

JUNG'S MODEL OF THE PSYCHE

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The psyche

Jung writes: 'By psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious', (CW6 para 797) so we use the term 'psyche' rather than 'mind', since mind is used in common parlance to refer to the aspects of mental functioning which are conscious. Jung maintained that the psyche is a self-regulating system (like the body).

The psyche strives to maintain a balance between opposing qualities while at the same time actively seeking its own development or as he called it, individuation. For Jung, the psyche is inherently separable into component parts with complexes and archetypal contents personified and functioning autonomously as complete secondary selves, not just as drives and processes. It is important to think of Jung's model as a metaphor not as concrete reality, or as something which is not subject to change.

The ego

Jung saw the ego as the centre of the field of consciousness which contains our conscious awareness of existing and a continuing sense of personal identity. It is the organiser of our thoughts and intuitions, feelings, and sensations, and has access to memories which are not repressed. The ego is the bearer of personality and stands at the junction between the inner and outer worlds.

The way in which people relate to inner and outer worlds is determined by their attitude type: an extraverted individual being orientated to the outer world, and an introverted one primarily to the inner world. Jung also noted that people differ in the conscious use they make of four functions which he termed, thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. In any individual, one of these functions is superior and is therefore more highly developed than other functions, since greater use is made of it, but each attitude operates in relation to the introversion or extraversion of the person, as well as in conjunction with other less dominant functions, giving a number of different theoretical possibilities.

The ego arises out of the Self during the course of early development. It has an executive function, it perceives meaning and assesses value, so that it not only promotes survival but makes life worth living. It is an expression of the Self, though by no means identical with it, and the Self is much greater than it. Jung compared the nature of consciousness to the eye: only a limited number of things can be held in vision at any one time, and in the same way the activity of consciousness is selective. Selection, he says, demands direction and other things are excluded as irrelevant. This is bound to make conscious orientation one sided. The contents which are excluded sink into the unconscious where they form a counterweight to the conscious orientation. Thus an increasing tension is created and eventually the unconscious will break through in the form of dreams or images. So the unconscious complex is a balancing or supplementing of the conscious orientation.

The personal unconscious

The personal unconscious is a product of the interaction between the collective unconscious and the development of the individual during life. Jung's definition of the personal unconscious is as follows:

Everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things which are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness; all this is the content of the unconscious' (CW8, para 382). 'Besides these we must include all more or less intentional repressions of painful thought and feelings. I call the sum of these contents the "personal unconscious"' (CW8, para 270).

One can see that there is more here than the repressed contents of the unconscious as envisaged by Freud, for while it does include repression, Jung also sees the personal unconscious as having within it potential for future development, and thus is very much in line with his thinking about the psyche.

Complexes

Jung considered that the personal unconscious is composed of functional units called complexes, and he reached the concept of the complex through some important and ground-breaking work he did as a young man on word association. He found that there were internal distractions which interfered with the association of the subjects to the test words, so that their reaction time was longer for some words than others. These responses tended to form groups of ideas which were affectively toned and which he named complexes or 'feeling-toned complexes'. The word association test suggested the presence of many types of complex not merely, as Freud claimed, a core sexual complex, or Oedipus complex.

Complexes are determined by experience but also by the individual's way of reacting to that experience. A complex is in the main unconscious and has a tendency to behave independently or autonomously so that the individual may feel that his behaviour is out of his control. We probably have all said at one time or another when we have done something seemingly out of character: 'I don't know what came over me'. This sense of autonomy is perhaps most marked in abnormal states of mind, and can be seen most clearly in people who are ill; whom we sometimes think of as possessed, but complexes are parts of the psyche of us all.

Complexes have their roots in the collective unconscious and are tinged with archetypal contents. The problem for the individual is not the existence of the complexes *per se*, but the breakdown of the psyche's capacity to regulate itself. Jung held that the psyche has the ability to bring into awareness dissociated complexes and archetypal material in order to provide a balance or compensation to conscious life. He thought that the ego was prone to making inappropriate choices or to one-sidedness, and that material arising from the unconscious could help to bring a better balance to the individual and enable further development to take place.

