

ONE BODY , MANY SELVES

AUTHE NTIC- ITY :

THE LOVE CHILD OF

EGO & SHADOW



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“BY PSYCHE I UNDERSTAND THE TOTALITY OF ALL PSYCHIC PROCESSES,
CONSCIOUS AS WELL AS UNCONSCIOUS”
(C.G JUNG, 1971, PARA 797)



Figure 1: Model of The Human Psyche

The psyche refers to the complete personality of an individual which is formed by their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. It can be divided into two parts, the **conscious** and the **unconscious**, which are at constant interplay and form the personality. Most one's personality develops beneath their active awareness which could be brought on by external occurrences. This personality often forms the image that is projected on the outside for the world to witness, the **Ego**. What one is capable of, why one does and likes the things that one does is hidden beneath the surface, which forms the **Shadow**.

Jung believes (2014, p.275) that one's truest and most authentic self is formed only when ones Persona and Ego confronts the Shadow. Not only confronts but truly accepts it which can be done by analysing one's thoughts, actions and questioning why we do what we do.

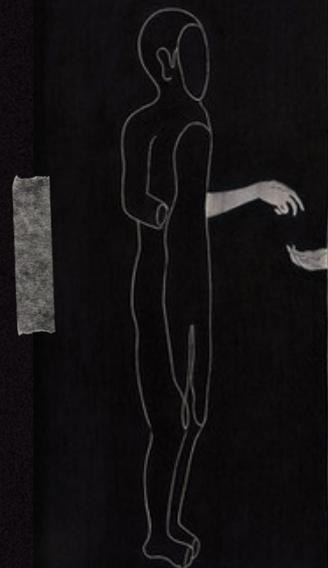


Figure 2 Part I

By doing so we might uncover undesirable traits and parts of themselves and the potentiality of what it indicates about ourselves- **that we might not always be who we think or hope we are.**

The Ego and Shadow coexist together, one cannot exist without the other as they are two sides of the same coin. It almost makes it seem like **two parallel realities** of one's self can exist along with the other.

What if these two different selves were to confront each other in a dreamlike state where the distinction of different parts of one's psyche is blurred? A state of limbo which does not abide by the rules and constraints of reality and allowed these two sides, conscious and unconscious, to have a conversation with each other.



As humans, we often feel the need to be constantly evolving and changing because the world around us is ever changing and never still. To change is a matter of survival even if the change is unpleasant and unsettling but how do we understand that the direction that we grow in as we change is the path that we must take to become our truest self? Do we as humans living in this world need to make a conscious choice to be or not be our most authentic self? What might influence this decision or what might discourage us from doing so? How does one marry their Ego and Shadow together to achieve what Jung believes to be our most 'authentic self'?

Figure 2 Part II

THE CHARACTERS OF THE HUMAN PSYCHE

The conscious realm: Can be defined as the field of awareness, consisting of those psychic content that one is aware of.

The unconscious realm: Consists of psychic contents which one is unaware of and can be further divided into;

1. **The personal unconscious:** It is particular to everyone. Consists of events of one's life that are deemed insignificant, are forgotten, or are repressed due to their distressing nature.

2. **The collective unconscious:** It consists of 'psychic structures' or 'cognitive categories' which are not unique to the individual but rather are shared by all, influencing our thoughts, behaviors, and the way we look at the world. The home to the archetypes.

"THE ARCHETYPAL STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE PSYCHE ARE THE PSYCHIC ORGANS UPON WHO'S FUNCTIONING THE WELLBEING OF THE INDIVIDUAL DEPENDS ON AND WHOSE INJURY HAS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES"

(E. NEUMANN, 2014, P. 15)

The Persona: Social mask that each of us wear in our interaction with others in society. It is basically an altered version of one's reality, a two-dimensional reality and its formation starts quite early in life. Accepting the values that go with the norms of society and rejecting the ones that go against it.

The Ego: Provides a sense of self as it sits in the centre of consciousness. The ego decides what is appropriate to be displayed as one's persona to the outside world and what isn't.



