as no surprise that Tobit’s ‘othering’ behaviour leads to a number of crises that further ‘other’ him and his family. Firstly, Tobit stubbornly<sup>7</sup> continues his burial activities against Assyrian law, to the point that a price is put on his head and he has to flee. Having lost everything that belongs to him apart from his immediate family (at least he acknowledges that), he is thrice ‘othered’: being ‘other’ to the Israelites and his own family and ‘othering’ them in the process, he now has to ‘other’ himself further by fleeing from his family and home, that is, by moving from one context of ‘othering’ to an ‘other’. His flight from the law inevitably

5. One may cite other indications that Tobit and Tobias are one character split into two: the names Tobit and Tobias stem from the same Hebrew root, and ‘in both the Old Latin and the Vulgate, father and son have the same name, Tobias’ (Moore 1996:11–12).

6. He seem[s] so obsessed with his doing good that he [can] see little else ... I [have often] wondered what Anna and Tobias were doing while Tobit was feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and burying the dead. Did they live in terror while he was out stealing the bodies of the slain and burying them (Tob 1.17–18)? How did they experience his fleeing for his life and their subsequent loss of all worldly goods (Tob 1:19–20)? Did they panic when Tobit left during his Shavuot meal to tend to the dead yet again (Tob 2:1–4)? Was Tobit even aware of their plight? For me, he [is] not (Eftimiadis-Keith 2015:107).

7. The narrative would like to persuade the reader that Tobit’s tenacity in doing good is a positive thing: it helps him maintain his relationship with God (see Anderson 2011:495) and functions as an act of resistance against the Assyrian oppressors (Egger-Wenzel 2015:43–45). However, as various researchers including myself have noted, there is something obsessive about the nature of Tobit’s good deeds that leads to destruction/self-destruction (Miller 2012:506; Weeks 2011:393), who first confirmed my conviction that Tobit’s deeds were obsessive and self-destructive (Miller 2012:506; Weeks 2011:393. Similarly, Macatangay 2011: 215–216; Nickelsburg 2005:30).

leads to his family being ‘othered’ all the more as the family of a felon and fugitive among Israelite and Assyrian ‘others’. However, the first-person narrative does not tell us this; Tobit is still focusing on himself.

Secondly, in a mind-boggling move, right after he has returned from fleeing, Tobit sets out to bury a fellow Israelite at the time when he (Tobit) and his family are celebrating Shavuot (2:1–7), thus ‘othering’ them and the joyous celebration in the process. Having buried the man to the derision of his neighbours (2:8), who ‘other’ him by their derision, Tobit sleeps outside his home (2:9), thus ‘othering’ himself once again, for fear of polluting it through his contact with the dead, that is, ‘othering’ it ritually. As a result, the excrement of some sparrows – that which is ‘other’ to the body of an animal ‘other’ – settles into his uncovered eyes, covering them with a white film so that he eventually goes completely blind (2:10). One may say that his multiple ‘otherings’ of his family and himself and his blindness to them have now become manifest in his physical body. This, in turn, takes its toll on his family, once again: Anna has to ‘other’ herself, as a woman of former good standing, by doing ‘women’s work’ so that she can keep her ‘othered’ family afloat (2:11). Instead of rewarding her, Tobit ‘others’ Anna even further through his senseless insistence that she has stolen a kid goat and must return it, ‘for we have no authority to eat anything stolen’ (2:13). His ‘righteous’ anger burns against her despite her truthful explanation (2:14), eliciting her exasperated, ‘othering’ response: ‘Now where are your acts of charity? Where are your righteous deeds? See, these things are known about you!’ (2:14).