The further development tends to take place in a situation of conflict, which Jung saw as a creative and inevitable part of human life. When unconscious contents break through into consciousness it can lead to increased development in the individual. However, complexes can easily manifest themselves without the ego being strong enough to reflect on them and enable them to be made use of, and it is then that they cause us (and other people) difficulties. Jung was more concerned with the present and with future development than with delving into the past, emphasising a teleological approach and being concerned with the meaning of symptoms and their purpose.

The collective unconscious

The theory of the collective unconscious is one of the distinctive features of Jung's psychology. He took the view that the whole personality is present *in potentia* from birth and that personality is not solely a function of the environment, as was thought at the time when he was developing his ideas, but merely brings out what is already there. The role of the environment is to emphasise and develop aspects already within the individual.

Every infant is born with an intact blueprint for life, both physically and mentally, and while these ideas were very controversial at the time, there is much more agreement now that each animal species is uniquely equipped with a repertoire of behaviours adapted to the environment in which it has evolved. This repertoire is dependent on what ethnologists call 'innate releasing mechanisms' which the animal inherits in its central nervous system and which become activated when appropriate stimuli are encountered in the environment. These ideas are very close indeed to the theory of archetypes developed by Jung. He wrote:

'the term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the

bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a "pattern of behaviour". This aspect of the archetype, the purely biological one, is the proper concern of scientific psychology'. (CW18, para 1228).

The archetypes predispose us to approach life and to experience it in certain ways, according to patterns laid down in the psyche. There are archetypal figures, such as mother, father, child, archetypal events, such as birth, death, separation, and archetypal objects such as water, the sun, the moon, snakes, and so on. These images find expression in the psyche, in behaviour and in myths. It is only archetypal *images* that are capable of being known and coming to consciousness, the archetypes themselves are deeply unconscious and unknowable.

I have mentioned the biological, instinctual pole of the archetype, but Jung perceived the concept as a spectrum, there being an opposing, spiritual pole which also has an enormous impact on behaviour. Archetypes have a fascinating, numinous quality to them which makes them difficult to ignore, and attracts people to venerate or worship archetypal images.

The Self

The Self for Jung comprises the whole of the psyche, including all its potential. It is the organising genius behind the personality, and is responsible for bringing about the best adjustment in each stage of life that circumstances can allow. Crucially, it has a teleological function: it is forward looking, seeking fulfilment. The goal of the Self is wholeness, and Jung called this search for wholeness the process of individuation, the purpose being to develop the organism's fullest potential.

It is a distinguishing feature of Jungian psychology that the theory is organised from the point of view of the Self, not from that of the ego, as early Freudian theory was, and the teleological perspective of Jung is also distinctive. The ego, along with other structures, develops out of the Self which exists from the beginning of life. The Self is rooted in biology but also has access to an infinitely wider range of experience, including the whole wealth of the cultural and religious realms, and the depths of which all human beings are capable. It is therefore capable of being projected on to figures or institutions which carry power: God, the sun, kings and queens and so on.

Persona

This is a part of the personality which comes into existence 'for reasons of adaptation or personal convenience'. The origin of the term comes from the mask worn by Greek actors in antiquity and denotes the part of the personality which we show to the world. The persona has been called 'the packaging of the ego' or the ego's public relations person, and is a necessary part of our everyday functioning. One might say that one's social success depends on having a reasonably well-functioning persona, one which is flexible enough to adapt to different situations, and which is a good reflection of the ego qualities which lie behind it.

However trouble comes when a person is identified with their persona, and everyone will have come across people who cannot leave behind their work persona, such as a teacher who treats everyone as though they were still in primary school, or bossily tells people what to do. Although this is annoying to be with, the more serious part of it is that it may leave major aspects of the personality unrealised, and the individual therefore significantly impoverished. The persona grows out of the need in childhood to adapt to the expectations of parents, teachers and peers, and this may well mean that the persona carries traits of personality which are desirable, leaving the opposite, undesirable traits to form part of the shadow.

