BE MY BABY: PHIL SPECTOR AND BLACK FEMININE IMAGES IN HIS WALLS OF SOUND: A JUNGIAN READING

Ari Katorza

Rimon School Of Music, Ramat Hasharon, Israel

Department: Tunesmithing and Music History

Email: arikatorza12@gmail.com

Abstract

This article investigates Phil Spector's construction of Black femininity as a crucial site in which racialised hierarchies and postwar American multiculturalism were simultaneously reproduced and destabilised. Situating Spector within the broader history of Black–Jewish artistic collaboration in the 1950s and 1960s, the study argues that his productions staged a fraught encounter between African American expressive traditions and Euro-American cultural authority. Drawing on cultural history, popular music studies, and Jungian archetypal theory, the analysis traces how Spector's representations of Black female performers drew upon, reconfigured, and at times constrained three recurring archetypes: the maiden (kore), the nymphet and lolita, and the great mother. Close readings of recordings by the Ronettes, the Crystals, and the climactic "River Deep – Mountain High" show how Spector's Wall of Sound simultaneously elevated and disciplined Black female voices, granting them mythic resonance while embedding them within racialised power structures. The article argues that these tensions mirror the broader contradictions of Black–Jewish alliances in the civil rights era, offering new insight into the cultural politics of race, gender, authorship, and authority in postwar American popular music.

Key Words: American Jewish History, Phil Spector, Black-Jewish Relations, Civil Rights Movement era, American Popular Music.

This article examines the role of Jewish songwriters and producers in shaping representations of African American femininity - an often overlooked dimension of postwar Black–Jewish collaboration in popular music - and situates it within broader debates on American ethnic politics. Through a case study of Phil Spector, one of the most influential producers of the 1960s, this article explores how Black femininity functioned as a symbolic and psychological site through which multiculturalism was articulated in mass culture.

Despite Spector's deeply troubling personal history and his 2009 conviction for the 2003 murder of Lana Clarkson - resulting in a 19-year prison sentence prior to his

death from COVID-19 in 2021 - his musical legacy remains essential for understanding postwar Black–Jewish artistic cooperation. Like earlier Jewish composers, Spector regarded Black musical expression as a vital component of American culture. This article focuses specifically on his constructions of new images regarding Black femininity in the early-to-mid 1960s.

There is broad scholarly consensus that the civil rights movement shaped the artistic alliances between American Jews and African Americans in the postwar period. Early academic studies already noted how these collaborations transformed American popular music and challenged the historically dominant WASP cultural order. Within this context, Spector's work may be read as part of a larger, semi-covert cultural struggle against Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony - one conducted through sound, affect, and imagery rather than explicit political discourse.[1]

Unlike the Gershwins or Leiber and Stoller, Spector was neither the most explicit spokesperson for Black culture nor an overtly political songwriter. His recordings - co-written with Brill Building figures such as Goffin and King, Mann and Weil, Barry and Greenwich - rarely addressed politics directly. Yet they were imbued with a dense semiotic aura that celebrated African American grace, emotional authority, and cultural prestige. Consciously or not, Spector fused European high-art aspirations with Black expressive power, producing new feminine images that reconfigured mainstream American sensibilities.[2]

Drawing on cultural history, popular music studies, and Jungian psychology, this article analyses Spector's representations of Black femininity through three dominant archetypes: the kore/maiden, the nymphet (Lolita), and the great mother. Through close readings of recordings by girl groups such as the Ronettes and the Crystals, and culminating in "River Deep - Mountain High," the article demonstrates how Spector's *Wall of Sound* elevated Black female voices into mythic, emotionally authoritative figures that both challenged and reproduced existing power relations. While politically parallel to the peak and subsequent fragmentation of the Black–Jewish alliance during the civil rights era, Spector's work reveals the possibilities and limits of multicultural collaboration in mass culture. His legacy thus offers a critical lens on race, gender, authorship, and power in postwar American popular music.

This article claims that Spector's aesthetic can be understood as a form of **Elitist Humanism** - a paradoxical synthesis of cultural elitism and emotional universalism.

[1]Cmiel, Kenneth, "The Politics of Civility," in The Sixties: From Memory to History, ed. David Farber, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994, pp. 263–270; Peter Schrag, The Decline of the Wasp, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973; Christopher, C. Robert, Crashing the Gates: The DE-WASPing of America's Power Elite, London and New York: Touchstone Books, 1986; P. Kaufmann, Eric, The Rise and Fall of White-Anglo America, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

[2]This group of Jewish writers and producers includes Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, Bert Berns and Jerry Ragovoy, and Phil Spector, who began as Leiber and Stoller's assistant and finally designed the sound of the girl groups. But we may add to these names the writers of Aldon music and other publishing companies on Broadway, like **Neil Sedaka** and Howie Greenfield, Carole King and her husband Gerry Goffin, Barry Mann and his wife Cynthia Weil (all were employed by Aldon Music), alongside Jeff Barry and Ellie **Greenwich, Burt Bacharach** and his older Jewish partner Hal David.

