Carl Jung

Aka Carl Gustav Jung

Born: 26-Jul-1875
Birthplace: Kesswil, Switzerland
Died: 6-Jun-1961
Location of death: Kussnacht, Switzerland
Cause of death: unspecified

Gender: Male
Race or Ethnicity: White
Sexual orientation: Straight
Occupation: Psychologist

Nationality: Switzerland
Executive summary: Inventor of the collective unconscious

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology. He is best known for his theories of the Collective Unconscious, including the concept of archetypes, and the use of synchronicity in psychotherapy. Along with Sigmund Freud, Jung pioneered modern theories of the relationships between the conscious and unconscious aspects of mind. But while Freud postulated a psychosexual explanation for human behavior, Jung perceived the primary motivating force to be spiritual in origin. According to Jung, it was from the soul that the complementary drives of differentiation and integration arose, fueling the processes of growth, development, and healing. Mental illness arose when these processes were thwarted. Influential in a variety of disciplines from theology to art to atomic physics, Carl Jung is considered, along with Freud and Alfred Adler, to be one of the principle founding fathers of modern psychology. In addition to producing his theory of the Collective Unconscious, Jung's work fueled the development of both word association tests and the Meyers-Briggs personality tests. A prolific writer, his best known works include The Psychology of the Unconscious (1912) and Psychological Types (1921).

Carl Gustav Jung was born 26 July 1875 in the Swiss village of Kesswil, near Lake Constance. His interest in spiritual principles and mythologies, both Eastern and Western, was given an early boost by family encouragement and example. Jung's father, began tutoring him at an early age in Latin and the other subjects and was himself a classical scholar, an Orientalist, and a pastor. A number of Jung's uncles were also pastors and his maternal grandfather was a distinguished theologian and Hebraist. His paternal grandfather, Carl Jung Sr., was a professor of surgery at the university of Basel, as well as Grand Mast of the Swiss order of Freemasons. Curiously this same grandfather, who was German born, was also rumored to be an illegitimate love child of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and he allegedly bore a physical resemblance to the famous writer.

All this aside, Carl Jung's dedication to study was somewhat slow in developing. But after sustaining a head injury, which incurred fainting spells requiring him to stay home from school, he became so
disgusted with himself (upon overhearing his father's fear for his future) that he managed to overcome both the physical handicap and his lazy habits to become a promising young scholar. But this transition remarkable on its own, was marked by a peculiar incident that served to awaken Jung's interest in the nature of mind and in paranormal phenomenon. One day while walking home from school, he experienced himself suddenly coming out of a profound mental fog. He felt as if he were finally "himself". But more remarkably he also felt that this self was simultaneously 12-year-old Carl Jung an wise old man who had previously lived in the 1700s. Paranormal events of this nature, or more particularly experiences of trance mediumship and clairvoyance, were not unknown in Jung's family. In college his curiosity of such phenomenon led him to conduct considerable research, the skeptical results of which formed the basis of his doctoral thesis. Although Jung concluded that many self-proclaimed trance mediums were really "channeling" some kind of repressed psychological disturbance he would later state an unequivocal belief that some psychic phenomena, particularly telepathy, was genuine.

Meanwhile, with his intellectual life now expanding rapidly, the adolescent Jung immersed himself in philosophy, religion, biology, zoology, medicine, and paleontology. When he entered the University of Basel, in 1895, his intended field of focus was medicine, but along the way he became captivated with the fledgling science of psychiatry. And when he graduated, in 1900, he became an assistant physician the Burghölzli Mental Hospital in Zürich. Here he was under the direction of the famous Eugen Bleuler whose pioneering work in the field of schizophrenia suggested that psychological disturbances arose not only from physical deterioration of the brain, but also from the presence of conflicting beliefs and desires within the psyche. Although a widely accepted notion now, it was a radical insight for its time. Also of influence on Jung was the work of Pierre Janet, under whom Jung studied briefly during a Paris seminar. Janet's extensive research with mental patients suggested that traumatic incidents generate powerful emotionally charged beliefs which, although forgotten or otherwise pushed out of conscious recall, often continue to exert a powerful influence on the individual's emotions and behaviors for many years.

