

## CARL JUNG "ARCHETYPES OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS" (1934)

Jung, Carl. "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious." The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Vol. 9i of Collected Works. Ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. 20 Vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953-1978. 3-41.

Jung draws a distinction between Freud's notion of the "personal unconscious" (3) (henceforth, PU) and his own notion of the "*collective unconscious*" (3) (CU). He describes the PU as the "gathering place of forgotten or repressed contents" (3) and as derived from "personal experience" (642). However, the PU "rests upon a deeper layer" (3), the CU. The latter is "not individual but universal" (3): it is "identical in all men" (4), consisting of a "common psyche substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (4). Secondly, it is "not a personal acquisition but is inborn" (3), that is, it is biologically inherited rather than, as is the case with the PU, something produced during the formative stages of human development in the course of which the infant is 'socialised' and acquires a gendered and sexualised identity.

Where the contents of the PU are the *instincts* or *drives* (as Freud's German term is more accurately and more often translated today), that is, those repressed desires which are socially incompatible with the dominant mores of human society, the contents of the CU are the "*archetypes*" (4). These are, according to Jung's definition, "archaic or . . . primordial types" (5), that is, "universal images that have existed since the remotest times" (5), which are retained at unconscious levels of the psyche and which are passed on from generation to generation as part of the psychic inheritance of all humans. In short, Jung defines the archetype as the psychic residue of repeated patterns of experience, handed down from generation to generation since time immemorial, which prestructure our experiences in the present. An archetype is an "immediate datum of psychic experience" (5) that has "not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration" (5). It is an "unconscious content" (5) that is only subsequently "altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (5).

Archetypes are expressed in a number of ways: especially in primitive tribal lore or myths (where they are "no longer contents of the unconscious, but have already been changed into conscious formulae taught according to tradition" [643]), fairytales and dreams which are, like myths, a particularly fertile source of study for understanding the archetypes found in the human psyche.

Myths, Jung claims, are essentially "psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul" (6): primitive man desperately needed to assimilate all outer sense experience to inner, psychic events. It is not enough for the primitive to see the sun rise and set; this external observation must at the same time be a psychic happening: the sun in its course must represent the fate of a god or hero who, in the last analysis, dwells nowhere except in the soul of man. All the mythologised processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth . . . are the symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection--that is, mirrored in the events of nature. (6)

In short, myths "refer to something psychic" (644) within human beings, being "involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings" (645) on the part of

primitive man. The psyche contains, Jung asserts, all the "images that have ever given rise to myths" (644): our "unconscious is an acting and suffering subject with an inner drama which primitive man rediscovers, by means of analogy, in the processes of nature" (644).