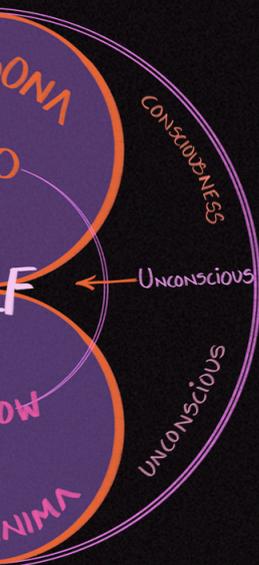
Figure 3 Part I: Model of The Human Psyche,

The Shadow: Certain personality type elicit negative feedback from people around us which could push us to suppress these traits and these traits then reside in the shadow.

Failure to acknowledge one's shadow can cause chaos in their life since shadow tends to influence one's emotions thoughts and feelings beyond conscious control. Often the shadow finds expression through projections.

"The show, when it is realised, is the source of renewal; the new and productive impulse cannot come from established values of ego. When there is an impasse and sterile time in our lives we must look to the dark, hitherto unacceptable side which has been at our conscious disposal" (Zweig. C, 1999).

Anima and Animus: They are much further away in the unconscious and are seldom realised. Jung believed that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, has a masculine and feminine part in their unconsciousness which is just as important as any other archetype.



The Self: *"...the Self is our life's goal, for it is the completest expression of the fateful combination we call individuality" (C G Jung, 1963, p. 398).*

Proper expression of the self is the main objective of the individuation process. The self is the central archetype of the entire psyche, it acts as the unifying or the organising principle of the psyche and is oriented towards the union of the conscious and unconscious realm. Jung called it, 'A link to the infinite' (2014, p. 324).

Figure 3 Part II: Model of The Human Psyche,

INDIVIDUATION

Individuation is the **singular unified state of wholeness**. The process of analysing aspects of the unconscious to attain a more **harmonious sense of Self**. Confronting contents of the unconscious to bring about a more harmonious balance between the different parts of the psyche.

Jung (2014, p. 275) uses the term “individuation” to denote the psychological process that one might go through to become an “in-dividual”.



Figure 4

“INDIVIDUATION MEANS BECOMING A SINGLE, HOMOGENEOUS BEING AND IN SO FAR AS ‘INDIVIDUALITY’ EMBRACES OUR INNERMOST, LAST, AND INCOMPARABLE UNIQUENESS, IT ALSO IMPLIES BECOMING ONE’S OWN SELF. WE COULD THEREFORE TRANSLATE INDIVIDUATION AS ‘SELF-REALIZATION’” ,

(C.G JUNG, 2014, PARAGRAPH 266).

ANSWERING THE CALL

The act of achieving ones most authentic self is a journey that must be chartered bravely. It can be compared to what Joseph Campbell calls the **Hero's Journey**, in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where the protagonist follows a set path to achieve their ultimate goal.

Our journey of achieving our true self begins when we become curious about our shadow self and our collective unconscious. When we start questioning why we behave, react, and feel the way we do about certain situations. When we start to wonder if certain events or people in our lives have impacted this.

This curiosity and these questions are our call for adventure, and it is up to us if we answer it or not.

If we do answer it then we must be aware that the road is filled with perils, trials, pitfalls, and revelations that might not be very comforting. This journey might even feel cathartic, almost like you are abandoning the current sense of self that you have relied on for so many years, but it is on us to decide if this journey is worth it or not.

