Jungian Archetypes

The following provides information about Jungian Archetypes, with a description of the archetypal theory followed by a list of prominent archetypes.

*The first two pages of this handout describe the nature of archetypes and Carl Jung’s philosophy; the following pages list the archetypes (Situation, character, symbolic).*

**Archetypes As Defined By Carl Jung**:

**The Nature of the Archetypes**

**(taken from handouts by Geoff Girard)**

An archetype is a generic, idealized model of a person, object or concept from which similar instances are derived, copied, patterned or emulated. In psychology, an archetype is a model of a person, personality or behavior. This article is about personality archetypes, as described in literature analysis and the study of the psyche.

Carl Jung proposed that humans have a "preconscious psychic disposition that enables a (man) to react in a human manner." These potentials for creation are actualized when they enter consciousness as images. There is a very important distinction between the "unconscious, pre- existent disposition" and the "archetypal image." The archetype may emerge into consciousness in myriads of variations. To put it another way, there are a very few basic archetypes or patterns which exist at the unconscious level, but there are an infinite variety of specific images which point back to these few patterns. Since these potentials for significance are not under conscious control, we may tend to fear them and deny their existence through repression. This has been a marked tendency in Modern Man, the man created by the French Revolution, the man who seeks to lead a life that is totally rational and under conscious control.

Where do the archetypes come from? In his earlier work, Jung tried to link the archetypes to heredity and regarded them as instinctual. We are born with these patterns which structure our imagination and make it distinctly human. Archetypes are thus very closely linked to our bodies. In his later work, Jung was convinced that the archetypes are psychoid, that is, "they shape matter (nature) as well as mind (psyche)" (Houston Smith, Forgotten Truth, 40). In other words, archetypes are elemental forces which play a vital role in the creation of the world and of the human mind itself. The ancients called them elemental spirits How do archetypes operate? Jung found the archetypal patterns and images in every culture and in every time period of human history. They behaved according to the same laws in all cases. He postulated the Universal Unconscious to account for this fact. We humans do not have separate, personal unconscious minds. We share a single Universal Unconscious. Mind is rooted in the Unconscious just as a tree is rooted in the ground. Imagine the Universal Unconscious as a cosmic computer. Our minds are subdirectories of the root directory. If we look in our personal "work areas," we find much material that is unique to our historical experience--could only have happened to us--but it is shaped according to universal patterns. If we humans have the courage to seek the source to which our "account" belongs, we begin to discover ever more impersonal and universal patterns. The directories of the cosmic computer to which we can gain access are filled with the myths of the human species.

Modern man fancies that he has escaped the myths through his conscious repudiation of revealed religion in favor of a purely rational natural religion (read: Natural Science). But consider his theories of human origin. In the beginning, there was a Big Bang, a cosmic explosion. This is an image from which reason may begin to work, but it is not itself a rational statement. It is a mythical construct. Consider the theory of biological evolution. Man's ancestors emerge from the seas, and they in turn emerged from a cosmic soup of DNA. The majority of creation myths also begin with the same image of man emerging from primordial oceans. See Genesis 1 or the Babylonian creation epic. Consider the Modern tendency to call ourselves persons from the Latin persona. The term derives from the "mask" of Dionysus. Moderns are the wearers of masks! The reality is concealed in the darkness of mystery. This too is a mythical construct.

## **The Archetypes**

### **The Shadow:** The most basic potential for patterning is the Shadow Archetype. This is the potential of experiencing the unconscious side of our unique personalities. As we move deeper into the dark side of our personality personal, identity begins to dissolve into "latent dispositions" common to all men. We experience the chaos which indicates that we are drawing close to the material structure of psychic life. This "Other Side" may be manifested in a wealth of images. The image of "wilderness" is fundamental. Remember that Hanzel and Gretel were led "into the woods" and were trapped. Knights discover dragons, ogres, and thieves in the woods. Robin Hood is at home in the wild. The image may be that of the mob and its underworld, an urban equivalent in which "Pretty Boy" Floyd is a hero. There is always "the concrete jungle." Dragons sail the sea, "the watery wilderness." Jesus and John the Baptist met God "in the wilderness," as did Israel at Sinai.

The Shadow is the easiest of the archetypes for most persons to experience. We tend to see it in "others." That is to say, we project our dark side onto others and thus interpret them as "enemies" or as "exotic" presences that fascinate. We see the Shadow everywhere in popular culture. He is Batman. She is Spider Woman. It is the Ninja Turtles. We see it in popular prejudice as well. We "imagine" that the Black Man is our enemy; that Communists are devils. We incline towards Hawaii as the "land of paradise." We accept people uncritically if we perceive them as "Fair Haired." Of course, Satan is the great Shadow image of popular religion (Consider: the word only occurs 54 times in the entire Bible.)

