

taken in part from Clifton Snider's *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made On: A Jungian Interpretation of Literature*



C. G. Jung

A Brief Outline of Jungian Psychology
with some
Archetypal Images, Themes, and Symbols
by Clifton Snider

Jung's Psychology of Consciousness

- I. Psychological Types (see Snider, pp. 12-13)
 - A. Introversion: the libido (psychic energy) is turned inward, away from the object, into the subject.
 - B. Extraversion: the libido is turned outward, toward the object
- II. Functions of Consciousness: these are divided into four.
 - A. Thinking (this type relates to the world via thought, cognition, logic: true vs. false)
 - B. Feeling (this type makes value judgments: good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant).
 - C. Sensation (this type experiences the world through the senses)
 - D. Intuition (this type "perceives through his or her unconscious")

An introvert's or an extravert's primary function can be any of these four, and he or she can (and ideally will) develop the others too. Also, introversion and extraversion are merely categories, not destiny, and any given individual can develop opposite traits, and ideally will do so.

Jung's Psychology of the Unconscious

While Freud believed in the personal unconscious, Jung, once an associate of Freud, accepted the concept of the personal unconscious but also postulated the concept of the collective unconscious. In it are the archetypes, tendencies to form universal images--archetypal images; these can be images of animals, people, anthropomorphic beings (such as the vampire or gods and goddesses), objects (a tree, a

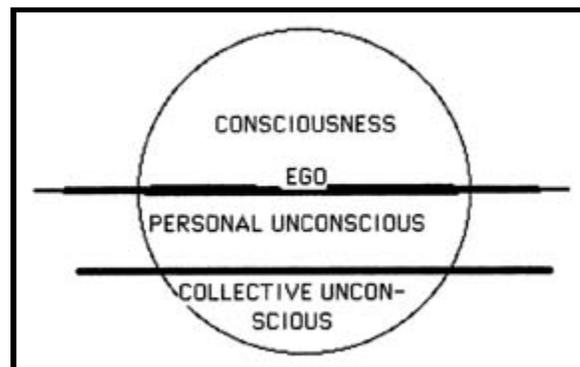
house, a cross or a mandala, for example), abstract ideas (made concrete by the images), and patterns such as the hero's journey, as in Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

Probably the central therapeutic concept of Jung's analytical psychology is the concept of the need for balance to gain psychic health. Therefore, when an individual is troubled, he or she will dream archetypal, as opposed to merely personal, dreams whose aim is to right an imbalance in the psyche of that individual. This is the concept of compensation. Just as dreams can be personal or archetypal, so can literature. Jung calls the former psychological (it springs from the personal unconscious) and the latter visionary (it springs from the collective unconscious). Visionary literature compensates for collective psychic imbalance.

The collective unconscious is common to the human race the world over. To achieve psychic health, or wholeness, the aim is individuation, becoming a whole, individual person. This process is different for each person (and most never achieve it or even attempt it), but Jung believed it especially involved coming to terms with the following archetypes: the shadow, the anima or animus, and the Self. Archetypes come from the collective unconscious and by definition can be positive and negative. In theory their numbers are limitless.

As a Jungian literary critic, I have searched for "new" archetypes (ones not thought of before, such as the archetype of Ideal Love I refer to in my book, *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made On*, p. 49) and new ways of looking at well-known archetypes (for example, the concept of the "male" anima; see my essay on Oscar Wilde's fairy tales, link below). Also, I try to look for archetypes in literature that may not have been noticed before, such as shamanism in the poetry of Emily Dickinson (you can link to my essay on this topic below). For more on using Jung to analyze literature, see my book and the links below.

A Diagram of Jungian Psychology



LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS:

- A. **Individual** (includes **Ego, Persona, Personality Types** (Introversion or Extraversion, terms Jung coined), and **Functions of Consciousness** (Thinking, Feeling, Intuition, Sensation))
- B. Family
- C. Clan
- D. Nation
- E. Large group (e. g., The West, Asia, Africa, etc.). The archetypes from this level are much the same in any individual who comes from that group.
- F. Primeval ancestors. This level applies to all humanity.
- G. Animal ancestors in general. This level applies to all higher forms of life.