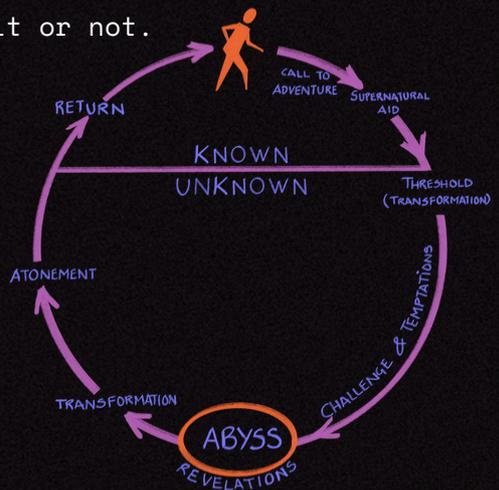


Figure 5: The Hero's Journey

Often, we uncover unpleasant memories that we might have repressed in our formative years and slowly after every discovery we would understand our shadow self more and more. Carl Jung believes that our **shadow self is made of every aspect of our personality that we and the society have deemed unacceptable**. One might wonder, how much of this repression happened during our childhood, a time when we were the bravest and most uncaring of others' opinions. Does our inner child also linger somewhere in the unconscious realm where they might have been banished to piece by piece as we grew up.

An attempt to uncover and understand our shadow self might also help heal our inner child as we tried to accept our whole sense of self and everything that comes with it. **The battlefield or the path of this journey is signified by the course of our lives.** We cannot disregard our worldly responsibilities as we embark on this journey to combine our physical world with our spiritual world. Our life and time keeps flowing and we must flow with it. The weight of it might be heavy but with each discovery we might feel lighter as we don't have to wonder anymore.



Figure 6

Yes, there might be a cost to uncovering the things that we might have to unearth to reach our goal, but the fruit of reward might be sweeter than anything else we have ever tasted.

BLURRING THE WORLDS

"EVERYTHING IN THE UNCONSCIOUS SEEKS OUTWARD MANIFESTATION",
(C.G. JUNG, 1963)

There are various ways in which the shadow shows itself, its presence being most noticeable in the most intimate environments as it projects itself into the outside world. Since Ego is born out of the consciousness, we would expect it to turn its back on the shadow, disregarding and suppressing it. Or that unconsciousness loses its footing with the birth of the Ego and that it would silently follow Ego and the decisions made by it. That is just what we would like to think but in fact that is not the case.



Figure 7



Figure 8

The truth is that the **consciousness succumbs all too easily to the unconscious** because, unconsciousness the wiser one between the two.

Due to this, Jung defines (2014, p. 282) intuition as "perception via the unconscious"

BLURRING THE WORLDS : ACTIVE IMAGINATION

“Active imagination” is a dialogue with different parts of yourself that live in the unconscious. In some way it is quite like dreaming except that you are fully aware, conscious, and doing it with intent. Instead of dreaming you go into your imagination while you are awake, and you would allow your unconscious to represent itself in the form of images that you might find in your dreams.

If we truly want to part ways with the illusions, we have about our being and live in the full truth of it, however little we like to be the way we are, then there is nothing that can help us so much so in our attempt than active imagination.



Figure 9



Figure 10 Part I

“THE POINT IS THAT YOU START WITH ANY IMAGE, FOR INSTANCE JUST WITH THAT YELLOW MASS IN YOUR DREAM. CONTEMPLATE IT AND CAREFULLY OBSERVE HOW THE PICTURE BEGINS TO UNFOLD OR CHANGE. DON'T TRY TO MAKE IT INTO SOMETHING, JUST DO NOTHING BUT OBSERVE WHAT ITS SPONTANEOUS CHANGES ARE...”

(C.G JUNG, 1947, LETTER TO MRS. O)

In active imagination the conscious mind actively participates. The ego goes into the inner worlds, walks around, makes friends with or fights with the parts of the unconscious it finds there. You engage in conversations, exchange viewpoints, go through adventures together and eventually learn something from each other.

The events take place on the imaginative level which is neither conscious nor unconscious but a meeting place, a common ground where both can meet on equal terms.



Figure 10 Part I

In his book, *Innerwork: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*, Robert Johnson describes (1981) **Jung's four step approach to Active imagination:**

1.The Invitation:

Invite the creatures of the unconscious to the surface to make contact with them. **Every interaction, big or small, helps us understand our inner world a little better and to get familiar with its structures and inhabitants.** A lot of the times we have something vague or inconspicuous brewing under the surface of our consciousness.

