ARCHETYPES OF POWER AND SECURITY IN THE ERA OF HYBRID THREATS: TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

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Abstract

In the context of growing hybrid threats and the rise of post-truth politics, this article explores the transformation of power and security through the lens of archetypal psychology and information warfare. The manipulation of symbolic systems and the distortion of truth have become core mechanisms in contemporary conflicts, shifting the battlefield from physical territories to human consciousness. Drawing on Jungian theory, the study examines how archetypes – universal patterns of perception – are reactivated and instrumentalized in the age of digital propaganda, psychological operations, and algorithmic influence. The article also highlights the convergence of behavioral analytics, narrative engineering, and strategic communication as tools for shaping collective identity and undermining cognitive resilience. Through interdisciplinary analysis, the work underscores the urgent need to develop culturally adaptive mythic frameworks that counter disinformation, restore symbolic coherence, and strengthen democratic security structures. Archetypes, once confined to myth and literature, now emerge as operational categories in understanding and confronting cognitive warfare.

1. Introduction

In the context of expanding information flows and increasing technological capacity, the tools for shaping human consciousness and constructing artificial realities have become more powerful and sophisticated. The ongoing hybrid warfare of the 21st century – initiated and actively conducted by the Russian Federation – demonstrates an unprecedented manipulation of truth, distortion of facts, and deliberate application of disinformation techniques, giving rise to a phenomenon widely recognized as the post-truth era.

Within this paradigm, the nature of truth is systematically undermined. Selective fragments of factual information are used to construct enemy images, propagate illusions, and establish a narrative where all assertions are relativized, and the very concept of objective truth is dismissed. This strategic obfuscation fosters public confusion, cynicism, and ultimately passive acceptance of manipulated realities.

As one leading ideologue of Russian authoritarianism once cynically remarked when confronted with accusations of falsehood, «You need the truth. We need victory.» [KP2.1] This aphorism epitomizes the instrumentalization of information in service of political and military objectives – truth becomes subordinate to strategic gain.

Language, mass media, and state communications – once viewed as tools for informing the public – are increasingly weaponized. They function as instruments of mass psychological warfare, contributing to societal disorientation and large-scale cognitive manipulation. Instead of the uninformed and passive masses of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the contemporary world witnesses the emergence of pseudo-informed publics – individuals bombarded with conflicting or false information, and whose perceptions are shaped by curated virtual realities, visual stimuli, and emotionally charged propaganda.

In the 21st century, the primary battlefield has shifted to the sphere of human faith, beliefs, and convictions. This transformation is closely associated with the evolving relationship between truth, the devaluation of truth, and the depreciation of factual information. These trends are most pronounced in totalitarian, authoritarian, and neo-fascist regimes, where state-controlled narratives and information manipulation are systematically deployed as instruments of governance and domination. From these regimes, such phenomena pose a direct threat to advocates of morality, justice, and those committed to the principles of objectivity, critical thinking, and impartial inquiry.

Despite the proliferation of information technologies and the widespread personal access to information through billions of digital devices, this technological abundance often creates a false sense of informational autonomy. The illusion of information freedom masks the existence of centralized control over content, selective visibility of narratives, and monopolization of digital platforms that determine the informational agenda. As a result, instead of promoting enlightenment, such environments risk deepening manipulation and mass disorientation.

This dynamic gives rise to what can be termed the expansion of the informational void or the territory of cognitive darkness – a space where objective reality is systematically replaced by artificial constructs and ideologically driven fabrications. In such contexts, the occupation of individual consciousness becomes a strategic goal, leading to the symbolic and psychological subjugation of entire populations. The enslavement no longer manifests through physical coercion alone but through epistemological control –

the ability to define what is accepted as true or false, just or unjust, real or unreal.

Ultimately, the instrumentalization of information in hybrid conflicts and authoritarian regimes has the potential to catalyze a new form of mass enslavement – one rooted not in chains, but in the internal colonization of human thought, belief systems, and moral judgments.

The struggle for power is one of the most powerful factors of human reptilization, bringing it to the level of a subversive, cruel, aggressive entity, able to forget about all the laws of morality, cross all the red lines of prohibitions, morals, religion, and societies, ignore the requirements of the Constitution, laws, rules, and, finally, traditions. Power is desired as it helps to better realize each of the basic instincts inherent in living beings.