H. Central Fire (life itself). ("A spark from this fire ascends through all intervening levels into every living creature" (Barbara Hannah, *Jung: His Life and Work* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991), p. 16).

Hannah notes that with the layer or level of the nation considerable differences in archetypal images appear--hence the difficulty of differing nations in understanding each other. Only the individual and the family are fully in the conscious sphere, yet elements from these will become buried in the personal unconscious, much as Freud postulated.

Some Archetypal Images, Themes, and Symbols

Archetypes, it is important to remember, are bipolar. They always contain the potential for the opposite of their central characteristic. If they are conceived of as positive, the negative is a possibility as well. Even the **shadow**, generally a negative archetypal figure of the same gender as the individual (containing traits he or she does not or prefers not to acknowledge), can be a positive force (see Snider, pp. 3 and 15). Also, archetypes overlap, so that, for instance, the **scapegoat** may also be a **hero** or a **vampire** could be a **trickster**. I have put the archetypal images, themes, and symbols in boldface.

Archetypal Characters

The Hero. Lord Raglan, in *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Dream*, finds that traditionally the hero's mother is a virgin, the circumstances of his conception are unusual, and at birth some attempt is made to kill him. He is, however, carried away and raised by foster parents. We know little or nothing of his childhood, but when he reaches manhood he returns to his future kingdom. After a victory over the king or a wild beast, he marries a princess, becomes king, reigns uneventfully, but later loses favor with the gods. He is then driven from the city and meets a mysterious death, often at the top of a hill. There are many variations on this pattern, of course. The dying and reviving god of fertility is one of them. See the patterns demonstrated by Joseph Campbell in *Hero With a Thousand Faces*. **The Feminine Hero** is not as prominent in Western culture, but examples of both male and female heroes exist throughout the world, examples such as Gilgamesh, Ishtar, Osiris, Shiva, Krishna, Kali, Oedipus, Theseus, Perseus, Jason, Dionysus, Orpheus, Diana, Moses, Joseph, Elijah, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Arthur, Merlin, Robin Hood, Joan of Arc, Quetzalcoatl, and many, many others.

The **hero** often has a **helper** of some sort, perhaps a **Wise Old Man** or **Wise Old Woman** who guides him or her (or, conversely, leads him or her astray) and/or a **companion**, who may be a **double** (see below) for him or her. Examples of the former include Tiresias (for Oedipus), Merlin (for Arthur), and Naomi (for Ruth); see Snider, pp. 21 and 29. Examples of the latter include Gilgamesh and Enkidu, David and Jonathan, Achilles and Patroclus, Alexander and Hephaestion, Sam and Frodo in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and many others. Like all archetypes, the **double** can be both positive and negative. A form of the double used in formal literature is the **foil**, who provides a contrast with the hero, as does Laertes for Hamlet. Horatio is positive compared to the more negative Laertes.

A modern variation of this archetype is the **Antihero**, found in many forms of literature, from Byron's *Don Juan* to Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* to Knowles's *A Separate Peace* and Lowry's *Under the Volcano*. A psychological explanation for the appearance of this archetype in the last two hundred years or so is the partial disappearance of what Jung called the *imago Dei* or the **God Image**, "imprinted on the human soul [according to "the Church Fathers"]. When such an image is spontaneously produced in dreams, fantasies, vision, etc., it is, from the psychological point of view, a symbol of the Self . . . of psychic wholeness" (qtd. in Snider, *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made On*, p. 21). The need of a spiritual center filled by an *imago Dei* or some **Higher or Supreme Power** seems to be innate in humans, and heroes are often the incarnation of this archetype. The alcoholic protagonist of *Under the Volcano*, on

the other hand, desperately needs some spiritual fulfillment such as that provided by the *imago Dei*.

The Scapegoat can also be a **hero**, an **outcast** or **outsider**, and a **wanderer** (e.g., Cain, Oedipus, the Wandering Jew, and Coleridge's Ancient Mariner). He or she is conceived as the alien **other**. The scapegoat is an animal or more usually a human whose death in a public ceremony or expulsion from the community expiates some taint or sin, the results of which have been visited upon the community. In ancient times the sacrifice of the scapegoat was meant to restore fertility to the land, so that the scapegoat can be a kind of hero.

