
The Psychological and Visionary Mode in Carl Jung's Essay *Psychology and Literature*

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ABSTRACT

Carl Jung is one of the most acclaimed psychologists who was primarily a disciple of Sigmund Freud but then found his own system of psychological study and worked alone. The selected essay is one of the finest documents in the field of psychology and thus having great significance. The major concern of this essay is to show the duality between Psychological mode and visionary mode. Both these modes are clearly attached to each other but are also varied as well. In this work he describes the psychology of the Unconscious. The essay has deep psychological concerns of Jung regarding the relation of Psychology with the literature. Let us try to understand how they are closely related to each other or opposed to each other.

Keywords: *Psychology, Vision, Autobiography, Primordial Experience, Duality.*

The essay *Psychology and Literature* published in 1941, is a work by Carl Jung who is a well known psychologist. Jung, a disciple of Sigmund Freud parted company with Freud in 1913 to develop his own school of analytical Psychology. In this work he describes the psychology of the Unconscious. He beautifully describes the interconnection of psychology and Literature in this work. His concept is very much distinct from that of Freud's Psychology.

According to Jung, as the psychology is a study of psychic processes, it is obvious enough that psychology can be brought to accept upon the study of literature, because the human psyche is the womb of all his sciences and arts. On the one hand we may expect psychological research to explain the formation of a work of art, and on the other to reveal the factors that make a person artistically creative. The psychologist is thus faced with two separate and distinct tasks, and must approach them in completely different ways. He says that:

“Psychology and the study of art will always have to turn to one another for help, and the one will not invalidate the other”

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It is an important principle of psychology that psychic events are derivable. It is a principle in the study of art that a psychic product is something in and for itself whether the work of art or the artist himself is in question. Both principles are valid in spite of their relativity. However, he says that:

“A great work of art is like a dream, because for all its obviousness, it does not explain itself and is never unequivocal (Clear)”

Psychological mode and Visionary Mode

1. Psychological mode of art deals with material drawn from the realm of human consciousness such as the moral lessons of life, the emotional setbacks, the experience of passion and crisis of human destiny. These experiences are treated by the literary writer in a creative manner and the reader succeeds in getting the better insights into the life. The psychological mode doesn't rise above the limits of psychological intelligibility.
2. The visionary mode of art deals with material which is primal and improves on human understanding. It arises from the timeless depth and is unknown and cold, many sided, and fantastic. It is sudden in mystery. History and mythology are taken to be its material.
3. While dealing with the psychological mode, we don't care to know what the materials are and what the materials mean. But in the visionary mode, we want to know the materials and their meanings. The materials in the visionary mode, remind us of dreams, night time fears and dark recesses of mind.
4. We experience the psychological mode through our feelings (which are obvious). But the visionary mode is experienced through our feelings (which are mysterious, weird and open).
5. The visionary artist must make use of imagery which is not easy to handle and easy to understand. Dante, in *Divine Comedy*, conveys his vision, clothed in images of heaven and hell. Goethe uses images of the regions of Greek antiquity. Wagner uses images from the Nordic Myth. Blake invents the indescribable images of Tiger and Lamb.
6. Example of the Psychological mode is the first part of Goethe's *Faust* play. On the other hand examples of the visionary modes are: Harmas's *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, Neitzche's *Dionisyan Exuberance*, the poem of William Blake and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.

Jung's Views on the Poet/Artist

Jung takes the *Primordial experience* free from personal bias (favoritism), reaching out to the cultural heritage of mankind as the driving force working in the creative artist and concretized as a work of art. He says that a work of art must rise above the realm of personal life and speak from the spirit and heart of the poet as man to the spirit and heart of mankind. According to him, “an artist is objective and impersonal- even inhuman because as an artist he is his work and not a human being.”

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He further says that he may be also a duality of mixture of contradictory attitudes- a human being with a personal life & an impersonal in a creative process. According to him, an artist doesn't have any official role but his specifically artistic disposition involves more of collective psychic life than personal psychic life. As a human being, the artist has moods, will and personal aims but as an artist he is 'collective man'-one who carries and shapes his unconscious, psychic life of mankind. To perform this difficult duty, he has to sacrifice happiness and everything that makes life worth living for the ordinary human being.

There are two conflicting forces within the artist's mind-

- (i) The common human desire for happiness, satisfaction and security and
- (ii) A pitiless passion for creation which may override the personal desire.

The creative force drains off the human desires to such an extent that the personal ego develops all sorts of bad qualities- ruthlessness (pitiless), selfishness and, arrogance.

The creative work arises from the unconsciousness depths, from the realm of the mothers. Behind the mother's womb, lies the archetypal womb of Great Mother Earth. Behind the particular obviousness of the procreative work lies the Universal Creative and re-creative spirit.

The work in process becomes the poet's/artist's fate and decides his psychic development. Therefore Jung says that, "It is not Goethe who creates Faust but Faust which creates Goethe"

The Primordial images or archetypes are activated when conscious life acquires false attitude. The images come instinctively in the dreams of individuals, and the visions of the artists and psychic (supernatural) thus, restores the psychic life of the age. So, the work of the poet/artist meets the spiritual need of the society in which he lives and therefore his work means more to him than his personal fate. Jung compares the work of art to a dream for two reasons:

- (i) In its apparent obviousness, it does not explain itself and
- (ii) It is never unequivocal (Clear)

Jung concludes his essay with the remark that the secret of an artistic creation and its effectiveness is to be found in a return to the state of participation magic- to that level of experience at which it is man who lives and not the individual. Therefore every great work of art is objective and impersonal.

Thus, in the essay we may find the deep psychology of Jung regarding the relation of Psychology with the literature. However, his views on these two are very much welcomed by critics in both the realms: psychology and Literature and thus this essay is of great significance.

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