

**JUNGAN LITERARY  
HERMENEUTICS**



## **Jungian Literary Hermeneutics**

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# **JUNGLIAN LITERARY HERMENEUTICS**

Ana Kechan





*To my family,  
without whose support and love  
no story would have been written*

## About the Author

**Ana Kechan** was born in Tetovo, where she completed her primary and part of her secondary education. She completed her secondary education with honors in the United States, as the first scholarship holder of Rotary International from Macedonia. After graduating from the Faculty of Philology and the Department of English Language and Literature, she enrolled in an MA program in Literary Studies and successfully defended her Master's thesis in 2005. In the meantime, she began her career, first as a lecturer and then as a senior lecturer in English at the Southeast European University. After receiving her Ph.D. in 2010, she continued her university career as an assistant professor and associate professor of English and American literature at FON University. In 2008, she completed her DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and became a CELTA trainer for the University of Cambridge. She has also completed a four-year training in Gestalt therapy. Since 2018, she has been teaching and training at the English Language Teaching Department of International Balkan University in Skopje. Her interests are comprehensive and include the areas of hermeneutics, folklore and mythology, analytical psychology, archetypal criticism, psychotherapy, English language teaching methodology, and teacher training.

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# Preface

In the third decade of the 21st century, most of Carl Gustav Jung's ideas still seem very forward-thinking. Controversial and innovative, even during his lifetime, Jung departed drastically from the established theories of, primarily, Sigmund Freud, but also other theorists of psychology at the turn of the 20th century. However, his theories thrived and continued to inspire followers with many continuing his work into the second half of the 20th century, developing a climate of post-Jungianism. The relevance of his theories on the collective unconscious and archetypes is still maintained today.

In the context of literary theory and criticism, as I will show in the following text, there are not many deviations from the ideas that Jung set forth in his interpretation of literary works, although he did not create a specific system of literary interpretation. Jung's main postulates, which apply both to patient work and the analysis of literary works, are the collective unconscious and archetypes, or archetypal images, as a reflection of this aspect of the unconscious. Today, the

term *archetype* has become semantically over-saturated and is used and misused in all contexts, often losing the meaning that Jung ascribed to it. What makes archetypes fascinating is precisely their polysemy, and on an individual level, it is an entire world waiting to be discovered.

Jung believed in the process of individuation, that is, in the integration and depotentiation of archetypal representations—both personal and collective. That process should lead to self-realization and to the discovery and experience of the meaning of life. This is one of the key reasons why Jung's psychology lends itself so naturally to literary interpretation - its fundamentally symbolic orientation. Unlike strictly empirical or behaviorist approaches, analytical psychology recognizes that human experience is mediated through images, metaphors, and narratives. Literature, in this sense, becomes not merely an artistic expression, but a privileged field in which unconscious processes reveal themselves in structured, observable form. Characters, plots, and motifs are therefore not only aesthetic constructions, but also psychological configurations through which universal patterns of the psyche become visible.

It is precisely this universality that distinguishes Jungian literary hermeneutics from other interpretative models. While many modern theories emphasize the historical, ideological, or linguistic conditioning of texts, the archetypal approach directs attention toward transhistorical patterns of meaning. This does not negate the importance of cultural specificity; rather, it situates it within a broader psychological framework. Individual works of art may differ in style, form,

and thematic focus, yet they frequently express analogous symbolic structures, demonstrating the continuity of human psychic experience across time and space.

Finally, the contents and the message of this book are profoundly relevant today because they confront some of the greatest crises of the modern world: our collective inability to understand the forces that shape human behavior beneath the surface of consciousness. In an age defined by polarization, mass anxiety, digital projection, cultural fragmentation, and a deepening disconnect from meaning, Jungian archetypal psychology offers an urgently needed language for interpreting the unconscious patterns driving individuals and societies alike. Academically, the text restores depth and nuance to literary studies by reintroducing a psychological framework capable of explaining the universal structures underlying stories across cultures—an interpretive power that few contemporary theories possess. Beyond academia, its insights into the Shadow, Anima, and Animus speak directly to the emotional, relational, and ethical challenges of our time, illuminating why we repeat destructive patterns and how integration—not repression—creates resilience and wholeness. In a world overwhelmed by surface-level analysis, this book provides what is most lacking: a rigorous, human-centered interpretative model that bridges psychology, literature, culture, and lived experience, offering both scholars and ordinary readers a path toward a deeper understanding of themselves and the forces shaping the modern era.



# Introduction

The psychology of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), which he termed analytical psychology, is one of the most controversial and debated phenomena in the psychological and academic worlds. It is often misunderstood as a philosophy, or even as a belief system, because some of the experiences of those who have entered deeply into it seem so strange that they are automatically assumed to be philosophical or mystical speculations.

Barbara Hannah (1891–1986), one of Jung’s followers, draws the following parallel:

They are really more or less in the position of people listening to an explorer’s account of some strange tribe whose habits are so different to their own that the listener may involuntarily find himself thinking: “He is pulling the long bow,” or “fishermen’s tales”! (Hannah, 2000, pp. 107-108)

And this is not far from reality. Many of Jung’s analytic psychology settings need to be experienced personally to