



Mandala Consulting's Jung Pages
by Anthony Wilson

An Initial Personal Reflection

I have a sense of excitement as I write, tinged with something like awe and where-do-I-begin? How can I do justice to the man and the vast range of Jung's thinking and influence. Rica Viljoen of Mandala Consulting, the only Organization Development consultancy I've ever heard of, to work with an unashamed holistic and Jungian bias, afforded me the opportunity to fulfill a long-held aspiration, to make Jung's work better known. I believe if, for example, only a few people discover what their Shadow is and dissolve their Shadow projections, the world will be a better place.

For me handling Jung's ideas is like playing with high voltage electricity. Heady stuff. Like all power and knowledge, it can intoxicate me, inflate my Ego and corrupt me. I find it helps me to remind myself often, *I didn't invent this stuff*. If we should meet please remind me when I start to talk about Jungian thought.

Uniquely, Jung is, at the same time, both a global psychologist and a local psychologist. He had enormous respect for, and appreciated the value and healing power of those manifestations of the unconscious psyche that have something in common with us all: the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

Concerning archetypes, Proffo writes, *[They] provide extremely provocative possibilities for ethnological study. They are the means of finding the unity underlying the variety of cultural products. Works of art, poetry, and literature, social and political ideologies, as well as religious works may be studied as expressions of these basic patterns.* [1]

But I am ahead of myself. My head tells me to start at the beginning, maybe tell the story of Jung's life, describe his professional career and its discoveries in a neat, chronological sequence. That way I won't get to archetypes for quite a while. My heart says I must start at the archetypal material. In some ways this is much harder to intellectualize, yet in other ways it is oftentimes instinctively grasped and welcomed.

The Mother Archetype or "I'd walk a million miles for one of your smiles, my Mammy."

Archetypes

An archetype is an unconscious concept, a shell, waiting to be fleshed out and expressed in some way with an archetypal image. While an archetype is common to all of humankind, the form its expression takes will differ from culture to culture.

Jung said that the archetype represented that portion of our being *through which the psyche is attached to nature.* [2] It is *a dynamism which makes itself felt in the numinosity and fascinating power of the archetypal image.* [3]

Archetypes are part of that deeper layer of the unconscious psyche that Jung calls the Collective Unconscious. He doesn't mean that we all share, as it were, one mind. He says, *this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals... a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us.* [4]

Let's back up a little here and find out what Jung means by "the unconscious". He said,...

the unconscious depicts an extremely fluid state of affairs:

everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking;

everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten;

everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind;

everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do;

all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness:

all this is the content of the unconscious. [5]

Samuels, Shorter and Plaut wrote, “*Jung did not regard the unconscious solely as a repository of repressed, infantile, personal experience but also as a locus of psychological activity which differed from, and was more objective than, personal experience, since it related directly to the phylogenetic, instinctual bases of the human race.*” [6]

To sum up, archetypes exist deep inside us and we are naturally not conscious of them. Like all unconscious material, there is no object, there is nothing to behold. As Jung said, we cannot hold the unconscious in the palm of our hand. However, we have hints and inferences that tell us of the existence of the unconscious. Archetypal images are just such occurrences that point to the existence of the unconscious psyche.

Examples of Archetypes

The archetype is in itself inexpressible, since it is unconscious. However it is the natural tendency of all unconscious material to want to become conscious by manifesting itself in consciousness. Making the unconscious conscious is what we are called to do; it is our task; our opus or life's work. In his memoirs Jung wrote, *As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.* [7] This, of course, is not easy and not accomplished without some discomfort and pain. We luxuriate in our unconsciousness. Jung described unconsciousness as humankind's worst sin. As Eckhart Tolle says, “I avoid the now by sleeping.” [8]

No one gets conscious if they do not suffer! If you are always in the maternal waters at 35°C. you need nothing, but you are not conscious. [9] Psychology will only help us so far in our quest, our heroic journey to find and bring back to our daily life the “treasure hard to obtain”, to become a Prometheus, to discover fire, to increase our consciousness. *The Opus consists of three parts: insight, endurance and action. Psychology is needed only in the first part, but in the second and third parts, moral strength plays the predominant role.* [10]

Archetypal images are the manifestation of archetypes. Yet they are not fully conscious. One talks of being in the grip of an archetype. When we think we are in control, that is probably when we are not. As Jung said, concerning complexes, we say we have a complex, but it is the complex that has us. The problem is the almost impossibility of the science of psychology, for as has been said many times before, what do we have to study the human psyche with, but another human psyche. We have no external vantage point outside of the human psyche. We can never reach true objectivity.

A convenient and accessible place to start reading about archetypes is the small publication, *Four Archetypes* [11], an extract from the larger volume, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*. It consists of four seminal essays, *Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype*, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales*, *Concerning Rebirth* and *On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure*.

The Mother Archetype

Let us consider the Mother. The significance of this particular archetype is hard to overestimate. Like all symbols it takes us further. Its expression is somehow incomplete. It is important here to distinguish between the personal mother and the archetypal mother. The influence of our personal mother is greatly amplified by the archetypal mother.

