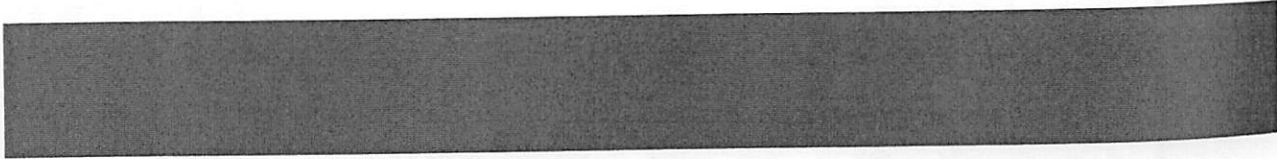
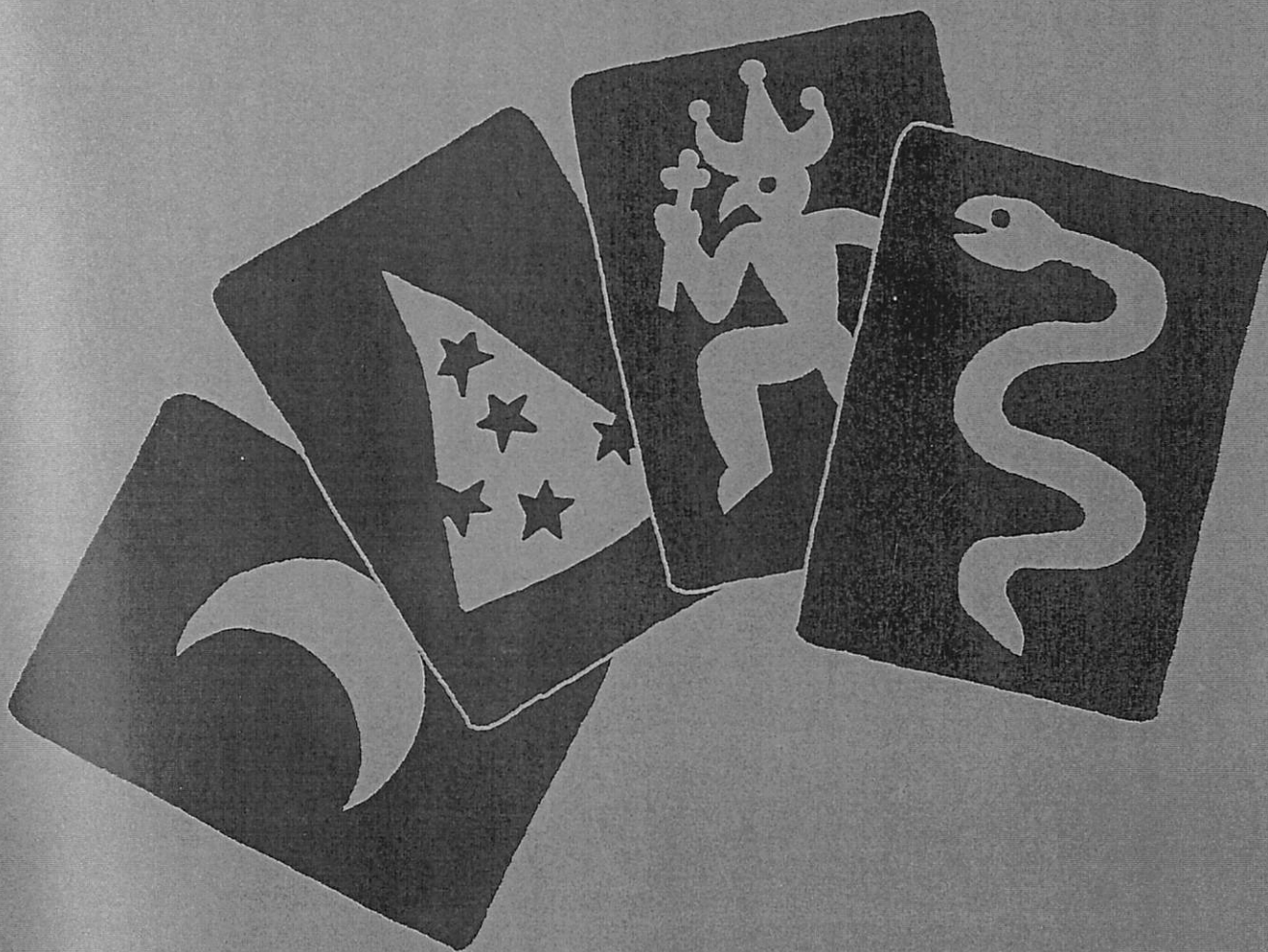




THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS IS MADE UP OF ARCHETYPES

CARL JUNG (1875–1961)





IN CONTEXT

APPROACH
Psychoanalysis

BEFORE

1899 Sigmund Freud explores the nature of the unconscious and dream symbolism in *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

1903 Pierre Janet suggests that traumatic incidents generate emotionally charged beliefs, which influence an individual's emotions and behaviors for many years.

AFTER

1949 Jungian scholar Joseph Campbell publishes *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, detailing archetypal themes in literature from many different cultures throughout history.

1969 British psychologist John Bowlby states that human instinct is expressed as patterned action and thought in social exchanges.

Myths and symbols are strikingly similar in cultures around the world and across the centuries.

Therefore, they must be a result of the **knowledge and experiences we share** as a species.

The memory of this shared experience is held...

...in the **collective unconscious**, which is part of each and every person.

...in the form of **archetypes**—symbols that act as organizing forms for behavioral patterns.

Each of us is born with the innate tendency to use these archetypes to **understand the world**.

Sigmund Freud introduced the idea that rather than being guided by forces outside ourselves, such as God or fate, we are motivated and controlled by the inner workings of our own minds, specifically, the unconscious. He claimed that our experiences are affected by primal drives contained in the unconscious. His protégé, the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, took this idea further, delving into the elements that make up the unconscious and its workings.

Jung was fascinated by the way that societies around the world share certain striking similarities,

despite being culturally very different. They share an uncanny commonality in their myths and symbols, and have for thousands of years. He thought that this must be due to something larger than the individual experience of man; the symbols, he decided, must exist as part of the human psyche.

It seemed to Jung that the existence of these shared myths proved that part of the human psyche contains ideas that are held in a timeless structure, which acts as a form of "collective memory." Jung introduced the notion that one distinct and separate part of the

unconscious exists within each of us, which is not based on any of our own individual experiences—this is the "collective unconscious."

The commonly found myths and symbols are, for Jung, part of this universally shared collective unconscious. He believed that the symbols exist as part of hereditary memories that are passed on from generation to generation, changing only slightly in their attributes across different cultures and time periods. These inherited memories emerge within the psyche in the language of symbols, which Jung calls "archetypes."

See also: Pierre Janet 54-55 ■ Sigmund Freud 92-99 ■ Jaques Lacan 122-23 ■ Steven Pinker 211

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The personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer... I call the collective unconscious.

Carl Jung

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Ancient memories

Jung believes that the archetypes are layers of inherited memory, and they constitute the entirety of the human experience. The Latin word *archetypum* translates as “first-molded,” and Jung believed that archetypes are memories from the experiences of our first ancestors. They act as templates within the psyche that we use unconsciously to organize and understand our own experience. We may fill out the gaps with details from our individual lives, but it is this preexisting substructure in the unconscious that is the framework that allows us to make sense of our experience.

Archetypes can be thought of as inherited emotional or behavioral patterns. They allow us to recognize a particular set of behaviors or emotional expressions as a unified pattern that has meaning. It seems that we do this instinctively, but Jung says that what seems to be instinct is actually the unconscious use of archetypes.

Jung suggests that the psyche is composed of three components: the ego, the personal unconscious,

and the collective unconscious. The ego, he says, represents the conscious mind or self, while the personal unconscious contains the individual's own memories, including those that have been suppressed. The collective unconscious is the part of the psyche that houses the archetypes.

