

Archetypes in Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*

Jyoti, M.A. English Research Scholar

Lovely Professional University

Phagwara

Jyotikalsi99@gmail.com

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Dr. Balkar Singh

Research Supervisor

HOD- Verbal Ability-IV

Lovely Professional University

Phagwara

balkar.singh@lpu.co.in

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Abstract

Archetypes are the presentation of collective unconscious in general and are the major components in forming personal consciousness. Archetypes are the living systems, structure and dynamics of social subjects and act as the guiding force while taking important decisions. Identity formation, reality principle, formation of binaries, justification for accepted realities, mechanism of truth, damnation and salvation- all are the schemata for the larger outlook of archetypes. Peter Carey in his novel '*Oscar and Lucinda*' presents the work of archetypes in the action of its characters. The metanarrative of the novel is ruled by various archetypal symbols, beliefs and inheritance of binaries. The paper analyses the archetypes of persona, shadow principle and Anima and Animus to foreground the psyche of its characters.

Keywords: Peter Carey, *Oscar and Lucinda*, Shadow, anima, animus, interpretation, identity, unconsciousness, psyche, personality, passion.

Concept of Archetypes was first introduced by the very famous Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. He believed archetypes are models of people, their mentality, behaviours and their personalities. According to him these archetypes plays a very significant role as inborn tendencies in order to influence the behaviour of humans. He suggested that the psyche of humans is consisting of three major components- ego, the personal unconsciousness and the collective unconsciousness. Ego is represented as the conscious mind of any individual whereas the unconscious the suppressed memories. But the collective unconsciousness is the most significant part of our psyche that contains those memories and knowledge that we share from one to the others as a species. In Jungian psychology, the archetypes are the representations of that part of the collective unconsciousness that are served as universal patterns and

images and we inherit them from generations to generations same as we inherit the behavioural patterns that are instinctive.

An archetype in literature or in any literary work is used as an object, character, belief or convention that is specifically constructed on some kind of historical context. People believe these archetypes just because they are occurring continually in the stream of their daily life since decades. There is no logical or factual explanation behind these kinds of things, but people have faith in them just because they are being accepted from generation to generation without being questioned. This can be illustrated by the instance of religious temples and churches. They represent as a home for God. But logically we consider them so religious and as a house for God just because this idea has been constructed a long back ago.

Plato refers to it as ‘pre-existing ideal templates and blue prints’. Carl Jung called them “primordial images” and the “fundamental units of the human mind”. Archetypes in general, can be seen on television in a serial or a film. It can be any response that we give to our surroundings and our attitudes regarding anything are the archetypes in it. Jung writes in his ‘The Structure and Dynamics of the psyche’, “the Archetypes are the living system of reactions and attitudes that determine the individual’s life in invisible ways.” There are various types of archetypes projected by many writers but in the real life there are thousands of archetypes that occur in our day to day life. Carl Jung states: “Archetypes are not dissimilated only by tradition, language, and migration, but they can re-arise spontaneously, at any time, at any place, without any outside influence” (12).

However, when we critically look at a well-known booker prize winner Australian writer Peter Carey’s novel *Oscar and Lucinda*, we find that he has used various archetypes throughout the entire novel in order to make his work more precious and valuable. Cary’s talent of using literary devices in a precise manner makes his works unique and enjoyable. From the beginning to the end of the novel we see that the book deals with so many archetypes that help the characters to move ahead in the story. His characters are representative of binaries of nature-

Jung was beginning to play with archetypal images and the collective unconsciousness, which contains images derived from our early ancestors’ experiences explaining why spirituality is deeply rooted for many people and certain myths and images are universal: mother/earth, mother/ Virgin, Mary/church/godmother symbolizes nurturance; hero/Christ/Abraham Lincoln symbolizes overcoming humble birth with superhuman powers; shadow/Satan/devils/aliens/Hitler symbolizes the dark half of personality. (81)