The Shadow is the personification of that part of human, psychic possibility that we deny in ourselves and project onto others. The goal of personality integration is to integrate the rejected, inferior side of our life into our total experience and to take responsibility for it.

### **The Anima Or Animus:** The second most prevalent potential patterning is that of the Soul (Anima is the male name for soul; Animus is the female name for soul). Here we meet our inner opposite. Males meet their Anima; females their Animus. The Anima may appear as an exotic dancing girl or a weathered old hag--the form generally reflects either the condition or the needs of our soul presently. Remember the wicked witch encountered by Hanzel and Gretel. The Animus may appear as an exotic, sensual, young man or as an old grouch. Remember the Great Oz who ran the Emerald City? There is always Simon Legree who took in Little Eva. Consider Super Man and Lois Lane. Clark Kent is the inferior, shadow side of Super Man, but he is also closer to ordinary people. Lois Lane has no interest in Clark. She is infatuated with Super Man, her Animus; the masculine completion of her personality. Wonder Woman offers us an example of the Anima in action.

### **The Syzygy (Divine Couple):** If one comes to terms with the Shadow and the Soul, one will encounter the enchanted castle with its King and Queen. This is a pattern of wholeness and integration. The opposites of the outer and the inner life are now joined in marriage. Great power arises from this integration. Christ and the Church, God and Israel are syzygy images. The believer who aspires to be the "bride of Christ" is modeling his or her experience in response to the syzygy archetype.

### **The Child:** The Child Archetype is a pattern related to the hope and promise for new beginnings. It promises that Paradise can be regained. Child images like the New Year's Babe obviously derive from this archetype. So do the golden ring and the golden ball and most flower and circle related images. The birth of the Christ Child who unites Heaven and Earth, Man and God, is a powerful archetypal event. Were the life of Jesus not interpreted by this archetype, it would lose most of its meaning. Jesus would just be one more teacher from the Hellenistic world.

### **The Self:** The ultimate pattern is the Self. For Jung this is the God image. Human self and divine self are incapable of distinction. All is Spirit. Images of Spirit abound. Wind and breath being two very common ones. The Spirit descends as a Dove upon Jesus in the wilderness. The voice declares to him his true nature: "You are my Son, my Beloved." This is an archetypal drama of the Self. Galahad achieving the Grail and ascending with it to Heaven is likewise an archetypal drama of Self. Lancelot's failure to achieve the Grail speaks of his failure to achieve the final discovery of Self. Chariots and cars point in this direction. Remember the death car which comes in Darby O'Gill and the Little People? Enoch is taken up in a chariot of fire. Ezekiel Chapter One describes the chariot conveying God into the world.

**Directions:** In crafting your consideration of *Godot*, please consult the following list. **CONSIDER:** *Godot* may reflect ***variations of / deviations from*** these archetypes; simply because they appear may not necessarily mean that they reflect the exact definitions below.

SITUATION ARCHETYPES

1. The Quest – This motif describes the search for someone or some talisman which, when found and brought

back, will restore fertility to a wasted land, the desolation of which is mirrored by a leader’s illness and disability.

2. The Task – This refers to a possibly superhuman feat that must be accomplished in order to fulfill the

ultimate goal.

3. The Journey – The journey sends the hero in search for some truth of information necessary to restore

fertility, justice, and/or harmony to the kingdom. The journey includes the series of trials and tribulations the

hero faces along the way. Usually the hero descends into a real or psychological hell and is forced to discover the

blackest truths, quite often concerning his faults. Once the hero is at this lowest level, he must accept personal

responsibility to return to the world of the living.

4. The Initiation – This situation refers to a moment, usually psychological, in which an individual comes into

maturity. He or she gains a new awareness into the nature of circumstances and problems and understands his or

her responsibility for trying to resolve the dilemma. Typically, a hero receives a calling, a message or signal that

he or she must make sacrifices and become responsible for getting involved in the problem. Often a hero will

deny and question the calling and ultimately, in the initiation, will accept responsibility.

5. The Ritual – Not to be confused with the initiation, the ritual refers to an organized ceremony that involves

honored members of a given community and an Initiate. This situation officially brings the young man or woman

into the realm of the community’s adult world.

6. The Fall – Not to be confused with the awareness in the initiation, this archetype describes a descent in action

from a higher to a lower state of being, an experience which might involve defilement, moral imperfection, and/or

loss of innocence. This fall is often accompanied by expulsion from a kind of paradise as penalty for disobedience

and/or moral transgression.