### Self-alienation and the dominance of the *animus-Logos*

Following a Jungian paradigm, the alienation/‘othering’ that Tobit causes and experiences, most often as a consequence of that which he has caused, may be seen as a reflection of his self-alienation. Given the near automation with which Tobit seems to operate, and the self-destructiveness of his deeds, one might argue that he unconsciously sets himself up for ‘othering’ if not for failure through his choices because he is out of sync with his own soul, that is, because of his internal ‘self-othering’. A lengthy quote from Jung’s *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, aptly captures what may be seen as Tobit’s internal predicament:

The acceptance of oneself is the essence of the whole moral problem and the epitome of a whole outlook on life. That I feed the hungry, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy in the name of Christ – all these are undoubtedly great virtues. What I do unto the least of my brethren, that I do unto Christ. But what if I should discover that the least among them all, the poorest of all the beggars, the most impudent of all the offenders, the very enemy himself – that these are within me, and that I myself stand in need of the alms of my own kindness. (Jung 2005:240–241)

In the process of focusing on giving alms to others, Tobit has lost connection with his family. For me, his ‘othering’ of his immediate family and his identification with ‘others’



outside of his family points to a repression of his *anima-Eros* in favour of his *animus-Logos*. And indeed, Tobit's behaviour exemplifies Jung's sexist view of the effect of (the unchecked ascendance of) the *animus-Logos* in a woman:

In men, Eros ... is usually less developed than Logos. In women ... Eros is an expression of their true nature, while their Logos is often a regrettable accident. It gives rise to misunderstandings and annoying interpretations in the family circle and among friends. This is because it consists of opinions instead of reflections, and by opinions I mean a priori assumptions that lay claim to absolute truth. (Jung 1959a:14–15, [author's own italics])

Tobit's behaviour shows that Jung's sexist interpretation of the *animus-Logos* in women is just as applicable to men. It suggests that Tobit's *animus-Logos* function, his poisoned reasoning, has all but completely subsumed his *anima-Eros* or relational function. While the unchecked ascendance of the *animus-Logos* is clearly seen in his *a priori* assumption of Anna's guilt, its most poignant expression is Sarah's predicament which results from the 'love' that an evil demon, Asmodeus, has for her. Asmodeus, the ascendant *animus-Logos*, unsparingly controls Sarah, the submerged *anima-Eros*. He subjugates her to his 'love', that is, his possession and/or oppression of her, preventing her from entering into a meaningful marriage relationship and bearing children. His 'love' for Sarah, who is 'other' to himself in gender and substance, sees to the death or ultimate 'othering' of seven men and 'others' her (and her family)<sup>8</sup> from those around her, causing her to lash out against her societal 'others', her maidservants, who in turn lash out at her (3:7–9). Seeing her as the cause of her husbands' deaths and their own suffering, they imprecate her to the complete 'otherness' of total extinction: 'Why do you beat us concerning your husbands? Because they are dead? Go with them! And may we never see a son or a daughter of yours!' (3:8–9).

While Sarah's altercation with the maidservants bears distinct similarities to the altercation between Tobit and Anna,<sup>9</sup> symbolic interpretation allows us to appreciate Tobit's psychological state at this point: marriage symbolises the *hieros gamos*<sup>10</sup> or acme of the individuation cycle, while children symbolise newness, growth, transformation and contribution to the continuance of society. In other words, Tobit's suppression of his *anima-Eros* has left him at the mercy of an ascendant and so pedantic, indeed demonic, *animus-Logos* that bedevils his relationships, prevents him from reaching future potentialities and thus sours his individuation process. Small wonder that he regresses to the first stage of individuation in chapter 1 and that he is preoccupied with burying the dead at his and his family's expense: he has died to the creative, relational principle and so to himself.

8.The 'othering' effect of Sarah's predicament on her family can be seen, *inter alia* in Raguel's expressed fear of derision in 8:10.

9.For example, Tobit and Sarah are both characters who are grieving their plight, both antagonise a female character(s) in their household, and the antagonised party (parties) lash out against them. Spatial-temporal concerns prevent deeper analysis at this point.

10.In Jung's thinking, the *hieros gamos* [sacred marriage] refers to the conjunction (*coniunctio*) of conscious and unconscious elements, as well as the union of opposites and the resultant new birth (see Jung 1966:234–235).

Tobit's suppression of the *anima-Eros* manifests further in his relation to the ultimate 'Other', God or the Self. While Tobit does his best to obey what he believes are God's commands through almsgiving and keeping *kosher*, his prayer in chapter 3 shows that he regards God as a detached observer who delights in punishing those who have dared to sin, whether they have done so knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly. In other words, one may say that suppressing his *anima-Eros* has led to his being blinded to the positive, relational (*Eros*) aspects of the Self in favour of its harsher, *Logos* functions. Having attempted to obtain healing through *Logos*-centred scientific means, that is, by consulting doctors seemingly many times over and having failed (2:10), he wishes to die (3:6); he wishes to 'other' himself from life itself. Considering himself already dead (5:10), he does not recognise the Self, in the guise of Raphael-Azariah, who is reaching out to him. Thus, 'othering' the Self, Tobit has no joy, is filled with self-pity (5:10) and seems not to see his family that have stood alongside him all the time.