As referred by Jung, psyche works like structural binary. Most of the time mind decides everything into negative and positive entities. These entities later on determine the understanding of the world. As referred by Bill Ashcroft et al, “an extreme instance of this is a resonance as a symbol that

made in an archetypal term of discrimination and prejudice.” The writer further differentiates both characters’ views about this by writing, “His father made a speech. Oscar did not believe it. His father said the pudding was a fruit of Satan. But Oscar had tasted the pudding. “It did not taste like the fruit of Satan” (Carey, *Lucinda* 10). This shows that how the archetypes carried by Oscar’s father were attempted to change by Oscar. Furthermore, Oscar also tries to make some changes in the ideas that angles of God can come to the human beings and how people believe and try to fix some kind of specific evidences towards these ideas by showing illogical man-made justifications. Jung states:

While such identity categories are not entirely dismantled or refused, they are also not taken as given. They are also critiqued, de- naturalized and, importantly, de- mystified. This amounts to an archetypal Social constructionist ‘in between’ stance of critical engagement with identities alongside a concern with placing these identities in material social structures. (227)

It depicts that the identity is also matter of identity politics position arise is archetypal in nature. Thus, it constitutes the reality principle and makes people to believe in its incomplete arbitrary interpretation. It rules the collective psyche of the society. Thus, the chances of contention and opposition are very less. Mostly, it is accepted by all and circulated through all societal agencies. However, these archetypes can come in questions once confronted by different ideology. We read that Oscar denies to his friend Tommy Croucher’s claim of seeing an angel and a sign left by that angel as a proof of its existence.

His friend Tommy Croucher claimed to have seen an angel. He said it was ten feet tall and his mother had seen its head above the milking shed. He took Oscar and showed him the angel had left behind. There were three small stones which made the points of a triangle. Tommy said they stood for “Father,” “Son” and “Holly Ghost.” Oscar had not believed Tommy Croucher, but when he saw that the sign was the mathematical symbol for “therefore it follows.” He changed his mind. (Carey, *Lucinda*16)

In some religions, there are certain rituals that hold strong belief in animal sacrifice. People follow a specific set of beliefs or archetypes which believe in sacrifices in order to please their gods. In this novel also we see the event of killing a pig in a cruel way to keep their rituals alive. It also is a significant thing when Oscar continuously dreams about his father that critically reveals many things. His dreams, in which he saw his father symbolizes death and his mother as the genuine happiness of his life. Moreover, dreams describe something serious in this novel. Dreams are the representation of psycho- sexual factors infantilism. The dreams represent unconscious symbolism. All the factors which are considered hysteric or tabooed by the society gets its expression in dreams when the unconscious dominant over the conscious. It is a “pathological phenomenon” (6) it is an “auto hypnosis” (8) and it is a part of pathological association. This hypnosis has no effect when we are unconscious. Thus, they represent the repressed desires which lay the foundation of a disassociation of mental personality.

Dreams are the product of wishful thinking or fear neurosis. For children, dreams work for instant fulfilment. As Sigmund Freud states:

The state of hysteria about it, the linking of the anxiety with the reproduction of an appropriate experience or a dream, causes the *pavor nocturnus* of children to appear as something special. But the *pavor* can also emerge in a pure form, without any dream or recurring hallucination. (332)

Study of dreams can also foreground mental places that have most of traumatic neurosis, take residence in dreams because they are not able to express them publicly in a restricted reality, sexual desires, social irrelevance etc. all are compatriots of the unconsciousness. As Freud said in *Beyond Pleasure Principle*:

None of these things can have produced pleasure in the past and it might be supposed that they would cause less unpleasure to-day if they emerged as memories or dreams instead of taking the form of fresh experiences. They are of course the activities of instincts instead of leading to satisfaction; but no lesson has been learnt from the old experience of these activities having led instead only to unpleasure. In spite of that, they are repeated, under pressure of a compulsion. (15)

