The Concept of DEBT in Collective Consciousness (a Socio-historical Analysis of Institutional Discourse)

Natalya Davidko

crossref http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.sal.0.19.949

Abstract Ever since the publication of Durkheim’s pioneering works, collective consciousness has been studied in philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and other sciences. The present article takes a linguistic view of the phenomenon of collective consciousness and hypothesizes that archetypes from which people draw the basis of their behavior and attitudes are encoded in the language and may be construed through the analysis of written artifacts. Archetypes, which are viewed as conceptual wholes stored in human minds and represented by language units (mainly vocabulary), contain archetypal features that vary and change over time under the influence of religious beliefs, ethical norms, moral values, mainstream economic ideas, and popular wisdom. The conception and continual change of archetypal meanings take place in discourses which are acts of social use of a language. The article takes an integrated approach to the meaning of discourse and postulates that it has a threefold intentional dimension: authorial intent, subject (aboutness), and intended impact (dialogicality). Archetypal features are inferred from the analysis of the semantics of discourses which incorporate ideational, conventional and intentional meanings where the last one plays a major role in imbedding ideas in collective consciousness. Changes in conventional meaning are looked into at the attitudinal level over a long time span, which provides sufficient evidence concerning the driving force behind these changes. Finally, ideational meaning is studied against a broad background of the changing social and economic environment.