

Carl Jung's Celtic Connections

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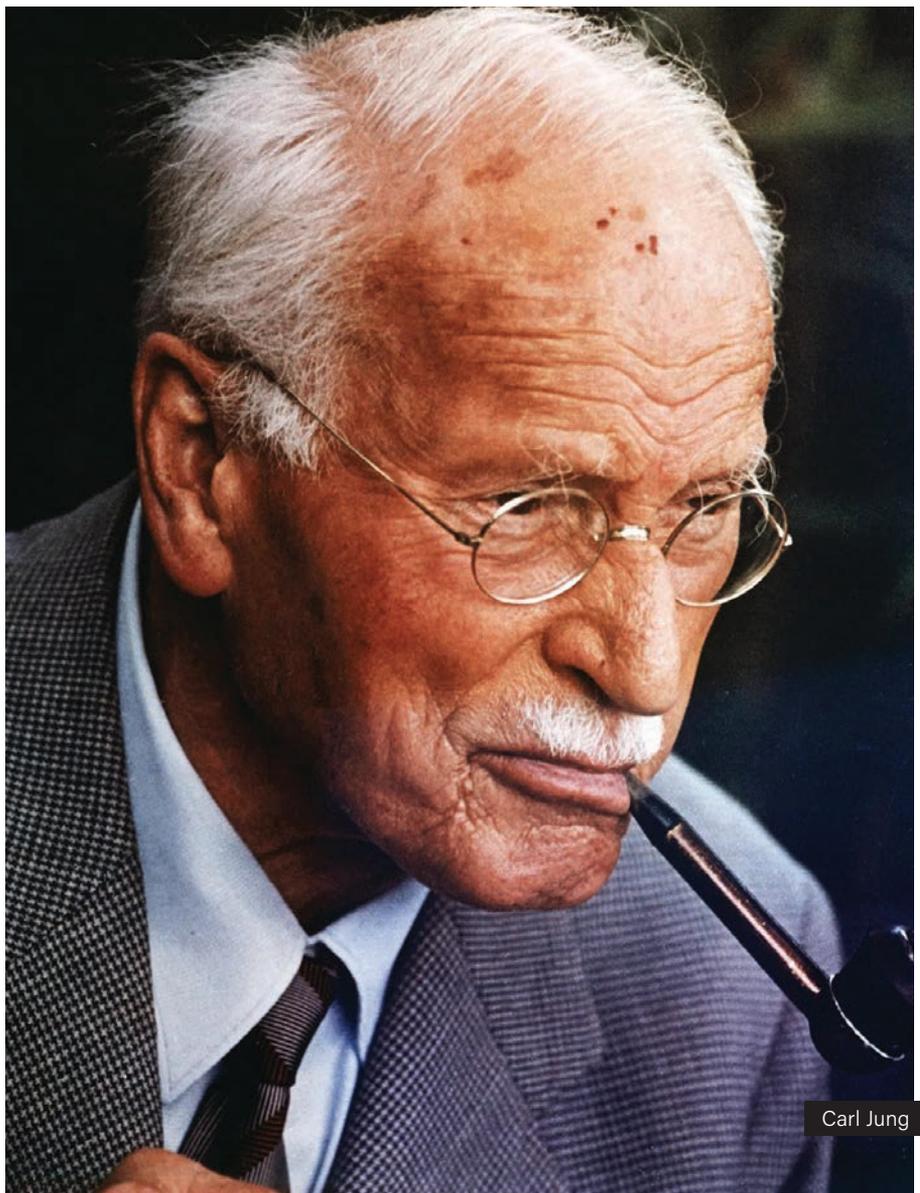
Archetypal is the Greek word for 'original pattern'. Swiss psychoanalyst/psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) used the concept of archetypes to better understand factors that influence personality and human behaviour. For example, archetypal figures like the Hero not only have an impact on our dreams, but also upon our conscious thoughts, beliefs, and values. Jung explored the individual's conscious mind - perceptions, thoughts, and actions. Human beings are also affected by the 'personal unconscious' mind that holds onto forgotten or suppressed experiences. Of particular interest, however, is Jung's concept of the 'collective unconscious' - a shared collection of memories, experiences, and knowledge inherited from our ancestors.

We know from the emerging science of epigenetics how trauma affects us in particular ways that have been passed down genetically (hence the term inter-generational trauma). However, talents, strengths, and resilience are also inherited - not just through the influence of kin in our lives, but also through our DNA.

Jung considered the experience of dreaming - and how symbols manifest from myths and the subconscious - as a religious process. For those with faith in an established religion, the process might be easier as the path is already paved. Jung firmly believed, however, that any person could be guided by their own religious authority.

Archetypes connect cultures all over the world through powerful universal symbols that imbue mythologies, spiritual movements, and religions. Celtic mythology is rich with gods and goddesses that represent elements of Jungian archetypes, and can serve as those who searching for greater identity and meaning in hyper-capitalized, consumerism-driven Western societies.