7. Death and Rebirth – The most common of all situational archetypes, this motif grows out of the parallel

between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. It refers to those situations in which someone or something,

concrete and/or metaphysical dies, yet is accompanied by some sign of birth or rebirth.

8. Nature vs. Mechanistic World – Expressed in its simplest form, this refers to situations which suggest that

nature is good whereas the forces of technology are bad.

9. Battle Between Good and Evil – These situations pit obvious forces which represent good and evil against one

another. Typically, good ultimately triumphs over evil despite great odds.

10. The Unhealable Wound – This wound, physical or psychological, cannot be healed fully. This would also indicate a loss of innocence or purity. Often the wounds’ pain drives the sufferer to desperate measures of madness.

11. The Magic Weapon – Sometimes connected with the task, this refers to a skilled individual hero’s ability to use a piece of technology in order to combat evil, continue a journey, or to prove his or her identity as a chosen

individual.

12. Father-Son Conflict – Tension often results from separation during childhood or from an external source when

the individuals meet as men and where the mentor often has a higher place in the affections of the hero than the

natural parent. Sometimes the conflict is resolved in atonement.

13. Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity – Some characters exhibit wisdom and understanding intuitively as

opposed to those supposedly in charge.

SYMBOLIC ARCHETYPES

1. Light vs. Darkness – Light usually suggests hope, renewal, OR intellectual illumination; darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair.

2. Water vs. Desert – Because water is necessary to life and growth, it commonly appears as a birth or rebirth symbol. Water is used in baptism services, which solemnizes spiritual births. Similarly, the appearance of rain in a work of literature can suggest a character’s spiritual birth.

3. Heaven vs. Hell – Humanity has traditionally associated parts of the universe not accessible to it with the dwelling places of the primordial forces that govern its world. The skies and mountaintops house its gods; the bowels of the earth contain the diabolic forces that inhabit its universe.

4. Haven vs. Wilderness – Places of safety contrast sharply against the dangerous wilderness. Heroes are often sheltered for a time to regain health and resources.

5. Supernatural Intervention – The gods intervene on the side of the hero or sometimes against him.

6. Fire vs. Ice – Fire represents knowledge, light, life, and rebirth while ice like desert represents ignorance, darkness, sterility, and death.

7. Colors

A. Black (darkness) – chaos, mystery, the unknown, before existence, death, the unconscious, evil

B. Red – blood, sacrifice; violent passion, disorder, sunrise, birth, fire, emotion, wounds, death, sentiment, mother, Mars, the note C, anger, excitement, heat, physical stimulation

C. Green – hope, growth, envy, Earth, fertility, sensation, vegetation, death, water, nature, sympathy, adaptability, growth, Jupiter and Venus, the note G, envy

D. White (light) – purity, peace, innocence, goodness, Spirit, morality, creative force, the direction East, spiritual thought

E. Orange – fire, pride, ambition, egoism, Venus, the note D

F. Blue – clear sky, the day, the sea, height, depth, heaven, religious feeling, devotion, innocence, truth, spirituality, Jupiter, the note F, physical soothing and cooling

G. Violet – water, nostalgia, memory, advanced spirituality, Neptune, the note B

H. Gold – Majesty, sun, wealth, corn (life dependency), truth

I. Silver – Moon, wealth

8. Numbers:

A. Three – the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Ghost); Mind, Body, Spirit, Birth, Life, Death

B. Four – Mankind (four limbs), four elements, four seasons

C. Six – devil, evil

D. Seven – Divinity (3) + Mankind (4) = relationship between man and God, seven deadly sins, seven days of week, seven days to create the world, seven stages of civilization, seven colors of the rainbow, seven gifts of Holy Spirit.

9. Shapes:

A. Oval – woman, passivity

B. Triangle – communication, between heaven and earth, fire, the number 3, trinity, aspiration,

movement upward, return to origins, sight**,** light

C. Square – pluralism, earth, firmness, stability, construction, material solidity, the number four

D. Rectangle – the most rational, most secure

E. Cross – the Tree of life, axis of the world, struggle, martyrdom, orientation in space

F. Circle – Heaven, intellect, thought, sun, the number two, unity, perfection, eternity, oneness, celestial realm, hearing, sound

G. Spiral – the evolution of the universe, orbit, growth, deepening, cosmic motion, relationship between unity and multiplicity, macrocosm, breath, spirit, water