The shadow

This carries all the things we do not want to know about ourselves or do not like. The shadow is a complex in the personal unconscious with its roots in the collective unconscious and is the complex most easily accessible to the conscious mind. It often possesses qualities which are opposite from those in the persona, and therefore opposite from those of which we are conscious. Here is the Jungian idea of one aspect of the personality compensating for another: where there is light, there must also be shadow. If the compensatory relationship breaks down, it can result in a shallow personality with little depth and with excessive concern for what other people think about him or her. So while it can be troublesome, and may remain largely unconscious, the shadow is an important aspect of our psyche and part of what gives depth to our personalities. The fascination which the differing, contrasting, or opposing aspects of personality hold for us, is illustrated in such novels as Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, or The Picture of Dorian Gray.

The way in which we most immediately experience the shadow is as we project it on to other people, so that we can be fairly sure that traits which we cannot stand in other people really belong to ourselves and that we are trying to disown them. While difficult and painful, it is important that we work at owning our shadow to bring it into relationship with our persona, and so provide some integration of these two complexes within our personality.

Anima and animus

The next two complexes in the personal unconscious are perhaps the most difficult to understand and the most contentious. Jung conceived of there being at another psychic level a contrasexual archetype, designated as anima in the man and animus in the woman. These figures are derived in part from the archetypes of the feminine and masculine, and in part from the individual's own life experience with members of the opposite sex beginning with mother and father. They inhabit the unconscious depths as a compensation for the one-sided attitude of consciousness and a way of rounding out the experience of belonging to one sex or the other.

Just as happens with the shadow, these archetypes are met with firstly in projected form. They carry with them the numinous quality which accounts for falling in love at first sight, which one can think of as a projection in a man on to an unknown woman of an archetypal image and the woman then becomes fascinating and immensely appealing.

While he was influenced by the gender-based thinking of his time, Jung recognised that the "masculine" aspects of the psyche such as autonomy, separateness, and aggression were not superior to the "feminine" aspects such as nurturance, relatedness, and empathy. Rather, they form two halves of a whole, both of which belong to every individual, and neither of which is superior to the other. One can see this as a development of the emphasis on the masculine psyche in Freud's work. These complexes need to be related to in their "otherness", and connect the ego to the objective psyche.

Individuation

Jung called the search for wholeness within the human psyche, the process of individuation. It may be described as a process of circumambulation around the Self as the centre of personality. The person aims to become conscious of him or herself as a unique human being, but at the same time, no more nor less than any other human being.

For Jung, conflict is not only inherent in human psychology, but is necessary for growth. In order to become more conscious, one must be able to bear conflict. There are many internal opposites, as well as those experienced in the outside world. If the tension between the opposites can be borne, then out of this clash something new and creative can grow. In Jung's view, this 'something' is a symbol which will contribute to a new direction which does justice to both sides of a conflict and which is a product of the unconscious rather than of rational thought.

For Jung the symbol is something which cannot be fully explained or understood but has the quality of both conscious and unconscious worlds. The symbol may be the agent of transformation which brings about the development which was so important an aspect of his thinking, and which leads towards individuation as the goal towards which humans strive.

References

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THE SHADOW

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In Jung's model of the psyche, there are various personified structures that interact with one another in our inner world. Two of these, the *persona* and the *anima/animus*, are relational; the *persona* relates to the external world, and the *anima/animus* to the internal world. The *ego*, which is primarily body-based and may be understood as the executive part of the personality, stands alongside the *shadow*, and these two are to do with our identity.

Problems with not recognising the shadow

Jung had a deep interest in the *shadow* – its form and content – and in the process of assimilating “the thing a person has no wish to be” [CW16, para 470]. He saw quite clearly that failure to recognise, acknowledge and deal with shadow elements is often the root of problems between individuals and within groups and organisations; it is also what fuels prejudice between minority groups or countries and can spark off anything between an interpersonal row and a major war. This is perhaps why the General Index to his collected works contains over two pages of references to the *shadow*. Becoming familiar with the *shadow* is an essential part of the therapeutic relationship, of individuation and of becoming more rounded, more whole and more colourful.