Incorporating the work of both Bleuler and Janet, Jung began to formulate a new theory of the workings of the unconscious mind that would prove remarkably similar to that being simultaneously worked up by Sigmund Freud. But Jung's theories were but one part of a whole new psychology, uniquely his own, in which the psyche was viewed as a dynamic growth-oriented entity poised between two powerful and complementary drives: the drive to learn and incorporate new perspectives (differentiation), and the equally important drive toward creating a coherent, harmonious integration of all the inner aspects of the self (integration). This basic concept would form the foundation of much of Jung's later work and theo:

In time he would expand this dialectic into a complex mandala-like view of the psyche and soul, in which a whole pantheon of paired opposites and complementary archetypes existed within the greater self. Meanwhile the persona, the self projected on the world, was but the tip of the iceberg on this larger, more complicated and often contradictory entity.

Building on Bleuler and Janet, and later incorporating Freud, Jung believed that the successful express integration of the complex, interdependent elements within the larger self was often short-circuited by traumatic events and social or familial conditioning, repressing the individual's natural drives. The result was varying degrees of mental illness in the form of disabling neurosis or deep pathological psychosis. Jung was able to explore this theory amply during his time at Burghölzli, where he witnessed the most profound cases such internal schism. In his later role there as chief physician, he developed word association experiments to understand and study the phenomenon (building upon the work of anthropologist and explorer Francis Galton). These studies not only validated the earlier work of Janet, but also determined that material with related emotional content tended to become grouped together in the psyche, evolving into dynamic clusters, or "complexes".
Jung further determined that these complexes could then grow to such proportions that they began to function as sub-personalities. The conflicting impulses between these various complexes, whether repressed or not, created disorder in the psyche, expressed as anxiety, frustration, or inconsistencies in thought or behavior. More interesting still, Jung felt these complexes were often the source of the so-called spirits that "possessed" trance mediums and of the mysterious voices heard by psychotics. Multi-personality disorder was simply a highly advanced case of the over-developed complex. Despite all this Jung believed complexes were a normal part of a healthy, well-functioning mind. However, in the unhealthy mind (one in which the drive toward integration was suppressed or otherwise thwarted), normal schisms and conflicts could spiral out of control, leading to deepening dysfunction -- both on personal and social levels.

When Jung published the results and interpretation of his early work in The Psychology of Dementia Praecox, he drew the attention of Sigmund Freud, who was fascinated by the parallels between Jung's theory of the unconscious and his own. The pair struck up a correspondence and eventually a close personal and working relationship. And Freud, older by some 20 years, took on a mentorship role, grooming Jung to become his successor as head of his new psychoanalytic movement. But Jung was no cut out to be merely someone else's disciple. His ongoing attempts to reach new understandings of the mind became increasingly stymied by Freud's dogmatic insistence on his own interpretations, on his own version of psychoanalytic theory. In time Jung tired of Freud's domineering and paternal manner. It was impossible to limit his thinking to Freud's concept of psychological structure and equally impossible to accept Freud's reductionist assertion that all psychological troubles were rooted in sexual matters. Like Alfred Adler, Jung found himself splintering away to pursue his own theories.

The form and detail of Jung's theory would prove sweeping and complex. His early exposure to psychical or spiritual phenomenon and his grounding in diverse spiritual teachings -- as well as his work with the profoundly mentally ill -- all conspired to give him a very different outlook than that held by Sigmund Freud. While Freud emphasized the physical/animal nature as the primal driving force, Jung looked to the spiritual self, the transcendent soul nature as the more significant force. It was the spiritual self, and drives arising from it, that created humankind's need to grow, experiment, and to achieve higher levels purpose and development. It seems ironic that while Freud struggled to understand the impact of people repressed sexual longings, Jung was indulging in a string of satisfying and meaningful affairs (his wife had to tolerate one such woman, Toni Wolf, being a regular fixture at Sunday dinner) whilst forging ahead to more mystical aspects of the mind.

But while Jung sensed that there were new levels yet to be understood in the structure of the psyche, he could not fathom exactly what they were. However, in the fall of 1913, not long after his break with Freud, Jung became plagued with peculiar and deeply disturbing dreams. First came a dream of a "monstrous flood" that spread across Europe, all the way to the Swiss Alps. He saw thousands of people drowning and civilization itself falling into ruin. Then the flood changed from a deluge of water to one of blood. Subsequent dreams featured images of eternal winter and rivers of blood. Jung, who had recorded and studied his own dreams since childhood, was at a loss to relate the bizarre nightmares to anything within his own personal life. He eventually began to fear that he was lapsing into psychosis.

Several months later, the nationalism and extremism spreading across Germany escalated into terrible violence and repression (and much later, Nazism and international war). The dreams suddenly made a kind of sense, like symbolic premonitions of what was to come. But how could one account for such things? What mechanisms of the mind would allow him to envision such things, even at unconscious levels, before even the earliest stages of the events occurred? But his earlier work on psychic phenomenon, while revealing considerable fraud, also hinted that human psyches were genuinely linke
together in some way both subtle and profound. He called this shared body of knowledge and connecti
the Collective Unconscious.

Psychic predictions and telepathy aside, probably the most important feature of the Collective Unconscious is that it is a source of innumerable panhuman archetypes which influence our longings a relationships. That is, even though each person grows up influenced by his or her particular mother or father (or doctor or teachers), there is allegedly another level at which he unconsciously is driven or influenced by deep archetypal images of the Mother, the Father, the Child, the Healer, the Wise Man/Woman and so on. These images come to the individual via Collective Unconscious. But where does the collective unconscious reside? Assuming as we traditionally have that the mind is wholly contained in the human brain -- or at least within our physical body -- how does it come to be passed from one person to the next?

According to those with materialist leanings, but who are yet willing to incorporate Jung, these archetypes as something inherited at birth, as if genetically, like blue eyes and curly hair. Or they point the fact that all human beings share a common physiology, a fairly common way of perceiving the wor through our basic biological faculties -- eyes, ears, nose, etc. We have common nervous systems as we and common basic needs for food, warmth, and touch. Thus, it makes sense that there is a basic shared quality to our longings and perceptions.

But as interesting as such explanations may be, it must be remembered that Jung himself was not a materialist, but a mystic. He dabbled in astrology, Kabbalah, alchemy, and so on, seeing each as exhibiting clues to some greater, spiritually based, reality. Furthermore, he used the theory of the collective unconscious not only to explain cross-cultural similarities in mythology and psychological functioning, but as already noted, to explain so-called psychic phenomenon like precognition, telepathy and synchronicity. All were, to Jung, manifestations of the collective unconscious -- that is, of our unsrinkage, one soul to another, and of our linkage to a higher order of intelligence.

Because of its complexity and inherent mysticism, Jung's theories have received limited acceptance within mainstream psychology. Many complain that Jung's work cannot readily be applied to the problems of everyday life. Ironically, it was a conversation with Carl Jung that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, and likewise all related 12 Step Programs. Jung advised a chronic alcoholic known only as "Roland H.": "I can only recommend that place yourself in the religious atmosphere of your own choice, that you recognize your own hopelessness, and that you cast yourself upon whatever God you think there is. The lightening of the transforming experience may then strike you." This advice worked where no psychological, religious, or medical therapy had previously succeeded and the prescription was shared with Bill W., the now famous founder of A.A.

It is worth noting that although 12 Step programs have brought innumerable people to a spiritual way of life both they and Carl Jung are roundly criticized by Christian Fundamentalists who refuse to accept a spiritual ideology that does not specifically and exclusively promote Jesus Christ. Jung's theory of mind has meanwhile found a particularly warm reception within the New Age spiritual movement, some of whose constituents view him as a part of some great "wave of light", a spiritual effort or "plan" to bring humanity out of the dark ages both literally and figuratively.

But Jung himself did not see the purpose of life as being the victory of light over dark. Rather his own vision was one of wholeness, of all elements of the self moving in a complicated dance, in and out of balance, in an endless unfolding creative drama of growth. Unlike Freud and many other early theorist: Jung saw this drama of development as continuing right up until the final years, perhaps even the final
moments of one's life. Therefore, life did not merely end in death: it came to a point of completion, before crossing over into another experience of expression and development via the death and release of the physical body. Carl Jung himself completed his life on 6 June 1961 after a number of dreams portending a transition to a tower bathed in light on the "other side of the lake".

**Father:** Johannes Paul Achilles Jung (pastor, b. 1842, d. 1896)
**Mother:** Emilie Preiswerk (b. 1848, m. 1874, d. 1923)
**Sister:** Gertrud
**Wife:** Emma Rauschenbach (b. 1882, m. 1903, d. 1955, five children)

University: MD, University of Basel, Switzerland (1900)
Professor: Psychology, University of Zürich, Switzerland (1932-1940)
Professor: Medical Psychology, University of Basel, Switzerland (1944-1945)

**Sgt. Pepper Lonely Heart**

**Author of books:**
*Symbols of Transformation (1912)*
*Aion (1951)*
*Answer to Job (1952)*
*Mysterium Coniunctionis (1955-6)*

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