A feeling that we cannot quite understand yet and to better recognise them we can start by asking our unconsciousness, "Where is this obsession? Who is obsessed?". We must empty our 'Ego-mind' and simply exercise patience as our conscious mind conjures up images. While practicing active imagination we must not push a certain image to appear or manipulate it in any way. To make these conversations easier **we can start with an image or a fantasy** that might have been flashing through our minds before we started the exercise as it will act as a good starting point because often it is the unconscious that tried to push it to the surface.



Figure 11

2.The Dialogue:

The act of opening a dialogue will allow you to give yourself over to your inner figures and let them have a life of their own. Jung believes that in doing so the unconscious and the conscious mind will become united. The inner entity might lead you down a path and it is up to you to follow it or not and if not then it might lead to conflict, but it is still a dialogue which will help the two understand each other better.

Exchanging point of views and advice in the process.



Figure 13

All these conversations might not necessarily be verbal but can also be visual. The Ego is like an island and the deep waters surrounding it are a home for the unconscious entities. **Active imagination affirms that our inner conscious is present and has a voice.** Its opinions are a different point of view, not the final verdict.

"We know that the mask of the unconscious is not rigid- it reflects the face we turn towards it. Hostility lends it a threatening aspect; friendliness softens its features" (C.G Jung, 1980).

3.The Values:

It is the values and ethical element that our Ego must introduce. Ethos- meaning essential character or spirit of a person. **It prevents the imaginative process from turning destructive by setting up boundaries.** Since our unconscious is a house to beings that rely more on their instincts, it is the conscious mind that should bring in the ethics. Though all the archetypes are not like this.

4.The rituals:

The most important step of all is for the unconscious part to find their place and purpose in our outer lives. To process the information gathered after doing the steps mentioned above, we must ground ourselves back into the physical world. **The act of grounding** can be something as simple as taking a walk outside to reconnect or by even making something tangible like a painting.

This method of active imagination is quite powerful hence we should be careful as we could get so lost in the flow of it that they might not be able to pull ourselves out of it. It is also important to document what is uncovered during this process.

Our unconscious is powerful and if we are to approach it, we must do so with respect and care.

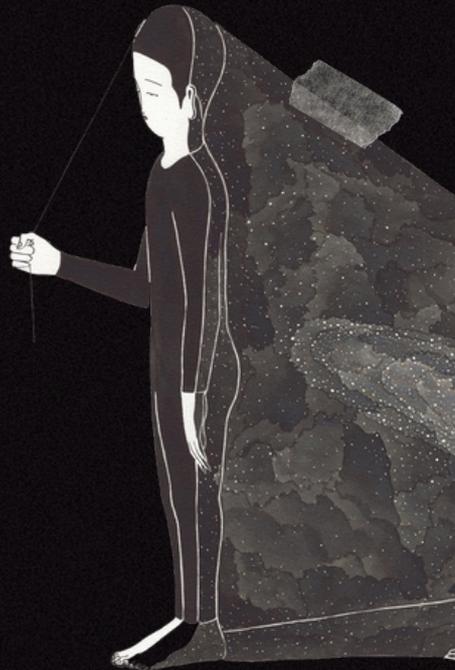


Figure 13 Part I

BLURRING THE WORLDS : DREAMS

"DREAMS ARE IMPARTIAL, SPONTANEOUS PRODUCTS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS PSYCHE, OUTSIDE THE CONTROL OF THE WILL. THEY ARE PURE NATURE; THEY SHOW US THE UNVARNISHED, NATURAL TRUTH AND ARE THEREFORE FITTED AS NOTHING ELSE IS TO GIVE US BACK AN ATTITUDE THAT ACCORDS WITH OUR BASIC HUMAN NATURE WHEN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS HAS STRAYED TOO FAR FROM ITS FOUNDATIONS AND RUN INTO AN IMPASSE",

[C.G JUNG, 1992, PARAGRAPH 317]

Jung (1963) also stated that **dreams could be a medium for communication between the conscious and the unconscious**. The inner psyche could try to push images to the surface of our consciousness in the form of dreams but the most important part in this is that these dreams should be interpreted in the correct way to get the unconscious mind's message across.