Given the above, it is clear that Tobit has lost his internal treasure just as he has lost his worldly wealth: he has lost his real self because he has suppressed his *anima-Eros* and given himself over to the tyranny of his now dictatorial *animus-Logos*. In this sense, it is not surprising that he is blinded by the excrement of two sparrows, for birds often symbolise the ancient goddesses (Carus 1911), the ultimate expressions of the *anima-Eros*, and what we suppress comes back to haunt us.

Not being blessed within himself, Tobit seeks the blessing of the *animus-Logos* Self through good deeds and, when that fails, sends Tobias to retrieve the treasure he had left in trust with Gabael (4:1–2, 20–21; 5:1–3, 17–22). Tobias symbolises Tobit's younger self, the self orphaned by the death of his mother and father, the self whom his grandmother had instructed in doing good deeds even as Tobit instructs Tobias before his departure (4:5–19).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the old treasure symbolises an old spark of life from days gone by.

While Tobit wishes to die, and begs God to take his life, thus completing his 'self-' and 'Self-othering', the Self has other plans (3:16–17). The Self wants Tobit to complete his current individuation cycle and be transformed. Unlike Tobit, the Self encompasses the full manifestation of the *Eros* function and so is able to relate with Tobit at a level other than that of reason and *Logos*: God hears Tobit's and Sarah's heartfelt prayers – Tobit's internal cries, and sends Raphael to heal him or them. 'Othering' himself as an angelic being, Raphael takes on human form, that is, crosses over into Tobit's conscious psyche and acts as the young Tobit's (Tobias') guide on his quest to recover the spark of life, the old treasure he once had.

Raphael and Tobias leave for Rages (6:2), signifying the second stage of the individuation process, namely 'separation from the other'. On the way to Rages, Raphael

11.For an in-depth analysis of Tobit's wisdom teachings, see Macatangay (2011).

and Tobias overnight at the Tigris River which, as a body of water and potential mirror to oneself, is symbolic of the unconscious psyche. Tobias attempts to wash himself, but a large fish jumps out of the water and endeavours to swallow his foot (6:3). With the angel's guidance, Tobias brings the fish to land and guts it, keeping its gall, heart and liver to one side. He then roasts and eats some of the fish, salting the rest (6:4–6). According to Jungian psychological categories, this scene depicts suppressed unconscious contents rising through the conscious threshold: the fish breaks the surface of the water and attacks Tobias. Interestingly, the fish (in GII) attempts to swallow Tobias' foot which, in line with well-known Hebrew thought, may be read as a euphemism for his genitals. The fish, like the sparrow, is a symbol of the goddess (Carus 1911), pointing once again to the suppression of Tobit's *anima-Eros* function and the devastation that suppression can bring: if Tobias does not fight the fish, that is, incorporate its contents, his ability to enter into a meaningful marriage relationship and procreate will be stymied. This scene shows that Tobit needs to let his suppressed love (*anima-Eros*) arise from the unconscious and make it a part of his conscious self in order to continue his journey to recover the spark of life. And indeed, this begins to happen as Tobias falls deeply in love with Sarah, sight unseen ('he loved her very much, and his heart clung to her'; 6:18), through the mediation of the Angel or Self. Tobit, represented here by his younger self, is inexplicably drawn to that which he needs to incorporate consciously, his suppressed *anima-Eros*, in order to regain the spark of life, experience psychic healing, complete this leg of his individuation and mature as a result of his ensuing transformation. Interestingly, like Sarah who had been divinely destined by God to be Tobias' wife (6:18), the spark of life or his healing had been his since time immemorial. However, he had been unable to see it until he had begun to assimilate some of the unconscious shadow and *anima* contents represented by his besting the fish and partially consuming it. The assimilation of shadow contents and his altercation with the fish show that Tobias or Tobit has successfully negotiated the third leg of his individuation cycle, namely the 'differentiation of moral properties'.