Scapegoating can also be intensely personal in the form of persecution by one individual against another. To use another as a scapegoat is to project one's shadow (or the collective shadow) onto him or her or onto a group. The scapegoats are viewed as aliens. As Jungian psychoanalyst Erich Neumann writes: "Inside a nation, the aliens who provide the objects for this projection [of evil] are the minorities" (*Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, Boston: Shambhala, 1990, p 52). Such minorities include, but are not limited to, "heretics [i.e., religious minorities], political opponents and national enemies," and the "fight against . . . [them] is actually the fight against our own religious doubts, the insecurity of our own political position, and the one-sidedness of our own national viewpoint" (p. 52). Hence, homophobia, defined by Robert Goss as "the socialized state of fear, threat, aversion, prejudice, and irrational hatred of the feelings of same-sex attraction" (*Jesus Acted Up: A Gay and Lesbian Manifesto*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, p. 1), is actually a fear of one's own "feelings of same-sex attraction." Racism, anti-Semitism, and sexism (and any other kind of prejudice against an individual because of his or her status) also involve projecting one's shadow onto the other so that whatever faults one attributes to the scapegoat are likely to be unpalatable faults of one's own.

The Devil Figure is a form of the **shadow**, evil incarnate, a figure who frequently offers the hero (or the individual protagonist in a myth, poem, or story) worldly goods, fame, or knowledge for possession of his soul. The Faust legend is an obvious example, as is Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in which the protagonist is offered eternal youth and beauty, however obliquely.

The Fool is a shadow figure distressed by some unconscious lack of **power**, often driven by **greed** or an inordinate desire for **fame** (all archetypes), who projects his or her inadequacies against scapegoats as described above. Modern examples range from political leaders with real power (such as **Hitler** and **Stalin** or current leaders from various parts of the globe, including the United States) to some (certainly not all) political commentators, leaders of crusades against minorities, and religious leaders who are intolerant of the **other** as described above and/or take financial and spiritual advantage of their followers because of their greed and desire for power. Probably the most famous literary example of the latter is Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry*, but channel surfing the TV or radio and doing an Internet search will easily provide more contemporary examples of all the fools I cite. These **fools** or **tricksters** (see below) generally suffer from psychic "inflation" (see Snider, pp. 80 and 84, n. 5); they are unconsciously possessed by archetypal forces or figures that drive them to compensate for their psychic split by persecuting others. When such figures have real power, it goes without saying they can and do cause real harm against their own people and especially against others whom they demonize as the **enemy**.^{*} Most wars involve this kind of psychology on the part of those who lead their nations to war. **War** and **Peace** are powerful archetypes.

The Fool is not always negative, of course. A relatively benevolent form of the fool is the **Clown**, who is more aware of his or her trickster aspect, perhaps, than is the fool. Indeed, laughter can be a great healing force. That cruelty is often a part of comedy demonstrates a need to displace our own shadow urges to be cruel. The clown is cruel, or suffers cruelty, for us. The **trickster** often plays this role, for the trickster and the fool or the clown usually embody the same archetype.

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The Anima (the feminine side of a man's psyche) can take many forms, from the merely physical to the highest spirituality and wisdom (see Snider, p. 17). She can be the **Kore** figure (mother/maiden/hag), the **Earth Mother** (symbol of fruition, abundance, fertility, but also of destruction on a grand scale), the **temptress** (or *femme fatale*), the **unfaithful wife or mate**, the **star-crossed lover**, the **jilted lover**, and so on. See Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*.

The Mother and Child together and separately are powerful archetypes, as are the **Father and Child**. Jung says that "'Child' means something evolving towards independence" (qtd. in Snider, p. 115). The **Mother** in her positive aspect is nurturing, protecting, and loving; in her negative aspect she is withholding of nurture, protection, and love. The **Father**, too, is protective, instructive, and loving in his positive aspect but destructive and hurtful in his negative aspect. At their best, the **mother** and the **father** serve as teachers and examples of love and acceptance to their children.

There are also the **Oedipus** and the **Electra Complexes** for men and women respectively. Though commonly associated with Freudian theory, these archetypes are not incompatible with Jungian theory.