2. Results and discussion

Archetypes, traditionally understood through qualitative, introspective frameworks in psychology, are increasingly being reexamined through empirical and computational lenses. With the proliferation of big data, machine learning, and behavioral analytics, the idea of modeling archetypes has empirically gained traction through structured data and algorithmic inference. This approach aims to capture recurring patterns of human behavior, personality, and cultural norms to forecast behavior in strategic contexts such as national security and commercial marketing.

In contemporary marketing, the concept of the "customer avatar" or "ideal customer profile" provides a relevant example of applied archetypal thinking. These avatars are generalized representations of target market segments, built using demographic, psychographic, and behavioral data. Corporations create these profiles to tailor messaging, design product experiences, and predict purchasing behavior. Such avatar development involves a de facto empirical archetyping process: identifying clusters of traits, behaviors, and needs from real-world data to generate a predictive persona. These models can then be implemented in recommendation systems, A/B testing, or targeted advertising algorithms.

Beyond marketing, archetypal modeling holds significant potential in national security and sociocultural analysis. Understanding archetypal dynamics within populations—whether of individuals, teams, or entire cultures – can support risk assessment, strategic forecasting, and public diplomacy, for example:

• identifying archetypes of radicalization or group cohesion.

• mapping cultural resilience or collective trauma patterns.

• designing narrative counterstrategies against disinformation campaigns.

These approaches draw upon the same principles as marketing but are adapted to more complex systems of social behavior and geopolitical relevance.

To understand modern archetype modeling, it is essential to revisit its intellectual roots. Carl Gustav Jung and Sigmund Freud were pioneers of psychological theory, with distinct views on the unconscious.

• Freud, a neurologist by training, introduced the idea of the unconscious as a repository of repressed desires, particularly sexual in nature. His psychoanalytic method aimed to uncover hidden trauma through therapeutic dialogue, achieving catharsis.

• Jung, originally a follower of Freud, expanded on this by introducing the collective unconscious – a shared reservoir of symbolic patterns and images (archetypes) that manifest across cultures and histories.

Jung's departure from Freud largely stemmed from his rejection of sexual reductionism. Where Freud saw libido as the central life force, Jung proposed a pluralistic model of psychic energy, including spiritual, creative, and instinctual drives. Jung's notion of the collective unconscious, once seen as mystical or speculative, now finds renewed relevance in the age of algorithmic culture. Just as Jung proposed universal archetypes (e.g., the Hero, the Shadow, the Mother), machine learning models cluster users into behavioral typologies across social platforms, consumer datasets, and psychological assessments. In effect, we are witnessing the quantification of archetypal knowledge: systems that replicate the structure of Jungian insights, not through introspection, but through pattern recognition and behavioral analytics.

At its core, the concept of the archetype emerges from a cognitive and evolutionary understanding of human perception – our brain's inherent capacity to identify patterns of typicality across both physical and psychological domains. Carl Jung formalized this capacity through his theory of archetypes, which he proposed as innate, universal templates embedded within what he termed the collective unconscious. These archetypes serve as the foundation for mythological figures, narrative motifs, and psychological behaviors observable across cultures and time periods. Modern science – through behavioral analytics, marketing segmentation, and cognitive modeling – has begun to explore how these patterns might be quantified and applied for real-world purposes, such as in customer profiling, propaganda analysis, or even leadership archetyping in national security domains.

Throughout his writings, Jung redefined archetypes as primordial images – universal, archaic patterns and symbols residing within the collective unconscious. These may appear spontaneously in dreams, myths, religions, and artistic expression. Jung emphasized that archetypes are not fixed representations, but rather dynamic templates that shape emotional and cognitive perception.

A frequently cited example illustrates this point: Jung observed a psychiatric patient describing a vision of air flowing from a tube in the sun – a vision he would later find echoed in newly translated ancient Egyptian texts describing the sun's phallus as the source of cosmic breath. Given the patient's lack of education and access to these texts, Jung hypothesized that such imagery emerged from collective psychic structures, not learned knowledge.

The work of Joseph Campbell, most notably *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, reinforced Jung's theoretical framework by identifying recurring themes across global mythologies. Campbell described the Hero's Journey as a universal narrative structure comprising three phases: departure, initiation, and return. This structure is not only evident in traditional epics but has been consciously replicated in modern narratives. For instance, George Lucas acknowledged Campbell's influence in constructing the plotline of Star Wars, where protagonist Luke Skywalker exemplifies the archetypal hero. The call to adventure, refusal, acceptance, and transformative journey reflect Campbell's model precisely. Such structural archetypes evoke a deep psychological resonance in audiences, arguably because they align with innate cognitive expectations of development, conflict, and resolution.