Through this lens, he merged mass popular music with high-art ambition, creating works that not only crossed racial boundaries but reshaped representations of African American femininity. The analysis draws on Carl Jung's theories of archetypes and the collective unconscious.

The first part of this article situates Black–Jewish relations within existing academic discourse, while the following sections offer a Jungian reading of Spector's work, focusing on archetypes of the **shadow**, **anima**, **kore/maiden**, **nymphet (Lolita)**, and **great mother**.

Black-Jewish Relations and the Academic Research

For decades, scholarship on Black–Jewish relations in American popular culture has been shaped by two dominant interpretive models. The first, the **whiteness approach**, views Jewish engagement with African American expressive culture as a form of appropriation: an assimilationist strategy enabling Jews - once regarded as racially ambiguous - to align themselves with hegemonic white American identity. From this perspective, Jewish universalism becomes a vehicle for cultural incorporation into whiteness.[3]

At the opposite end lies the **altruistic approach**, which interprets Black–Jewish cooperation as rooted in Jewish empathy and a perceived affinity with African American histories of exile, marginalisation, and suffering. Here, cultural collaboration is framed as a humanistic response to shared minority experience.[4]

Recent scholarship, notably Kun (2010) and Hersch (2016), has complicated this binary. Kun conceptualises American music as a multi-vocal field shaped by intersecting identities rather than simple patterns of influence. Hersch offers an account of **re-minoritisation**, arguing that Jewish artists in the interwar and postwar years maintained symbolic distinctiveness even within the assimilative logic of liberal pluralism. He also cautions against over-identification with African American expressive forms, which risked subsuming Jewish identity within racialised cultural idioms.[5]

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[3]For the Whiteness and "melting pot agents" approaches, see Melnick, Jeffrey, A Right to Sing the Blues: African Americans, Jews and American Popular Song, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999; Rogin, Michael, Blackface, White Noise:Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998; Sacks, B. Karen, How Jews Became White Folks and What that Says about Race in America, New York: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

[4]For "altruistic" approaches, see Fuchs, H. Lawrence, "Sources of Jewish Internationalism and Liberalism," in The Jews: Social Patterns or an American Group, New York: Free Press, 1956, pp. 595–613;Alexander, Michael, Jazz Age Jews, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001;Howe, Irving, World of Our Fathers, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976; Buhle, Paul, The Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture, New York: Verso, 2004; Kazin, Alfred, "The Jew As Modern Writer," in The Ghetto and Beyond; Essays on Jewish Life in America, ed. Peter Rose, New York: Random House, 1969, p. 424.

[5]For "altruistic" approaches, see Fuchs, H. Lawrence, "Sources of Jewish Internationalism and Liberalism," in The Jews: Social Patterns or an American Group, New York: Free Press, 1956, pp. 595–613;Alexander, Michael, Jazz Age Jews, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001;Howe, Irving,

My interpretation diverges from both approaches. I argue that Black–Jewish musical cooperation - especially in the postwar period - functioned as a subtle, often indirect challenge to WASP cultural dominance. In this context, Jewish participation in popular music was shaped by a form of **elitist humanism**, a hybrid cultural logic that fused African American expressive charisma with elements of European high art. Jewish songwriters and producers positioned themselves as mediators between these traditions, imagining a more cosmopolitan vision of America that contrasted with the puritanical ethos of WASP culture. This aesthetic and ideological fusion produced some of the most influential musical representations of American identity during the twentieth century.[6]

Historical and Cultural Axis of the Black-Jewish Relations

To situate Phil Spector's engagement with Black femininity and multiculturalism, it is necessary to outline briefly the political and cultural context of postwar Black–Jewish relations. The 1960s counterculture exerted a profound influence on American society, intensifying postwar liberal struggles that culminated in the passage of civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s. The pursuit of social justice was accompanied by the emergence of an alternative ethnic culture, shaped by a fragile and often contradictory alliance between American Jews and African Americans.[7]

This alliance was grounded in political cooperation between Martin Luther King Jr. and numerous Jewish organisations, as well as the involvement of the old Jewish Left and the New Left, both marked by significant Jewish participation.[8] For many

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World of Our Fathers, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976; Buhle, Paul, The Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture, New York: Verso, 2004; Kazin, Alfred, "The Jew As Modern Writer," in The Ghetto and Beyond; Essays on Jewish Life in America, ed. Peter Rose, New York: Random House, 1969, p. 424.