The Animus (the masculine side of a woman's psyche) can also take many forms, including the merely physical to the highest spirituality and wisdom (see Snider, p. 18). Whereas the number of wholeness for a woman, according to Jung, is more often three, for a man is it four. The animus can also be the **tempter** (the **rapist** is an extreme example), an *homme fatale*, an **unfaithful husband or mate**, the **star-crossed lover**, the **jilted lover**, and so on.

For the homosexual man, Robert Hopcke posits the possibility of a "**male anima**" who functions exactly as the anima has always functioned, as "guide to the unconscious and to relatedness with others," and who, again like the traditional anima, is "a figure of often enormous erotic charge, all too frequently idealized and projected out onto a man's object of love" (*Men's Dreams, Men's Healing*, Boston: Shambhala, 1990, p. 122). Presumably, the "**female animus**" can do the same for the lesbian, although I have not found research on this topic to date.

Another archetype that can apply to all sexual orientations, although usually it is of the same gender as the individual, is the **Double**, which in Plato's *Symposium* is a symbol for male and female same-sex wholeness, as well as for opposite-sex wholeness. (See Mitchell Walker's "The Double, an Archetypal Configuration," *Spring* (1976): 165-175.) Included in examples of this archetype are brothers or sisters (often twins), friends, and lovers. To the examples I cite above in my paragraph on the **hero's helper**, I would add the Sufi poet, Rumi, and Shams al-Din.

A variation of the **double archetype** is the *puer aeternus* (the eternal youth) and the *senex* (the old man, often the **Wise Old Man**, see Snider, pp. 77-78) and their feminine counterparts, the *puella aeternus* and the **Wise Old Woman**. These can form a constellation of the **Self**, the archetype of **Wholeness**, just as the anima and the animus can lead to such psychic wholeness. An example of the **negative double** is the **hostile brothers** (e.g., Cain and Abel); sibling rivalry is another, often milder, form of this aspect of the archetype.

The Hermaphrodite, joining the opposites of male/female, is a symbol of psychic wholeness (see Snider, pp. 20-21). The transgendered (as well as the bisexual) figure, although not quite the same as the hermaphrodite, could symbolize wholeness as well, depending on the context in which it is found. **Androgyny**, as I show in my discussion of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (Snider, pp. 87-93), can also symbolize psychic wholeness, or the **Self**. Among native Americans in the Western Hemisphere, the

["two-spirit"](#) third and fourth gender person fits this archetype.

The Trickster, Jung says, is an aspect of the shadow archetype, at least in its negative traits (see "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure" in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. 2nd ed. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969. Vol. 9, part i, of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, pp. 255-272, as well as my articles on Wilde's [The Importance of Being Earnest](#) and on [the trickster in Edward Lear](#)). The trickster, obviously, deceives, often playfully, sometimes painfully. A very sexual archetype, it has the ability to change genders and play havoc with the hyper-rational personality and community. Examples of the trickster are Satan, Loki, and, in Native American mythology, the coyote, the raven, and the Winnebago trickster. The **vampire** is, in fact, a kind of trickster, "able to change into many shapes, among them bats, wolves, spiders, butterflies, fog, or even a bit of straw" (see my essay on ["The Vampire Archetype in Charlotte and Emily Brontë"](#)).

A necessary archetype is the **Healer**, be he or she a spiritual figure (such as a [shaman](#) or **priest**), a physician, or, indeed, a psychotherapist. One example is the *curandera* in Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*. Sadly, people who need healing, whether spiritually or physically or both, sometimes seek help from **charlatans**, who are actually tricksters of a very malignant order. Because the need for wholeness is so strong, sometimes even these charlatans can be effective.

Other powerful healing archetypes are **confession** and **forgiveness**.

The Persona, though intimately tied to the psychology of the conscious mind, can also be an archetype. It is the role we play at any given time. The psychological danger is to identify too closely with one particular role (see Snider, p. 9).

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Finally, the **Artist** is an archetype in myth, literature, and everyday life. As I explain in my book, *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made On*, Jung classifies literature, and by extension all art, into "psychological" and "visionary" modes. The former stems from the personal psychology of the creator; the latter may also do so but it has universal (that is, archetypal) applications that stem from the collective unconscious. A neoPlatonist, Jung believes "The creative process has something of the 'feminine' in it, arising as it does from the unconscious, 'from the realm of the Mothers.'" You can not force it, for "Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument" (Snider, p. 7).