The shadow and identity

Complementary to Jung's idea of the *persona*, which is “what oneself as well as others thinks one is” [CW9 para 221], the “*shadow* is that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors...If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is his *shadow* does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses etc “ [CW9{ii} paras 422 & 423].

The shadow's potential

What needs to be emphasised very strongly here is that the *shadow* contains all sorts of qualities, capacities and potential, which if not recognised and owned, maintain a state of impoverishment in the personality and deprive the person of sources of energy and bridges of connectedness with others. For example, a person might believe that to be assertive is to be selfish; so he goes through life being pushed around by others and deep down seething with resentment, which in turn makes him feel guilty. In this case, his potential for assertiveness and his resentment both form part of his *shadow*. Analysis might challenge his value system, track it back to its origins, help him to become more embodied and thereby more in touch with his needs, and open up areas of choice, which would probably lead to his resentment diminishing.

Personal and collective aspects of the shadow

It may be helpful to think of the *shadow* in a vertical way. At the top is the *personal shadow* – it may feel rather black, formless and underdeveloped as well as unwanted and disowned. But, as we have seen, whilst it may feel like a cess-pit it can also be a treasure trove. Below this, but not divided from it in any way, is the *collective shadow*. This, like the *personal shadow*, is relative in that it will be in part culturally determined. It consists of that which opposes our conscious, shared and collective values. For example, female circumcision is acceptable in some cultures; and abhorrent to members of other cultural groups. Something like paedophilia, however, is a transgression of a taboo, which seems to be universally upheld.

The shadow and evil

That leads us to the deepest areas of the shadow, where we find manifestations of evil as a dynamic in the world to which we need to relate with collective guilt, responsibility and reparation: privatised water, the arms trade, famine, torture, Guantanamo Bay etc; each of us will have such a list. The problem of evil is one that Jung explored through his correspondence with the Dominican, Fr Victor White, and through his writings, particularly “Answer to Job”. It is a huge topic which is beyond the scope of this introduction.

The shadow and projection

How is the *shadow* encountered? Almost always in *projection* onto some other individual/family/group etc. This means that I see in an other something I do not like; this tends to keep happening. I may begin to notice that a lot of other people are rather greedy, for example. And I may begin to feel censorious or judgmental about their greed. But, with luck, it may dawn on me that, what I am disliking in others is actually something with which I struggle within myself. These projections can be onto external others or onto internal dream figures; or both.

What are some of the disowned aspects of the psychosomatic unity that we call a person? The body is a good place to begin. Its form is problematic for some people, who do not feel physically joined-up; others dislike or hate their shape and go to dire lengths to change it; others feel quite disembodied. The contents of the body attract negative projections, which can then be parcelled out to others, whom we describe as “shitty/snotty/bloody” etc. Then there are sexuality and sex and their accompanying anxieties and pressures.

In terms of human development, once infants can experience, enjoy and live in their bodies, they can then learn, with their mother’s help, how to translate sensations into affects. For example, “butterflies” in the stomach can mean “I am nervous/feeling shy/afraid of that authority figure etc”. This is gradually how we construct an emotional vocabulary, and how we learn to accept a wide range of feelings alongside the capacity to think about them. But many people who seek therapy come with a whole number of emotions locked behind a defensive wall of armouring, which prevents closeness with themselves and others, true

intimacy and conflict. Positive and negatives feelings are projected onto those around them, and with the projection goes the capacity to think clearly about situations and relationships.

The influence of others on the shadow

Why has this happened? From infancy and through childhood and adolescence we pick up from our parents/carers both conscious and unconscious messages about what is acceptable in terms of our body, our feelings and our behaviour. All that is unacceptable is suppressed and repressed and becomes part of our *shadow*. We not only take in and repress what is unacceptable, we also internalise our carers' attitudes to these unwanted qualities and characteristics of ourselves. The harsher the attitude, which may have been expressed by withdrawal of love, rejection, physical/emotional/sexual abuse, the more hostile we are to these facets of our *shadow*. At worst, the *shadow* becomes inextricably entwined with abandonment anxiety so that its emergence can really feel like a matter of life or death. Again, though, it is necessary to emphasise that positive, loving feelings fantasies and impulses can become as much part of the *shadow* as negative hostile ones.