[6]For "altruistic" approaches, see Fuchs, H. Lawrence, "Sources of Jewish Internationalism and Liberalism," in The Jews: Social Patterns or an American Group, New York: Free Press, 1956, pp. 595–613;Alexander, Michael, Jazz Age Jews, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001;Howe, Irving, World of Our Fathers, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976; Buhle, Paul, The Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture, New York: Verso, 2004; Kazin, Alfred, "The Jew As Modern Writer," in The Ghetto and Beyond; Essays on Jewish Life in America, ed. Peter Rose, New York: Random House, 1969, p. 424.

[7]For "altruistic" approaches, see Fuchs, H. Lawrence, "Sources of Jewish Internationalism and Liberalism," in The Jews: Social Patterns or an American Group, New York: Free Press, 1956, pp. 595–613;Alexander, Michael, Jazz Age Jews, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001;Howe, Irving, World of Our Fathers, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976; Buhle, Paul, The Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture, New York: Verso, 2004; Kazin, Alfred, "The Jew As Modern Writer," in The Ghetto and Beyond; Essays on Jewish Life in America, ed. Peter Rose, New York: Random House, 1969, p. 424.

[8]Freedman, Murray, What Went Wrong? The Creation and the Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance, New York: Free Press, 1994; Svonkin, Stuart, Jews against Prejudice, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999; Diner, Hasia, In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935, Westport: Greenwood Press,1977; Greenberg, Sheril, "The Southern Jewish Community and the Struggle for Civil Rights," in V.P. Franklin, Nancy L. Grant, Harold M. Kletnick, and Genna Rae

American Jews, engagement in the civil rights movement was also a means of securing their own ethnic legitimacy within American society.[9] Until the 1950s, Jews and African Americans were widely regarded as the least socially accepted groups in the United States; their cooperation functioned, in part, as a shared path toward social recognition.[10]

In parallel, the postwar period witnessed the rise of rock 'n' roll as a dominant cultural and economic force. Rooted in the hybridisation of African American and Latin rhythms with European harmonic structures, rock music was closely aligned with postwar youth culture and quickly became the centre of the music industry. These political and musical developments unfolded along parallel trajectories. While no direct causal link can be drawn between civil rights activism and popular music production, Jewish artists, producers, and entrepreneurs played prominent roles in both arenas. Much of the popular music they produced during this period reflected - implicitly rather than overtly - the cosmopolitan and universalist ideals circulating in civil rights discourse. As a powerful semiotic form of mass media, Black–Jewish musical collaboration helped generate and disseminate new multicultural images of American identity.

The Privileged Position of Jews in the Music Industry

To understand Phil Spector's work, it is essential to recognise the historically privileged position American Jews occupied within the music industry from the late nineteenth century onward.[11] The central role played by Jews in shaping the American entertainment industries has been widely documented. Data indicates that during the postwar era, American Jews owned or managed approximately 40 per cent of the key independent record labels responsible for recording and distributing rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll.[12]

McNeil, eds., Afro-Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies of Convergence and Conflict, New York: Putman, 1998, pp. 123–164.

[9]Liebman, Arthur, Jews and the Left (Contemporary Religious Movements), New York:John Wiley, 1979.

[10]Freedman, Murray, What Went Wrong? The Creation and the Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance, New York: Free Press, 1994; Svonkin, Stuart, Jews against Prejudice, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999; Diner, Hasia, In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935, Westport: Greenwood Press,1977; Greenberg, Sheril, "The Southern Jewish Community and the Struggle for Civil Rights," in V.P. Franklin, Nancy L. Grant, Harold M. Kletnick, and Genna Rae McNeil, eds., Afro-Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies of Convergence and Conflict, New York: Putman, 1998, pp. 123–164.

[11]Gabler, Neal, An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood, New York: Crown Publishers, 1997; Most, Andrea, Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004; Michael Billig: Rock and Roll Jews; Stratton, Jon, Jews, Race and Popular Music; Zuckerman, Bruce, Kun, Josh, and Ansell, Lisa, The Song Is Not the Same. Jasen,David A., Tin Pan Alley: An Encyclopedia of the Golden Age of American Song, New York: David E. Jasen Books, 1987; Suisman, David, Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.

[12]Katorza, Ari "Rock Jews"; Katorza, Ari, Stairway to Paradise: Jews, Blacks and the American Music Revolution, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001; Karp, Jonathan, "Blacks, Jews, and the Business of Race Music,

This commercial success also fostered dense artistic and professional networks. The music industry became particularly known for its concentration of Jewish composers, songwriters, and producers. It is important to stress, however, that this "Jewish" creativity rarely manifested as an explicit expression of Jewish identity. On the contrary, most Jewish artists and industry figures tended to downplay or conceal their ethnic background, presenting their work as culturally universal rather than ethnically specific.

Until the early twenty-first century, popular music historiography largely overlooked the disproportionate influence of American Jews as a social group in the development of rock 'n' roll, especially between 1955 and 1970. Jews owned or played decisive roles in nearly every major independent label of the period and were among the first to record and promote African American and Latin performers, sounds, and styles. At the same time, a substantial cohort of Jewish singer-songwriters and producers left a lasting imprint on the pop music landscape. Against this structural and cultural backdrop, Phil Spector's musical vision and career can now be more clearly situated.

Spector's Works, Black Femininity and Jungian Reading

The path toward a postwar, multicultural vision of American popular music was neither straightforward nor uncontested. For much of the early twentieth century, Black music was dismissed by major record labels as "pornography," deemed unsuitable for mainstream consumption. Yet Jewish songwriters and producers increasingly championed African American musical expression as a vital and affirmative component of American life. Under the liberal currents of the postwar era, figures such as Leiber and Stoller, Goffin and King, Bacharach and David, the Aldon Music writers, and ultimately Phil Spector, pursued this synthesis with unusual tenacity. They connected Tin Pan Alley and Broadway sophistication to the aesthetics of blues and rock 'n' roll, blending European melodic sensibilities with African American rhythmic and emotional authenticity.[13]

Unlike many of his contemporaries - who often had at least some formal musical training - Spector was largely self-taught, relying on instinct, ambition, and an exceptional ear. Like other Brill Building writers, he emerged from a hit-making environment marked by strong Jewish presence, entrepreneurial acumen, and a confident sense of cultural possibility. Crucially, he channelled these influences through the voices and personas of African American girl groups, making Black femininity central to his musical vision.

1945–1955", in Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism, ed. Rebbeca Korbin, New Jersey/London: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

[13]While scholars affirmed the influence of Eastern European Jewish music on Tin Pan Alley in the early decades of the twentieth century, the rock era lacked this heritage and fusion. Yet, Jewish rockers helped blend Afro-American and Latin rhythms and sounds with various aspects of high European culture and art. Jack Gottlieb, Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, New York: University of New York Press, 2004.

Spector's upbringing also shaped his trajectory. Born in New York in 1940 to a family marked by mental illness - his father, a second-generation Russian Jewish immigrant, died by suicide when Spector was still a child - he moved with his mother to the predominantly Jewish Fairfax district of Los Angeles. He attended Fairfax High School, also attended by Jerry Leiber, and grew up amid a tension between Hollywood glamour and the physical, sun-drenched culture of California youth. Short, awkward, and socially out of place, Spector turned to music as a terrain in which he could assert power and identity.[14]

Beginning as a jazz-influenced guitarist, he quickly gravitated toward studio work. While still in high school, he formed The Teddy Bears, recording at Gold Star Studios in collaboration with Era/Dore Records - both part of a broader Jewish cultural network. His first hit, "To Know Him Is to Love Him" (1958), which he wrote, arranged, and produced, bore more resemblance to a Broadway ballad than to early rock 'n' roll and sold more than one million copies.

The multicultural environment surrounding him facilitated the development of a distinctly Jewish professional network that would prove essential to his success. On the advice of his mentor Lester Sill - a well-connected Jewish industry figure - Spector relocated to New York to work within the Leiber and Stoller orbit at Atlantic Records. Jerry Wexler later recalled Sill introducing Spector as a "prodigy" who could "play, compose, produce - everything," and who "came from the same school as Jerry and Mike," even if this was only partly accurate.

Spector was equally impressed by the Ertegun brothers at Atlantic and by Don Kirshner and Al Nevins, the Jewish founders of Aldon Music. These self-made "outsiders" exemplified the ethnic entrepreneurialism that defined the independent music industry. Spector soon developed his own network, forging a close working relationship with Doc Pomus (Jerome Solon Felder), the Jewish songwriter behind numerous Ray Charles and Elvis Presley hits. Pomus recalled Spector regularly driving to visit him, enjoying his wife's Jewish cooking – while mystified that "and then the big songs started coming."[15]

The Music Producer as an Auteur

Spector used studio production as the primary vehicle for realising his elitist–humanist vision. By the late 1950s, recording itself had undergone a profound transformation: whereas swing-era studios aimed simply to capture an orchestra's best performance, the rock-era studio became an instrument in its own right. Multi-track tape, echo chambers, and new dynamics-processing tools such as limiters and compressors enabled producers to construct dense, three-dimensional sonic environments. Through the 1960s, expanding technologies - reverberation, varispeed,

[14] Cohn, Nik, "Phil Spector", in The Rolling Stone's illustrated history of Rock and Roll, ed. DeCurtis, Anthony, Henke, James, New York: Rolling Stone/Roundom House, 1992, pp. 180–183.