Archetypes are not merely static patterns – they are psychologically activating forces. Campbell and Jung both emphasized that archetypes function on an emotional and often spiritual level, creating meaningful engagement with stories, rituals, and symbols. The widespread popularity of films like Star Wars, despite critiques of their literary quality, demonstrates the affective power of archetypal sequencing. Audiences are instinctively drawn to these narratives, not necessarily because of their dialogue or setting, but because the underlying structure echoes universal psychological experiences – loss, courage, transformation, and return.

Modern Western society, particularly in its secular iterations, has seen a decline of organized religion and an erosion of traditional mythic narratives that

once structured cultural life. Jung and Campbell both argued that myths are not literal truths, but metaphorical containers for archetypal forces – psychic energies that give form and coherence to human experience.

Religious rituals and imagery historically served as symbolic rituals of initiation, transformation, and belonging. As noted, the move from Catholic iconography to Protestant austerity symbolically stripped myth of its imaginal potency, alienating the collective psyche from archetypal connection. The result is a widespread spiritual hunger and a proliferation of secular substitutes for myth – including cinema, fandom, political ideologies, and even technology.

Jungian theory holds that archetypes, such as the Hero, the Redeemer, the Great Mother, and the Trickster, are embedded in the collective unconscious. When cultural conditions suppress or fail to engage these deep structures, archetypes emerge in distorted or unconscious forms – such as populist movements, conspiracy ideologies, or violent extremism.

Mass culture has tried, with limited success, to create new mythic figures (e.g., national founders, political heroes), but such figures often lack the symbolic abstraction and imaginative elasticity of classical gods or mythic avatars. Historical figures like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson have failed to become fully mythologized due to the abundance of factual detail that resists symbolic projection.

Joseph Campbell famously remarked, "We need new myths that are in accord with our reality." In the current era – marked by digital acceleration, ecological crisis, geopolitical uncertainty, and loss of communal identity – there is a cultural imperative to rediscover a unifying symbolic narrative. Such a myth would not be religious in the traditional sense but would instead offer a psychological and cultural framework to address questions of identity, transformation, belonging, and collective purpose.

Jung anticipated this transformation in a prophetic dream report: individuals from across the world collaboratively building a great symbolic temple – a structure that would become the mythic architecture of a future global civilization. He speculated that this new symbolic order may take centuries to fully emerge.

Returning to the metaphor from systems theory and quantum physics, we might say that the mythic «seeds» are present within the collective unconscious, awaiting the right contextual parameters – conditions of crisis, technological change, or symbolic emptiness – to catalyze growth. This aligns with Jung's observation that in times of upheaval, archetypal forces reassert themselves in powerful and often unpredictable ways. Therefore, the contemporary myth must arise not from prescriptive institutions but from the emergent experience of collective transformation, deeply informed by diverse cultural inputs, technological mediation, and psychological need.

From the perspective of information environments and cognitive infrastructure, a shared mythic narrative functions as a form of cognitive resilience. When societies lack shared stories, they become more vulnerable to fragmentation, propaganda, and cognitive warfare. Thus, cultivating symbolic systems that integrate diverse archetypes while promoting unity and ethical development is not merely a psychological or artistic goal – it is a strategic imperative. A future-facing myth could support social cohesion, inspire sacrifice and creativity, and anchor the human spirit amid accelerating change.

Many individuals undergo a significant shift in their dominant archetype during midlife. For example, one might move from the archetype of the Youth or the Warrior to that of the Mentor, the Ruler, or the Caregiver. Such transformations are analogous to mythic journeys where the individual returns «not the same» – a concept embedded in Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey model. These transitions are often catalyzed by life events such as childbirth, trauma, professional change, or existential crises, and may be seen as emergent patterns of self-organization within the psyche.

Jung's analysis of the collective possession of Germany under Nazi ideology exemplifies how archetypes can dominate not only individuals but entire cultures. He theorized that the Wotan archetype, a pre-Christian Germanic war god, became constellated in the German psyche following national trauma and humiliation after World War I. Hitler, in this model, is viewed as a manna personality – an individual capable of channeling collective unconscious material and becoming a «mouthpiece» for archetypal forces.

This interaction between the leader and the populace creates a feedback loop where the archetype is continually amplified, shaping cultural attitudes, symbolism, and even national policies. Jung cautioned that such possession by archetypal energies can lead to mass delusion, dehumanization, and large-scale violence when not made conscious and integrated responsibly.

