

# AN ARCHETYPAL MANDALA

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Carl Jung defines an archetype as “essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear.”<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say:

All the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are **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 (emphasis mine).<sup>2</sup>

And later he admitted:

Not for a moment dare we succumb to the illusion that an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of. Even the best attempts at explanation are only more or less successful translations into another metaphorical language. (Indeed, language itself is only an image.) The most we can do is to **dream the myth onwards** and give it a modern dress..... The archetype – let us never forget this – is a psychic organ present in all of us. A bad explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus be injured. But the ultimate sufferer is the bad interpreter himself (author’s emphasis).<sup>3</sup>

An archetype, then, is a “symbolic expression” of the contents of the collective unconscious, which has come into consciousness and has been perceived. These contents are expressed symbolically through myths and images, and any attempt to impart an archetype’s ultimate definition is doomed to inadequacy, since an archetype “takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear.” The best we can do, says Jung, is to remain as conscious as possible as we “dream the myth onwards” that we offer symbolic allusions to the nature of archetypes, keeping in mind Jung’s warning that an incompetent interpretation may lead to a “bad attitude” toward the “psychic organ” present in each one of us. Our aim is to show how archetypes are everywhere, and how valuable it is to become conscious of their presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Jung, C.G., *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pt. 1, Princeton, NJ, 1969, Princeton University Press, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160

A convenient “template” for capturing a sense of the symbolic expressions that are contained in our collective consciousness, is found in the ancient science of Astrology. The twelve signs of the Zodiac, which are “ruled” by the ten planets (including Moon and Sun) of our geocentric perspective, offer a workable system into which we may “plug-in” a set number of archetypes. From these twelve essential archetypal forms, we may derive an infinite number of cross-referencing images as brought forth from the great drama of human existence, giving order to a seemingly random panoply of cultural mythologies. In other words, the twelve archetypes delineated in Astrology (and many other symbol systems) offer a comprehensive archetypal “reading” of anything having to do with human experience; *everything* fits into this model, suggesting that the number 12 itself carries a significance that only our unconscious fully appreciates. At any rate, I will offer here a brief summary of the twelve archetypes as they correlate to an Astrological system that is accessible to everyone. This “astro-archetypal” correspondence was developed by Dr. Charles Bebeau, PhD, and NIN Bebeau, MA, at the Avalon Institute in Boulder, CO.

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## 1. **WARRIOR/Aries/Mars**

As the first sign and occurring in the first “house” of the Zodiac, Aries points to an investigation into the self. Who am I? What am I all about? As a fire sign, Aries is initiatory and aggressive, representing concrete action in the world. The Warrior is a masculine energy, focused outward. Aries is located in the head, tracing the boundaries of a Roman Centurion’s helmet (covering the nose and back of the neck). Along with the Scorpio/Dark Mother archetype, Warrior/Aries is the most intense energy going, rippling with potential activity. In dreams, we may notice a dominant theme consisting of war, or everything may take place in and around a car (a Warrior symbol in the modern age). Red is often associated with this archetype. In mythology, hero figures such as Hercules follow the Warrior archetype, as do outright war-makers like the Sumero-Babylonian god, Marduk.

## 2. **ARTIST-PRIESTESS/Taurus/Venus**

Taurus is the nest builder; she loves to surround herself with beautiful, pleasing things, creating a sense of security and groundedness within her living space. Feminine and associated with earth energy, she is the Priestess who exhibits a natural gift for artistic creation. She is also the “Drama Queen.” The lower jaw and front of the neck are body parts from which this very expressive energy emits. She is neither beginning nor ending, but maintaining. The Artist-Priestess, like the Soul Mother archetype, represents a very earthy feminine spirituality, secure in her connection with a greater awareness. Others look to her for a sense of security. Isis is an ideal mythical Artist-Priestess figure.

### **3. COMMUNICATOR/Gemini/Mercury**

Fast-paced and airy, Gemini is the messenger of the gods – Mercury with wings on his feet. Masculine, centered in the analytical processes, the Communicator is concerned with an interpretation of life based on thought. Here we find fast learners, very intelligent, able to speak and write effectively – or, in a wounded sense, blocked with respect to communication. Laughter comes easy to most Communicator-types, as their minds typically “get it” when others find humor flying over their heads. Traditionally, Gemini depicts the twins – mirror images, able to see themselves in the other. Another keyword for this archetype is “adaptable,” as he is able to move from problem to solution without batting an eye. Thoth and Hermes are representative of this energy. In dreams, telephones and TV’s might indicate a Communicator process. In the body, the Communicator lives in the band around the eyes, and in the right shoulder, arm and hand.