[15]Dave Thompson, *Wall of Pain: The Biography of Phil Spector* (New York: Sanctuary Publishing, Ltd., 2003), 41.

tape manipulation, flange and phasing, and controlled distortion - greatly widened the expressive palette available to producers.

Within this evolving technological landscape, producers were expected to shape every aspect of a recording: its movement, tempo, and flow; its depth and scale through layered instrumentation; and its timbral "colour" in ways reminiscent of classical impressionism. Spector, like other Jewish producers before him, fused African American musical foundations with the orchestral aesthetics of European high art. But he extended this synthesis further - both in ambition and execution - redefining the producer as an auteur. In his cosmology, the performer often played a secondary role; the true creative centre was the sound itself.[16]

The Wall of Sound crystallised this vision. Working with arranger Jack Nitzsche, engineer Larry Levine, and the elite Los Angeles session collective known as the Wrecking Crew, Spector expanded Leiber and Stoller's practice of recording many musicians simultaneously into something monumental. He assembled near-orchestral ensembles - multiple guitars, pianos, percussionists, brass and strings - playing in overlapping registers within a single room. The intentional microphone bleed, coupled with Gold Star's echo chamber, produced a massive, enveloping texture unlike anything of its time. This approach reached its fullest expression in his work with girl groups such as The Crystals and The Ronettes, where Black feminine voices were placed at the centre of a vast, quasi-symphonic soundscape.

Spector was obsessed with marrying the sensibilities of high art to mass culture. "It's gold - pure gold - coming out of these speakers," his assistant Sonny Bono recalled him saying.[17] Though often mythologised as a latter-day Wagnerian, Spector drew eclectically on Schubert, Hollywood film scores, and even Walt Disney. He famously described his productions as "little symphonies for teenagers," works in which emotional immediacy and overwhelming sonic scale coexisted. As critic Nik Cohn suggested, the apocalyptic grandeur of Spector's sound may also reflect a kind of psychic compensation - an outsized aesthetic answer to the traumas and insecurities that shaped his life.[18]

The African-American Feminine Images

Carl Gustav Jung foregrounded the study of religion, myth, and symbolism as essential pathways toward psychological balance and therapeutic insight.[19] Central to his theoretical system are the concepts of the **collective unconscious** and **archetypes**, which he developed partly through extensive clinical work with patients experiencing paranoia and psychosis. Jung proposed that beneath the personal unconscious

[16]Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller with David Ritz, *Hound Dog: The Leiber and Stoller Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 2148, Kindle edition.

[17]See the inside booklet of the record box of Spector's hits Back to Mono (1958–1969).

[18]Cohn, Nik, "Phil Spector", in The Rolling Stone's illustrated history of Rock and Roll, ed. DeCurtis, Anthony, Henke, James, New York: Rolling Stone/Roundom House, 1992, pp. 180–183.

[19]Jung, Carl Gustav, Psychology and Religion, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

identified by Freud lies a deeper, shared psychic layer - one common to all humans across time and culture - which contains what he termed "collective material": myths, symbols, and archetypal images.[20]

As Jung famously wrote:

"In addition to the purely personal unconscious hypothesized by Freud, a deeper unconscious level is felt to exist. This deeper level manifests itself in universal archaic images expressed in dreams, religious beliefs, myths, and fairy tales […] Archetypal images expressed in religious dogma in particular are thoroughly elaborated into formalised structures which, while expressing the unconscious in a circuitous manner, prevent direct confrontation with it."

For Jung, archetypes are universal, inborn symbolic patterns that have developed over thousands of years alongside human instincts. They play a decisive role in shaping perception, behaviour, and experience, offering insight into both individual psychology and collective cultural expression. Archetypes recur in myths, fairy tales, religious narratives, and artistic forms, where they crystallise fundamental human concerns.