A powerful metaphor for archetypal constellations is found in systems theory and contextual parameter modeling, akin to phenomena in quantum physics. Just as snow requires precise environmental conditions to manifest, archetypes may also require

specific psychological, social, and environmental "dials" to become active. This leads to the hypothesis:

Archetypes are omnipresent latent structures that manifest when contextual parameters align. This model suggests that trauma, social upheaval, inequality, or cultural narratives can serve as conditions of activation, akin to planting dormant seeds under the right soil and light conditions. Once active, the archetype reshapes behavior, identity, and perception both individually and collectively. Examples of such application include:

• military culture activating the Warrior and Apollonian archetypes,
• fraternity initiation rites as unconscious Dionysian rituals,
• mass media marketing using archetypal figures to drive consumer behavior,
• authoritarian regimes activating the Shadow and Warrior energies.

Group structures – whether mythic pantheons, military squads, or corporate teams – often reflect distributed archetypal roles, enhancing group function through complementary strengths. As seen in military hierarchies or fictional ensembles (e.g., Marvel's Avengers), typical archetypal configurations include:

• the Hero (leadership and sacrifice),
• the Wise Mentor (strategy and foresight),
• the Trickster (innovation and subversion),
• the Caregiver (stabilization and morale),
• the Shadow (embodied conflict and opposition).

Such arrangements provide not only narrative richness but also functional diversity that mirrors both ancient myths and modern organizational psychology.

This framework proposes that understanding archetypes as condition-dependent emergent phenomena can enrich fields as diverse as:

• clinical psychology (e.g., understanding PTSD as archetypal rupture).
• conflict resolution (e.g., mapping Shadow projection in groups).
• artificial intelligence (e.g., modeling psychological patterns in agents).
• marketing (e.g., archetypal branding and avatar development).

While the Jungian tradition has yet to fully explore parameter modeling, disciplines such as behavioral economics, complexity science, and machine learning are already building predictive models of archetypal behavior under varying conditions. An integrative, cross-disciplinary research agenda is needed to bring these approaches into dialogue with depth psychology.

3. Conclusions

In the era of hybrid threats and post-truth politics, the manipulation of information has evolved into a strategic instrument for exerting control over human consciousness. The 21st century marks a paradigm shift in the nature of warfare – from territorial conquests to cognitive domination – where beliefs, identities, and symbolic structures become primary targets of conflict. The rise of disinformation, narrative warfare, and algorithmic propaganda reveals a critical transformation in how power is exercised, not through coercion alone, but through epistemological control over what populations perceive as truth, justice, and reality.

Within this context, the role of archetypes – universal psychological patterns rooted in the collective unconscious – takes on renewed significance. Originally theorized by Carl Jung as symbolic templates that structure human thought and culture, archetypes today are being operationalized through behavioral analytics, strategic communication, marketing psychology, and national security forecasting. Contemporary technologies allow for the empirical modeling of archetypal behavior, enabling prediction, manipulation, and even weaponization of mass consciousness.

As this article has demonstrated, archetypes influence not only individual identity development but also collective behavior, especially during periods of trauma, uncertainty, or societal fragmentation. Whether in commercial branding, populist politics, or hybrid warfare, archetypal patterns are increasingly recognized as critical mechanisms through which influence is exerted and legitimacy is constructed.

The modern world's symbolic deficit – marked by the decline of shared myths and traditional meaning-making systems – renders societies more vulnerable to the emergence of distorted or destructive archetypal expressions, such as extremism, authoritarianism, and mass delusion. Without conscious engagement with these deep psychological forces, cultures risk succumbing to unconscious possession by the Shadow or Trickster elements of the psyche.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to cultivate integrative mythic narratives and symbolic systems that promote psychological coherence, cultural resilience, and ethical development. Such narratives can serve as counterweights to disinformation and ideological fragmentation, offering frameworks for meaning, identity, and collective purpose in a rapidly transforming global environment.

Moreover, interdisciplinary engagement – bringing together psychology, systems theory, artificial intelligence, and security studies – is essential for developing robust models of archetypal activation and influence. Understanding archetypes not as fixed myths but as dynamic, emergent phenomena tied to context and cultural parameters enables more effective strategies in both psychological defense and societal transformation.

Ultimately, this research underscores the imperative to treat the symbolic and cognitive dimensions of security with the same seriousness as material threats. In doing so, it becomes possible to resist epistemic colonization, counter cognitive warfare, and foster a more resilient, ethically grounded, and psychologically aware global society.

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