The archetypes

There are many archetypes, and though they can blend and mold into each other in different cultures, each of us contains within us the model of each archetype. Since we use these symbolic forms to make sense of the world and our experiences, they appear in all human forms of expression, such as art, literature, and drama.

The nature of an archetype is such that we recognize it instantly and are able to attach to it a specific, emotional meaning. Archetypes can be associated with many kinds of behavioral and emotional patterns, but there are certain prominent ones that are highly recognizable, such as The Wise Old Man, The Goddess, The Madonna, the Great Mother, and The Hero.

The Persona is one of the most important archetypes described by Jung. He recognized early in his own life that he had a tendency to share only a certain part of his personality with the outside world. He also recognized this trait in other people, and noted that human beings divide their personalities into components, selectively sharing only certain components of their selves according to the environment and situation. The self that we present to the world—our public image—is an archetype, which Jung calls the “Persona.”

Jung believes that the self has both masculine and feminine parts, and is molded into becoming fully male or female by society as much as biology. When we become wholly male or female we turn our backs on half of our potential, though we can still access this part of the self through an archetype. The Animus exists as the masculine component of the female personality, and the Anima as the feminine attributes of the male psyche. This is the “other half,” the half that was taken from us as we grew into a girl or boy. These archetypes help us to understand the nature of the opposite sex, and because they contain “deposits of all the impressions ever made” by a man or woman, so they necessarily reflect the traditional ideas of masculine and feminine. »



Eve is one representation of the Anima, the female part of a man's unconscious. Jung says she is “full of snares and traps, in order that man should fall... and life should be lived.”

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All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes.

Carl Jung

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The Animus is represented in our culture as the “real man;” he is the muscle man, the commander of soldiers, the cool logician, and the romantic seducer. The Anima appears as a wood nymph, a virgin, a seductress. She can be close to nature, intuitive, and spontaneous. She appears in paintings and stories as Eve, or Helen of Troy, or a personality such as Marilyn Monroe, bewitching men or sucking the life from them. As these archetypes exist in our unconscious, they can affect our

moods and reactions, and can manifest themselves as prophetic statements (Anima) or unbending rationality (Animus).

Jung defines one archetype as representing the part of ourselves we do not want the world to see. He calls it the Shadow, and it is the opposite of the Persona, representing all our secret or repressed thoughts and the shameful aspects of our character. It appears in the Bible as the devil, and in literature as Dr. Jekyll's Mr. Hyde. The Shadow is the “bad” side of ourselves that we project onto others, and yet it is not entirely negative; it may represent aspects that we choose to suppress only because they are unacceptable in a particular situation.

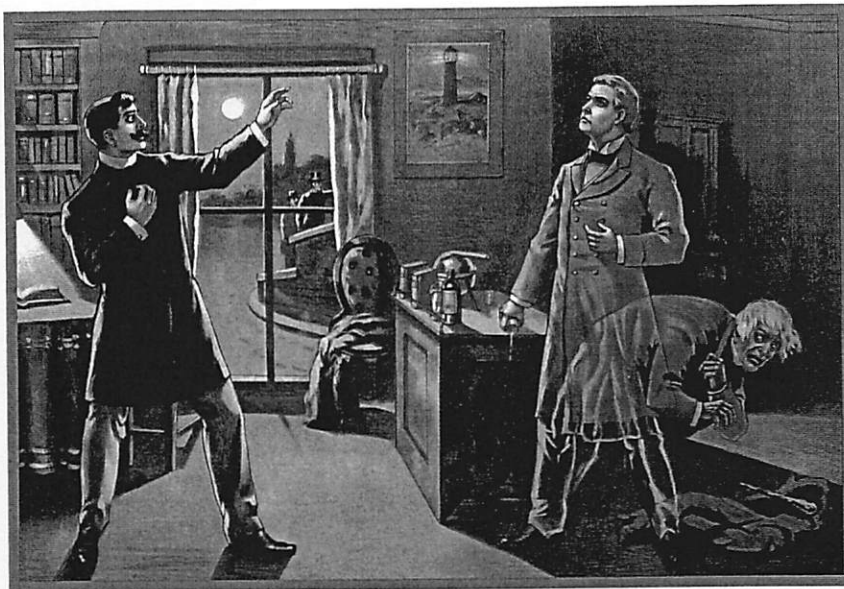
Of all the archetypes, the most important is the True Self. This is a central, organizing archetype that attempts to harmonize all other aspects into a unified, whole self. According to Jung, the real goal of human existence is to achieve an advanced, enlightened psychological state of being that he refers to as “self-realization,” and the route to this lies in the archetype of the