Among the most significant archetypes identified by Jung are: **the Self**, representing psychic wholeness and the goal of individuation; **the Shadow**, containing repressed desires, instincts, and socially unacceptable impulses; **the Persona**, the social mask adopted to meet external expectations; **the Anima/Animus**, denoting the unconscious feminine within men and masculine within women; **the Great Mother**, embodying both nurturing and destructive potential; **the Hero**, who overcomes adversity through transformation; **the Wise Old Man/Woman**, a guiding figure of insight; and **the Trickster**, a disruptive force that exposes hypocrisy and destabilises norms.

Jung maintained that archetypes shape destiny, everyday behaviour, and worldviews, and that psychological health depends on the process of **individuation** - the integration of these archetypal forces into a balanced self. This article draws on Jung's framework to examine how archetypes are projected through music, image, and performance in popular culture, arguing that such projections form a crucial basis of artistic resonance and mass appeal.

As Jung noted:

"The formulation of archetypes is an empirically derived concept […] based not only on medical evidence but on observations of mythical, religious, and literary phenomena. These archetypes are primordial images, spontaneous products of the psyche."[21]

[20]Jung, Carl Gustav, "The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious", Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 9 Part 1, 2nd ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 3.

[21]Jung, Carl Gustav, "The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious", Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 9 Part 1, 2nd ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, pp. 54-72.

Because popular music discourse is deeply entangled with questions of race, the **shadow** archetype emerges as particularly salient in a Jungian reading of rock and pop. The history of Anglo-American popular music has been shaped by sustained interaction between Black and white artists, with white performers frequently aspiring to emulate African American styles. This dynamic reflects broader psychic tensions surrounding desire, identification, repression, and racial hierarchy.

Within popular music, the shadow symbolises suppressed aspects of the collective psyche - aggression, envy, transgression, and prejudice - that are often displaced onto racialised others. Rock music, especially in its formative decades, functioned as a site where these tensions could be expressed and negotiated. Similarly, the persistent play of masculine and feminine imagery opens a pathway to the **anima/animus** archetypes, while myths of excess, rebellion, and transgression invite comparison with the **Trickster** figure.

Until the post-war era, representations of Black women in American culture were shaped by radicalised stereotypes rooted in marginalisation and systemic racism. The **Mammy** figure cast Black women as loyal, nurturing, and submissive; the **Jezebel** stereotype hyper sexualised them as driven by unrestrained desire; and the **Sapphire** type portrayed Black women as aggressive, loud, and perpetually angry.[22] Leiber and Stoller's "Hound Dog" (1953), performed by Big Mama Thornton, arguably drew on the Sapphire stereotype in its portrayal of a woman confronting an unfaithful lover - a raw intensity later diluted in Elvis Presley's 1956 cover.[23] Another example is "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean" by R&B singer Ruth Brown (1953)**.** Ruth Brown expresses anger and exasperation at a mistreating partner. Her sharp vocal delivery and accusatory tone present a woman calling out male wrongdoing with clear emotional intensity - traits often coded in mid-century culture as "angry Black woman." An additional example would be "Got My Mo-Jo Working"by Ann Cole (1954). Ann Cole delivers this track with a biting intensity that borders on accusatory confrontation. Her vocal persona expresses frustration, suspicion, and emotional outrage toward a deceitful man who has "put a spell" on her, or her spells will not work for him. The performance projects a woman who is loud, assertive, and unafraid to call out male manipulation - traits that mid-century audiences often read through the Sapphire stereotype.

Phil Spector's treatment of Black femininity diverged sharply from earlier stereotypes. Rather than reducing Black women to caricatures or singular tropes, he often - though not always consciously - elevated their personas and transformed them into highly marketable cultural icons. At the same time, this artistic elevation existed alongside patterns of coercion, exploitation, and intimidation that later became central

[22]West, M., Carolyn, "Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Historical Women and Their Implications for Psychotherapy", in Psychotherapy, Vol 32, 1995; Asmus, Sigrid, Hunter-Larsen, Jessica, Valentine, Megan, Beyond Mammy, Jezebel & Sapphire: Reclaiming Images of Black Women, New York: Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, 2018.

[23]Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller with David Ritz, *Hound Dog: The Leiber and Stoller Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), loc. 1236, Kindle edition.

to legal findings against him.[24]
By the early 1960s, American producers increasingly turned to girl groups - predominantly young African American performers - whose repertoire centred on romance, longing, and the idealised "perfect boy." Although situated in a pre-feminist cultural landscape and often constrained by conservative lyrical themes, these groups projected a deep desire for belonging, dignity, and upward mobility. As Greil Marcus observed, their power lay not merely in youthful romanticism but in the "unbelievable desire" and "staggering demand for life" voiced by a single lead singer bolstered by her companions.[25]

Spector's productions of Black girl groups activated deeper psychological registers. The first relevant Jungian archetype is the **shadow -** the primitive, repressed dimension of the psyche that includes aggression, sexuality, envy, and racism. The encounter between white audiences and Black feminine voices confronted listeners with their collective shadow, compelling them to face aspects of themselves projected onto the racial "Other." This encounter often gave rise to ambivalence: fascination intertwined with anxiety, attraction with fear. At the same time, Black femininity in Spector's work could embody a fusion of the shadow with the **anima**, the archetype of the internalised feminine - both enchanting and dangerous, virtuous and transgressive.