### **4. NOURISHING MOTHER/Cancer/Moon**

Here we have the image of a full-bodied “Momma” – breasty, ample belly, she has what it takes to give loving care to the child in all of us. She ensures everyone’s comfort, even at the expense of her own – which points to her main issue in life, usually having to do with codependency. Why doesn’t anyone take care of me? Among the three Mother archetypes developed in this system, this one is most closely associated with the actual act of mothering. She is very emotional, in keeping with her water nature, and with this emotional aspect she is highly intuitive. Gaia, the Earth Mother goddess, is a familiar archetypal image for this collective symbol of motherhood. She fosters nourishment through food, both for herself and others. The Moon is her abode.

### **5. GOLDEN CHILD/Leo/Sun**

Also known as the Divine Child – baby Jesus beaming with spiritual energy, thrusting forth as if from the heart of Creation. Indeed, this archetype lives in the heart (including all of the chest and upper back). Here we have the public orator, the stage ham, life of the party. We know Golden Child types by their effortless ease around anyone and everyone; we feel as if we’ve known these people all our lives. They are spontaneous and open to the moment. Apollo comes to mind as a prime mythological expression of the Golden Child. Lions (Leo) and cats in our dreams usually indicate the presence of this archetype, as does the Sun.

### **6. SOUL MOTHER/Virgo/Mercury**

This Momma is mothering at the soul-level, rather than at the physical level as with the Nourishing Mother (though both mother at all levels to some extent). There is a more spiritual aura around the Soul Mother. Like the Artist-Priestess, she connects her

spirituality to the Earth – in fact, she **must** include the Earth in her rituals, as the Divine for her is directly linked to the natural world. Another name for her is the Wounded Healer, someone who has been to the depths, experienced her deepest wounds, and made room in her life for a process of healing. Then she becomes an able guide through a process of depth-healing in others, a true Mother of the Soul. Tiamat, the original Earth Mother, personifies this archetype. Hospitals and other healing images often point to the Soul Mother, who lives in the left shoulder, arm and hand, as well as in the intestines.

## 7. **LOVERS**/ Libra/Venus

As the name suggests, this archetype is into committed relationships, always looking for the other as a mirror for the inner (even if he doesn't know it). With this urge toward relationship comes a profound interest in balance and justice – these types are often activists and champions for the “oppressed.” Their airy nature rarely plumbs the depths as do most earthy and watery energies, but this trait allows them to see the other side of issues in a diplomatic way. Because they want peace as much as possible, they are prone to relinquishing their own needs and desires in relationship, which is a lifelong issue for most (similar to the Nourishing Mother). Scales are a common image, often emerging through dreams in the context of mediation and diplomacy.’

## 8. **DARK MOTHER**/Scorpio/Pluto

Of the twelve archetypes described here, the Dark Mother is the least honored in our patriarchal world culture, and is therefore the most wounded. Here we have witch burnings, sex crimes and a culture of violent death. What we're not taught through the System is that the Dark Mother represents the deepest, most intense expression of feminine power available to human experience. She is the descent into the unconscious depths, Ereshkigal in her Underworld domain – a domain present in each of us, though our Judeo/Christian heritage (as well as most other dominant religious systems) stresses a “heaven” realm somewhere up in the skies, the opposite of the depths. We are taught to fear and ignore the “queendom” of dreams, our window into the unconscious; without a conscious awareness of our dreams, we are cut off from at least half our life-source. Dreams show a natural transformation process that ascends and descends, just as our waking lives do – one is not better or worse than the other, but our anti-Dark Mother belief system paints the descent (labeled “depression”) as something to be medicated, controlled and denied. The Dark Mother is the power of sexuality and watery emotion, her penetrating eyes looking behind superficial appearances for the deeper meaning of existence. If accepted, this Kali force offers complete transformation and access to our truest purpose; if denied, her transformative nature will manifest regardless, and the experience may be unpleasant. The Dark Mother manifests physically in the genitals, reproductive system, elimination organs and blood.

## 9. **TEACHER-TRAVELER/Sagittarius/Jupiter**

This archetype is about more than just education; it is wisdom gained through experience, through worldly travel and exposure to the large issues concerning human existence. Here we have the World Teacher, the Christ or Buddha or Krishna – with the wounded aspect often manifesting in sexual deviance between spiritual authority and a trusting flock (as when the guru takes advantage of his disciples). His fiery energy may become argumentative and stubborn as he presents a scholarly interpretation of the large issues at his command, and he has the power to dominate discourse. In his wise aspect, his teaching is more Socratic; he asks questions, and the student learns through her own analytical processes, which is to say that he teaches others how to learn, not what to learn. The Teacher-Traveler lives in the hips, thighs, liver and gall bladder.