Jung acknowledged that archetypes could intermingle, giving rise to 12 archetypal figures or images. These include the Ruler (King / Queen); the Creator / Artist; the Sage; the Innocent; the Explorer; the Rebel; the Hero; the Wizard / Magician; the Jester; the Everyman; the Lover; and the Caregiver / Mother.



Carl Jung

“ Jung further divided the archetypal figures into masculine and feminine characteristics through his concepts of the animus and anima - the male and female parts of the psyche, respectively

For him, the masculine relates to problem-solving, emotional stability, and logical thinking. The feminine is characterized by intuition, emotional connections, trust, and empathy. Jung has been critiqued for his projection of a male, white, cis-gendered, Eurocentric psyche of what it is to be female.

To bridge this gap, feminists argue that

the archetypes should be viewed without a gendered bias, as all humans can exhibit these characteristics.

People of Western societies tend to be most familiar with male archetypes, which arose from the monolithic God of Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity). The four Jungian male archetypal figures are; the King, who seeks maturity by achieving balance within control of his realm. Sometimes described as the Father figure, he represents authority, wisdom, protection, and provision; the Warrior, whose courage and resilience serve him in the pursuit of a noble cause. Also described as the Hero, his is a courageous journey in response to a challenge or crisis; the



Magician, who becomes the master craftsman, through the pursuit of knowledge and technology, provides meaningful contributions to the world. Also described as the Wise Old Man, he seeks wholeness and self-realization through wisdom, insight, and intuition. The Magician understands the ways of the world and how to use this wisdom for the good of all; the Lover, who experiences the world with youthful idealism and an innate belief in goodness. This archetype embodies emotion and excitement and inspires creativity in all that he does.

However, prior to Hellenic and other Western patriarchal religions and mythologies, holistic models of goddess archetypes and energies were tied to Mother Nature, the Land, and feminine creation. That influence prevailed across the planet.

The seven female archetypal figures are the Mother, the Maiden, the Huntress, the Mystic, the Sage, the Queen, and the Lover. Goddesses of mythology can be used to further journeys of self-discovery and inner wisdom on how to live with more intention and purpose.

“The Celtic values of inclusivity, integrity, authenticity, creativity, and a reverence for Mother Nature were passed down through the ages, and - in a socially and economically divisive world – are needed more than ever.

For all genders, the feminine archetypes, and the goddesses associated with them, can inspire us to develop our strengths to better ourselves and our communities.

Celtic mythology is particularly helpful in this regard - the tri-goddesses of Celtic mythology, Danú, Brighid, and the Mórrígan provide ways for all genders to tap into the powers of the Ruler, the Sage, the Mystic, the Hunter, the Lover, and in particular, the Mother/Creator/Protector.

In Celtic mythology, we see the Tri-goddess represented through three attributes: warmth, wisdom, and warfare. These align with Jungian archetypes; wisdom is associated with the Sage, the Mystic, and the Mother.

The goddess Cailleach is known as the Old One - all-knowing, she is wife to the sea god Manannan and is said to control the weather. She also rules the healing arts and sciences, childbirth, death, and rebirth - roles traditionally associated with the Mother. Her time is that of fall and winter.

Warfare aligns with the Huntress, the Queen, and the Mother. Warfare is embodied in the tri-goddess The Morrigan, who is always at the ready to fight for her beloved land and people. She, too, is associated with the Mother roles of life, death, and rebirth.

Warmth aligns with the Maiden, the Mother, the Queen, and the Lover. The Druid tri-goddess Brigid represents warmth and is linked to the spring and summer months. Her goddess identity and importance to Celtic culture was the only one that survived foreign domination. She is now deemed a Saint and is celebrated in the Christian liturgical calendar on February 1, as well as at Imbolc in the pagan Wheel of the Year of Sabbats and seasons. Brigid rules learning, healing, and the smithy/fire crafts - qualities associated with the Sage and Mystic.

Though she is absent from the earliest Irish mythological narratives like the Book of Invasions, it is important to acknowledge Danú, the Irish Mother Goddess of creation, destruction, and regeneration. She is the symbol of the land itself, and the progenitor of the divine Tuatha Dé Danann (the supernatural folk). Danú is Ireland's most revered goddess, a symbol of the country's fertility. In Jung's Theory of Anima Mundi, there is a connection between all living beings, and a soul to the world, which is Danú's role in Irish mythology. She is the mother of deities, heroes, artisans, and craftspeople, and protector of the lands. She also presided over all coronations of Irish Kings of old and their goddess queens.

In the tri-goddesses, we can better understand the holistic nature of Celtic culture, including ties to nature, spirituality, and the Veil (collective unconscious). It is very possible that the missing piece to our thriving as a society - and indeed our very survival as a species - is the goddess and the archetypes and values that she embodies.