

The Conscious Living Program



MODULE 1: THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS & ARCHETYPES

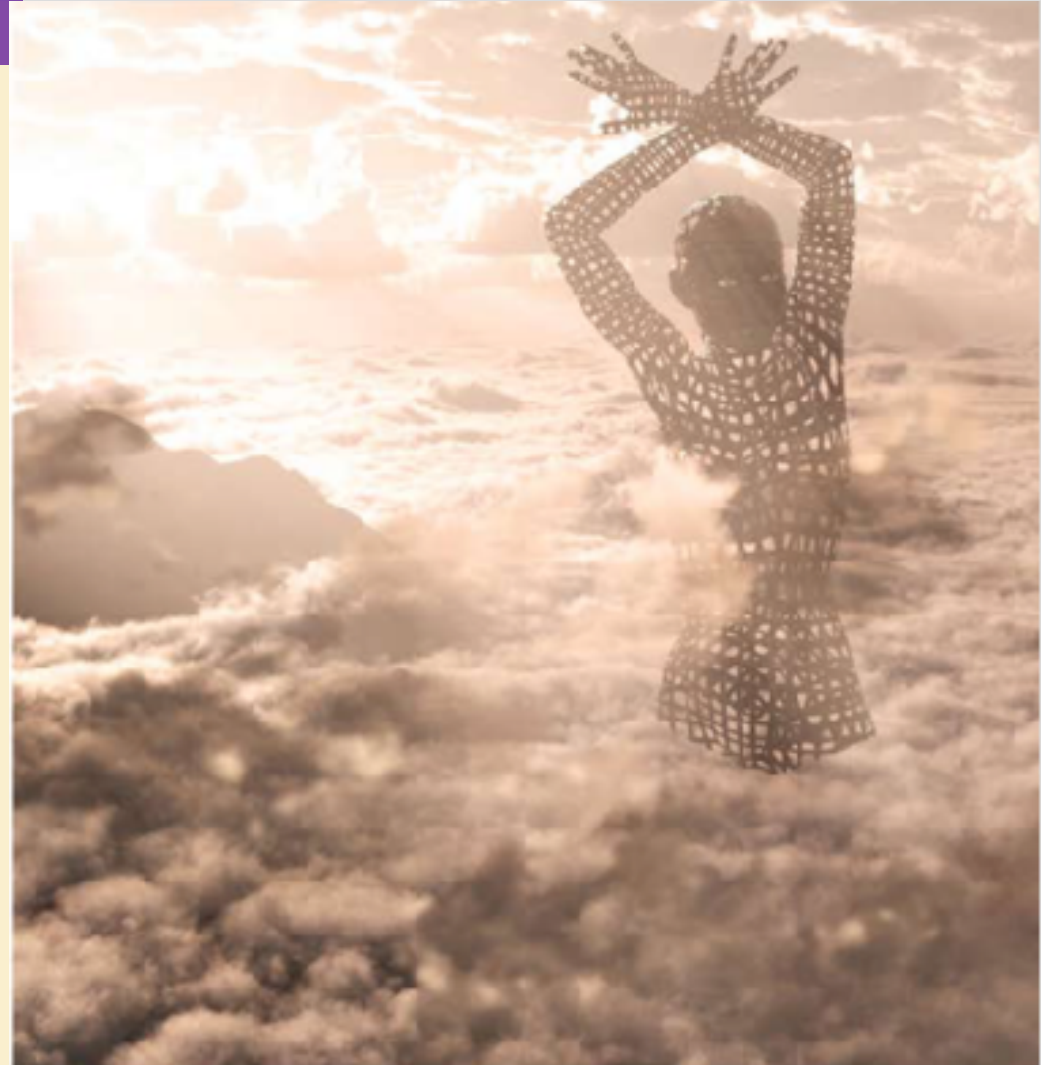
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MODULE 1: THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS & ARCHETYPES

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Quotes

Read the quotes below and reflect on what resonates for you or where it seems familiar. Capture your thoughts, ideas and associations in your journal.

[...] It must be pointed out that just as the human body shows a common anatomy over and above all racial differences, so, too, the psyche possesses a common substratum transcending all differences in culture and consciousness. I have called this substratum the collective unconscious. This unconscious psyche, common to all mankind, does not consist merely of contents capable of becoming conscious, but of latent dispositions towards certain identical reactions. Thus the fact of the collective unconscious is simply the psychic expression of the identity of brain-structure irrespective of all racial differences. This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between various myth-motifs, and symbols, and the possibility of human beings making themselves mutually understood.

The various lines of psychic development start from one common stock whose roots reach back into all the strata of the past. This also explains the psychological parallelisms with animals. *(From Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower)*



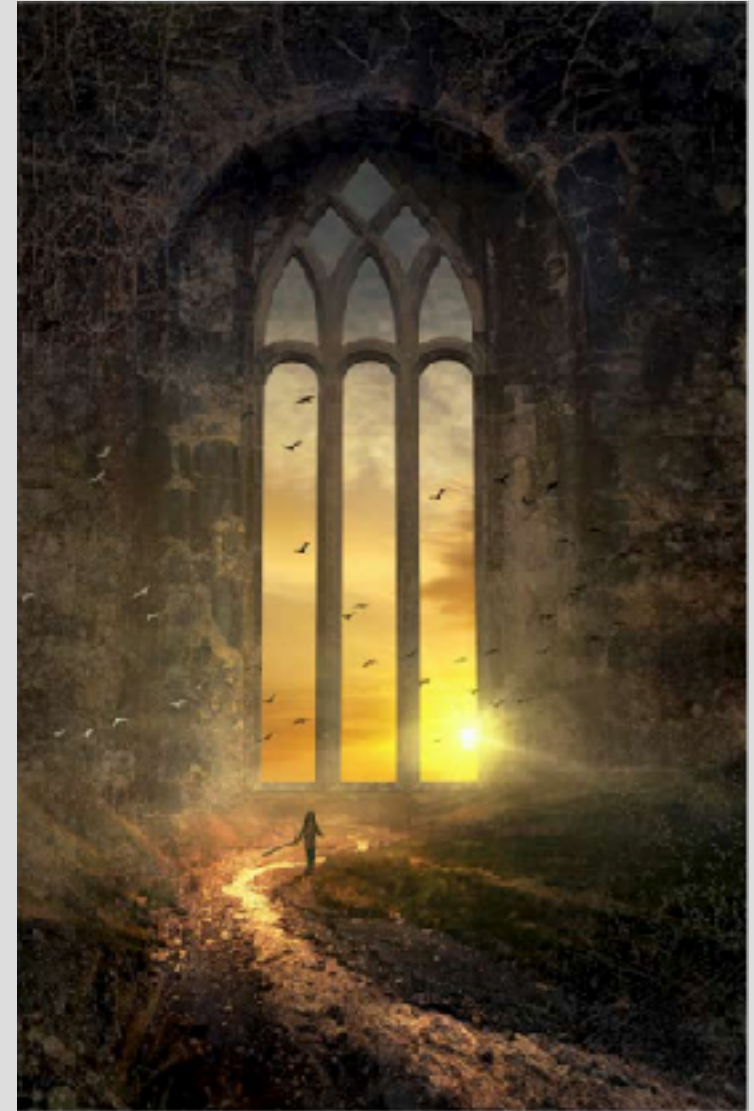
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Taken purely psychologically, it means that mankind has common instincts of imagination and of action. All conscious imagination and action have been developed with these unconscious archetypal images as their basis, and always remain bound up with them. This condition ensures a primitive health of the psyche, which, however, immediately becomes lack of adaptation as soon as circumstances arise calling for a higher moral effort. Instincts suffice only for the individual embedded in nature, which, on the whole, remains always the same. An individual who is more guided by unconscious than by conscious choice tends therefore towards marked psychic conservatism. This is the reason the primitive does not change in the course of thousands of years, and it is also the reason why he fears everything strange and unusual.

(From Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower)

And the essential thing, psychologically, is that in dreams, fantasies, and other exceptional states of mind the most far-fetched mythological motifs and symbols can appear autonomously at any time, often, apparently, as the result of particular influences, traditions, and excitations working on the individual, but more often without any sign of them. These "primordial images" or "archetypes," as I have called them, belong to the basic stock of the unconscious psyche and cannot be explained as personal acquisitions. Together they make up that psychic stratum which has been called the collective unconscious. The existence of the collective unconscious means that individual consciousness is anything but a tabula rasa and is not immune to predetermining influences. On the contrary, it is in the highest degree influenced by inherited presuppositions, quite apart from the unavoidable influences exerted upon it by the environment. The collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings. It is the matrix of all conscious psychic occurrences, and hence it exerts an influence that compromises the freedom of consciousness in the highest degree, since it is continually striving to lead all conscious processes back into the old paths. (From the Significance of Constitution and Heredity in Psychology CW 8 par. 229)





My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (From The Concept of the Collective Unconscious CW 9 par. 90)

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Concept

The Collective unconscious is one of Jung's signature concepts. The idea developed when Jung was working with schizophrenics at the hospital. He became aware that his patients' fantasies and dreams often reflected mythological and religious ideas from cultures which they could not possibly have prior knowledge of. His subsequent research into mythology, religion, Gnosticism, alchemy and eastern mysticism allowed him to develop his theories on the collective unconscious.

Jung was an empirical scientist. He followed the experience of his patients and then developed the theories and found the supporting data to confirm the validity and

reality of these experiences. He did not develop his theories from philosophical concepts. He wanted to understand why human beings have certain experiences and behaved in certain ways. His life's work culminated in a map of the psyche and a lexicon that allows us to identify the movements within our own psyches and bring consciousness to bear on these.



Jung did not believe that we are born into this world a blank slate, but rather that we are born with certain predetermined psychic brain structures. Just like certain birds know that they need to migrate, we humans have specific developmental stages that we all go through, e.g. adolescence. We also all have experiences of falling in love, loss, fear, joy etc. The collective unconscious carries these predetermined psychic blueprints of human experience.

This means that our psychic inheritance from our ancestors and from the beginning of life on earth is within us and that we have access

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Concept

to it. Not only does the collective unconscious determine our propensity for human experience, but it also contains access to archetypes, the blueprints of our predispositions and potential.

Jung's specific interest in the archetypes were from the perspective of human development, so he focused on that in his theories. According to Jung, the human being on his/her path towards individuation, has four developmental phases:

- Development of the ego
- Integration of the shadow
- Integration of Anima and Animus
- Access to the Self

Jung was also interested in the archetypal nature of personality, and explored the concepts of introversion and extraversion, and the 4 types in his system of typology. We will explore these concepts in the other modules on this course.

Although Jung did not do much work on personal archetypes, Post Jungians have explored them. Caroline Myss also developed a system of identifying personal archetypes. Just like Astrological natal charts identify certain archetypal influences on the various aspects of your life, archetypes generally influence and affect the way we experience

our lives. Archetypes are literally limitless. We can see archetypal representations when we look at Greek and Roman gods, mythological stories and fairy tales. We all have access to these archetypes, but they don't all manifest within us. Next week we will look at how archetypes inform the development of complexes, which is the focus of Jungian work. No one can manifest a pure archetype, since that would fracture your ego and sense of self. Our access to these divine energies is through complexes.

Archetypes, because they lie in the collective unconscious, are by nature numinous, or

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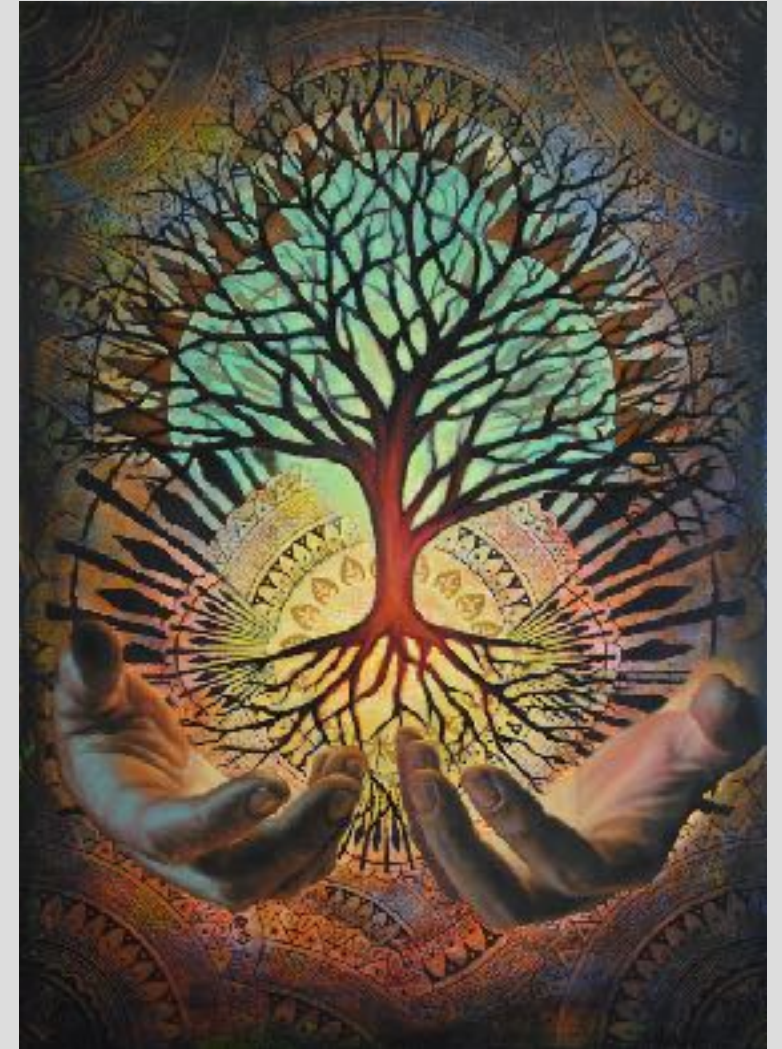
Concept

divine and carry enormous libido (psychic energy). They drive our behaviour and give us the energy to create images and ideas that propel us forward in the world. This energy informs our complexes and affects our behaviour.

An archetype is an energy pattern that has a drive or instinct as well as an image. For example, we know that Loki was a trickster, and the myths of Loki inform us of the trickster qualities, they give us an image of what a trickster behaves like. Another example is the paramecium, a single cell organism. It has lived for millennia and has two instincts, to

feed and to escape predators. But how does it know what is food and what is a predator? This is informed by the image of the archetype that has developed over millions of years and lies within the collective unconscious of this organism. It carries within it the images for food and the images for predators.

The archetype therefore consists of an energy pattern and an image. It lies in both the physical material world as instinct and the psychic realm as image.



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Applications

During this application we are going to explore certain archetypal dynamics we have with our parents.

Before we get into the application, I would like to mention a few archetypes to help you understand how do to this application. But please note that this is by no means an exhaustive list. If there is a dynamic at play, try to think creatively on what this dynamic represents as an archetype. See chart below.

Fraud	Victim	Ruler
Mentor	Narcissist	Creator/Artist
Manipulator	Villain	Sage
Reformer	Scapegoat	Innocent
Wizard	Achiever	Explorer
Clown	Child	Rebel
Everyman	Imposter	Hero
Lover	Warrior	Caregiver
Rescuer	Confidant	Soother
Helper	Critic	Outsider
Wounded Child	Golden Child	Judge

Answer the questions on the following page per caregiver, i.e. for both your mom and dad, or alternatively the main caregivers during your formative years - birth to five. Capture your answers in your journal and all memories, associations and thoughts that rise into consciousness.

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Applications

Reflect on your relationship with your mother/main caregiver.

- List three archetypal roles that you embodied with your mother.
- Who else do you have this dynamic with? (either same dynamic or reversed)
- How does this affect these relationships?
- What is sacrificed in this dynamic?
- What is gained through this dynamic?

Reflect on your relationship with your father/main male presence.

- List three archetypal roles that you embodied with your father.
- Who else do you have this dynamic with? (either same dynamic or reversed)
- How does this affect these relationships?
- What is sacrificed in this dynamic?
- What is gained through this dynamic?



THE HOMUNCULUS - Iona Miller, 1993

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Mindfulness Activity

During interactions with other people, see if you can identify what dynamic is active in the interaction and what archetypal energy is present.

Capture your thoughts and realisations in your journal.



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Links to Resources

Suggested reading:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-collective-unconscious-2671571>

<https://appliedjung.com/the-collective-unconscious/>

<https://appliedjung.com/ego-archetype/>

<https://www.harleytherapy.co.uk/counselling/what-is-the-collective-unconscious.htm>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/unconscious-mind.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/dec/20/top-10-books-about-the-unconscious>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2011/jun/20/jung-archetypes-structuring-principles>

<https://www.harleytherapy.co.uk/counselling/carl-jung-archetypes.htm>

YouTube videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRaXf_fNhno

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIMsTnx3Xqw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhXZLQAXbYU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vHB70e3gfk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eU-OW2lveU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wywUQc-4Opk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFng0WCJ8X8> (James Hillman)

<https://youtu.be/A8Yyl4UIGjk> (Carolyn Myss)

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