Jung's experience

In 'Memories, Dreams, Reflections', Jung recounts a dream, in which he and a "brown-skinned savage" killed Siegfried. In telling the dream, Jung describes some of the feelings associated with encountering and assimilating the *shadow*: fear, disgust, remorse and guilt, compassion, grief and humility. It is an awesome list and it denotes the power of the *shadow*, its capacity to possess us ("He is not himself today"), even overwhelm us. But it omits shame; we all tend to feel ashamed of our *shadow*, some cripplingly so.

In the early chapters of his autobiography, Jung makes frequent reference to his mother's use of shame as a means of discipline. But neither Freud nor Jung paid much attention to shame, although they both suffered greatly from its effects. Perhaps this deficit in their writings was due in part to neither of them being analysed. For the shadow to emerge without overcoming the ego with the toxic effects of shame, we each need a different relational and psychological environment; analysis, psychotherapy, counselling – all of these offer such an environment in different ways. The therapist offers consistent positive regard, expressed in part through a commitment to reliability, continuity and the wish to share his/her understanding of the patient's inner and outer world with the patient. This is part of gaining insight, finding meaning, taking action (in terms of reality testing, for example) and enduring the outcome for the time being. The patient begins to trust the therapist; and this trust deepens when *shadow* elements of the patient come into the therapeutic relationship, where they are accepted with compassion and attempts at understanding. If all goes well enough, they are not subjected yet again to disapproval, shaming or rejection, and the energy which is locked within them is released. For example, the depressed person who manages to contact and become familiar with suppressed rage becomes enlivened and energetic.

Assimilating the shadow

This process, the assimilation of the *shadow*, leads to self-acceptance and self-forgiveness. Grievance and blame give way to the taking of responsibility and attempts at sorting-out what belongs to whom. A fierce conscience, which tends to be self- and other-punitive can relax, and personal values can be set in counterpoint to collective morality.

The therapist's shadow

The therapist also has a *shadow*, a theme which has been explored by Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig, who alerts us to the dangers inherent in the possible perversion of the archetypal image of the Wounded-Healer. Such a perversion can take place when, for a variety of reasons, the therapist splits the therapeutic pair into 'healed therapist' and 'wounded patient', thereby extracting the healing potential from within the patient, who is then caught in a passive, infantilised and dependent position. Such splitting can lead to all sorts of transgressions of the therapeutic boundary, which are always the responsibility of the therapist because of, amongst other factors, the power of the transference. These need to be dealt with in further analysis+/supervision.

The trickster

From mythology it is the character of the Trickster "...a collective shadow figure, a summation of all the inferior traits of character in individuals" [CW9{1} para 484], whom Jung thought could save us from 'hubris' and free the conscious mind from its fascination with evil. The trickster is usually thought of as atrocious, unconscious and unrelated, but someone who can nonetheless transform the meaningless into the meaningful. Often encountered at cross-roads, s/he is always moving, duplicitous, sexually rampant and a joker. The trickster is best portrayed, perhaps, by the figure of Hermes, who gave Pandora ('the all-gifted one') audacity and cunning.

In Western culture it is the wolf that brings us close to the world of *shadow* at its more animalistic level. De Vries (1984) cites the archetypal qualities of the wolf: untamed nature, fertility, lust, cruelty, murderousness, avarice; "...the diabolical, melancholic hungry" that can take possession of more humane characteristics.

Jung's shadow

It is now generally thought that Jung left those interested in his ideas and their development some of his own *shadow* elements to deal with: his anti-Semitism, his negative connotation of the animus, his obscure writing, his idealisation of the East etc. He never wanted there to be any 'Jungians', but it is interesting to note that so many Jungian organisations have been subject to splitting, to ossification of rigid defences and massive projection! But, as Stacey has suggested, it is in the shadowlands of organisations that so much creativity finds breathing space.