I can recall that when I was a child, my grandmother would extol the virtues of her long-dead mother in an idealized way. She would beg me to be grateful for my mother, her daughter and be kind to her because she suffered so greatly from her headaches, or “bad heads” as she would say. Migraine was given as the cause, but it became clear to me years later in my own analysis that these headaches might well have been somatic symptoms of hysteria. My mother would extravert her symptoms and involve me in her difficulties. She would say how my small hands stoking her forehead as she lay on the sofa, greatly helped to relieve the pain in her head.

One Archetype, many archetypal images across many cultures

Magna Mater is the “great mother”, Gaia, the Earth Mother. Gaia is the Greek goddess whose name comes from the Greek words “earth” and “grandmother”. Rhea is Gaia's daughter and Uranus or “the sky” is Rhea's father. In Roman mythology she is Tellus, Terra or Cybele. She is Ki or Ninhursaga in Sumerian mythology. The Great Mother is the creator of life and at the same time “*the loving and the terrible mother*” [12] Jung describes the Mother archetype's qualities as “*maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magical transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On*

the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark, the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate." [13] Instinctively this somehow resonates deep within us.

Our five-year old Siamese mother cat cared wonderfully for her kittens. Even to this day she has two old gloves which she treats as her babies, giving them fresh air and sunshine, keeping them warm at night, presenting them to my wife and I as we write of watch television. Perhaps they are "Transitional Objects" to a cat psychologist. Yet this same delicate and caring creature is also a merciless hunter-killer of the swallows that return to us from Europe each summer. She hypnotizes and teases mice and lizards before killing them. Is she not like Mother Nature herself? Providing bountifully for her children, while at the same time presiding over the world of tooth and claw and the law of survival of the fittest. This negative aspect of mother archetype is also represented by, for example, "the witch, the dragon (or any devouring and entwining animal such as a large fish or a serpent), the grave, the sarcophagus, deep water, death, nightmares and bogies (Empusa, Lilith etc.)." [14] In India, she is Kali

The term Great Mother her other titles in different cultures and traditions is the naming of the image (something which contains or amplifies the symbol; the condensed expression of the psychic contents as a whole and not merely, or even predominantly, of unconscious contents pure and simple. [15]) The Great Mother has two faces, one benign, the other terrible. Thus we can build up a picture of her.

Negative Pole	Positive Pole
Bad mother,	Good mother, cherishing, sustaining
Secretive, Dark, Gloomy,	Open, Shining
The Abyss	Heavenly
The World of the Dead	Life
Devouring, castrating, destroying, "Queen of the Night"	Nurturing, caring, helpful
Seducing, beguiling, tricking	Attracting
Poisoning, corrosive	Life giving
Terrifying, vindictive	Benign
Inescapable, like fate	Sympathetic, Flexible
Whore	Madonna
Cunning, earthy	Wise, spiritual

Closer to home we have the Zulu Great Earth Mother goddess, Nomkhubulwane or more simply, "Ma". She is often depicted with a woman's leg and an animal leg, or with two human legs and the toes of one of her legs with roots going down into the soil. She, too, has her tricky side as she is a shape-changer, sometimes referred to in Zulu as "she who chooses the state of an animal" Another local diety is Djobela, the one-eyed Earth Goddess.

In Rome two of the titles of the goddess Isis whom they borrowed from the Egyptians, were "Comforter of the Afflicted" and "Star of the Sea". In Roman Catholicism, these are also two of the titles given to the Mary, Jesus's mother.

Since writing the words above, an example of synchronicity has occurred. Last evening I watched a small fragment of a television programme on the History Channel about The Bible. For a few moments they featured the Roman cult of Isis and gave more of her names, including some I did not know, or had forgotten: "Virgin Mother", "Queen of Heaven", "Holy Mother of God". The commentary said that many of the temples dedicated to Isis, were later converted to Christian churches honouring Mary. Jung has some interesting observations to make on this point. He had written about Isis in 1938 and in 1950 the Roman Catholic church announced the doctrine of Mary being bodily assumed into heaven.

Jung had this to say on the topic, "*The declaration of the dogma comes at a time when the achievements of science and technology, combined with a rationalistic and materialistic view of the world, threaten the spiritual and psychic heritage on man, with instant annihilation. Humanity is arming itself, in dread and fascinated horror, for a stupendous crime.*" [16]

In Ireland the mother goddess is Anu or Danu and the rest of the pantheon of the Celtic Gods are the "Tuatha de Dannan" or the People of Danu. In Norse mythology Freya fulfills the archetypal image as does Yggdrasil or the World Ash or World Tree, from which we have all grown. The Hindus venerate Mahimata or the "Mother Earth", while in Turkic Siberia she is Umai.

All over the world, in every culture, the archetype of the mother is known. Jung felt that to a man the female is alien and thus, in males the mother archetype would be more unconscious. Whereas in a woman, it is more conscious, less terrifying and more attractive, since she shares the same gender as her mother. This may be so, but it could be a male's idealization of the female, ignoring mother-daughter rivalry.