Within this framework, Spector's output reveals three dominant feminine archetypes: **the kore/maiden**, **the nymphet (Lolita)**, and **the great mother**.

The Kore/Maiden

The girl-group repertoire often revolved around idealised masculinity - what Marcus terms the "shadowy male of wondrous attractiveness," a figure who ultimately came alive only through the girl's voice. These songs expressed a utopian pre-feminist longing for security, domesticity, and innocence. Yet Spector's monumental production style - his *Wall of Sound* - introduced dramatic tension between the promise of safety and the threat of emotional risk. This dynamic mirrors the kore archetype, exemplified by the Greek mythology of Persephone: at once innocent and endangered, sheltered yet vulnerable to forces beyond her control.

Spector's girl groups embodied this duality. Their polished vocal innocence masked the structural reality that they themselves were controlled by male producers. Paradoxically, however, despite this managerial control, their collective sound exerted immense cultural influence, foreshadowing the emergence of a more autonomous

[24]Dave Thompson, *Wall of Pain: The Biography of Phil Spector* (New York: Sanctuary Publishing, Ltd., 2003), 207–208. In 1997 U.S. courts initially ruled that Phil Spector owed significant unpaid royalties to Darlene Love and The Ronettes, but in 2002 the Supreme Court overturned the decision and reaffirmed the validity of the 1963 contract. Despite Spector's victory, the Supreme Court did not overturn a decision to transfer to the band additional royalties from hit collections and other uses of material not included in the old contract. The Supreme Court returned the issue to a lower court to determine the level of royalties to be paid to the band, but the band felt it had lost its central demand.

[25]Marcus, Greil, "How the other half lives: The Best of Girl Group Rock," Let It Rock, May, 1974.

female voice later in the decade. Tracks such as "He's Sure the Boy I Love," "He's a Rebel," and "Da Doo Ron Ron" exemplify this tension between innocence, longing, and the looming loss of purity.

The Young Nymphet (Lolita)

A second archetype evident in Spector's work is the **nymphet**, or Lolita figure - a fusion of youthfulness, seduction, and fragility. While some girl groups embodied the "girl next door," others projected an image of youthful allure inflected with exoticism and danger. This archetype draws on mythological nymphs - creatures associated with natural beauty, enchantment, and liminality - and resonates with later literary embodiments such as Nabokov's *Lolita*, or Faulkner's sexual Eula of the 1940s fictional Snopes family at the Mississippi in the book *Hamlet*. According to Jung, the collective unconscious projects these images as seductive, fragile, strong, dangerous yet sensitive. This ancient cocktail of danger and seduction are a fruitful source of artistic and commercial triumph. Spector documented these archetypes' projection via his production and musical brilliance.[26]

Jungian psychology identifies the nymphet/lolita as a projection of the collective unconscious: seductive yet vulnerable, powerful yet precarious. Spector's most influential realisation of this image appears in The Ronettes' "Be My Baby" (1963). Lead singer Ronnie Bennett's mixed African American, Native American, and Irish heritage contributed to a distinctive exoticism that Spector adoringly - but destructively - amplified in life and in sound. The song's structure, built on baion rhythms, layered arrangements, and the iconic drum motif, created an intoxicating blend of innocence and erotic charge.

The Lolita archetype is also deeply shaped by the male gaze. "Be My Baby" positions the female voice as longing for approval, reflecting a broader industry pattern in which young female performers were infantilised and rendered dependent on male authority. Yet the song's emotional force also endowed the protagonist with a kind of paradoxical agency - her longing became an overwhelming, culturally resonant force.

This archetype continued to circulate widely in popular music - from Serge Gainsbourg's *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (1971) to The Police's "Don't Stand So Close to Me" (1980), Britney Spears' "…Baby One More Time" (1999), and the self-aware melancholic reframing found in Lana Del Rey's work. Del Rey's invocation of Lolita ("Light of my life, fire of my loins") exposes the tension between romantic fantasy, power asymmetry, and feminine self-fashioning in contemporary culture.