However, we also study that in the novel both father (Theophilus) and son (Oscar) are carrying two different kinds of archetypes regarding the belief system of their religion. They both think that they are following the wrong way. Oscar thinks that the deeds and activities done by his father can lead him to go to the hell. Whereas his father thinks that eating the Christmas pudding will definitely send his son to the hell. We see Oscar worrying and praying for his father when Carey writes; “He was praying that his papa would not die. He felt cold and tight across his chest. The pain in his arms did not seem related to buckets, oh lord! Do spare him please, even though he is in grievous error. Let not his blood be poisoned in thy smiting, let him not be taken in ignorance. Dear Jesus, who died for us, lifts the scales from his eyes so he may see true light. Let him not be cast down. Let him sit with your saints in heaven.” (*Carey, Lucinda* 17) This shows how Oscar is worried about his father’s deeds and he prays for his father so that God can bless him with some light of awareness about what he is doing. This event also throws some light on the changes that Oscar tries to bring in the archetypes adopted by his father. So the faith and archetypal symbols are the product of societal condition, when a group of people stay at one place for a long time, in order to fulfil the gaps in their understanding, they start covering up with half-truths. These half-truths become the part of their existence and they start having them as higher realities.

Later we find out how Oscar’s father’s inherited ideas that we consider archetypes are different from that of Oscar’s. We read in the novel “his father would not tolerate any questioning of his faith.

He imagined God spoke to him. Oscar was moved to pity by his misunderstanding.” On the other hand, Oscar thinks about his plight. the writer allows us to know his innermost thoughts when he writes, “He wished he were a pig, that had no mortal soul, that he be made into sausage and eaten, release from the terrible pleasure of eternity” (Carey, *Lucinda* 30). This shows the type of archetypal revealed by the novelist that how people believe pigs are not concerned with the matter of eternity. In some communities like Islam, people think it is a sin to call the name of a pig. Here, we find that these kinds of archetypes are not sometimes wise. As in the matter of pigs, people do not think it necessary to accept pigs as the creation of the same God.

Meanwhile when Oscar goes to the University of Oxford, there he finds some different kinds of archetypes being believed by the people around there. Oscar experience some odd events and activities strictly followed by the students, “The Baptist boys made him eat dirt. They made him sing songs he was not allowed to sing. They showed him everything of a Pagan statue from the crystal palace. They put coarse mud on his skin because they can’t bear it so soft and white” (32) and at this place “He was not from “Here” He was from “There”.” Peter Carey has also depicted a very specific kind of archetypal symbol with the character sketch of Lucinda by describing her dare to change the conventional beliefs for women by inheriting a glass work factory and by developing a strange passion for gambling and playing cards. Our societies do not allow the women to pioneer to make their own ways to the life. But Lucinda dares to alter this archetypal belief. However, gambling is one of the major archetypes in the book. Katherine Adam discusses this and writes:

Coalition work brings us face to face with the absence of universal truths, the danger of safe assumptions, the falsity of common sense – or the lack of any supposed common basis in reason or rationality that promises to simultaneously transcend and unite difference. Rather today’s diverse political communities require approaches to discourse that will promote negotiation among divergent identities, histories and desires... coalitions also seek address differences without reifying them or falling into binary logics (2).

Soon they start deciding their understanding into binary categorization. This constitutes their consciousness and soon this consciousness denies by binary thinking. We see that even Oscar is a religious person and gambling is something that is not wise for his character. But according to Oscar some amount of evil is necessary and is allowed by God. But Lucinda tries to change those archetypes according to her own status and circumstances. Albeit Oscar also believe in gambling in order to make it as a way to endure life. In addition, if we study the character of Oscar in the light of ‘The Innocent’, a type of archetype given by Carl Jung, Oscar is a character who meets all the characteristics of this kind of archetype in the novel. This kind of persons tries to uplift and support others by their positive ways of life. This is what Oscar does for Lucinda when he decides that he will help her to transport the glass church on its destination. ‘The Innocent’ always tries to seek good things in his surroundings and always remains hopeful. But this kind of archetype always suffers just because of doing something wrong. And

Oscar even in the end of the novel suffers just because he commits a mistake of not telling Lucinda about his strong feelings of love for her.