What can be helpful to us is to realize that the archetypal Great Mother, has opposites in her character. She nurtures and destroys. Similarly, there is good and bad in us all, even my grandmother's saintly mother, that utter paragon of virtue. This good woman, no doubt, had the capacity to strangle my grandmother at birth. She didn't – or you wouldn't be reading this. And then again was this last sentence an example of projection on my part? Now there's something for me to think about.

The Mother Archetype forms the foundation of the mother-complex. Jung suggests that when a child's instincts are disturbed the archetype is constellated and this produces *fantasies that come between the child and its mother as an alien and often frightening element. Thus, if children of an overanxious mother regularly dream that she is a terrifying animal or a witch, these experiences point to a split in the child's psyche that predisposes it to a neurosis.* [17]

Elsewhere Jung tells us that the constellation of the archetypal images and fantasies is not in itself pathological. *The pathological element only reveals itself in the way the individual reacts to them.* [18] Thinking ourselves, or another person, identical with the archetype is the pathology. Maybe my poor old grandmother was simply trying to pass on to me a respect and reverence for my mother, or maybe she'd got it bad. We need to be careful that we do not try to turn flesh and blood people, or geographical places, or products or organizations or events into our archetypal images. Who could live up being a deity? Could Cape Town really be the Mother City? Was Saddam Hussein's First Gulf War, the "Mother of all Wars?" Does all that is good and bad flow from the motherboard of my notebook?

We place great, even impossible, demands on others when we ask them to live out our archetypes. Often criticized, in my opinion wrongly, as illustrating a selfish attitude, there is much wisdom the words of Fritz Perls. *I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine* [19].

Luckily for us, Winnicott said that most parents only have to be "good enough", not perfect, not fantastic, just human. [20] Having said that it's a truism, that seems to me very true, that most men marry a woman like their mother. There was even a song, an Al Jolson recording I believe, with the lyrics,

I want a girl, just like the girl, that married dear old Dad.

And in case woman readers are gently smiling knowingly to themselves thinking of their boy-husbands, pause for a moment's reflection - and remember it takes two to tango.

Anthony Wilson

[1] Progoff, I, *Jung: Psychology and its Social Meaning*

[2] *Mind and Earth*, CW10, para 53. A note on references: CW refers to The Collected Works of C G Jung. They are published in the UK by Routledge, and in the US by Princeton University Press. There are 20 volumes, each consisting of a number of articles. It is customary to quote the paragraph rather than the page number.

1. Psychiatric Studies
2. Experimental Researches
3. The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease
4. Freud and Psychoanalysis
5. Symbols of Transformation
6. Psychological Types
7. Two Essays on Analytical Psychology
8. The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche
9. (i) The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious (ii) Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self
10. Civilization in Transition
11. Psychology and Religion: West and East
12. Psychology and Alchemy
13. Alchemical Studies
14. Mysterium Coniunctionis
15. The Spirit of Man, Art and Literature
16. The Practice of Psychotherapy
17. The Development of the Personality
18. The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings
19. General Bibliography of C G Jung's Writings
20. General Index to the Collected Works

[3] *On the Nature of the Psyche*, CW8, para 414

[4] *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, CW9(i), para 3

- [5] *On the Nature of the Psyche*, CW8, Para 342
- [6] Samuels, Andrew, Shorter, Bani and Plaut, Fred. *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London
- [7] Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*
- [8] Tolle, Eckhart *The Flowering of Human Consciousness* audiotape
- [9] Carl Jung, *Dream Analysis: notes of the Seminar Given in 1928-1930*, edited by William McGuire, Routledge
- [10] *C G Jung: Letters*, selected and edited by Gerhard Adler, in collaboration with Aniela Jaffé. Translations from the German by R F C Hull, vol.2 1951-1961, Routledge
- [11] Carl Jung, Four Archetypes from the Collected Works of CG Jung, volume 9, Part 1, Bollingen Series XX, Princeton University Press
- [12] C G Jung *Symbols of Transformation* (CW5) which Jung refers us to in *The Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype* CW 9(i), para 158
- [13] *Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype*, CW9(i), para 158
- [14] *Ibid.*, para 157
- [15] *XI Definitions*, CW6, para 745
- [16] *Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype* CW9(i) para 195
- [17] *The Mother Complex* CW9(i) para 161
- [18] *A Study in the Process of Individuation*, CW9(i), para 621
- [19] An extract from the so-called "Gestalt Prayer" by Frederick Perls, (1893-1970) a psychologist who started Gestalt Therapy with his wife Laura. Perls who worked at Wits, and 1 Military Hospital. He was a psychiatrist in the South African Army with the rank of Captain. He moved to New York and became associated with the Essalen Institute in California.
- [20] "The good-enough mother... starts off with an almost complete adaption to her infant's needs and, as time proceeds, she adapts less and less completely, gradually according to the infant's growing ability to deal with her failure." Winnicott, D W (1951) *Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena*