

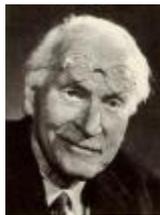
2221 THEORY & PRACTICE 1: LECTURE 5

CARL GUSTAV JUNG (1875-1961)

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INTRODUCTION



At the time that the relationship between Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler began souring (1907), Carl Gustav Jung met Freud, who was about 20 years his senior. Each was impressed with the other! But, they developed in different ways and could not maintain their relationship in the presence of such differences. One of their chief divergences involved the place of human sexuality and Freud's 'materialism'. Jung moved away from the concerns of Freud because of his (Jung's) own brilliance and his need for independence. A final rift occurred in 1913¹ (Singer, 1972: 369).

Whereas, Adler was a Jew who became a liberal protestant, Carl Gustav Jung was born into the home of a Swiss Reformed² pastor with numbers of uncles who were also clergy. His father struggled with faith in orthodox religion, a circumstance which had a large effect upon Jung³ prompting him to attempt to establish an alternative to traditional Christianity. Jung's mother and other family members dabbled in occultic, spiritualistic practices. Both his mother and father spent time in mental asylums.

¹ Jung (1977) says this took place in 1912.

² Probably 'Zwinglian' derived from Huldreich Zwingli, one the reformers who strongly differed with Luther's view of the sacraments viewing them through the lens of Renaissance Humanism. These humanists were strongly committed to understanding the scriptures in terms of the dictates of reasonableness. One can see how this tradition's emphases played a part in Jung's later formulations.

³ It's interesting to note that both Freud and Jung had fathers that were judged as 'weak' by their sons.

1. TWO MAJOR REALITIES FOR JUNG

a) The unconscious

Fundamental to the therapy proposed by Carl Jung as was the case with Sigmund Freud is the concept of the unconscious. However, each had a contrasting understanding of the unconscious that clashed with the other. Freud understood the unconscious as a rubbish dump for one's intolerable feelings and thoughts. (However, he did allow that 'archaic vestiges' [ancient human residue] may also exist.) Freudian psychotherapy involved bringing these thoughts and feelings into consciousness so that the rational ego could deal with them. **For Jung**, the unconscious was far more than the personal unconscious which was dwarfed in importance by what he termed, the *collective unconscious*. For Jung, the real person, the Self,⁴ is centred in this field. One can see how much further he has developed (some would say inflated) Freud's idea of the unconscious.

At the conscious level, we are *persona*, a collection of roles: father, mother, brother, sister, friend, and employee/employer. These roles are important as long as we do not confuse the persona with our real individuality which is buried in the unconscious. At the preconscious level resides the *shadow*, a part of ourselves that we do not wish to consciously recognise or express (Singer, 1972: 215).



In the collective unconscious exists the *archetypes*.

Jung's observations of his own personality, his clinical work and his examination of occult phenomena led him to believe that the unconscious was far bigger and more complex than Freud thought. He found that various cultures had similar myths and motifs in their art which reinforced his view that all humanity is related to 'a common mental substratum' (h2g2, 2001: n. p.). These archetypes are not fixed forms but are patterns of possibility. Archetypes cannot be directly experienced;

we can only know it through its effects on dreams and other mental contents (h2g2, 2001).

⁴ A term Freud virtually never used.

b) Dreams

Dreams are singularly important for Jung because they carry symbolic messages from the unconscious. Jung did not believe that dreams come in a disguised form (as did Freud) but in a symbolic or metaphorical form, that needs interpreting. Jung used a method of *amplification* and *active imagination* in order to gain insight into dreams (See insomnium.co.uk for a short article on this topic.)

2. INFLUENCES ON JUNG

Some writers argue that **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804) was very influential in Jung's work. Others claim that **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900) had the greatest influence over Jung of anyone (Miller, n. d.)⁵. Other claims are made for the (Jewish) Kabbalah (Drob, 1999), the occult/demons! (Mago, 2002), alchemy⁶ (Jaffe, 1977: 226), gnosticism⁷ (Jaffe, 1977: 227-227; Mago, 2002: 4; Payne, 1988) and eastern religion (Friesen, 2005: n. p.).

Doubtless, Jung was influenced by all these sources but we have to be careful to understand that Jung regarded himself as first a *psychologist*, a student of the psyche which for him meant the Self. Hence, for example, he did not regard eastern philosophers or alchemists or spiritualists as making metaphysical statements about actual reality but making psychological statements about inner human experience.

The apparent diversity of influences is also partly explained by identifying which aspect of Jung's complex thought and practice is being considered central. For example, Nietzsche is one source who helped Jung find an option to orthodox Christian belief; Kant is more associated with Jung's development of his theory of *psychological types*. Let us examine this latter connection first.

a) Jung's Psychological Types (Myers Briggs Type Indicator)

At an earlier time, Immanuel Kant inherited a difficult philosophical problem from the empiricists, most notably from the Scot, **David Hume** (1711-1776). Hume had shown that if one accepted empiricist assumptions one could find no empirical basis

⁵ Nietzsche (pronounced Nee chuh') also had a large influence on Freud.

⁶ 'An ancient system of science and magic devoted to finding a way to transmute, or change, substances from one form to another' (Cayne, 1967: Vol 1, 343).

⁷ Jung (1977) was eager to resist attempts to misread his ideas about God as Gnostic and although Jung has a connection with Gnosticism I do not think it helpful to understand his work as essentially Gnostic.

for causation (which meant no basis for science!), for one's own existence (!), for ethics, or for God. Being a sensible Scot, he continued enjoying life as if this lack of proof for everyday things did not matter. (Of course, in fact, it did not because it rather showed that empiricism was flawed!) Hawton (1956) reports that others have said that Hume's arguments have never been answered or bettered (p. 84)⁸ [].

But, Hume's writings, according to Kant, 'woke me from my dogmatic slumbers' (Hawton, 1956: 84). Kant 'solved' the problem in an ingenious way. He agreed with Hume that we could not know certainly that the sun would rise tomorrow. But, because we do think in this way, because we do appear to know the difference between our dreaming states and our conscious states, and that striking matches causes flames, **there must be some universal structure⁹ in the mind to account for these occurrences.**

Hence, the mind has inborn structures that make it perceive this way. However, critically, this solution means that we cannot know what things are 'in themselves'. We can only know them *as they appear to us*.¹⁰ This latter statement has had a profound effect on the Western world every since. Jung reflected on the argument between Freud and Adler¹¹ and decided that it could be explained in terms of their differing personality types which caused them to each see/perceive and understand the world differently. Jung concluded that it was little wonder the pair had not been able to see eye to eye.

Firstly, a major difference between Freud and Adler, according to Jung, was that Freud was an *introvert*, Adler, an *extrovert*. These two *attitude* types can be defined thus: introverts are oriented primarily to their 'inner subjective experiences'; whereas extroverts to their 'outer, objective world' (h2g2, 2001). Jung could discriminate between these two colleagues in terms of their egos preferred sphere of concentration.

⁸ And he is correct but only if one accepts empiricism as one's starting point in the first place. However, empiricism is deeply flawed and incoherent because it cannot establish its own principles based on its own assumptions!

⁹ Kant believed this structure to be universally the same. However, in our time, the widespread belief is that the structure is different for each person! Jung held this view.

¹⁰ The latter phrase provides the birth of phenomenology, the conviction that we can only study our perceptions of things to find out their essences.

¹¹ The relationship between Freud and Adler had worsened over the years from 1907 to 1911 leading to a final separation.

However, this distinction alone did not help Jung to differentiate between Freud and himself whom Jung considered both introverts. (If you are an introvert, extroversion will tend to be dominant in your unconsciousness and vice versa, according to Jung.)

Jung noticed that people show differences regarding the use of ‘four primary functions’ (h2g2, 2001): sensation, thinking, feeling, and intuition. Sensation tells us something exists, thinking, what it is, feeling, whether it is agreeable or not, and intuition, ‘where it has come from and where it is going’ (h2g2, 2001: n. p.)¹². Rather confusingly, he termed the thinking and feeling functions *rational functions* and sensation and intuition, *non-rational functions*. Jung believed that one of these functions will be dominant in one’s personality. However, he also noted that people will have one dominant attitude type, with one rational function and one non-rational function also operating. Personality description is not meant to be one’s life sentence. As one lives one’s personality may change and develop. What should be noted is Jung’s great concern for the recognition and the reconciliation of opposites: extroversion and introversion; rational and non-rational.

b) Jung’s Neo-Paganism

A controversial book, *The Jung cult: Origins of a charismatic movement* by Karl Holl, argues that Jung’s direct influences lie in the *fin de siecle*¹³ period of the 19th century (French for ‘the end of the century’). This period was dominated by the opposites, contrasts and tensions between ‘rationality and irrationality, of social progress and hereditary degeneration, of positivism and occultism’ (Miller, n. d.).

Rationalistic higher criticism of the bible’s text (19th century) had seemingly reduced orthodox Christianity to myth. The current ideas of who Jesus Christ was were also caught up in this ferment. If Jesus was totally within history then how could his death have any relevance for us today? No wonder Jung’s father was in such misery! Nietzsche scorned orthodox belief because it espoused the ‘weakness’ of the cross as opposed to humanity’s essential character, its ‘will to power’, its instinctive power to dominate others. (He was also an anti-democrat believing that the ‘herd’ was to be despised; only the courageous genius was to be applauded for being willing to pursue

¹² Some of these definitions are idiosyncratic. The only one I am somewhat happy with is feeling. Intuition’s definition seems to be far from our normal understanding of it.

¹³ Well-known French phrase for ‘end of the century’.

of path of suffering involved with being a true individual. Jung also had sympathy for this ‘celebration of the genius’ outlook.) In order for a renewal of Western Christian civilisation to occur, **a return to its pagan roots was needed**. Nietzsche was a true Romantic and Jung inherited much of this renewal spirit from him in Jung’s development of an alternative to orthodox Christianity.

Jung studied Gnosticism, alchemy, and the Kabbalah because he believed that these presented ‘purer’ symbols of the workings of the collective unconscious that had not been corrupted by the inroads of dogma and reason (i.e., activities of the rational ego).

c) Gnosticism

Another large influence on Jung was Gnosticism. He applauded Gnosticism because it was an alternative to the rational centeredness of traditional Christianity. The latter’s over-reliance on the rational ego had failed his father’s generation and Jung understood it to be a dead-end. However, from my reading, Jung was not a pure Gnostic—although some Christians have represented him in this way (e.g., Hird, 1998, n.p.)—mainly because he takes Gnostic ideas to refashion them according to his understanding of the collective unconscious. For example, Gnosticism taught that there is an inferior god (Jehovah God) who is the creator of the world who emerges out of the *pleroma* (Greek for fullness). This god imagines that it is ultimate but is ignorant and arrogant. Jung interpreted this Gnostic teaching to mean that the inferior god is the rational ego while the *pleroma* is the collective unconscious. That is, Jung **psychologised** these myths.

Gnosticism also had no time for the conscious ego but believed it needed to be absorbed into the *pleroma*. The Gnostics regarded individuality as a continuation of a false consciousness of separation from the ALL. However, Jung’s desire for humankind was for each person to achieve his/her true individuality. Furthermore, Gnosticism has a negative view of the material world, believing that humankind’s salvation lies in escaping from this world. This view was not Jung’s mature belief nor is it the teaching of biblical Christianity which looks for ‘a new heavens and a new earth’ (Rev 21).

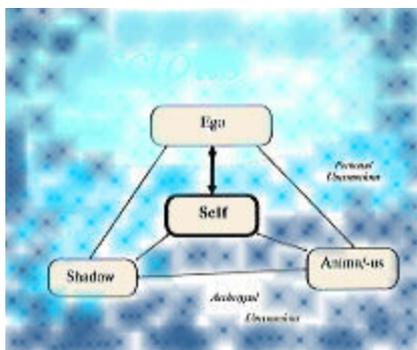
d) Alchemy

Jung was fascinated with alchemy which is essentially about changing one substance into another. Alchemists were particularly interested in changing lead into gold. They used empirical and magical means to bring this about. They are believed to have laid the foundations for modern-day chemistry. Jung was interested in their work because of their focus on transmutation of one substance into another. This process suggested the psychological development of inner transformation.

f) Kabbalah

Kabbalah stems from Jewish mysticism with some similarities to Gnosticism but also deviates markedly from Gnosticism as well. Drob (1998: n. p.) argues that there are marked similarities between Jung's view and that of the Kabbalah and the Jung may have not been eager to parade this source because of its strong *Jewish* associations! Jung, it appears, was determined to find some alternative to Christianity using 'Christian-like' sources, not Jewish ones.

3. JUNG'S VIEW OF HUMANKIND



Bessinger explains his picture of Jung's idea of the psyche in these words:

There are multiple centers of psychic energy, conscious (tinted light blue) and unconscious. The **Ego** is concerned with sensing the world, cognition, gender identity, etc.

The unconscious consists of a *personal unconscious* (darker tint) with our individual repressed and forgotten memories. The deeper *archetypal (collective) unconscious* (darkest tint) contains elements common to all humans.

The **Self** is the integrating center which seeks the good of a balanced person -- mind, body, and spirit alike. All humans have both masculine and feminine aspects. The **Anima** or **Animus** is the center for those instinctive gender energies which are not part of the Ego.

The **Shadow** complex is the main focus of the energies of repression and frustration, whose forces unrecognized and uncountered lead to destructive expression, or evil. The human personality involves the interplay of all of these various centers (1996: n. p., **bolding** in original).

According to Drob (1998: n. p.), Jung (and the Kabbalists) believed that 'the godhead creates the world and humankind in order to *realize itself*' (italics mine), that is to

perfect itself. (This view of God realising Himself through creation is unfamiliar to us as orthodox Christians!) However, in a parallel way, ‘the unconscious mind manifests itself in a conscious, reflective ego in order to complete and know itself as a “Self” ’ (Drob, 1998). Hence, for Jung the ego is very important in the *individuation* (becoming-a-true-individual) process. The ego is only a danger when it imagines itself to be all that the person is.

Drob (1998) says that, ‘God and humankind must pass through the world and redeem it in order to realize their full essence’ (n. p.). Jung is world-affirming (even though his idea of God is unorthodox).

4. JUNG’S UNDERSTANDING OF HEALING

Firstly, why is humankind in the mess that it is? According to Jung, early in history humans projected their unconscious contents onto the world and the heavens. In this process, they created the gods of Olympus, for example, by their projections. However, with the rise of rational powers people no longer accepted these gods but identified themselves completely with their rational powers. But, in withdrawing these projections from the world, humanity fails to ‘recognize the *archetypes* of the unconscious mind’ (Drob, 1998: n. p.). These archetypes become neurotic symptoms. The gods become diseases!

Jungian therapy tries to bring patients into direct awareness of the archetypes in their own psyches. By so doing, Jung believed that there would be greater unity within the person and hence, less pathology. He focussed on fantasy, art and dreams because he believed that in these acts archetypal material would be apparent.

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