## 10. **ELDER LEADER/Capricorn/Saturn**

An interesting thing about an Elder Leader type is that the first half of life features fast growth, is all business, and is tightly identified with the institutional structures of society. It responds to authority and the idea of responsibility, and approaches such things with a great deal of seriousness. The second half of life, however, is marked by a tangible relaxation of such vigilance; the Elder Leader becomes more childlike, laughing and smiling, a certain serenity coming over her or him (this energy, while feminine in the Astrological presentation, is actually both male and female – or neither). In other words, by the time our “structural guardian” reaches the twilight years, his or her “elder” status has resolved many of the rigid tendencies that come with structural adherence, and has formed a healthy relationship with the natural structure of life. This comes across as a “kind-grandfather” energy, very safe, very comfortable, a secure feeling that life’s framework is in good hands. These are the rock climbers (what steadier structure is there than a mountain?). In dreams the Elder Leader is often depicted through skyscrapers, police, work environments involving bosses, and structural edifices of many kinds. Shadow aspects include narrow-mindedness (a rigid clinging to dogmatic beliefs) and the need to control others, even as they seek to control themselves. Fundamentalist religious movements are a perfect example of this. The Elder Leader lives in the knees, skeletal system and skin.

## 11. **IDEALIST/Aquarius/Uranus**

Jung’s individuation process culminates in a union of opposites, a completing of the Mandala, a synthesis of disparate aspects of the journey. Jung was an Idealist, and his personal individuation process is exemplified in the Idealist archetype. It is inventive, sees the Big Picture, and gathers everything into a coherent vision. The Idealist feels a responsibility to present his or her vision (again, androgynous) to as much of humanity as possible, for the vision is one of unity and wholeness, and the Idealist is impelled to bring humanity back into a state of unity. This feeling of responsibility toward all of humanity sometimes comes at the expense of more localized considerations – like the “absent

father” phenomenon, the person who dedicates him or herself to an outside cause, which then consumes all his/her time and energy. The Idealist, like the Communicator, is a very fast and intelligent energy, and unlike the Communicator, the Idealist is as at-home in the depths as in the heights – a true messenger of the collective unconscious, able to project unconscious material into the realm of collective consciousness. The Idealist has a physical home in the calves and ankles, and is symbolically represented by flying objects, including UFO’s.

## 12. MYSTIC/Pisces/Neptune

The name of this archetype accurately depicts a very intuitive person. Access to intuition implies a trust in feeling-oriented, non-rational sources of information, and it is this issue of trust that cycles through the Mystic constantly. The Mystic wants to trust everyone, believing intuitively that all humans are part of the same whole... and this may eventually lead to disappointment, as the woundedness in others feeds off this innocent trust. The Mystic type comes into the world with a strong connection to the nonphysical reality from which it emerged; she talks to trees, which answer her, and she often has invisible “friends” who keep her company throughout childhood. Most, however, succumb to a cultural, religiously-dogmatic repression of these gifts, and at a fairly early age lose touch with their conscious use of intuition. The intuition persists unconsciously, however, as the urge for union with the Universe manifests no matter how deep the denial of its transcendent realities. The Mystic lives in the feet and pineal gland, known in various esoteric systems as the Third Eye.

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Jung never got around to presenting the archetypes the way we have here. In fact, he had a definite attitude toward such an attempt:

It is of no use at all to learn a list of archetypes by heart. Archetypes are complexes of experience that come upon us like fate, and their effects are felt in our most personal life.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, during an interview just months before his death, Jung said this:

When I find it difficult for me to classify a patient, I always send him off to have a horoscope made. This horoscope always corresponds to his character, and I interpret it psychologically.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Jung, C.G., *C.G. Jung Speaks: Interviews and Encounters*, edited by McQuire and Hull, Princeton, NJ, 1977, Princeton University Press, p. 462.

I believe his point in discouraging the memorizing of a list of archetypes was to warn us that archetypes are not “personalities,” and we cannot reduce them to a rigid set of qualities. The descriptions I’ve listed are just indications of the awesome potential contained within a given archetype, and we must remember to allow for our individual experience of an archetype to take precedence over the interpretations of someone else. Symbol systems such as Astrology are useful in grasping what Jung called “the correspondence between the world and the psyche,”<sup>6</sup> but each of us experiences this correspondence uniquely, according to our archetypal makeup as well as the archetypal dynamics of our surrounding environment. This is a complex idea, and our anciently-derived symbol systems are valuable “keys” for bringing it home to our individual life experiences.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.