10. Nature:

A. Air – activity, creativity, breath, light, freedom (liberty), movement

B. Ascent – height, transcendence, inward journey, increasing intensity

C. Center – thought, unity, timelessness, spacelessness, paradise, creator, infinity,

D. Descent – unconscious, potentialities of being, animal nature

E.Duality – Yin-Yang, opposites, complements, positive-negative, male-female, life-death

F.Earth – passive, feminine, receptive, solid

G. Fire – the ability to transform, love, life, health, control, sun, God, passion, spiritual energy,

regeneration

H. Lake – mystery, depth, unconscious

I. Crescent moon – change, transition

J. Mountain – height, mass, loftiness, center of the world, ambition, goals

K. Valley – depression, low-points, evil, unknown

L. Sun – Hero, son of Heaven, knowledge, the Divine eye, fire, life force, creative-guiding force, brightness, splendor, active awakening, healing, resurrection, ultimate wholeness

M. Water – passive, feminine

N. Rivers/Streams – life force, life cycle

O.Stars – guidance

P. Wind – Holy Spirit, life, messenger

Q. Ice/Snow – coldness, barrenness

R. Clouds/Mist – mystery, sacred

S. Rain – life giver, cleanser of spiritual matters

T. Steam – transformation to the Holy Spirit

U. Cave – feminine

V. Lightning – intuition, inspiration

W. Tree – where we learn, tree of life, tree of knowledge

X. Forest – evil, lost, fear

11. Objects:

A. Feathers – lightness, speed

B. Shadow – our dark side, evil, devil

C. Masks – concealment

D. Boats/Rafts – safe passage

E. Bridge – change, transformation

F. Right hand – rectitude, correctness

G. Left hand – deviousness

H. Feet – stability, freedom

I. Skeleton – mortality

J. Heart – love, emotions

K. Hourglass – the passage of time

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

1. The Hero – In its simplest form, this character is the one ultimately who may fulfill a necessary task and who

will restore fertility, harmony, and/or justice to a community. The hero character is the one who typically

experiences an initiation, who goes the community’s ritual (s), et cetera. Often he or she will embody

characteristics of YOUNG PERSON FROM THE PROVINCES, INITIATE, INNATE WISDOM, PUPIL, and SON.

2. Young Person from the Provinces – This hero is taken away as an infant or youth and raised by strangers. He

or she later returns home as a stranger and able to recognize new problems and new solutions.

3. The Initiates – These are young heroes who, prior to the quest, must endure some training and ritual. They

are usually innocent at this stage.

4. Mentors – These individuals serve as teachers or counselors to the initiates. Sometimes they work as role

models and often serve as father or mother figure. They teach by example the skills necessary to survive the

journey and quest.

5. Hunting Group of Companions – These loyal companions are willing to face any number of perils in order to be together.

6. Loyal Retainers – These individuals are like the noble sidekicks to the hero. Their duty is to protect the hero.

Often the retainer reflects the hero’s nobility.

7. Friendly Beast –These animals assist the hero and reflect that nature is on the hero’s side.

8. The Devil Figure – This character represents evil incarnate. He or she may offer worldly goods, fame, or

knowledge to the protagonist in exchange for possession of the soul or integrity. This figure’s main aim is to

oppose the hero in his or her quest.

9. The Evil Figure with the Ultimately Good Heart – This redeemable devil figure (or servant to the devil figure)

is saved by the hero’s nobility or good heart.

10. The Scapegoat – An animal or more usually a human whose death, often in a public ceremony, excuses some taint or sin that has been visited upon the community. This death often makes theme more powerful force to the hero.

11. The Outcast – This figure is banished from a community for some crime (real or imagined). The outcast is

usually destined to become a wanderer.

12. The Earth Mother – This character is symbolic of fulfillment, abundance, and fertility; offers spiritual and

emotional nourishment to those who she contacts; often depicted in earth colors, with large breasts and hips.

13. The Temptress – Characterized by sensuous beauty, she is one whose physical attraction may bring about the

hero’s downfall.

14. The Platonic Ideal – This source of inspiration often is a physical and spiritual ideal for whom the hero has an

intellectual rather than physical attraction.

15. The Unfaithful Wife – This woman, married to a man she sees as dull or distant, is attracted to a more virile or

interesting man.

16. The Damsel in Distress – This vulnerable woman must be rescued by the hero. She also may be used as a trap,

by an evil figure, to ensnare the hero.

17. The Star-Crossed Lovers – These two character are engaged in a love affair that is fated to end in tragedy for

one or both due to the disapproval of society, friends, family, or the gods.

18. The Creature of Nightmare – This monster, physical or abstract, is summoned from the deepest, darkest parts

of the human psyche to threaten the lives of the hero/heroine. Often it is a perversion or desecration of the

human body.