Jung highly values dreams and considered them to play an important part in the development of one's personality. Quite often the Shadow would present itself in different forms in our dreams or even as a recurring dream. Dreams can function as a state of limbo, an equal state, for both the unconscious and conscious mind as it appears when our subconscious mind is functioning. Jung did believe that dreams were not the most efficient way to achieving individuation as they do facilitate dialogues between the two parts of the psyche unless it's a lucid dream. One of the key parts of individuation is to become familiar with the inner workings of our mind and the human mind

is very complex, not to be easily deduced. Our dreams might seem vague and abstract at times, we might not even recall them in detail after waking up which could cause the message to get lost in translation. Thus, it is imperative for these dreams to be translated and understood correctly or else the message would be lost.



Figure 13 Part II

MERGING THE WORLDS

"PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ALL ITS PHASES IS A REDEMPTIVE PROCESS. THE GOAL IS TO REDEEM BY CONSCIOUS REALIZATION, THE HIDDEN SELF, HIDDEN IN UNCONSCIOUS IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EGO"

(EDINGER, 1992)

We can ignore the turmoil that we feel but the longer we ignore, the more it festers and gnaws on our being. Throughout his career, Carl Jung maintained that the crucial first step toward self-improvement is simply to become more aware of one's situation. He believed that we should not only overcome our ignorance regarding the realities of our outer situation but also become more aware of the reality of our psyche. The psyche is an irreducible fact of nature that should be considered as real as the physical world and just as impactful to our overall wellbeing. To fully grasp the process of

individuation we must be able to separate ourselves from the role we play, our persona, and prepare to accept our truest and most authentic sense of 'Self'.

We can get a better sense of our authentic self by even by attempting the process of individuation. Yes, it might feel cathartic to question the identity that we have built for ourselves but it is an important step towards gaining a much deeper sense of who we truly are. It might be difficult to separate ourselves from these veils that we have built over the years, but each step is a step forward in our psychological development. We can come closer to achieving our authentic self by marrying our Ego and Shadow together and truly understanding who we are as people.



Figure 14 Part I



Figure 14 Part II

“WE ARE LIKE ONIONS
WITH MANY SKINS,
AND WE HAVE TO
PEEL OURSELVES
AGAIN AND AGAIN IN
ORDER TO GET TO THE
REAL CORE”.
(C.G JUNG, 1930-1934)

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: *Carl Jung's Model of The Human Psyche*, made by the author (12/03/2020).

Figure 2 Part I: Moonassi (2010) *Sinking into you* [Pigment liner, marker, and ink on paper] South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 2 Part II: Moonassi (2010) *Sinking into you* [Pigment liner, marker, and ink on paper] South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 3 Part I: *Carl Jung's Model of The Human Psyche*, made by the author (12/03/2020).

Figure 3 Part II: *Carl Jung's Model of The Human Psyche*, made by the author (12/03/2020).

Figure 4: Moonassi (2017) *Property of Sorrow* [ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 5: *The Hero's Journey*, illustrated by the author (14/11/2022).

Figure 6: Moonassi (2022) *Mirage of You* [ink and acrylic on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 7: Moonassi (2021) *My Dear Shadow* [ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 8: Moonassi (2020) *Self Awareness* [ink and acrylic on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 9: Moonassi (2016) *People Watch Me* [Pigment liner and marker on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 10 Part I: Moonassi (2016) *Under the Surface* [Pigment liner and marker on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 10 Part II: Moonassi (2016) *Under the Surface* [Pigment liner and marker on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 11: Moonassi (2017) *Boundary as a new Dimension* [Korean ink on Korean paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 12: Moonassi (2017) *Vague Us* [ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 13 Part I: Moonassi (2017) *Responsible for our own Universe* [Pigment liner and ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 13 Part II: Moonassi (2017) *Responsible for our own Universe* [Pigment liner and ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 14 Part I: Moonassi (2019) *Better Versions of You* [acrylic and ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

Figure 14 Part II: Moonassi (2019) *Better Versions of You* [acrylic and ink on paper]South Korea (17/10/2022).