Archetypal Concepts and Themes

The Platonic Ideal is a source of inspiration and a spiritual ideal for the individual (or protagonist in myth and literature). It is an intellectual or a spiritual rather than a physical attraction.

The Quest can be a search for virtually anything, noble or ignoble, spiritual or physical; in any case, the **goal** (also called the **treasure hard to obtain**) has great value for the quester.

The Task is something that must be done to achieve something valuable: the hero must perform this task to save the kingdom, win the fair lady, etc.

Initiation involves going from one stage of life to another. Typically performed or experienced by a young person, it can also occur during any stage of life, as in the James Dickey novel, *Deliverance*. The proverbial **mid-life crisis**, if successful, is a kind of initiation.

The Journey can combine all or some of the above. Indeed, the **individuation process** (see above) is a kind of journey.

The Fall involves going from a higher to a lower state of being, as in *Paradise Lost*, *Sister Carrie*, *The Great Gatsby*, or *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

The hieros gamos ("sacred wedding") or **coniunctio** can symbolize the union of opposites that is achieved in the **Self** (see Snider, p. 20).

Death and Rebirth. The most common of all situational archetypes, death and rebirth grows out of the parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. **Life** and **Death** are themselves archetypes everyone experiences.

Archetypal Symbols

These are too many even to begin to be comprehensive, but here are a few (and this is not to say the images and themes above are not symbolic; they are).

The Mandala, a circle, often squared, can also symbolize the wholeness of the **Self** or the yearning for such wholeness.

Light/Darkness (the conscious and the unconscious), **Water or wetness/Dryness or the desert**, **Heaven/Hell**, **Trees**, **Rocks**, **Dirt**, **Flowers**, **Animals of all kinds (insects, birds, fish, mammals), etc., etc.** **Birds**, for instance, often symbolize the spirit (e.g., the Holy Spirit as a dove), but could symbolize many other things, as, for example, fear and destruction (e.g., in the Hitchcock movie, *The Birds*), courage, wisdom, etc. For many American Indians, the eagle is a particularly sacred symbol. By definition, a **symbol** has an infinitive number of possible meanings. **The trickster**, as I point out above, often appears as an animal, as does the **vampire**.

Caves can symbolize the unconscious, as can **bodies of water**, **the forest**, **night**, the **moon**, etc. These tend to be feminine symbols as well, just as anything that encloses or nourishes, depending on the context, can be a **feminine symbol**.

In addition to **light**, the **sky**, the **sun**, the **eyes**, etc., can symbolize consciousness.

A **seascape** or the **sea** itself can symbolize many things, as in Melville's *Moby Dick* or Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*. Similarly, in Proulx's story, "Brokeback Mountain," as well in the movie based on the story, the **landscape** is a powerful symbol standing for the relationship of Jack and Ennis and for many other things.

Although, as Freud is said to have remarked, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, sometimes it is indeed a **phallic symbol**, as are other items, depending on the context, whose lengths are much longer than their widths.

* * *

The meaning of any of the above archetypal characters, concepts, themes, and symbols depends on the context in which they are found, be it an individual's dreams, life and psyche or a given myth, fairy tale, piece of art, literature or whatever. **The context is vital if any real meaning is to be attached to the archetypes.**

***Fool**, *n.* A person who pervades the domain of intellectual speculation and diffuses himself through the channels of moral activity. He is omnific, omniform, omnipercipient, omniscient, omnipotent. He it was who invented letters, printing, the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, the platitude, and the circle of the sciences. He created patriotism and taught nations war--founded theology, philosophy, law, medicine, and Chicago. He established monarchical and republican government. He is from everlasting to everlasting--such as creation's dawn beheld he fooleth now. In the morning of time he sang upon primitive hills, and in the noonday of existance headed the procession of being. His grandmotherly hand has warmly tucked-in the set sun of civilization, and in the twilight he prepares Man's evening meal of milk-and-morality and turns down the covers of the universal grave. And after the rest of us shall have retired for the night of eternal oblivion he will sit up to write a history of human civilization.

- Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

See also Snider, [The Stuff That Dreams Are Made On: A Jungian Interpretation of Literature](#).

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