

Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious

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Plan for Seminar

PART ONE

1. Introduction

2. The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

3. Development of concept of archetype

4. Theoretical Issues

Questions

Break

PART TWO

1. Clinical engagement with the archetype

2. How to work with archetypes

3. The personal and the archetypal

Questions

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

Jung the empiricist:

Jung never starts with idea or concept and then develops the psychology from there.

Starting point is always **experience** – and invariably his own experience. The concept is Jung's attempt to generalize from experience.

BUT our problem is that...

Archetypes and collective unconscious are pre-eminently metaphysical concepts. Nobody every met the collective unconscious. Nobody every met an archetype.

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

Two questions always need to be asked when it comes to theoretical ideas in Jung, otherwise we end up in the realm of mystical theosophy.

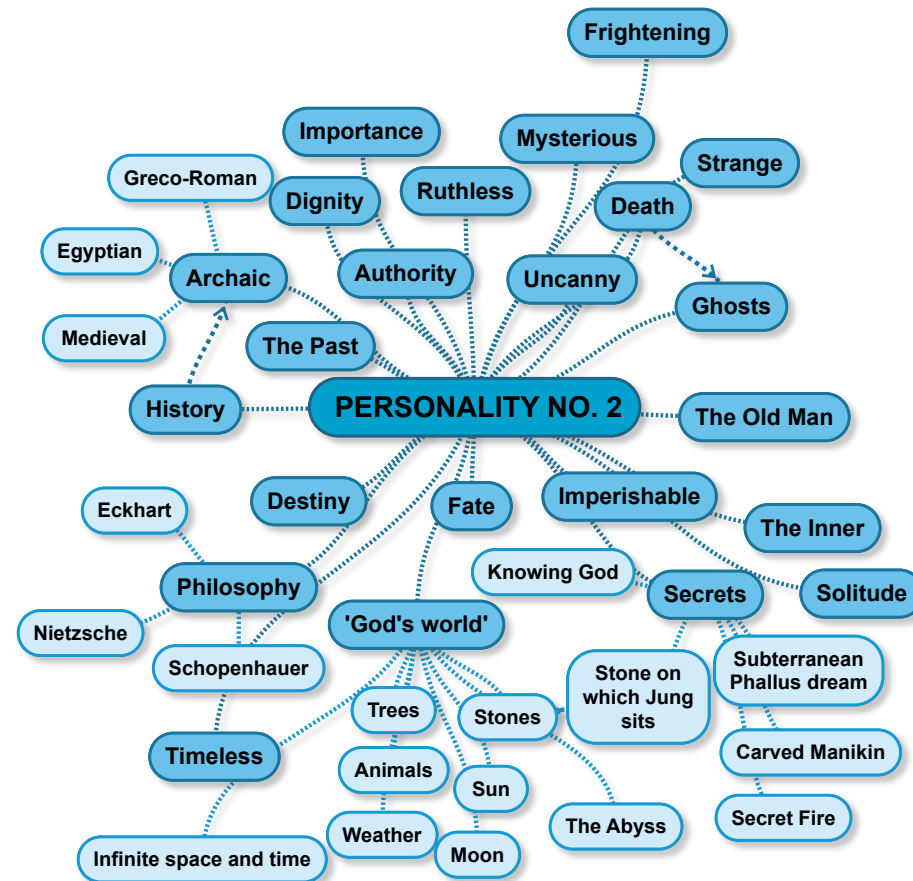
1. Which of Jung's experiences lies behind the idea?
2. How does it show up and function within psychotherapy?

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

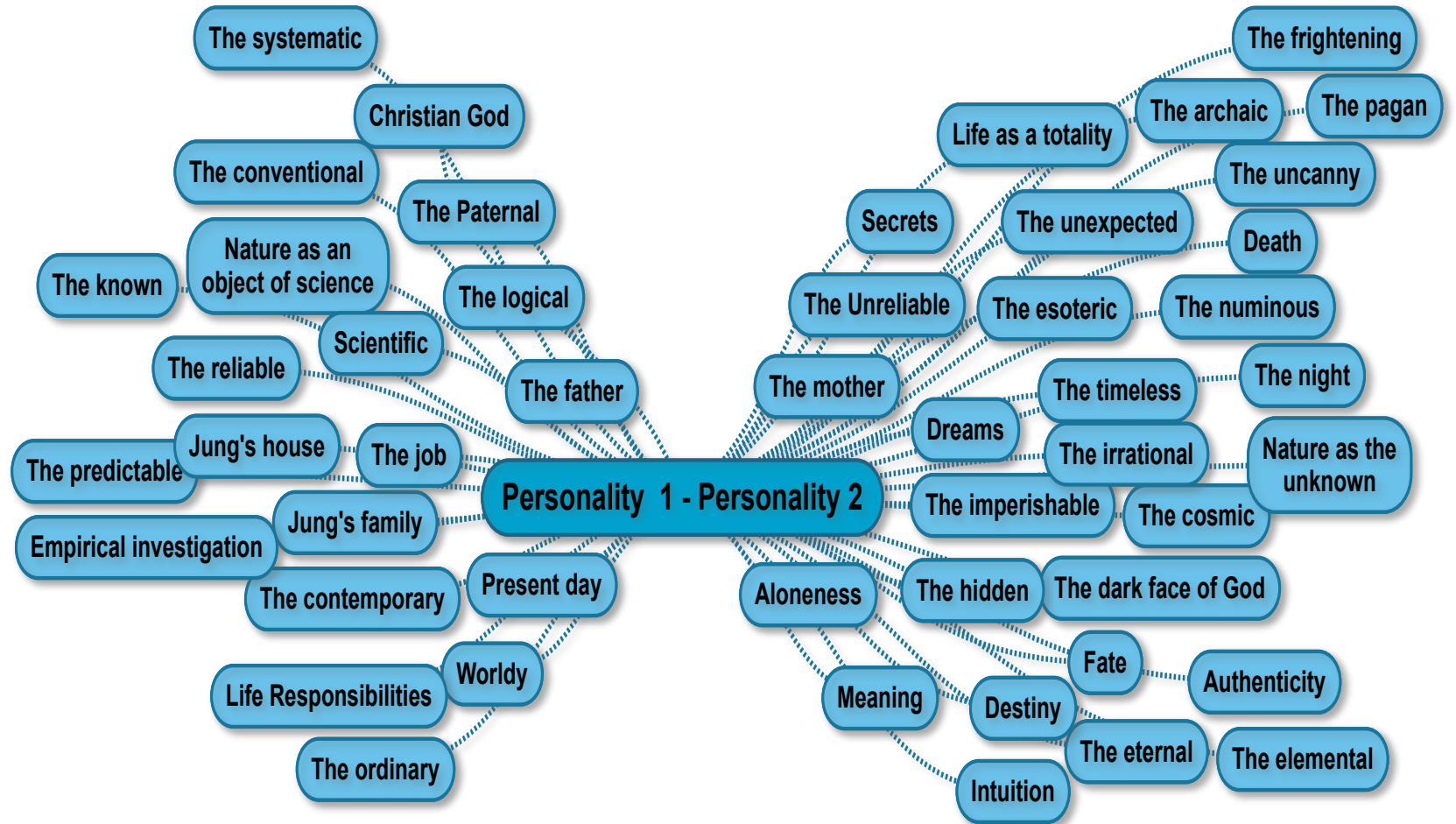
Personal:

Jung's own encounter with the numinous ("God's world" MDR)

Jung's experience of personality no. 2 (MDR)



The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology



The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

Personal:

Jung's discovery of complexes

Jung's psychotic patients (at the Burghölzli)

Jung's reading of mythology

Jung's encounter with the unconscious (The Red Book) – meeting with archetypes face to face.

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

These experiences lead to therapeutic developments:

Rethinking of purpose of therapy

Individuation

Techniques of amplification, active imagination, dreamwork

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

Need to concentrate not upon questions like

- What are archetypes?
- How many archetypes are there?

But rather...

- Why do archetypes show up in practice?
- How do archetypes show up in practice?

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

Why do archetypes show up in practice?

- Self-regulating psyche – one-sidedness leading to necessity for compensation.
- Archetypal experience as attempted solution to psychological problem

The place of the archetypes and collective unconscious within Jung's psychology

When constellated, how do archetypes show up in practice?

1. As persons – anima, shadow, divine child, hero, trickster
Often in dynamic pairings – e.g. animus /anima, mother/child, father/daughter (Winnicott: “there is no such thing as an infant”)
3. As typical dynamic situations: puberty, death/rebirth

Development of Jung's concept of the archetype

COMPLEXES

After working on word-association tests Jung comes to think of psyche as made up of feeling-toned complexes

Each can operate as autonomous splinter psyche

We meet them in our dreams – and each as unique emotional stance

Show up *in opposition to ego*

Ultimately this will allow for possibility of dialogue

Development of Jung's concept of the archetype

"Complexes obviously represent a kind of inferiority in the broadest sense-a statement I must at once qualify by saying that to have complexes does not necessarily indicate inferiority. It only means that something incompatible, unassimilated, and conflicting exists - perhaps as an obstacle, but also as a stimulus to greater effort, and so, perhaps, as an opening to new possibilities of achievement."

CW6 §925

Development of Jung's concept of the archetype

Later Jung suggests that complexes not just personal – not just to do with for example early years problems.

So Mother-complex has “archetypal core”:

Connected to Great Mother archetype

Complexes and Archetypes show up as similar:

The behaviour of new contents that have been constellated in the unconscious but are not yet assimilated to consciousness is similar to that of complexes. These contents may be based on subliminal perceptions, or they may be creative in character. Like complexes, they lead a life of their own so long as they are not made conscious and integrated with the life of the personality.”

CW8 §254

Development of Jung's concept of the archetype

The archetypes have their own initiative and their own specific energy, which enable them not only to produce a meaningful interpretation (in their own style) but also to intervene in a given situation with their own impulses and thought-forms. In this respect they function like complexes, which also enjoy a certain autonomy in everyday life. They come and go very much as they please, and they often interfere with our conscious intentions in an embarrassing way.

CW18 §546

Development of Jung's concept of the archetype

Experiences with psychotic patients

Unlike Freud – dealing with the forgotten or repressed experiences of neurotic patients

Jung (in Burghölzli) dealt with psychotic archaic dynamics producing images and narratives that couldn't be explained solely through personal experiences.

Experiences with his own quasi-psychotic breakdown (Red Book)

Lead him to see that such dynamics need not always be destructive – they can be creative.

Early mentions of the archetype

1912: (CW₄ §728) Talks of “collective nature” as opposed to personal nature. Examples given of “inherited systems”:

Youth and Old Age

Birth and Death

Sons and Daughters

Fathers and Mothers

Mating

Early mentions of the archetype

Urbild: primordial image

Image not just pictorial or visual – includes the whole gestalt:

“Image is psyche” (CW13 §75)

The image is not then a flat representation like a poster. It is a ‘functional form’; and ‘. . . the term “image” is intended to express not only the form of the activity taking place, but the typical situation in which the activity is released’ (CW9i: §152). i.e. image is the interaction of archetypal processes with sensory reality.

Marks beginning of Jung’s struggle to highlight dynamic processual aspect of archetype.

Dynamic process crucial: archetypes shape human behavior and respond to situations.

Early mentions of the archetype

1919: Instinct and the Unconscious (CW8 §263-282)

First use of term archetype

Archetypes constellate in response to problems which are beyond the capacity of ego consciousness.

Archetypes possess 'somnambulistic' consciousness of their own (like the complex)

Constellate in response to traumatic events but also assert themselves by exploiting problematic holes in ego intelligence.

Utilise productive imagination to respond creatively to situation

Early mentions of the archetype

For example:

Jung's *Red Book* period:

Trauma of split with Freud puts Jung into touch with disquieting void at centre of his life (What is my "personal myth?")

This problematic hole in Jung's conscious ego intelligence constellates the so-called *Auseinandersetzung* (confrontation) with the unconscious.

Highly emotionally charged situation

Meets archetypal figures and undergoes archetypal situations: bring to bear perspectives and affects differing powerfully from Jung's ego:

"I understood that there is something in me which can say things that I [ego] do not know and do not intend, things which may even be directed against me." MDR p.183

Archetype and Instinct

The primordial image might suitably be described as the instinct's perception of itself, or as the self-portrait of the instinct.

CW8 §277

[T]he archetypes are simply the forms which the instincts assume.

CW8 §339

Psychologically ... the archetype as an image of instinct is a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives...

CW8 §414

Archetype and Instinct

Crucial to see that Jung doesn't mean instinct as in modern biology but as in vitalistic tradition, and especially Bergson.

For Bergson:

Instinct must involve more than a set of motor mechanisms and must be taken as a kind of knowledge, implying a peculiar kind of mentality. Just as the somnambulist is perfectly conscious of what they are doing, but is unconscious of why they are doing it, instinctual activity involves a kind of consciousness which is intellectually unaware of its purpose.

Kerslake, 'Instincts and incest: From Bergson and Jung to Deleuze', in *Multitudes* 25: Été 2006

This is what Jung means when he compares archetypal images to [a] pattern of ideas, of a numinous or fascinating character, which... compels the moth to carry out its fertilizing activity on the yucca plant...

CW₁₀ §547

Inheritance of Archetype?

Motifs and images cannot be educationally or culturally transmitted – therefore archetypal potential must be somehow *inherited*.

Specific forms of archetype (archetypal image) not inherited.

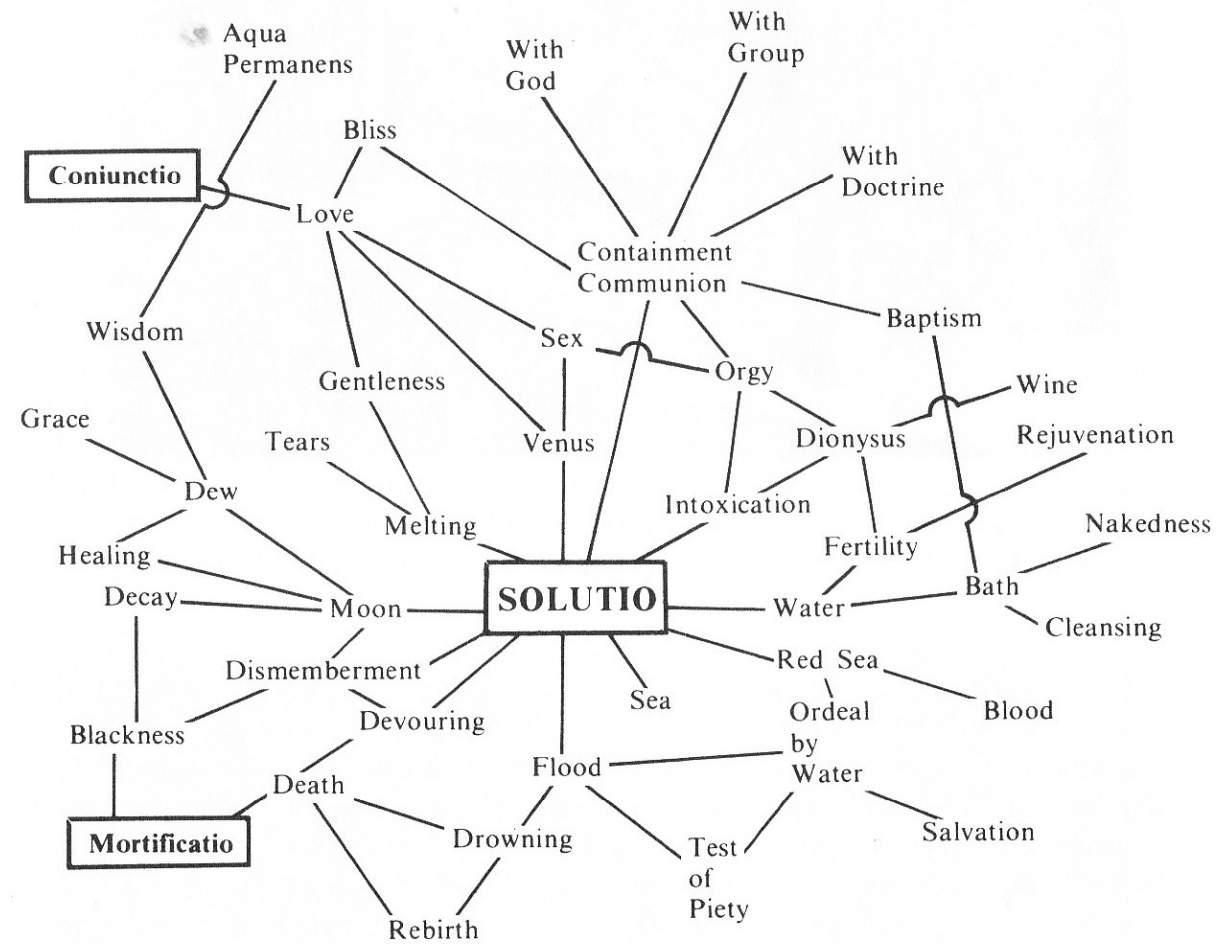
Only structures from which representations arise.

We should think about structural nodes around which motifs, ideas and images cohere in a kind of web or network.

e.g. Edinger's mindmaps in *Anatomy of the Psyche*

This is why amplification works as a method

Inheritance of Archetype?



Inheritance of Archetype?

All kinds of theoretical problems:

- Human Genome project has shown that there are only 24,000 genes in human genome. Very limited possibilities for transmission of information. Symbolical information cannot be encoded genetically.
- No mental structures in human infant for representation of symbolical information. Only basic emotions and primitive perceptual and behavioural programmes, for example, face recognition.
- Epigenetics tells us that genetic information is activated only in interaction with environmental factors, especially through experiences in relationships with primary caretakers. Experience and relationships play a much bigger role than was assumed for a long time. The key term is not blueprint, but **interaction**. One important conclusion from this is that Jung is wrong about the autonomy of the individual. The idea that the individuality of the person, their own true nature, is somehow preformatted and independent from exterior influences is mistaken.

Inheritance of Archetype?

Post-Jungian ways out of these problems?

Pietikainen: Constructivist archetype: culturally transmitted symbolic forms which contribute to our understanding and experience by giving 'irrational' or non-discursive form to some of the basic concerns of humanity.

Hillman – jettison archetypes as such – only archetypal images

Helps escape from biological problems but loses something:

Brooke: Jung is trying to retain a sense of essential embodiment: archetypes as fundamental modes in which world is revealed and engaged as a human world. Hence both 'instinct' and 'image'.

Archetypal Image

In 1946 ('On the nature of the psyche' CW8 §343-442)

Jung differentiates archetype as such from archetypal image

The archetypal representations (images and ideas) mediated to us by the unconscious should not be confused with the archetype as such. They are very varied structures which all point back to one essentially 'irrepresentable' basic form. . . . it seems to me probable that the real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious. . . .

CW8 §417

Archetypal Image

This emphasis also brings us back to the personal and the therapeutic:

[The archetype] cannot be explained in just any way, but only in the one that is indicated by that particular individual.

CW18 §589

It does not, of course, suffice simply to connect a dream about a snake with the mythological occurrence of snakes, for who is to guarantee that the functional meaning of the snake in the dream is the same as in the mythological setting? In order to draw a valid parallel, it is necessary to know the functional meaning of the individual symbol, and then to find out whether the apparently parallel mythological symbol has a similar context and therefore the same functional meaning.

CW9i §103

Pattern, model or process?

From early on tension between static 'model' and dynamic 'process':

For the archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy.

CW9i § 271

[The archetype] is a self-activating organism, endowed with generative power.

CW6 §754

Pattern, model or process?

Parallel with crystallisation:

A primordial image is determined as to its content only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience. Its form, however, as I have explained elsewhere, might perhaps be compared to the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, preforms the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, although it has no material existence of its own.

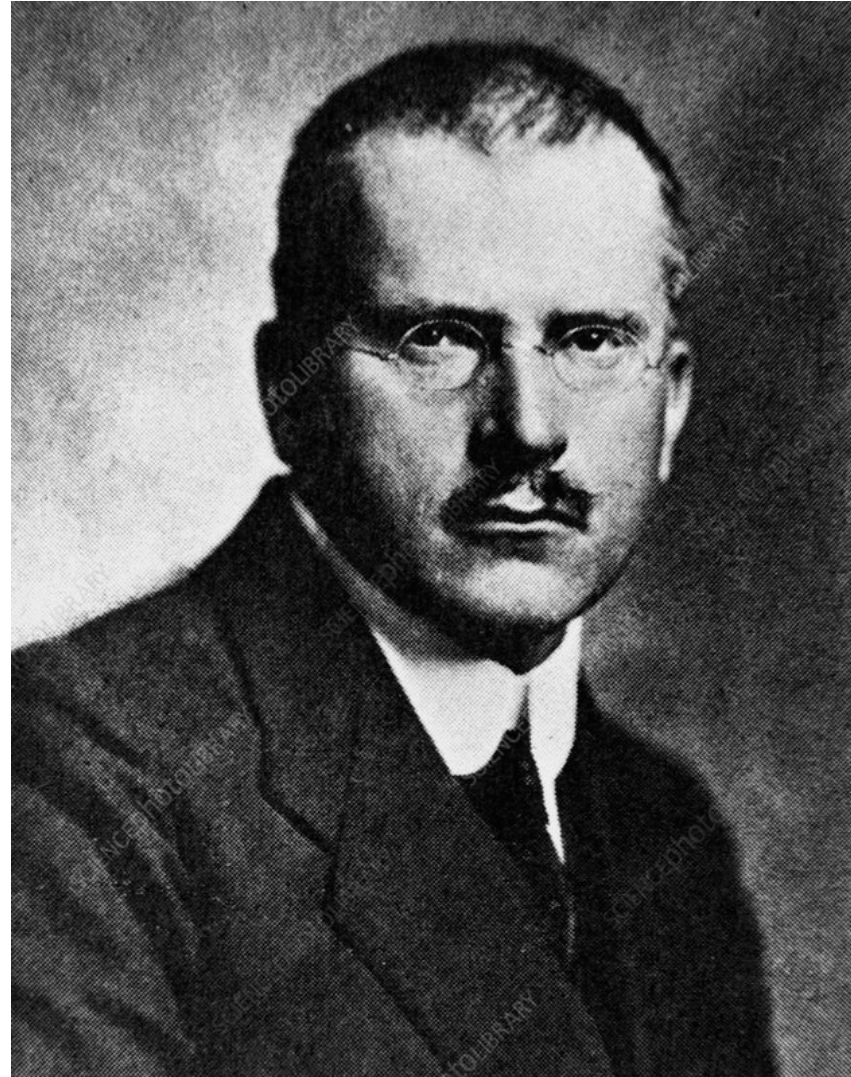
CW9i §155

[Archetypes] may be compared to the invisible presence of the crystal lattice in a saturated solution.

CW11 §222 n.2

BREAK!!

20 minutes



Clinical engagement with the archetypes

For Jung the archetypes show up clinically in these arenas:

Dreams

Active Imagination

Synchronistic phenomena

Transference/Countertransference

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

For Post-Jungians this topic is **highly political**

Zurich school (Classical) vs. London school (developmental)

Zurich:

Symbolic (Dreams, active imagination, myth, fairy tale)

London:

Transference/Countertransference & early years.

Distrust between the two.

Hillman's Archetypal school – in reaction to

1. Classical reductive use of symbolism
2. Reductive developmental

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

PERSONAL AND ARCHETYPAL

As a result what has occurred is splitting between what should (as Whitmont points out) be complementary and interdependent.

Task is to keep in mind both personal and archetypal and try to see one through the other.

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Example:

Jung working with a **dream**:

Client – young woman with father complex. V intellectual (attempt to extricate herself from emotional bond with father (dead)).

Stuck in neurotic ambivalence – her life has been held up.

Develops transference onto Jung: father imago transferred onto him. Jung now seen as father/lover. Huge overvaluation: “like a saviour or a god”

Transference neurosis gets stuck too. Just as stuck as original conflict.

Painful to stay but giving Jung up seems impossible and terrifying.

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

How to resolve the transference?

Jung has no idea.

Waits, keeping “an eye open for any movements coming from a sphere of the psyche uncontaminated by our superior wisdom and our conscious plannings.”

Dreams:

Of patient and distorted figure of Jung - supernatural size or very ancient or like the dead father.

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Example:

“Her father (who in reality was of small stature) was standing with her on a hill that was covered with wheat-fields. She was quite tiny beside him, and he seemed to her like a giant. He lifted her up from the ground and held her in his arms like a little child. The wind swept over the wheat-fields, and as the wheat swayed in the wind, he rocked her in his arms.”

Shows the unconscious sticking to Jung as father/lover

And insists upon the supernatural nature of father/lover

Dream seems to be reiterating what patient consciously knew (transference projection) and ignoring ‘common sense’

Why? What is teleological purpose of dream?

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Jung “had to be gigantic, primordial, huger than the father, like the wind that sweeps over the earth—was he then to be made into a god? Or, I said to myself, was it rather the case that the unconscious was trying to create a god out of the person of the doctor, as it were to free a vision of God from the veils of the personal.”

“Could the longing for a god be a passion welling up from our darkest, instinctual nature, a passion unswayed by any outside influences, deeper and stronger perhaps than the love for a human person?”

Jung says patient not very sympathetic to this idea but entertained it.

Then developed relationship outside of transference.

When left therapy it wasn't a disaster.

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Jung comments:

“A transpersonal control-point developed - a guiding function” that helped her through.

“My patient was quite unconscious of the derivation of “spirit” from “wind,” or of the parallelism between the two.”

Out of the purely personal form the dreams develop an archaic god-image that is infinitely far from the conscious idea of God. It might be objected that this is simply an infantile image, a childhood memory. I would have no quarrel with this assumption if we were dealing with an old man sitting on a golden throne in heaven. But there is no trace of any sentimentality of that kind; instead, we have a primordial idea that can correspond only to an archaic mentality.”

“Here is an historical image of world-wide distribution that has come into existence again through a natural psychic function. This is not so very surprising, since my patient was born into the world with a human brain which presumably still functions today much as it did of old. We are dealing with a reactivated archetype, as I have elsewhere called these primordial images.”

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

On this question of the projection of an archetypal figure in therapy:

Gordon:

The projection of an archetypal figure is often the root-cause of a particularly poisonous, intractable, and intransigent human relationship which one can encounter in, for instance, marital work. In analytic therapy it characterizes many a delusional transference, be this temporary or, in the case of borderline patients, relatively long-term state, which most of us have inevitably met and experienced. Many of us may at times have experienced the temptation to collude, by identifying with what has been projected into us, particularly if it happens to be flattering, as when we are cast into the role of the infinitely wise, or the infinitely understanding and compassionate, or the infinitely omniscient one; or we have experienced hurt or fear, or anger or despair if we find ourselves saddled with the projection of something or somebody bad or stupid or evil.

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Elsewhere she suggests that these projections crop up in countertransference in areas unexplored or worked through yet. If patient's material stirs up these areas then our ability to work could be affected by these archetypal constellations. Temptation to identify with:

- Great mother
- Great father
- Inquisitor
- Wise old man
- Wise old woman
- Healer
- Magician etc.

Or we project onto patients - divine child - archetypal patient

But however difficult this is, the alternative is not to block access to archetypal experience - leads to stagnation, lack of growth, rigidity. Sticking to ego-order

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Active imagination:

Best example Jung's engagement as depicted in Red Book.

Technique: Concentrate on specific point, mood, picture or event, then allow a chain of associated fantasies to develop and gradually take on a dramatic character. Images have a life of their own and develop according to own logic. Requires the overcoming of rational doubt which wants to sabotage the process.

First contact with archetypal figures came through Jung's active imaginations

e.g. anima

Dialogue between conscious ego and unconscious archetypal brings about transformation – shift in ego consciousness

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Problem: Jung's stuckness - having gone as far as he can with ego-consciousness (personality no 1) he now needs the compensatory input from the unconscious (personality no 2)

e.g. Philemon - (archetypal figure - superior insight of wise old man):

Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life... He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself, but in his view thoughts were like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air, and added, "If you should see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them." It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche... I understood that there is something in me which can say things that I do not know and do not intend, things which may even be directed against me.

MDR p.183

Clinical engagement with the archetypes

Synchronicity

Example from Jung

Young woman – “psychologically inaccessible” intellectual

Jung hoped “that something unexpected and irrational would turn up”

Telling dream – she had been given golden scarab

Tapping on window – Jung opens window and catches beetle in mid-air. It was scarabaeid beetle – hands it to patient: “Here is your scarab”

“This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results.”

CW8 §982

How to work with the archetypal

Amplification:

Working by analogy: content or story of an already known myth, fairy tale or ritualistic practice is used to elucidate or 'make ample' a clinical fragment—a single word or dream image or bodily sensation. If it triggers in analyst or patient the archetypal image or narrative then meaning can emerge from the material.

1. Brings to consciousness certain dynamics
2. Helps patient feel less alone – it is 'typical'

How to work with the archetypal

Example: (from Murray Stein)

Young Man – presenting problem: intense jealousy of beautiful girlfriend.

Only child – mother feels herself to be superior (musical, poetic, literary) to father (manual worker). Mother dotes on son – who is treated as 'special'.

He is sent to grandparents at early age – sees parents at weekends.

Identifies with mother (cultural interests, sensitivity) – alienated from father. Enjoys art and particularly sculpture.

Writes poetry (poem about himself as outcast hunchback despised by all) Thinks his body is too thick – wants to be small and slender.

One day sees leg turning blue from foot to above ankle – v upset – sees footprints moving across carpet and thinks it is his father. Then all returns to normal.

How to work with the archetypal

Goes camping – has dream of girlfriend sleeping with man in city she is visiting on school trip.

Stein (analyst) reminded of story of Hephaistus.

Hephaistus cast out of heaven, crippled in foot, craftsman and sculptor. Laughed at by other gods because of physical awkwardness – betrayed by Aphrodite (with Ares).

Stein suggests he looks into it.

Patient comes back for next session having read up – says he was moved by the figure. He shared story with girlfriend and wept when he describes Aphrodite's betrayal. Girlfriend weeps too and confesses she slept with man during school trip (at some time as patient's dream).

Patient very relieved because he is not crazy.

Not cured but self-esteem improves – and able to put his life experience into container of archetypal pattern.

Stein suggests this pattern is typical of introverted young men with early experience of parental abandonment.

How to work with the archetypal

BUT

Downsides to archetypal in therapy: particularly in Jungian analysis.

Some analysands are attracted to Jungian work because of its emphasis upon mythic, symbolic and archetypal.

How to work with the archetypal

Example:

Woman – father just dead.

Dreams ideas and images – archetypal, immense, otherworldly

Not psychotic (though flooded by ucs.)

No hallucinations

Vivid imagination

Spoke fluidly and easily about dreams, philosophy, ideas, myth etc

Couldn't talk at all about personal life and history (as if to say – why would anyone want to talk about that?)

How to work with the archetypal

Stein referred her on, and then met her again 8 years later after psychoanalytic-style analysis

Emotionally connected - could speak about personal – feelings for family etc

Analysis entirely based upon transference/countertansference

No dreams – avoided as defence against personal feelings

“This whole development was promised in the earlier dreams, but symbolically. The archetypal dreams showed that potential intactness, wholeness, and identity were there, but personal history was all shadow, all unconsciousness, and only after this had been integrated into consciousness could wholeness shine through.”

“The archetypal dreams had indicated this possibility, while at the same time they had covered and hidden the very detail of history she needed to become a person.”

How to work with the archetypal

Symbolic life can be a false life if lived before the personal history has been woven into consciousness.

Ego uses it as a defence – to block out troublesome personal

Needs to retain 'specialness'

When this is the case the analyst needs to find the personal historical reality inside the archetypal idea and image:

e.g. Retrieve personal mother from witch archetype

Unburden the weight of archetypal projections

How to work with the archetypal

Stein identifies two quite different approaches:

1. Finding archetypal pattern behind personal and historical
2. Finding personal historical stuff in welter of archetypal

He adds third:

See where archetypal and personal are joined - either because of archetypal intervention (synchronicity) or through union of personal and archetypal so that personal history takes on feeling of religious meaning and destiny.

How to work with the archetypal

In traditional societies people live wholly inside sacred history (participation mystique). There is no awareness of 'objective' history

In modern western society people live wholly outside sacred history – ignorant of transcendent factors.

Postmoderns (like Jung) live both inside and outside – holding tension of the opposites – living in paradox.

Stein sees these three stages in analysis:

- 1. Beginner enclosed in conscious subjectivity
- 2. After a bit objective awareness of 'other within' (complexes & archetypes)
- 3. Subjective and objective fuse - both in consciousness

Personal becomes symbolic and symbolic becomes personal.

Personal and archetypal

Mary Williams (The Indivisibility of the Personal and Collective Unconscious):

Two ideas:

1. Nothing in the personal experience needs to be repressed unless the ego feels threatened by its archetypal power

[The archetypes] have a dominating power, so it is not surprising that they are repressed with the most intense resistance. When repressed, they do not hide behind any trifling thing but behind ideas and figures that have already become problematical for other reasons, and intensify and complicate their dubious nature. For instance, everything that we would like, in an infantile fashion, to attribute to our parents or blame them for is blown up to fantastic proportions from this secret source."

CW9i §130

Personal and archetypal

Williams suggests that this means that what we call personal could just as well be called archetypal.

e.g.

Doctor with bipolar mother repressed his fear of her and her mania. But remains terrified of wife's tempers. In transference he overcame fear of analyst and this allowed him to re-experience fear of terrible archetypal mother - attached to repressed memories of mad mother. (Also attached to his fear of maniacal aggressor in himself)

Now able to give mother some warmth and improve relationship with wife.

Personal and collective treated as one entity. When ego integrated image of mother she became suffering human being not one-sided monster. Patient is humanized too.

If they are divided then collective cannot be integrated - remains a threat to all relationships.

Personal and archetypal

Williams

2. The archetypal activity which forms the individual's myth is dependent on material supplied by the personal unconscious.

In MDR MDR Jung seeks to get to know his myth “so he took it upon himself to get to know his myth so that in treating patients he would make due allowance for the personal factor”[?]

Example: Priest in Anatole France story obsessed by damnation of Judas. Particularly anxious because moving toward a heresy. Activation of Judas myth dependent on priest's repressed heretical urges.