Another quality of this archetype that we see in Oscar is the faith and open mindedness. But in this respect both Oscar and Lucinda are innocent represented by their expressions of gambling. Conclusively, they do so just for their keen desire for change and reformation. On the other hand, Lucinda who is the heroine of the novel belongs to 'The Orphan' type of Jung's archetypes. She holds the characteristics of this kind of archetype as she always searches for belongingness in the society and in the world. She finds many kinds of companies even the gambling, playing cards and running of the glass work factory just in order to seek a place in which she can fit herself to lead a good life. Furthermore, both Oscar and Lucinda represent a type of Jung's archetypes which he names as 'The Hero'. The both represents the qualities of 'The Hero' but they mend it by having their own justifications to the activities that the does in their lives. Oscar is an Anglican Priest, educated from the Oxford while Lucinda is a young heiress a representation of feminism. But yet they both gamble. As Yoshihisa states:

Selves, like novels, movies, fairy tales, myths, program music, and other kinds of stories, may be organized around a broad variety of themes such as jealousy, revenge, tragic heroism, injustice, and unattainable love, the innocence of a child, inseparable friendship, discrimination, and so forth. This thematic variety, however, does not exclude the possibility that culture provides us with limited amounts of basic themes that function as organizing frames for the understanding and interpretation of life events (3).

So, heroes are the product of self-identification process. As hero represents broad variety of themes like a metaphor in polyphonic novels, he represents contrasting qualities but always remain noble at heart.

Moreover, in terms of Shadow Archetype, we can analyze the novel from different perspective in which the characters are defined. Shadow Principle represents the id irrational part of our own existence. It is always within us and resurface at the time of weakness and troubled times. It mostly consists of unpleasant realities and project itself in negativity. Jung states:

But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved: we have at least brought up the personal unconscious. The shadow is the living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. (20)

Furthermore, the shadow existence lies in positivity and distantly exists until the time it finds the person in dilemma and takes possession of our ego unconsciousness. Jung in his book '*Psychiatric Studies*' states:

A man who is possessed by his shadow is always standing in his own light and falling into his own traps. Whenever possible, he prefers to make an unfavorable impression on others. In the long run luck is always against him, because he is living below his own level and at best only attains what does not suit him (123).

In case of Lucinda, she is possessed by his passion of gambling and playing cards. In order to make her life more enjoyable and bias free she becomes the victim of neglecting real meaning of life. She loves Oscar and does not dare to reveal it to Oscar. Likewise, Oscar also comes out from the kind of life he was living since his childhood and started enjoying gambling. Towards the end of the novel he does not find any appropriate state of life, rather he suffers. Carl Jung also gave the principle of Anima and Animus. Anima is a feminine quality which is in existence in both male and female. Anima is an archetype of male in which can be found in both male and female, “Anima means soul and should designate something very wonderful immortal” (26). It is not a documental sense but a philosophical content. It is “a natural archetype statistically sums up all the statements of the unconsciousness, of the primitive mind, all the history of language and religion. It is a fact in the proper sense of the word unconscious” (27). Animus on the other hand is a male principle and Jung explains it as:

The animus is obstinate harping on principles, laying down the law, dogmatic, world-reforming theoretic, and word- mongering, argumentative, and domineering. Both alike have bad taste: the anima surrounds her with inferior people, and the animus lets him be taken in by second-rate thinking. (124)

In the novel Oscar and Lucinda Oscar represents animus privilege and Lucinda represent anima. However, they are some overlapping in some moments. Oscar shows his feminine side and Lucinda shows the power of her will. It shows that both of them are complimenting each other, as Jung states:

Anima is fickle, capricious, moody, uncontrolled and emotional, sometimes gifted with daemonic intuitions, ruthless, malicious, untruthful, bitchy, double-faced, and mystical. The animus is obstinate, harping on principles, laying down the law, dogmatic, world-reforming, theoretic, word-mongering, argumentative, and domineering. (63)

In the novel Oscar is obsessed with the qualities such as shyness, love for glass, and fear of water and inexpressive. Thus, the archetypes portrayed by the author are the part of deeper unconsciousness. These are the emblems of collective consciousness which express the collective psyche of the society.

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