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 **The Trinity Archetype in *The Jungle Books* and *The Wizard of Oz***

Juliet McMaster

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**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

**The Trinity Archetype in *The Jungle Books*  
and *The Wizard of Oz***

*Juliet McMaster (bio)*

The magical and mystical significance of the number three is common to myth, religion, and children's literature. But though the cluster of three is important, it is also expected that the units within the cluster be subtly differentiated, and in some sense opposed and complementary. The most familiar constellation of this grouping and opposition is of course the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three in one. But the Trinity of Western culture is only one example of many such groupings in which the three elements are joined and opposed in a structure that is psychologically, morally, and artistically satisfying. Not surprisingly, the pattern occurs, with a parallel assignment of qualities to the three units, in a number of books written for children. My own concern is with the pattern as it is adapted in two works not far separated in time, but in space and culture further apart than two continents: Rudyard Kipling's two *Jungle Books* and L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. In each we find a trinity of companions for the protagonist, and in each the companions are differentiated and specialized in recognizably parallel ways.

The three persons of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, though indivisibly one, each specialize. God the Father, the Yahweh of the Old Testament, is creator and lawgiver, strong in justice and discipline. God the Son, the Christ of the New Testament, is the redeemer, saving man out of love and through sacrifice. God the Holy Spirit, always a more mysterious entity, seldom appears as a character, but is familiar in iconography as the bird that mediates between God and the Virgin in depictions of the Annunciation, and is invoked by Milton as the being who "Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss" (l. 21). The particular qualities assigned to these familiar dramatic personae are, respectively, omnipotence, benevolence, and omniscience; or, to use less Latinately theological terms: for God the Father, power; for God the Son, love; and for God the Holy Spirit, knowledge. **[End Page 90]**

This alignment of the persons of the Trinity with power, love, and knowledge (though each may partake of the characteristics of the

others) has been a well-established tradition in Christian theology since the time of Augustine ([Whitla 46-51](#)).<sup>1</sup> And in the Renaissance these perfect attributes of the divinity were assigned (in an imperfect, human form) to man, made in God's image. In his devotional poem "The Litanie," Donne addresses a stanza each to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then follows with a prayer to the Trinity:

As you distinguish'd undistinct  
By power, love, knowledge bee,  
Give mee a such selfe different instinct  
Of these; let all mee elemented bee,  
Of power, to love, to know, you unnumbered three.

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Man's best self, like God's, comprises the elements of power, love, and knowledge.

In nineteenth-century England, these attributes of the deity and of man were given a more popular currency by the so-called Bridgewater Treatises. The Earl of Bridgewater, when he died in 1829, left a large bequest to the Royal Society for the publication of a series of works "On the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation." These works were duly commissioned and published in the two decades following. The wide publicity of the Bridgewater Treatises is testified by the choice of Bridgewater's name by the phony "Duke" in *Huckleberry Finn*—where the "Bridgewater" of his claim swiftly degenerates into "Bilgewater" ([Twain 100-01](#)).

But the constellation of Power, Love (or Benevolence, or Goodness, as it is moralized), and Knowledge (or Wisdom) is of course not peculiar to Christianity. Its most familiar appearance in classical mythology is in the often-depicted episode of the Judgment of Paris, in which the young Paris has to judge between Hera the queen of heaven, Aphrodite the goddess of love and beauty, and Athena the goddess of wisdom. Each offers Paris the bribe that is hers to give: again, Power, Love, and...

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The trinity archetype in the Jungle Books and the Wizard of Oz, function  $B(x,y)$ , say, 100 thousand years, precisely distorts the city bill of lading.

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