The Great Mother

From 1965 - marked by President Johnson's completion of landmark civil rights legislation - the Brill Building network gradually began to lose its cultural and commercial dominance. The American music industry entered a period of rapid transformation. As the Vietnam War escalated and the counterculture radicalised,

[26]Jung, Carl Gustav, "The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious," p. 54.

popular music moved toward more experimental, surrealistic, and at times explicitly political and psychedelic forms.

Within this shifting landscape, Phil Spector tested the outer limits of his aesthetic ambition with the 1966 single "River Deep -Mountain High," performed by Ike and Tina Turner. Songwriters Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich later argued that Spector's megalomania overwhelmed the song's blues-based origins.[27] Yet many critics regard the track as his greatest artistic achievement. Nik Cohn famously described it as a "total brainstorm - Spector was louder, wilder, more murderous than he'd ever been, and Tina Turner matched him, big earth woman, one scream of infinite force." While the record achieved notable success in Europe, it failed commercially in the United States, where audiences appeared increasingly indifferent to Spector's Wall of Sound. Deeply affected by this reception, Spector withdrew from the music industry for nearly three years.

Tina Turner's performance, however, transcended both the commercial outcome and Spector's retreat. In "River Deep -Mountain High," Turner embodies the **great mother archetype** - a powerful, nurturing, and distinctly Black maternal force. The lyrics ("When you were a young boy, did you have a puppy / that always followed you around?") articulate not only romantic devotion but a deeper, quasi-maternal promise of unconditional attachment. This is not the submissive loyalty of the Mammy stereotype nor the sexualised excess of the Jezebel figure, but a complex synthesis of maternal authority, sensual maturity, and emotional and dangerous sovereignty.

Through a Jungian lens, Turner's performance activates the symbolic field of the mother archetype - associated with the earth, the divine, the nation, and the promise of redemption. Jung argued that the mother figure functions as a gateway to the unconscious, intensifying archaic images of care, meaning, and psychic integration. In this context, Turner's voice channels a mythological form of love that is at once protective and overwhelming. Unlike the Lolita-inflected vulnerability of *"Be My Baby,""River Deep—Mountain High"* articulates love as absolute and consuming, a force that both sustains and threatens to engulf the self.[28]

This paradox lies at the heart of the great mother archetype. Her love is infinite and unconditional, yet also devouring and potentially destructive. As explored in the Presley son–lover complex, such overwhelming emotional intensity can destabilise the subject it seeks to sustain. Turner's performance renders this tension palpable: her voice oscillates between exaltation and surrender, evoking both childhood innocence and cosmic magnitude. "Do I love you, my oh my? / River deep, mountain high" equates love with elemental forces, underscoring its mythic, awe-inspiring scale.

[27]Barney Hoskyns, "Phil Spector's Ghosts: The Spooky World of the Greatest Producer in Pop Music," *Slate* (February 2003).

[28]Bauman, Avi, "The Hidden Negatives of the Mother Figure", in Mothers: a Look at Psychoanalysis and Elsewhere, ed. Pironi, Emilia, Jerusalem: Van Leer and Kibuz Meuhad, 2009, pp. 54–90.

Within this framework, Spector himself may be read as both creator and maternal agent. His Wall of Sound functions as a kind of musical womb - enveloping, sheltering, and overpowering. Against the backdrop of his personal history as the son of a suicidal father and a family marked by mental illness - and in light of his later admission of paranoid schizophrenia – "River Deep -Mountain High," can be interpreted as a symbolic cry for psychic reunion: a fantasy of reconciliation between the abandoned child and the divine mother, mediated through Turner's voice.

For many listeners, encountering "River Deep - Mountain High,"approaches an experience of the **numinous**. Its mythic intensity and sonic grandeur continue to release affective energies that exceed rational control. As the song itself declares, "And it gets stronger in every way / And it gets deeper, let me say / And it gets higher day by day" - a fitting summation of the great mother's boundless and terrifying power.

Epilogue

This article argues that Phil Spector articulated a distinctive vision of American multiculturalism through a fusion of elitist humanism and Black femininity. His collaborations with Black artists represent one of the most significant expressions of postwar Black–Jewish artistic exchange. Politically, the Black–Jewish alliance reached its high point with the passage of civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s. Yet between 1967 and 1968 this coalition began to fracture, shaped by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., rising tensions surrounding Affirmative Action, and the emergence of Black Power, which encouraged more separatist and militant forms of African American identity.

The music industry underwent its own parallel transformation. As the counterculture intensified and musical tastes shifted, Spector's influence diminished after 1965. Nonetheless, his postwar productions - especially his construction of Black feminine personae - remain a revealing case study in both the possibilities and the inherent limits of Black–Jewish multicultural cooperation.

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