True Self. When fully realized, this archetype is the source of wisdom and truth, and is able to connect the self to the spiritual. Jung stressed that self-realization does not happen automatically, it must be consciously sought.

Archetypes in dreams

The archetypes are of significant importance in the interpretation of dreams. Jung believed that dreams are a dialogue between the conscious self and the eternal (the ego and the collective unconscious), and that the archetypes operate as symbols within the dream, facilitating the dialogue.

The archetypes have specific meanings in the context of dreams. For instance, the archetype of The Wise Old Man or Woman may be represented in a dream by a spiritual leader, parent, teacher, or doctor—it indicates those who offer guidance, direction, and wisdom. The Great Mother, an archetype who might appear as the dreamer's own mother or grandmother, represents the nurturer. She provides reassurance, comfort, and validation. The Divine Child, the archetype that represents your True Self in its purest form, symbolizing innocence or vulnerability, would appear as a baby or child in dreams, suggesting openness or potential. And lest the ego grow too large, it is kept in check by the appearance of the Trickster, a playful archetype that exposes the dreamer's vulnerabilities and plays jokes, preventing the individual from taking himself and his desires too seriously. The Trickster also



Dr. Jekyll transforms into the evil Mr. Hyde in a story by Robert Louis Stevenson that explores the idea of the “darker self,” through a character that embodies Jung's Shadow archetype.



appears as the Norse half-god Loki, the Greek god Pan, the African spider god Anansi, or simply a magician or clown.

Using the archetypes

The archetypes exist in our minds before conscious thought, and can therefore have an immensely powerful impact on our perception of experience. Whatever we may consciously think is happening, what we choose to perceive—and therefore experience—is governed by these preformed ideas within the unconscious. In this way, the

The tale of Snow White can be found all over the world with minor variations. Jung attributed the universal popularity of fairy tales and myths to their use of archetypal characters.

collective unconscious and its contents affect the conscious state. According to Jung, much of what we generally attribute to deliberate, reasoned, conscious thinking is actually already being guided by unconscious activity, especially the organizing forms of the archetypes.

In addition to his ideas of the collective unconscious and the archetypes, Jung was the first to explore the practice of word association, and he also introduced the concepts of the extrovert and introvert personality types. These ultimately inspired widely used personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Jung's work was influential in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and spirituality, and his archetypes are so widespread that they can easily be identified in film, literature, and other cultural forms that attempt to portray universal characters. ■



Carl Jung

Carl Gustav Jung was born in a small Swiss village to an educated family with a fair share of eccentrics. He was close to his mother, though she suffered from bouts of depression. A talented linguist, Jung mastered many European languages as well as several ancient ones, including Sanskrit. He married Emma Rauschenbach in 1903 and they had five children.

Jung trained in psychiatry, but after meeting Sigmund Freud in 1907, he became a psychoanalyst and Freud's heir apparent. However, the pair grew estranged over theoretical differences and never met again. In the years following World War I, Jung traveled widely through Africa, America, and India, studying native people and taking part in anthropological and archaeological expeditions. He became a professor at the University of Zurich in 1935, but gave up teaching to concentrate on research.

Key works

1912 *Symbols of Transformation*
1934 *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*
1945 *On the Nature of Dreams*

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By understanding the
unconscious we free ourselves
from its domination.
Carl Jung
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