

Briefly explain Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. Then find 3 examples...

[Literature](#)



Jungian Archetypes and Herman Hesse's *Demian* Both Freud and Jung had consensus on the concept that "the human mind contained innate structures" which helped him in understanding the world around him (Knox 12). These innate structures are inherited by the newborn unconsciously. Jung rejected behaviourists' principle that "a newborn child's mind is a tabula rasa" which contains nothing in it. A newborn according to Jung encounters the world with some inborn virtual images like "parents, wife, children,, birth and death.... These a priori categories have by nature a collective character; they are images of parents, wife, and children in general, and are not individual predestinations"(qtd in Stevens 75). Jungian psychology revolves round these conceptions archetypes which are the product of collective consciousness of human brain of collective consciousness of human brain. In this connection Jung argues that "the universal similarity of human brains leads us then to admit the existence of a certain psychic function, identical with itself in all individuals; we call it the collective psyche"(qtd. in Stevens 74). Collective consciousness is shared by everybody and based of manifold experiences shared by everyone.

Archetypes are the physical manifestations of those similar patterns of thoughts that are offspring of our collective consciousness. The recurrent archetypal symbols have found their expression in many works of literature and *Demian* is one such instance of literature which try to integrate human experience in the form of certain symbolic representations.

The Archetypes in *Demian*

Hesse was very influenced by Jungian psychology and most of his works like *Demian*, *Sidhartha* and *Steppenwolf* portray repeated symbolic characters.

<https://assignbuster.com/briefly-explain-carl-jungs-theory-of-the-collective-unconscious-then-find-3-examples-jungian-archetypes-in-the-book-demian-by-hermann-hesse-and-explain-why-theyre-archetypes/>

The recurrent archetypal symbols present in the story Demian are: The concept of two worlds, the bird, Beatrice and stock symbol of Mother Eve. Demian himself is an archetypal character. All these archetypes are the creations of the “ unconscious”. The protagonist’ identification of his self with all these archetypes show that the hero is viewing in each some aspect of his soul. In this way the hero successfully assimilates and integrates the projections of unconscious. It seems that they are not separate characters rather they have actually taken birth from the unconscious of Sinclair. Meir says that:

They are presented as real, and Sinclair occupies himself seriously with these characters, because symbols must not only be understood.; according to Jung, but also must be vital experience (durchlebt) in order to become part and parcel of the widened consciousness of the individual(4).

Meir finds that youthful innocence of Sinclair faces bewilderment at the “ realization” that there exist two worlds: the bright world and dark world. The first one is the symbol of love affection and wisdom while the darks world represents evil. Primarily the hero equates himself with the bright world but the bad influence of “ Kromer, The Archetype of he Shadow”. The dichotomy of good and evil is the favourite archetype of human psyche.

His confusion about good and evil involves him in many acts of good and evil till he meets Beatrice who is very much of his “ type”. Beatrice becomes a cult for him and his infatuation with her changes his “ mode of living”(6). His connection with the world of evil has broken under the imaginative influence of Beatrice and she has now occupied his dreams, a permanent abode of archetypes. Though unsuccessful in painting her picture, he visualizes and

<https://assignbuster.com/briefly-explain-carl-jungs-theory-of-the-collective-unconscious-then-find-3-examples-jungian-archetypes-in-the-book-demian-by-hermann-hesse-and-explain-why-theyre-archetypes/>

identifies himself with her in his dreams.

The quest of Sinclair does not end here, his unconscious keeps on creating images and images with which he temporarily identifies his soul or self. But one image takes him to another image. He at the advice of Pistorious tries to liv his life according to his dreams. His new desire to embrace “ mistress demon of his dreams” (9). His heartfelt desire seem to be fulfilled when he meets Demian’s mother, an archetype of Mother Eve. He craves “ to possess her” as it would mean possessing his own self. “ His love expresses itself in allegory; she is the sea and he empties himself into her like a river”(10).

The unconscious of Sinclair breeds different universal images of his self and he finds the physical instances of these images in the form of archetypal characters like Beatrice and Mother Eve. His dreams unconsciously lead him to the mundane symbols of his unconscious with whom he temporarily identifies himself. But his quest does not stop rather he moves from one image to another to complete the collage of his “ self”.

Works Cited

Knox, Jean. Archetype, Attachment, Analysis: Jungian Psychology and the Emergent Mind.

Hove, East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2003. Print.

Meir, Emil. “ The Psychology of C. G. Jung in the Works of Hermann Hesse”.

Diss. New York

University, 1999. Print.

Stevens, Antony. " The Archetypes." The Handbook of Jungian Psychology: Theory, Practice and Applications. Ed. Renos K. Papadopoulos. London:

<https://assignbuster.com/briefly-explain-carl-jungs-theory-of-the-collective-unconscious-then-find-3-examples-jungian-archetypes-in-the-book-demian-by-hermann-hesse-and-explain-why-theyre-archetypes/>

Routledge, 2006. 74-93.

Print.