### The Hieros Gamos and Tobit's transformation

On his wedding night, Tobias remembers Raphael's instructions (8:2). Before consummating his marriage, he burns the fish's heart and liver on the embers of incense. The intense smell makes the demon flee to upper Egypt where Raphael binds him (8:2–3). The tyrannical aspect of the *animus-Logos* function has been put in its place – it is bound in the Jewish people's 'original' land of bondage, Egypt, as the Self is heeded and the *anima-Eros* function rises from suppression. The *coniunctio*, the *hieros gamos*, symbolised by the consummation of Sarah and Tobias' marriage can now take place, in imitation of paradisaic bliss. Hence, Tobias prays:

Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors ... You made Adam, and you made for him a helper, a support – his wife Heua. And from

the two of them the human race has come. And you said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make for him a helper like himself'. And now not because of lust am I taking this kinswoman of mine, but with sincerity. Grant that I and she may have mercy and that we may grow old together. (Tobit 8:5–7)

The rest is history. Tobias and Sarah survive the night and there is great rejoicing in Raguel and Edna's home when this is discovered (8:9–18). The wedding is celebrated in Ecbatana for 2 weeks (8:19–20) and the spark of life is recovered as Raphael brings back the money that Tobit had left in trust with Gabael (9:1–6, 10:7). While painful at first, the integration of opposites and suppressed contents brings joy both in Ecbatana and Nineveh, where the wedding is celebrated again. Tobias returns with far more than he had been sent for (11:15, 12:1–5), for the spark of life is nothing unless it is put into practice through loving relationships mediated by the *anima-Eros*. And, indeed, loving relationships are restored. With the anger and bitterness of the gall resolved, Tobit's eyes are open and he is able to truly see his family for the first time (11:10–15). He rejoices over his son and embraces his daughter-in-law (11:14–17). His preoccupation with the dead is gone and his good deeds are framed within relationships of love.<sup>12</sup> His individuation cycle is completed, and his son and daughter-in-law go on to become the prototypes of the future eschatological community (Miller 2009:130). Life is restored to Tobit and through him to a community ravaged and depleted by the death-dealing *animus-Logos* function, which imprisons them in earning their salvation through good works.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

The preceding analysis has read against the grain of *Tobit's* surface narrative which portrays Tobit as a man of excellent virtue who continues to do good despite the various forms of opposition he faces. In imitation of the unconscious, the reading has reached below the surface of consciousness – what is written plainly in the text – and examined what underlies it. In so doing, it has shown how crucial it is for the relational, cosmogonic *anima-Eros* function not to be suppressed in favour of the *animus-Logos*. As such, it has offered an important alternative to overly logos-centric hermeneutical approaches to biblical texts and life itself – an unintended but valid consequence of this reading.

12. While doing good deeds remains high on Tobit's agenda, as can be seen by 14:2, 8–11 and underscored by Raphael's admonitions (12:7–9; see also 6:16), Tobit is no longer blindly committed to them, or the dead, or those outside his immediate family. In other words, he loses the near unconscious automation with which he performed good deeds before his physical blindness set in.

13. In some ways, *Tobit* seems to indicate that good works eventually lead to salvation. However, the book does not espouse this retributive approach completely. For example, Sarah knows that she is innocent, despite her suffering, and she is blessed in the end despite seemingly having done nothing to earn it. For detailed discussions on *Tobit's* relation to retributive thought see Kiel (2011; 2012) and Weeks (2011), both of whom note that the book's stance is not purely retributive despite having strong aspects thereof. Kiel's (2012:159, [author's own italics]) conclusion is worth quoting at length for the purposes of my analysis: 'The book of Tobit, at its core, suggests that humans do not have the ability to secure their future by way of their righteousness; God cannot be leveraged toward blessing. This is not because of an inability to be righteous, but because God has created a different world, one that does not run like a machine. In crafting this scenario, the book of Tobit wrests an incredible amount of control from humans. It offers, ultimately, an uncomfortable portrait of human contingency and our dependence on God's willingness to reveal to us the 'whole truth' (Kiel 2012:159).

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### Competing interests

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